



# Smithsonian

*National Museum of Natural History*

## Guide to the Melford E. Spiro papers, 1943-2003

Katie Duvall

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National Anthropological Archives  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Anthropological Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Melford E. Spiro papers
<b>Date:</b>	1943-2003, undated
<b>Identifier:</b>	NAA.2015-04
<b>Creator:</b>	Spiro, Melford E., 1920-2014 (Creator)
<b>Extent:</b>	9.6 Linear feet ((24 boxes)) 12 Sound recordings
<b>Language:</b>	Collection is primarily in English. Contains materials written in Hebrew and Arabic.
<b>Summary:</b>	Melford E. Spiro was a psychological anthropologist whose career included fieldwork on the Pacific Atoll of Ifaluk, on kibbutzim in Israel, and in Burma. His research topics included child rearing, cooperation, aggression, and supernatural beliefs. His papers, dated 1943-2003, primarily document these periods of fieldwork in relation to these topics. The collection consists of field notes, personality data and analysis, photographs, interview tapes and transcriptions, ephemera, subject card files, and research files. It also includes limited material related to his teaching and writings in the form of course outlines and research, lecture notes, annotated articles, drafts, and book reviews.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

These papers were donated to the National Anthropological Archives by Melford Spiro's son, Jonathan Spiro, in 2015.

### Related Materials

Film and sound reels have been transferred to the Smithsonian's Human Studies Film Archive, HSFA.2016.09.

### Processing Information

Original file titles were retained when possible. When handwriting was indecipherable, titles are followed by a question mark and a copy of the original folder was placed with the material.

Processed and encoded by Katie Duvall, 2016.

### Preferred Citation

Melford E. Spiro papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

### Restrictions

The Melford E. Spiro papers are open for research.

Access to the Melford E. Spiro papers requires an appointment.

## Restrictions

Use of archival audiovisual recordings with no duplicate access copy requires advance notice.

## Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

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## Biographical Note

### Chronology

1920 April 26	Melford Spiro born in Ohio
circa 1942	BA Philosophy, University of Minnesota
circa 1942	Studied at Jewish Theological Seminary in New York
1947-1948	Field work in Ifaluk (Caroline Islands atoll)
1950	PhD in Anthropology, Northwestern University
1950	Start of field work in Israel
1950-1957	Taught at Washington University, St. Louis, the University of Connecticut, and the University of Washington
1957	Began teaching at the University of Chicago
1961-1962	Field work in Burma
1968	Started at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) as a founding member of the Anthropology department
1968-1972	Chair of the Anthropology department at UCSD
1969-1972	Summers: Worked with Burmese refugees in Thailand
1975	Elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
1982	Appointed UCSD's first holder of the Presidential Chair
1982	Elected to the National Academy of Sciences
1990	Retired from UCSD
2014 October 18	Died in La Jolla, CA

Melford E. Spiro was a psychological anthropologist whose career included fieldwork on the Pacific Atoll of Ifaluk, on kibbutzim in Israel, and in Burma. His research topics included child rearing, cooperation, aggression, and supernatural beliefs. He was renowned for his "careful, insightful, and insistent emphasis upon motivational and psychological underpinnings of human behavior...and upon the need to take them into account in cross-cultural analysis." (Jordan)

While a PhD student at Northwestern University, Spiro was introduced to psychological anthropology by A. Irving Hallowell, who became a lifelong mentor and friend. After receiving his PhD in 1950, he went on to teach at Washington University in St. Louis, and the Universities of Connecticut, Washington, and Chicago before becoming the founding chair of the anthropology department at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) in 1968. He recruited the department's first faculty members in 1969 including Roy D'Andrade, Marc J. Swartz, Theodore Schwartz, Robert I. Levy, David K. Jordan, and Joyce Bennett Justus. Spiro also received training in psychoanalysis after arriving in San Diego and practiced as a lay analyst while establishing links to the medical school to provide anthropology graduate students with general psychiatric training.

Spiro served terms as president of the American Ethnological Society and the Society for Psychological Anthropology (SPA). He was one of the founders of *Ethos*, the SPA's journal. He was a member of the

National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and was the recipient of two Guggenheim fellowships and an Einstein Fellowship from the Israel Academy of Science. He also received an Excellence-in-Teaching award from the Chancellor's Associates at UCSD based on his mentoring of anthropology graduate students.

Sources consulted: Jordan, David K. "In Memoriam, Melford E. Spiro." *Anthropology News* 56, no. 11-12 (December 2015): 26-27.

