A World of Repositories, a World of Records: Redefining the Scope of a National Subject Collection

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Abstract: Archivists have been less succesful in collecting documentation on white ethnics than in gathering materials on other neglected groups in American society. This article addresses the problem by applying concepts of collection development to the holdings of an outstanding immigrant-ethnic repository, the Immigration History Research Center Collection of the University of Minnesota. It argues that the historic collecting policy is too broad and too indiscriminate to make the best use of the institution's resources and outlines a new policy based on present holdings and on the holdings and policies of other institutions.

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THE LAST TWO DECADES HAVE WITNESSED A REVOLUTION in popular and academic definitions of the content of American history. Women and members of racial and ethnic minorities have demanded broader recognition of their historical experience, and academic historians have shared these views and incorporated them in a broadening interest in society and culture. Professional archivists have been able to meet some of the resulting research needs by discovering or improving access to relevant materials already held by repositories that had acquired them as part of a geographic or institutional collecting policy or by repositories that had been founded decades earlier to document the history of women or the history of a single race or ethnic group. Making up for the remaining deficiencies became the central theme in the theory and practice of collecting manuscripts in the late 1960s and remained preeminent until it gave way to such current preoccupations as cooperation and appraisal.

The history of ethnicity has benefited relatively little from these developments. The established archives for single ethnic groups have seldom taken advantage of the burgeoning opportunities for professional staffing and financing by governments and foundations, and new ethnic documentation has not come into general repositories as readily as many other materials for the new social history.[1] Most writers have attributed the lag in collecting to the materials themselves or to attitudes toward them. In this view, the best that can be said of the archives profession is that it has not perceived what the necessary materials are or has not understood how to collect them; the worst, that it has not recognized the importance of documenting ethnic minorities and has been correspondingly lax in efforts at collecting. The obvious response of the concerned observer is to stimulate better work by identifying available materials, explaining how to work with ethnic group members, or inculcating the importance of ethnic documentation. The literature on collecting ethnic materials consists mainly of variations on these themes.[2]

These presentations are useful in certain situations, but the repetition of

[1]The author is indebted to Carl Ross and Marianne Wargelin Brown, officers of the United Fund for Finnish American Archives, for making her aware of the Finnish American Archives at Suomi College in Hancock, Michigan, as an excellent example of an old and distinguished research collection that remains relatively inaccessible because it has not received modern archival arrangement and description. Other examples include the Polish Museum of America and the American Swedish Institute.

For handy evidence of the weakness of ethnic holdings in general repositories, see, for example, the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections: Index, 1975–1978* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1979), which refers to only seven collections containing Polish American material and seven with Italian American material, four-fifths of which represent retrospective reporting by the University of Minnesota or the Center for Migration Studies. In contrast, there are several hundred entries for blacks and women. The editors of *Women's History Sources: A Guide to Archives and Manuscript Collections in the United States*, 2 vols. (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1979), are now testing their impression that working-class and white ethnic groups are least well represented in this largest subject survey to date.

[2]Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Immigration Studies Collection of the University of Minnesota," *American Archivist* 32 (April 1969): 139–145; Robert M. Warner and Francis X. Blouin, Jr., "Documenting the Great Migrations and a Century of Ethnicity in America," *American Archivist* 39 (July 1976): 319–328; Richard N. Juliani, "The Use of Archives in the Study of Immigration and Ethnicity," *American Archivist* 39 (October 1976): 472–477; Marc Lee Raphael, "The Genesis of a Communal History: The Columbus Jewish History Project," *American Jewish Archives* 29 (April 1977): 53–69; Walter Neutel, "*Geschichte Wie Es Eigentlich Gewesen* or The Necessity of Having Ethnic Archives Programmes," *Archivaria* 7 (Winter 1978): 104–109; Nicholas V. Montalto, "The Challenge of Preservation in a Pluralistic Society," *American Archivist* 41 (October 1976): 399–404; Rudolph J. Vecoli, "'Diamonds in Your Own Backyard': Developing Documentation on European Immigrants to North America," *Ethnic Forum* 1 (September 1981): 2–16; John J. Grabowski, "Ethnicity in Perspective, The Collections of The Western Reserve Historical Society," *Ethnic Forum* 1 (September 1981): 29–36.

arguments and the persistent weakness of collections suggest that additional premises are required. This article attempts to meet this need by offering an exemplary critique of the manuscript part of the Immigration History Research Center (IHRC) Collection of the University of Minnesota.[3] The original purpose of the analysis was to develop guidelines for future collecting programs. It should also serve as a case study because of the primacy of the collection among ethnic archives and manuscript repositories and the applicability of the principles to other institutions, whatever their specializations.

