

Archives

How Does the World Service Office (WSO) Decide on What to Keep in Archives?

1 First we begin with the question, "How is the preservation of Item in Question going to help retain our history of decision-making or help family members and friends of alcoholics?"

2 We ask, "Does the selection in question meet a specific need?" Other valuable information includes the arrangement of the material, condition, physical form, and subject content. If an item contributes to the visual, audio, or intrinsic sequence, we make every effort to maintain the chronology of the collection and preserve the provenance (order).

3 When making a decision regarding the specific pertinence of the document or piece for the archives, we strike a balance between the need for complete information and the desire to preserve the thinking of the fellowship at the time.

4 Sometimes we question the department or person who submits the material to help to identify the historical significance. Material retained at the WSO pertains to the history of Al-Anon and Alateen. Material specific to General Service Office (GSO) development is retained at the WSO. However, from the time of creation, the GSOs also begin their own collection.

5 We try to determine if the material provides additional information to existing data.

6 On occasion we ask the fellowship and staff to find missing items. This heightens the awareness of our early experiences of not having archival preservation until the latter part of the 1970's.

7 The Archives Advisory Committee assists us in keeping up-to-date with the appraisal process. It is comforting to understand that within the appraisal process there is no firm solution as to what to keep or not. On occasion, we have sought guidance from a local museum, archivist, or college.

8 We love to exchange ideas with other Archives Coordinators and consider the possibility of maintaining the materials for "displays" or other production needs.

9 The WSO has an accessioning guide for all departments to follow in submitting records to the archives. This helps us preserve the records for future reference.

10 In order to identify sound reasoning for retention, we consider the following: (a) trends; (b) research requests on specific subjects; or (c) repetitive use of a specific reference in routine correspondence.

11 When we receive duplicate items, we return or give them to the area archives.

(Editors Note: These guidelines were be adopted for area archives with permission from the WSO.)