Avruch, Kevin. "Biographical Memoirs, Melford E. Spiro." National Academy of Sciences. 2015. Accessed April 4, 2016. <http://www.nasonline.org/publications/biographical-memoirs/memoir-pdfs/spiro-melford.pdf>.

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## Scope and Contents

The Melford E. Spiro papers, 1943-2003, primarily document his periods of field work on the Ifaluk Atoll, on kibbutzim in Israel, and in Burma. The collection consists of field notes, personality data and analysis, photographs, interview tapes and transcriptions, ephemera, subject card files, and research files. It also includes limited material related to his teaching and writings in the form of course outlines and research, lecture notes, annotated articles, drafts, and book reviews.

The collection includes a great deal of the data Spiro collected at all three field sites, including Rorschach and Thematic Apperception tests (TAT) and the subsequent analysis, sentence completions, drawings by children, and autobiographies of informants. The majority of the interview transcriptions and questionnaires in the collection are from Israel and are written in Hebrew. Translations in English do not exist within this collection. The photographs include black-and-white snapshots of people and landscapes on Ifaluk and color slides taken in Burma and other locations in Southeast Asia.

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## Arrangement

This collection is arranged in 4 series: Series 1. Ifaluk, 1947-1988, undated; Series 2. Israel, 1951-1981, undated; Series 3. Burma, 1943-1978, undated; Series 4. Teaching and writing, 1953-2003, undated.

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## Selected Bibliography

1952. *Ghosts, Ifaluk, and teleological functionalism*. [Indianapolis]: [Bobbs-Merrill].

1956. *Kibbutz: venture in Utopia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

1965. *Children of the kibbutz*. New York: Schocken Books.

1967. *Burmese supernaturalism; a study in the explanation and reduction of suffering*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

1970. *Buddhism and society; a great tradition and its Burmese vicissitudes*. New York: Harper & Row.

1977. *Kinship and marriage in Burma: a cultural and psychodynamic analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

1979. *Gender and culture: kibbutz women revisited*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

1997. *Gender ideology and psychological reality: an essay on cultural reproduction*. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press.

## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

### Subjects:

- Anthropologists -- United States
- Ethnology
- Ethnopsychology
- Kibbutzim

### Types of Materials:

- Field notes
- Photographic prints
- Psychological tests
- Slides (photographs)

### Names:

- University of California, San Diego. Department of Anthropology

### Places:

- Burma
- Ifalik Atoll (Micronesia)
- Israel

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Ifaluk, 1947-1988, undated

#### 1.92 Linear feet

Arrangement: Arranged in alphabetical order with photographs listed at the end.

Scope and Contents: Series 1 documents Spiro's field work on the Ifaluk Atoll (currently part of the Federated States of Micronesia) as part of his dissertation research. The materials date from 1947-1988, with the bulk from his period of field work from 1947-1948. Materials include notes, interviews, personality data and analysis, a report, a manuscript draft, and photographs.

The materials primarily consist of personality and intelligence tests (Rorschach, Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT), etc.), observations, interviews, and drawings by children, and black-and-white snapshots of the people and landscapes of Ifaluk. Many of the subject files, covering topics such as life cycle, daily life, and sex, appear to be field notes that Spiro deconstructed and categorized.

Box 1	Children's drawings and conception theories, circa 1947
Box 1	Children, observations, 1947
Box 1	Children: Punishment and schedules and interviews on sex, circa 1947
Box 1	CIMA report (Coordinated Investigation of Micronesian Anthropology), 1947-1949
Box 1	Daily life, 1947
Box 1	Infants, 1947
Box 1	Life cycle, circa 1947 3 Folders
Box 1	Life cycle and sex (all used), 1947
Box 1	Manuscript, circa 1947 3 Folders
Box 1	Personality, 1947 2 Folders
Box 2	Personality analysis, Milton, 1947-1948
Box 2	Projectives, undated
Box 2	Projectives, female, Rorschach, 1947

Box 2	Projectives, male, 1947-1957 3 Folders
Box 2	Quotations, circa 1947
Box 2	Religion (religion and medicine and myth carbon), 1947
Box 2-3	Rorschach, 1947 3 Folders
Box 3	Rorschach, 1947
Box 3	SERT-BMIT, 1947
Box 3	SERT-BMIT, adults and children, 1947
Box 3	Tarove and Aneitin, 1947
Box 3	TAT, 1947 2 Folders
Box 3	Theory, 1947
Box 3	Used notes, 1947 3 Folders
Box 3	Women, 1947
	Photographs:
Box 4	Black and white prints, circa 1947-circa 1948
Box 5	Black and white prints, circa 1947-circa 1948 Notes: These prints were removed from an album for preservation purposes. The album did not contain any annotations.
Box 5	Negatives, circa 1947-circa 1948
Box 21	Slides, 1948
Box 3	Color prints from Tim O'Meara, 1988

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## Series 2: Israel, 1951-1981, undated

## 3.72 Linear feet

Arrangement: Arranged in alphabetical order.