Evaluation of a collecting program should be based on recognized standards of appraisal, but the literature on collection development is rather limited from this point of view. The textbooks offer nothing more incisive than the precepts that an institution should have a collecting policy and acquire materials selectively within its limits.[4] Most articles on particular subjects or repositories are mainly concerned with reporting achievements or outlining needs and opportunities.[5] A more critical approach is just beginning to emerge, years after important statements of the issues by Gould, P. Colman and F. Gerald Ham.[6] The following presentation shares ideas with this new literature but combines them differently to facilitate analysis of an existing collection.

A collection development policy is a statement of principles to guide an institution in deciding what to add to its holdings. Most manuscript repositories have such policies, though with great variation in their form and application. They place these limits on themselves because they want to concentrate their resources on the materials that are most valuable to their natural constituencies or because they believe that complementary specialization on the part of all repositories will produce the best allocation of resources for the benefit of all constituencies. Correspondingly, the principles of selection are likely to be based on the interests of the people and institutions they serve or the perception of need and opportunity in some field of research.

The simplest kind of collecting policy is one that draws a boundary between material that is excluded from a collection and material that may be added to it. Any worthwhile division will automatically exclude large amounts of material, but decisions about what to include can

[3]The IHRC Collection and the IHRC are coordinate units in the University Libraries and the College of Liberal Arts, respectively, of the University of Minnesota. The curator of the collection and the director of the center share responsibility for collection development. This article is concerned with the materials in the collection (principally the manuscripts), the policies that guided their selection by staff members of both units, and the present curator's responsibility for using library resources to advance the teaching, research, and service missions of the university.

[4]Ruth B. Bordin and Robert M. Warner, *The Modern Manuscript Library* (New York: Scarecrow Press, 1966), pp. 14–16, 28–30; Kenneth W. Duckett, *Modern Manuscripts: A Practical Manual for Their Management, Care, and Use* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1975), pp. 61–65.

[5]Eva Moseley, "Women in Archives: Documenting the History of Women in America," *American Archivist* 36 (April 1973): 215–222, and Philip P. Mason, "Wayne State University: The Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs," *Archivaria* 4 (Summer 1977): 137–150, are outstanding examples.

[6]Gould P. Colman, contribution to "The Forum: Communications from Members," *American Archivist* 36 (July 1973): 483–486; F. Gerald Ham, "The Archival Edge," *American Archivist* 38 (January 1975): 5–13; Linda J. Henry, "Collecting Policies of Special-Subject Repositories," *American Archivist* 43 (Winter 1980): 57–63; Fredric M. Miller, "Social History and Archival Practice," *American Archivist* 44 (Spring 1981): 113–124, Jane Wolff, "Faculty Papers and Special-Subject Repositories," *American Archivist* 44 (Fall 1981): 346–352; Andrea Hinding, "Toward Documentation: New Collecting Strategies in the 1980s" (Paper delivered at a meeting of the Association of College and Research Libraries, Minneapolis, 3 October 1981).

only be automatic if the repository is able to collect all available material that falls within the boundaries of the collecting policy. Most often, the material is so abundant or hard to identify that it is impractical to collect it all. A repository can ignore this problem for some time by collecting opportunistically, or it can begin to collect in a more discriminating way. The usual means of discrimination is to form an impression of the value of each collection as it comes to hand. A more rigorous method is to apply predetermined criteria to available manuscripts. One way to develop such criteria is to analyze the historical experience that is to be documented and the universe of records that might be available to document it, taking into account the holdings, policies, and resources of all repositories that are or might be collecting in the same field.

