

## Archives

The Society has considered from time to time the establishment of formal archives. Initially, papers were in the hands of the secretary. From early days, the only documents still in existence are minute books of the Society and of the Council, some programs of meetings, and some lists of members and speakers. The minutes of the Society come to an end in 1912. There is a gap in minutes of the Council from 1907 to 1913 because these were destroyed in a fire. Files of correspondence of successive secretaries beginning with R. G. D. Richardson in 1920 are in the possession of the secretary and await deposit in the archives at Brown University. The writer does not know whether the correspondence files of Secretaries Thomas Scott Fiske and Frank Nelson Cole still exist.

An effort was begun in the Providence office in the 1960s to organize the files of the secretaries but it came to a halt partly as an economy move when there was a slight reduction in staff. In 1975, R. L. Wilder raised with the secretary the question whether the Society has formal archives, as he was seeking a place for his papers and Lucille Whyburn was doing so for the papers of G. T. Whyburn. The University of Texas was a natural place that they had in mind because of association with R. L. Moore.

In December 1976, following exploration and correspondence with many people by H. L. Alder, President Elect of the MAA, a joint AMS-MAA Fact-Finding Committee on Archives was established. It consisted of Alder as chairman, Judith V. Grabiner, Robert B. Greenwood, Everett Pitcher, David P. Roselle, and Wilder. The intent was possibly jointly to select a site for archives of both organizations.

Wilder and then Alder had examined the facilities of the Humanities Research Center (HRC) at the University of Texas, which professed interest and which held the papers of R. L. Moore, President of the Society in 1937–1938.

The desirability of archives separate from and not in complete control of the Society posed problems of access insofar as these are needed at irregular intervals for the conduct of Society business. On the other hand, order could

be introduced into the files, as by indexing and cataloging, and they could be made more readily available to interested parties in a public place.

During 1977 a contract with HRC was formulated and was examined both by principals and attorneys. With some revision the MAA found it satisfactory, the Board of Governors approved it in January 1978, and it was signed and became effective for the MAA soon thereafter.

The Trustees were not satisfied with the proposal to place the archives at HRC and at their meeting of 10–11 December 1977 decided to appoint a committee, consisting of Cathleen Morawetz, F. P. Peterson, and Calvin C. Moore, to explore further. In February 1978 Alex Rosenberg was co-opted. The matter was discussed at length by the Trustees in May of 1978. The committee initially provisionally favored the HRC proposal. It developed that Brown University was quite interested in receiving the Society archives. Detailed examination of draft contracts showed that Brown appeared to offer a more favorable contract both financially and in terms of available services.

The Trustees wished still more information concerning the Brown contract and the matter was deferred to December 1978. At that meeting the committee of Trustees recommended that the Society deposit its archives at Brown and the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees approved. This was not the end of the matter. A question of jurisdiction was raised in the Council of 23 January 1979. It was the position of the Trustees “that the establishment of archives is a matter of care or disposal of property of the society and that the Trustees, acting as usual with the advice of the Executive Committee, have full jurisdiction.” However, the joint Fact Finding Committee had not been discharged. It took the position in a report from Alder that the Society was about to act in a manner contrary to the recommendation of the Fact Finding Committee and that “much more than the care and disposition of property is involved in deciding on a location for the Society’s archives.” Moreover, it proposed to prepare for the Council a statement showing among other things the tentative nature of the Brown proposal and the desirability of having AMS and MAA archives together at HRC. R H Bing also asked that the Council consider the issues. The Council did agree to receive the proposed report of the Fact Finding Committee. The committee suggested a presentation in August 1979. However, the secretary was instructed to schedule it for 20 April 1979 and to invite Alder, the chairman of the committee, to appear at the Council meeting. This produced a second temporizing statement from Alder for the Fact Finding Committee. After extended discussion, the Council of 20 April 1979 voted to wait until August 1979 to hear the report.

The Executive Committee and Board of Trustees of 11–13 May 1979 voted to supply the Fact Finding Committee with all available documents but noted that the Trustees had already taken a position.

At its meeting of 22 August 1979 the Council received a majority report from the Fact Finding Committee, a report from a minority of one, and background information, the total coming to 152 pages. The Council considered the first recommendation of the committee that the AMS “consider postponing the final decision [on its archives] once again, this time to seek, on its own, the evaluation of independent experts, both archivists and historians.” This was replaced by a substitute motion “that the Council requests the Board of Trustees to rescind the action taken in December 1978 [concerning archives] and that any further action be laid over indefinitely until such time as the Council or Board of Trustees chooses to put it on the table.” The Fact Finding Committee concurred with this position and the Council passed the motion.

In view of this action of the Council, the Board of Trustees of 9–11 November 1979 “instruct[ed] the executive director to defer the accomplishment of a contract with Brown University for the establishment there of the Archives of the Society.”

The Society understands that the interests of the HRC changed with a change in personnel and that the Mathematical Association in fact deposited its archives with the library of the University of Texas in Austin rather than with the HRC.

It may be just as well that the Society postponed action on a contract with Brown in that Brown was rebuilding some of its library structures and may not have been quite ready to proceed. In any event, conversations between the Society and Brown were resumed in 1984 and resulted in the signing of a contract in January 1986.

The contract provides several features that the Society values beyond the care for archives. One is advice in the establishment of a Record Management Program for the Society that will assist in separating non-current from current records and in establishing retention schedules and disposition of non-current records, including those of archival value. Another is the storage of a single copy of every item published by the Society for the purpose of future reproduction by the Society.

In order to proceed, grant money is to be sought. The National Historical Publications and Records Commission in late 1987 provided a grant of \$4668 for a records management planning project. A consultant on records management, Victoria A. Davis, undertook early in 1988 to provide the required advice. With this in hand the Society and Brown University are in a position to apply for grant money to establish the archives, effect the initial transfer of material, and process it.