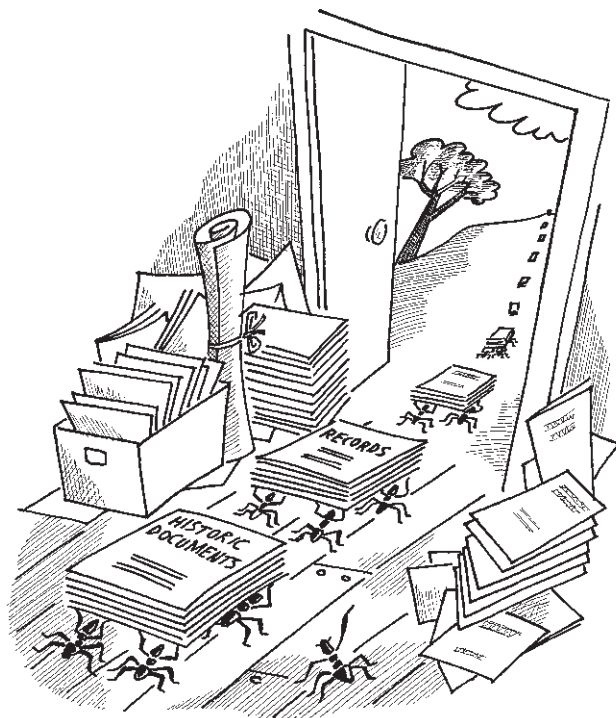




Leprosy Archives



Preserve Them!



INTERNATIONAL
COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES

This Project

The Global Project on the History of Leprosy exists to help ensure that the legacy of the human experience of leprosy survives.

The four project areas are:

- 1 To locate existing historical resources and make a database. This will create a pathway for future researchers to study and discover leprosy's rich history.
- 2 To collect video testimonies of people affected by leprosy. This will add a living history dimension to leprosy.
- 3 To give advice on the good storage of leprosy archives and historical resources.
- 4 To put together information on the legal and social discrimination faced by people affected by leprosy.

The purpose of this booklet is to help fulfil the third task and assist with the first.

For more information please contact:

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URL: <http://www.leprosyhistory.org>

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“History is our guide to the future, for there can be no vision without a sense of history”

Kofi Annan, Secretary-General, United Nations, 1998

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Why bother?

You can help to ensure that leprosy is properly documented by saving the archives in your care and ensuring that they are there for people in the future to learn from.



Leprosy is a disease with a long history connected with many countries. It has influenced kings, shaped communities and formed attitudes. It has brought out both the best and the worst in humankind: personal courage, loving care, and scientific perseverance on one side; cruelty against fellow human beings on the other.

In much of the world it is gradually being conquered, but it leaves behind it a knowledge and an experience which is of great medical, historical and sociological value.

You can help to ensure that it is properly documented by saving the archives in your care and ensuring that they are there for people in the future to learn from. Without them there will be little to document the progress of the disease as the memories of those who have experience of it, either as patients or carers, are lost. **Bear in mind that good record keeping for organisations will also save money.** If you cannot house the material safely or have concerns that it may not survive, consider offering it to another archive or library.

What?

What are archives? Technically they are the original, no longer used, records of an organisation or individual which are kept because of their continuing interest and relevance. Archives come in many forms.

In organisations (e.g. charities, hospitals, government offices etc).

- financial or legal records
- property deeds outlining ownership
- minutes of meetings
- admission/discharge records or clinical treatment records
- key policy files/correspondence
- patient records

Individuals (e.g. those who have had, or have leprosy. Also carers, medical researchers, health care workers, politicians, administrators and those involved in any way). Their archives may include any of the following:

- letters or notes which are important in that they may be about key events in a career, or contacts with significant people in the leprosy field
- papers of importance from committees attended, the groups they have been involved in, the places they have visited or the contacts they have made.
- detailed observation records or medical notes
- photographs of people and places
- recordings, films or videos, especially of personal interviews

Who cares?



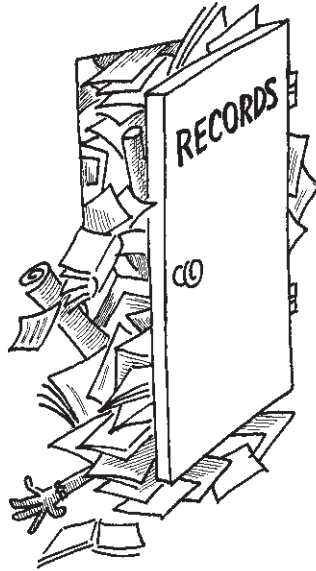
Archives are of importance to different groups of people at different times. These include:

- administrators who use records and historical material for future reference
- historians of leprosy, interested in the medical history and social, economic and other aspects
- biographers who wish to learn more about people or institutions involved in leprosy
- individuals who have been involved with the communities or who may be searching for information about members of their own families
- media researchers, both radio and television who may have an interest in the survival of communities or the disease

Keeping selected archives will

- **save money** for organisations in the future through reducing storage space as well as through using better day to day administration systems
- **ensure the survival** of important material to document the history of leprosy
- **concentrate effort** on essential issues
- **Help with health education and training** by providing sources of background materials

Sort it out!