The Immigration History Research Center Collection is one of those repositories that originated in a perception of need. It began with a project on the history of the Minnesota Iron Range that was conducted by several members of the University of Minnesota Department of History in 1962 and 1963. Their work included research on several ethnic groups from eastern and southern Europe. The difficulty they experienced in finding information led the university to begin a program of collecting source materials on all the European ethnic groups that are identified with the great wave of migration from the 1880s to the First World War.[7] Expansion and reformulation of the ethnic range of the collection has led to a current list of twenty-four ethnic groups originating in eastern, central, and southern Europe and the Near East.[8]

The IHRC Collection has had a historic collecting policy of the simpler kind, consisting mainly of a limitation to the twenty-four ethnic groups. There have been no stated and few apparent restrictions on the kinds of material that are admitted except that they must relate to one of these groups, be two-dimensional records rather than three-dimensional objects, and "deal with the causes of emigration . . ., the actual processes of migration, or the experiences of the immigrants and their descendants."[9] Every kind of personal paper, organizational record, and imprint has been considered desirable so long as it meets these criteria. The geographic range has been the entire United States at every level of activity from nation to household. The time span has been from the first wave of immigrants to the indefinite future, ending only when people no longer identify with ethnic groups. The only restriction is that the materials must document self-conscious ethnicity.[10] They cannot merely

[7]Vecoli, "Immigration Studies Collection," 142–143. The project resulted in these essays, completed in 1963: Hyman Berman, "Education for Work and Labor Solidarity: The Immigrant Miners and Radicalism on the Mesabi Range"; Clarke A. Chambers, "Social Welfare Policies and Programs on the Minnesota Iron Range, 1880–1930"; and Timothy L. Smith, "Educational Beginnings, 1884–1910," "Factors Affecting the Social Development of Iron Range Communities," and "School and Community: The Quest of Equal Opportunity, 1910–1921." Copies of the essays are available in the IHRC Collection. In the absence of suitable ethnic manuscript materials, all are notably dependent on ethnic newspapers, government records and reports, local histories, and interviews.

[8]The ethnic groups are Albanian, Armenian, Bulgarian, Byelorussian, Carpatho-Ruthenian, Croatian, Czech, Estonian, Finnish, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Jewish (East European), Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Near Eastern, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovene, and Ukrainian.

[9]"Statement of Policy Relating to the Collecting of Materials for the Immigrant Archives" (Mimeographed, 1974?). Staff members have been dissatisfied with this policy for some time but have not so far worked out a replacement.

[10]The descriptions and assessments of the collection in this article were derived initially from the manuscript card catalog, most of which is reproduced in the *Guide to Manuscript Holdings* (St. Paul: Immigration History Research Center, 1976), and the nine volumes (including four second editions) of the IHRC Ethnic Collections Series, published by the center between 1976 and 1981.

manifest outsiders' attitudes or furnish information about ethnics, among others, in situations without overt ethnic character.[11]

The collection that has resulted from these policies is the most important body of primary source material on American immigration from eastern and southern Europe. There are dozens of important collections of organizational records and personal papers documenting a great variety of significant ethnic activity from the late nineteenth century to the present. No other institution has, or could now hope to acquire, equivalent holdings of the records of national organizations before 1945, and many important chapters in local history are better documented in the IHRC Collection than in the local library or historical society.[12] Much of this material would not be in any repository if it were not at the University of Minnesota, and some would by now have been destroyed. The historians, archivists, librarians, and friends from the community who gathered these resources have reason to be proud of their achievement.

It is also true that the manuscript holdings are rather small in relation to the scope of the historic collecting policy.[13] The average is hardly more than one hundred linear feet per ethnic group, which may not be enough space for the historically valuable records of even one national ethnic organization.[14] The same point is evident in comparison with other institutions: the Social Welfare History Archives at the University of Minnesota is somewhat larger notwithstanding its narrower scope of collecting, and such wide-ranging repositories as the Minnesota Historical Society and the Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University have collections ten times as large.[15]

Another indication that the manuscript holdings are relatively small is their uneven composition. They offer nationally significant documentation for only about one-third of the ethnic groups, and the strengths for those groups are mainly within topical or geographic limits. Some of these limits vary from group to group, manifesting themselves in concentrations of material on such subjects as the Polish press and the Italians of Chicago. Others span several groups, showing up in exceptionally strong sources on such topics as fraternal organizations and Minnesota ethnic groups. There are also important

[11]Warner and Blouin, "Documenting Great Migrations," 320–322; Juliani, "Use of Archives," 476; and Grabowski, "Ethnicity in Perspective," 32–33, stress the value of such materials for ethnic historical studies.

[12]A convenient way to explore the strengths of the collection is to survey the strongest holdings for particular ethnic groups. They are described in four volumes of the IHRC Ethnic Collections Series: Lynn A. Schweitzer, comp., *Italian American Collection: A Brief Description*, 2nd ed. (1977); Frank Renkiewicz, comp., *Polish American Collection: A Brief Description*, 2nd ed. (1977); Michael G. Karni, comp., *Finnish American Collection: A Brief Description*, 2nd ed. (1978); and Halyna Myroniuk and Maria Samilo, comps., *Ukrainian American Collection: A Brief Description*, 2nd ed. (1980).

