

How Does the World Service Office Decide on What to Keep in Archives? Criteria Used by the WSO

- 1- Begin with the question,
“How is the preservation of _____(Item in Question)_____ going to help family members and friends of alcoholics?”
- 2- When duplicates are submitted, the materials are either returned or submitted to the area archives coordinator.
- 3- When making a judgment regarding the value of an item, strike a balance between the need for complete information and the desire to preserve the thinking of the fellowship.
- 4- Ask, “Does the selection in question meet a specific archival, museum, or imaging need?” Other valuable information includes the arrangement of the material, significant gaps, condition, physical form, and subject content. If an item contributes to the visual, audio, or intrinsic sequence, make every effort to maintain the chronology of the collection and preserve the provenance.
- 5- Questioning the person who submits the material helps to identify the historical significance. Although the General Service Offices maintain the histories of their respective countries, materials specific to the development of General Service Offices (GSOs) are retained.
- 6- Try to determine if the material provides additional information for future research or may hamper the search by preserving too much.
- 7- In order to identify sound reasoning for retention, consider the following:
(a) trends (b) research request on specific subjects or (c) repetitive use of a specific reference in routine correspondence.
- 8- Review the accessioning guide before disposing of an item. This review often prevents us from a costly blunder and helps to maintain the integrity of the collection.
- 9- Once the inventories are reviewed and the gaps in the collection are identified, ask the fellowship and staff to help locate missing items.
- 10- In addition to the Archives Advisory Committee, library research regarding the appraisal process is helpful. It is comforting to understand that within the appraisal process there is no firm solution. Guidance from the local museum, archivist, or college is always welcome.
- 11- Exchange ideas with other areas and consider the possibility of maintaining the materials for “displays” or other production needs.