What can be destroyed?

Everyone has records of one sort or another. Many of these do not need to be kept. You can't keep everything but here are some hints about what you should keep.

It doesn't have to be old to be kept. Consider how useful something may be in 10/20/50 years time.

For organisations

Many organisations accumulate records but don't have a system for their selection or long-term storage. Understandably, they are more interested in the treatment of leprosy today than keeping archives. This makes life much more difficult for anyone wanting to do research later.

Have a system for keeping and for throwing out records. This should involve regular sorting and storage of files by an appointed person. Ideally this should be introduced after consultation with a qualified archivist/records manager. The following guidelines give an idea of the main types

Sort it out!

of records that any organisation should consider preserving permanently. All these can be in either paper or electronic format (if regularly updated) or both.

Always keep the original if at all possible. It is authentic while a copy is not.

- minutes of boards/committees
- departmental and administrative papers
- annual reports/special reports
- financial records/annual audited accounts
- legal agreements/contracts etc.
- building works/plans
- key policy files/correspondence
- management records
- papers relating to important events
- relations with government,WHO/ILA/ILEP members, charitable, religious or other institutions
- press/media contacts including press releases
- publicity material
- newspaper clippings

Sort it out!

For personal papers

What should be kept depends on the person and the importance of their work. Often However, papers of great value to researchers are to be found in unlikely places. The following are general guidelines for the kinds of papers that may be worth preserving.

- letters to/from colleagues/organisations and possibly family (including letters of congratulation/condolence etc)
- records kept as a member of committees/organisations (not necessarily just minutes and agenda but related documents and reports).
- legal records, ownership of property, finances etc.
- records relating to appointments, degrees, honours, awards, career in general
- diaries, especially if not simply appointments/lists
- calculations and data for published papers
- research notebooks, memoranda, research notes, project papers
- lectures, talks, speeches, broadcasts and unpublished papers including draft articles
- drawings, photographs, film, tape recordings
- list of publications/CVs

Sort it out!



What can be destroyed?

It is best to take advice from an archivist or records manager (contact either your national archives or a local archive) before throwing anything away. A few general points however, are given below. Also, remember to make a list of anything you decide to throw away; not only will it help future researchers to know what was there but it will also form the basis for knowing what to throw away in the future.

Most of the following can be thrown away but only after it has been carefully checked

- **duplicate copies** of reports, publications etc (but bear in mind they may be useful to another institution)
- **manuscripts** of published papers (keep only if the text is very different from the published work)
- **multiple drafts** of anything (unless the development of an idea or work is of key importance. Depending on the person/institution it may not be necessary to keep even one copy, although a list of publications is always useful)

Sort it out!

- fully published data (but in some cases samples or significant experiments may be saved)
- page and galley proofs
- routine/daily correspondence and papers e.g. arrangements for travel, cheque stubs, all the paperwork associated with attendance at one meeting
- printed matter circulated for conferences etc.
- appointment diaries (unless the person is very famous and likely to be the subject of a biography)
- agenda papers/miscellaneous committee records and circulars (unless it is the formal record of the event)
- references
- offprints of articles by others (but not if part of a group of related papers e.g. part of a research topic or included amongst correspondence with the author, or if the publication is rare or hard to obtain)

Now what?

Never update, alter or correct a document, even if it appears to be wrong. If necessary attach separate notes, signed and dated, with your views on what is correct.



Here are some guidelines on what you should do with records that you have decided to keep.

Even with limited resources your efforts to keep important records will not be wasted and the information will be available for years to come.

Care and Management

- make a list of everything to be kept
- keep all the material together (it forms a whole) and do not separate, lend, sell or destroy any part of it; separating even damaged material from its original place may destroy evidence
- keep them in the original order - it will be helpful to future researchers. For instance, don't be tempted to put all similar materials together, such as invoices, or letters of condolence, if they are not already arranged like that

Now what?

- **never update**, alter or correct a document, even if it appears to be wrong. If necessary attach separate notes, signed and dated, with your views on what is correct
- **seek advice** on the best way to catalogue the material so that it is easily accessible to the owner and to any researcher in the future. This also provides security as uncatalogued material is at risk from accidental loss or deliberate theft
- **encourage good practice** in creating records as well as keeping them; encourage regular records management to avoid future problems of selection and disposal
- **keep computer disks and tapes**. Also keep any paperwork that goes with them as this may be crucial if the disk or tape becomes technically outdated and no longer readable with current machines
- **identify photographs** with dates and names on the back in pencil whenever possible

Now what?