[13]See Vecoli, "'Diamonds in Your Backyard,'" 6–8, for a complementary description of the holdings of newspapers and other ethnic imprints.

[14]Another way to express the size of the manuscript collection is in terms of its extremes. The largest holdings are in the Polish American and Ukrainian American collections, each of which contains at least sixty collections occupying more than five hundred linear-feet. The smallest holdings are for six ethnic groups, each of which is represented by no more than three collections occupying no more than twenty-one linear-feet or three reels of microfilm, and there are five ethnic groups with no manuscripts at all. The distribution of imprints is in roughly the same proportion, but there are significant print materials for almost all ethnic groups.

[15]*Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: National Historical Publications and Records Commission, 1978), pp. 310, 331, 340.

holdings of the records of welfare agencies that specialized in helping recent immigrants regardless of ethnic origin. Many of these materials were gathered in special collecting programs, based on the specifications of external funding or the interests and affiliations of the staff members concerned. The remaining collections consist largely of small and often unrelated holdings, many of which resulted from unsolicited collecting opportunities.

Most manuscript repositories are deficient in some areas covered by their collecting policies. The IHRC Collection is different from some others in this situation because the gaps are only marginally reducible in the foreseeable future and because this circumstance has not led to any fundamental narrowing or focusing of that policy.[16] My thesis is that the dispersion of the holdings is not merely a sign of work remaining to be done, but also indicates just such a basic policy problem. This article will support this assessment by pointing out the difficulties that result from perpetuating the historic breadth of collecting, and draw on those observations to show the benefits of concentrating future growth in narrower—and deeper—channels.

Because the collection was founded on the idea that an important segment of historical documentation was generally neglected and needed urgently to be saved, the initial stress was on "gathering in" as much as possible in a short period of time. Notwithstanding the continuing deficiency of all existing collections even after twenty years of effort, it is now clear that except for the early years, a great deal more material has survived than is ever likely to be collected. The gaps in the collection are a challenge to the collecting policy not so much because they are large as because so much is available to fill them. To acquire one manuscript collection and commit additional resources to its permanent maintenance is to choose not to acquire something else, but collecting priorities are necessary to reveal the consequences of such a choice. In the absence of such criteria, one can concentrate collecting initiatives on the most obviously important lines of development, but the field is too vast to justify much confidence in such impressionistic choices.

Even if there were no difficulty in identifying the most important collecting initiatives, the IHRC Collection would have a special need for firm standards of appraisal because an unusually large portion of its resources is expended on responding to the initiatives of others. The long-standing close relations between the Immigration History Research Center and many ethnic activists result in a steady stream of offered or readily available material, and the historic policy offers no rationale for declining such opportunities except utter worthlessness or extraordinary size. Establishing preliminary control over the resulting accessions is a considerable burden, and it may grow as continuing appeals for financial support from the ethnic communities increase the size and diversity of this constituency. The result is that regular staff members have little opportunity to implement their own priorities for the development and maintenance of the collection.

The lack of discrimination in the collecting policy is particularly unfortunate when it allows accessions that should be left to other institutions. Serving as the principal repository for the source materials of twenty-four ethnic groups

[16]The center has encouraged other institutions to participate in the collection of ethnic source materials by conducting national surveys of organizational records (see Montalto, "Challenge of Preservation," 400–404), but such outreach activities do not confront the question of how the collection can best use its own resources.

would be a most ambitious undertaking even if it involved only the records of national organizations and their leaders, but it is clearly unattainable (unless by default) if it includes local materials and the papers of ethnic scholars. Ethnic history is overwhelmingly local history, and truly local materials can best be chosen and made accessible at a local level.[17] The papers of scholars should ordinarily be the province of their own universities' archives, partly because this is essential to institutional cooperation and partly because their research value is likely to center more on their institutional roles than on the subjects of their research.[18] The IHRC Collection cannot be the best repository for either class of material, and it should be reluctant to relieve other institutions of the full pressure—or foreclose their full opportunity—to document the ethnic dimensions of their own areas of responsibility while it is so far from having exhausted its national obligations.

