



Suggestions for Compiling a Community History

The ASA Committee on Archives and Historical Materials encourages all chapters, sections, interest groups, and committees to write or update their organizational history. The Iowa State University Parks Library, which maintains the ASA permanent collections, is enthused about this new emphasis.

Communities are encouraged to post or update their histories to their ASA Community web site. Please alert the [Director of Awards, Committees, and Elections](#) when this occurs so we can highlight new histories in Amstat News.

Developing a good, comprehensive history can be a worthwhile project for ASA communities. The history will likely be of great interest to new and prospective community members. It should be a renewed source of pride for those individuals who contributed to major accomplishments and could be a good topic for a session at the Joint Statistical Meetings.

The process for compiling or updating a history can itself be worthwhile and may be a way to involve some individuals who are not currently active with other community business. Fact finding might bring newer members in touch with former members. An oral history approach might be needed to gather information from past community members to fill in details. Requesting [past community rosters](#) may help develop leads to follow.

The suggestions listed below are appropriate for fact finding and preparation of a narrative written history. It may be particularly advantageous to develop an annotated history. That is, can complete lists of past community members be compiled? The annotated listings might lead to additional contacts for improving the history writeup.

In addition to answering the questions in this document (and adding additional questions and answers that spin off from these), it may be helpful to develop a series of snapshots. That is, what was the community like in the 70's, the 80's, etc.? Instead of decades, there may be some other logical breaks based on activities over time.

RESOURCES:

Are there earlier community histories?

Are there good chronological files available?

Who are the past active individuals who have an interest in documenting history?

ORIGINS:

When was the community started?

Who were the key organizers?

What events led to the founding?

Was assistance received from other ASA communities?

Were there some previous efforts to start the community? What was the original charge?

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES:

How has the community changed over time?

When were new activities or responsibilities added?

What activities have been discontinued and when?

When were new community charges written?

IMPORTANT INDIVIDUALS:

Which individuals have been particularly significant in continuing/expanding the community?

Have community members received recognition such as serving as ASA officers?

SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES:

What programs brought significant notoriety to the community?

What activities have been the most successful?

What services have the community provided to the statistical community?

What joint activities have there been with other ASA sections, chapters, interest groups or committees?

Has the community helped to start any other committees, sections, chapters, or interest groups?