Association for Social Anthropology in Eastern Oceania.

OUR EXISTENCE!

In March, 1967, a symposium of social anthropologists with recent field experience in Eastern Oceania was held at the University of California, Santa Cruz. The symposium was focused on systems of adoption and fosterage in Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia; but we discussed as well wider questions of social anthropology in the Pacific. The symposium was organized by Dr. Vern Carroll of the University of Washington, and represented the first phase of his long-range plan for recurring conferences on social anthropological questions of comparative importance in the Pacific. Dr. Carroll is editing a volume of papers presented at the symposium.

One major conclusion reached at the symposium was that the intensification of modern social anthropology research in the Pacific has not so far been sufficiently systematic: we have gone out as individuals or in small team projects, largely out of touch with our colleagues, and have pursued diverse research interests and published the results in scattered bits and pieces. Organized comparative studies like those on politics and kinship that brought African social anthropology into focus have so far been lacking.

What, then, to do about it? We decided to form this association, as a means of organizing research, disseminating information, and arranging recurring symposia on topics in Oceanic social anthropology.

OUR SCOPE

Our primary scope includes, in area, insular Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia; and in subject, social anthropology. Our relegation of New Guinea to the periphery is not aimed at excluding our colleagues working in this area or at denying the many ethnographic and theoretical concerns we share. Rather, it reflects our recognition of the different strategies entailed in New Guinea research, and of the great advances achieved in recent years toward the sort of organization and systematic comparison we hope ourselves to attain. Similarly, our relegation to the periphery of Oceanic linguistics, archaeology, and physical anthropology reflects our concern to bring into sharp focus sociological problems in Oceania. Our first symposium made it clear that questions of genetic relationship and historical connection invariably impinge on questions of sociological comparison in Austronesian-speaking Oceania. We look forward to continuing communication with our anthropological colleagues on these questions.

OUR ORGANIZATION

Dr. Roger Keesing of the University of California, Santa Cruz, was selected as Secretary of the Association. Drs. Vern Carroll
Ward Goodenough and Harold Scheffler will join Dr. Keesing as an Executive Board. Correspondence concerning the Association should be directed to Roger Keesing; correspondence concerning our first symposium and volume should be directed to Vern Carroll.

Provisionally, we have decided to have two categories of membership: Members and Associate Members. The former will include all participants in one of the Association's symposia — so that their ranks will probably grow with each symposium. Associate Members will (according to present plans) include other professional anthropologists. Finally, our newsletters and other publications will be available to all interested parties. A modest fee will be charged for membership (perhaps an annual fee of $5.00 for Members, $2.00 for Associate Members and subscribers), to cover costs of duplication, mailing, etc. For the moment, expenses will be borne by the Center for South Pacific Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz.

Contributors to the first symposium on adoption (and consequently Members) are:

Vern Carroll University of Washington
John Fischer Tulane University
Ruth Goodenough Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Ward Goodenough University of Pennsylvania
Antony Hooper University of Auckland
Alan Howard Bishop Museum
Paul Kay University of California, Berkeley
Roger Keesing University of California, Santa Cruz
Bernd Lambert Cornell University
Michael Lieber University of Oregon
Robert Levy University of Hawaii
Henry Lundsgaarde University of California, Santa Barbara
Paul Ottino Bishop Museum
Harold Scheffler Yale University
David Schneider University of Chicago
Martin Silverman Princeton University
locations, dates, and present addresses if possible.

(c) Suggest to scholars planning such research that they send me a short summary of what they propose to study, where, and when.

D. AN ANTHROPOLOGICALLY IDEAL DATA RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

Anthropologists typically struggle with data retrieval problems of at least two sorts in connection with their field work: first, sifting through field notes for scattered bits and pieces recorded over a long time span; and second, hunting through documentary records.

I have found an electronic data retrieval system ideal for these purposes, and am trying to get one at Santa Cruz. Since the potential uses of this equipment are so widespread in a university setting, some of you might cajole your university into getting one (for $25,000 to $30,000).

This is the Kodak Miracode system. It places documents on 16mm. microfilm, with an electronic indexing system compatible with almost any code you could devise for your materials. About 2,000 documents (e.g., pages of your field notes) fit on a single microfilm reel. You sit at a viewing console, with keyboards beside you. You specify the desired search criteria (normally up to six at one time). The gadget searches the 2,000 documents on the reel in less than ten seconds, counts the number of documents that satisfy your criteria, displays them for you on the console viewer, and prints out full-size copies of any documents you require.

If you have spent as much time hunting through your field notes as I, the advantages will be obvious. You could pull out from your notes all observations dealing with both individuals X and Y, or all observations on such-and-such kind of gardening ritual, or all observations on X preforming that ritual in village A in August, 1964 while Y was not present (and still have one search question left over.

Another major use would be in data sharing between institutions equipped with this system. The institutions could share the tasks of coding or reproduce what documents they have, and then distribute copies of the microfilms. The Hawaiian Ethnography project, for instance, would be ideally suited to such a system.

I have considerable information of this system and could supply some data, but any major Kodak agency should be able to do better (P.S. — I own no Kodak stock). (R.K.)
A. NOTES ON THE ADOPTION VOLUME

Authors of papers for the Adoption volume should keep an accounting of any personal expenses incurred in the preparation of their manuscript. Reimbursement may be possible, if the grant awarded by Wenner-Gren is not required for subvention of the publication. (V.C.)

It is the editor's understanding that agreement was reached at our meeting that any royalties from the volume should go to support of the Association and its activities. Any dissenting voices should make themselves heard at this stage. (V.C.)

Transcription of the tapes from the conference is proceeding slowly — because parts are quite hard to decipher, and because nobody here speaks Gilbertese. As soon as they are finished, they will be distributed to participants. (R.K.)

B. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Responses of Members to my questionnaire about a next symposium topic have been extremely helpful (though naturally everyone elected a different topic). We will try to reach a decision of a topic in the near future. (R.K.)

C. INFORMATION URGENTLY REQUIRED

One major function of the Association will be to disseminate information on who is doing, or planning to do, field research in Eastern Oceania. Eventually we hope to distribute lists, perhaps twice a year, of scholars in the field or planning to go to the field. The need for such information will be clear to many of you from personal experience. In my own experience, I had almost left for the field when I discovered that Daniel de Coppet was planning to work in the same place on the same island at the same time. He had not known of my plans, and the island had not been studies by an anthropologist for thirty years.

To help avoid such problems, you can usefully:

(a) Send me a list of social anthropologists you know to be working in your (or any) area of Eastern Oceania, with locations.

(b) Advise me of any scholars (including graduate students planning to work in Eastern Oceania, with approximate