A more realistic collecting policy would relate future development of the collection to its present composition and to the holdings and policies of other institutions. It would reflect the current composition of the collection by completing the development of its ethnic, geographic, and topical strengths and proceeding systematically in its areas of weakness. It would respond to the holdings and policies of other institutions by favoring complementary lines of growth and referring prospective donors to more appropriate repositories. Accessions outside these boundaries would require special justification. These principles would not in themselves result in a good collecting policy, but such a policy would necessarily meet these criteria and could only develop with respect for these limits.

The other foundation for a revised collecting policy should be a delineation of the universe of records from which documentation can be drawn.[19] A survey of the IHRC Collection shows that the manuscript part of this universe consists of the records and papers of at least six categories of people and institutions: (1) ethnic organizations, such as presses, benefit societies, social clubs, political associations, and churches; (2) leaders of ethnic organizations and communities; (3) ordinary people who identified themselves as members of ethnic groups and produced papers that document immigrant experience or ethnic activity; (4) historians, social scientists, and creative writers who specialized in ethnic subjects; (5) social welfare agencies that specialized in helping recent immigrants; and (6) leaders of those agencies. A broader definition of format would include such materials as imprints, artifacts, and sound recordings. A broader definition of content would embrace a wide range of materials that have no overt ethnic character but contain information about ethnic group members or show actions and attitudes concerning them.[20] When all these sources fall short, there is the final option of creating documentation by interview and observation.[21]

[17]Grabowski, "Ethnicity in Perspective," 29-36, describes an outstanding local collecting program. Robert F. Harney, "Ethnic Archival and Library Materials in Canada: Problems of Bibliographic Control and Preservation," *Ethnic Forum* 2 (Fall 1982): 3-31, pleads for diverse institutions to document a multiethnic national culture.

[18]Wolff, "Faculty Papers," 346-351.

[19]The author borrowed this concept from Andrea Hinding of the University of Minnesota.

[20]Vecoli "'Diamonds in Your Backyard,'" 6-12, offers a more detailed taxonomy of ethnic documentation but does not apply it critically to collecting strategies or priorities.

[21]An important example is Carla Bianco, *The Two Rosetos* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974). She used anthropology to define the subject and develop the documentation. Raphael, "Genesis of Communal History," 59-62, outlines a similar project based on sociological survey techniques.

A simple application of this scheme is to identify a central ethnic institution and search comprehensively for its records. In the past six years, the IHRC has conducted two major surveys along these lines, focusing on ethnic fraternal organizations and international institutes.[22] There is also evidence of such an understanding in the collection's impressive holdings on such topics as the Polish American press and the Finnish American cooperative movement. These projects were conducted mainly by temporary appointees. What remains is to apply the same strategies and priorities to the collecting activities of the regular staff, even to the exclusion of less valuable or less appropriate materials that may be offered.

A more complex application is to select materials within a composite of topical, geographic, and chronological limits. The obvious example is the documentation of a community. The Iron Range project that provided the impetus for the IHRC Collection was difficult to carry out because no one had collected systematically along these lines. That job is still largely undone notwithstanding almost two decades of effort by several institutions. There are, however, urban archives whose holdings appear to have been based on such an analysis,[23] and the IHRC Collection has achieved an important concentration of materials on the Finnish Americans of Minnesota. Choosing materials is bound to be more difficult for ethnic groups that are larger or more dispersed or have laid less foundation through their own historical activities.

I would further argue that institutions and communities are the principal public means by which ethnic group members relate to one another and that collecting by institution and by community are therefore the principal strategies for systematic documentation of immigration and ethnicity. I have combined them in a model plan for the development of the IHRC Collection's Greek American holdings. That collection now has four major parts: the records of one administrative department of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America; the Greek American library and the immigration-related office files of the historian Theodore Saloutos; the files of a number of newspapers and parish bulletins from the mid-1960s to the present; and microfilm of the convention records, magazine, and recent death benefit claims of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (Order of AHEPA). The first two acquisitions owed much to the initiatives of the custodians of those materials. The periodical holdings resulted from an effort to guarantee preservation of the future product of the ethnic press by subscribing to all appropriate titles, and the AHEPA records were filmed as part of a project supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

My collecting plan is both an extension and a critique of these commitments. My proposal for collecting by institution is based on Rudolph J. Vecoli's precept that the press, the church, and the fraternal organization are the basic ethnic institutions and that this should be reflected in the development of ethnic collections.

The Press In documenting the Greek American press, we should extend our current newspaper holdings by searching for backfiles of these papers and all

[22]Montalto, "Challenge of Preservation," 400–404.