Practical care

- store all material on shelves in boxes with lids. Some of the greatest threats to archival material come from light, water, insects and dirt. The best boxes are acid free (made from rags not wood pulp) but if you cannot get these, use the strongest locally available. Maps should be stored flat or rolled round in acid free tubes. Acid free folders can be used to wrap individual bundles of paper. Also it may be cheaper and easier to get acid free paper to line boxes and tubes.

Acid free paper and boxes may not be easy to buy or recognise. If your stationer cannot help you, try contacting your national archives for advice. See page 17 for more details.

- use acid free paper (if possible) for important documents such as minutes etc.
- store all material at least 15cm (6 inches) off the floor to protect against flooding

Now what?

Store all material at least 15cm (6inches) off the floor to protect against flooding.



- **store archival material in secure, stable, cool, dry and clean conditions.** If the temperature can be kept the same, records last a lot longer (especially photographs and films) than if it changes with the time of day and the seasons. Monitor the conditions if possible with a thermometer and hygrometer. The ideal conditions for most types of material are no more than 18° C and no more than 60% relative humidity.
- **when creating records of importance use a fountain pen.** avoid the use of biros, felt tip pens or magic markers, all of which fade.
- **only use pencil when writing on existing documents**
- **don't repair materials with sellotape, scotch tape or other sticky tape**
- **don't store records in plastic files,** or use any materials which degrade or rust such as staples, lever arch files or metal film containers
- **make sure that photocopiers are well serviced** for copying records (such as newspaper cuttings and other delicate records)
- **handle the material with care,** do not let readers use uncatalogued material and supervise them while they are using original material.

The basics



DO

- ✓ Put records in boxes with lids
- ✓ Adopt a system for regularly keeping and getting rid of stuff
- ✓ Keep the temperature as stable as possible
- ✓ Keep originals not just copies
- ✓ Keep stuff together
- ✓ Keep a list of what you keep and what you get rid of
- ✓ Use acid free paper if you can for making minutes Tell us (ILA/ICA) about your collection so that we can let others know about it!

The basics



DON'T

- ✗ Alter records
- ✗ Write on existing records in pen
- ✗ Rearrange files
- ✗ Just keep piles of paper on shelves
- ✗ Throw it all away if you haven't enough space – find somewhere else to keep your archives
- ✗ Use biros, marker pens, etc. if you can help it for making important records – fountain/ink pens are best

For your eyes only!

There is frequently correspondence or documentation such as case notes, which is of a sensitive nature. This may be due to:

- **comments** on colleagues, relations or friends,
- **individual sensitivity** such as medical information/ relationships with others/compromising information
- **semi-official business** of outside organisations
- **relations with government** or other organisations which may contain confidential information

The first reaction may be to destroy this but it is better to discuss the problem with an archivist or records manager who will be used to dealing with this kind of material.

Bear in mind that with the passage of time even very confidential matters become less sensitive. It is preferable to plan restricted access or closure periods if necessary than to destroy evidence forever. Many public organisations operate a closure period of 25-30 years before information which has not already been in the public domain, can be seen by researchers. Information about the health of individuals may well be kept closed for a longer period. If material is to be deposited elsewhere it should be discussed with the archivist who will have responsibility for administering the access rules.

Who will give advice?

Advice should be sought as early as possible from a professional organisation or a local archival institution. Addresses can be sought from national, local and regional archives or libraries. Contract archivists can sometimes be employed for a short time for particular situations.

The international organisations listed below can also be contacted for help.

International Council on Archives (ICA);

60 rue Francs-Bourgeois, 75003 Paris, France

(e-mail; ica@ica.org) for information on regional and local archives as well as archival advice

International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA);

IFLA-PAC, Bibliotheque Nationale de France, 2, rue Vivienne, 75084 Paris cedex 02, France for information on regional and local libraries as well as archival and library advice

International Records Management Trust;

12 John Street, London WC1N 2EB,

United Kingdom

(e-mail; irmt@sas.ac.uk)

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URL: <http://www.leprosyhistory.org>

Acid free paper suppliers

To find acid free paper try contacting your local, good stationer. If they cannot help contact your national archives or library for advice.

Listed below are three international suppliers.

PEL
Shelfanger, Diss
Norfolk
IP 22 2DG
UK
Tel: +44 (0)1479 651527
Fax: +44 (0) 1379 650582
Email:

Atlantis France
26 rue des Petits-Champs
7500 Paris
France

Hollinger Corporation
P.O. Box 8360
Fredricksburg
VA 22404
USA

This booklet has been printed on acid free paper

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Notes