[23]For example, Frank A. Zabrosky, "The Records of Urban Society," *Drexel Library Quarterly* 13 (October 1977): 16–33.

others that began publishing before, say, 1960. If there is no complete file in any responsible institution, we should try to acquire one for ourselves or a local repository and insure that it is extended by subscription. We should likewise acquire or encourage the acquisition of selected editorial and publishing records. Any major serials or more recently established newspapers could be sought in the same way, but with less urgency. We should not solicit minor local publications, such as parish bulletins, except as part of a community-based collecting program. We should continue to accept Greek American books and pamphlets as they are offered independently or as part of manuscript collections and should buy them as opportunities arise.

The Church In documenting the church, we should begin with the judgment that it is neither practical nor appropriate for us to serve as the permanent archives of the archdiocese. This is because of the volume and sensitivity of its records and the likelihood that the archbishop and his staff will always need ready access to the most important materials for guidance in policy-making. We should say instead that we are holding certain record series until the archdiocese establishes its own archives. There is a model for this in the recent transfer of our holdings of the records of the Orthodox Church of America to the church's own archives. We should not collect local church records except in an emergency or as part of a community-based collecting program. We should seek back issues of archdiocesan publications and subscriptions to those that we are not now receiving. We must continue our donated subscriptions to parish bulletins but should not accept any more such subscriptions except as part of a community-based collecting program. We should, however, continue to accept and even solicit such special publications as jubilee books.

The Fraternal Organization In documenting additional fraternal activity, we must begin by rounding out our holdings of the records of AHEPA and renewing contact with its women's auxiliary, the Daughters of Penelope. Then we should look at the other national organizations, most obviously the Greek American Progressive Association but also those limited to immigrants from outlying parts of Greece such as Crete or Macedonia.

Besides the fraternal societies, there are civic, cultural, and educational groups such as the American Hellenic Congress and the American Society for Neo-Hellenic Studies. Their records should have lower priority because most were founded after 1960 and (except the Congress) focus on Greek politics and culture, but we should try to acquire any of their publications that are not suitable for the classical or modern Greek holdings in other parts of the University of Minnesota Libraries.[24]

My plan for collecting by community begins in Minnesota. We have personal contacts in the Greek Orthodox parishes of the Twin Cities and some hope of fruitful competition between them in documenting their respective histories. My conversations with the women who have the greatest interest in these matters have centered on two points: (1) The IHRC Collection is ready to help preserve the records of the local organizations, most obviously AHEPA and the Daughters of Penelope, by gathering them for the collection or microfilming them and returning them to the former

[24]The general collection of the University of Minnesota Libraries supports classical Greek studies. The major resource for modern studies is the Basil Laourdas Modern Greek Collection, developed largely by history professor Theofanis Stavrou.

officers who now hold them. (2) Oral history is highly desirable, but it will be most successful if based on extensive research and will probably require external support.

Later we might appeal for private materials—diaries, letters, photographs —to document the early years of the community. We could also advise the churches on preserving their records and look for leads to other local and regional organizations. Finally, we might be able to develop a documentation project with the right sociologist or anthropologist.

We should not divert our resources to local collecting programs outside Minnesota as long as that major commitment is unfulfilled, but we might try to organize a network of archives to work in tandem on community projects. In the absence of a community-based collecting program in a locality, we should accept important offered materials, but not seek them out or respond initially as though we were an ideal repository.

I have exposed more of the principles of collecting practice than is customary in defending collecting policies, but a still more fundamental foundation would be a more discriminating definition of the historical experience that the collection is meant to document. In ethnic documentation this is partly a matter of chronological distinctions. The Great Migration preceding the First World War has stronger claims than later immigration of the same ethnic groups because its causes and consequences were more central to its period of history. If ethnicity is defined as an element of culture in the second and later generations, I would say, too, that immigration demands more attention than ethnicity for the same groups. This is not only because of the difference in the centrality of the two movements, but also because it is not so easy to identify documentation for ethnicity. The records of recent ethnic activity are less representative of ethnic populations than those of the earlier immigrant associations, and the ethnicity that is an element of contemporary culture is relatively inaccessible to standard document-gathering techniques. I would say in conclusion, however, that no part of ethnic studies—neither immigration nor ethnicity, neither old migration nor new—has an adequate share of the materials already in manuscript repositories throughout the United States, and that is a situation we must do more to correct, even in these lean times.