Scope and Contents: Series 2 documents Spiro's field work with Israeli kibbutzim beginning in 1950 and continuing throughout his career. The materials date from 1951-1981 and include field notes, personality data and analysis, interviews, transcriptions and questionnaires, ephemera, and a subject card file.

The personality data includes drawings by children, Rorschach tests, and sentence completions. Some of the notations on the materials are in Hebrew and Arabic. The interview transcriptions and questionnaires are written in Hebrew. Translations in English do not exist within this collection. The series also contains 12 cassette tapes that were labeled as interview tapes, but it is not clear if they correlate to any of the transcriptions.

Box 6	Arab children, undated 4 Folders
Box 6	Arab children, 258, undated
Box 6	Children's drawings, undated
Box 6	Children's drawings: Bet alfa [?], undated
Box 6	Children's essays (learning theory), 1952 2 Folders
Box 7	Field notes, 1951 9 Folders
Box 14, Item 01-12	Interview tapes, 1971-1981, undated 12 Sound cassettes
	Interview transcriptions:
Box 7-8	Bait-Hashitta, undated 5 Folders
Box 8	Eim-Shemer, undated 5 Folders
Box 9	Geva, undated 4 Folders
Box 9	Ma'gan-Michael, undated 4 Folders
Box 10	Ma'yah-Zvi, undated

## 3 Folders

Box 10	Three kibbutz interviews, Hagi, 1976 2 Folders
Box 10	Three kibbutz interviews (Hagi): First copy of interview and questionnaire of Kibbutz Ma'ayan-Zvi and Kibbutz Geva (Ha'ihud), undated 3 Folders
Box 11	First copy of interview and questionnaire of Kibutz Ma'agan Micael and Berit Hashita (Hakibutz Hamenhad), undated 4 Folders
Box 11	First copy of interview and questionnaire of Kibutz Ramat Hashofett and Kibutz Ein-Shemer (Hakibutz Ha'arzi), undated 4 Folders
Box 11	Unlabeled, undated
Box 12	Unlabeled interviews [?], undated 3 Folders
Box 12	Unlabeled interviews [?], undated 4 Folders
Box 12	Leslie's serv BMIT, sentence completions Devorah Menshel [?], undated
Box 12	Questionnaires and tests, Kibbutz research with Hagi, Hagi research, undated
Box 12	The Reconstructionist, 1958
Box 12	Rorschach, undated
Box 13	Subject card file, 1976, undated 10 Folders

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## Series 3: Burma, 1943-1978, undated

### 2.71 Linear feet

**Arrangement:** This series is arranged in 3 subseries: 3.1 Field notes, 1961-1962; 3.2 Research and collected data, 1943-1978, undated; 3.3 Photographs, 1959-1962.

**Scope and Contents:** Series 3 documents Spiro's field work in Burma and subsequent research. The materials date from 1943-1978 and include his period of field work in Burma from 1961-1962 and his work with Burmese refugees in Thailand from 1969-1972. Materials include field notes, collected data, research files, and photographs.

The field notes cover his period of study from 1961-1962 and some have been deconstructed and organized by subject. Collected data includes autobiographies, drawings, sentence completions, TAT (Thematic Apperception Tests), and BMIT-SERT protocols, schedules, and tables. The photographs consist of color slides taken in Burma and other locations in Southeast Asia.

### 3.1: Field notes, 1961-1962

Box 15	Field notes, 1961
Box 15	General notes to be filed, 1961-1962 2 Folders
Box 15	Village politics, miscellaneous, 1961-1962
Box 15	Field notes, 1961 July-August
Box 15	Field notes, 1961 July-September
Box 15	Field notes, 1961 August-1962 January
Box 15	Field notes, 1961 September-October
Box 16	Field notes, 1961 September-1962 February 4 Folders
Box 16	Factionalism, used notes, 1961 October-November
Box 16	Field notes, 1961 October-November
Box 16	Field notes, 1961 October-December
Box 16	Field notes, 1961 November
Box 16	Field notes, 1962 January
Box 17	Field notes, 1962 February-March 2 Folders
Box 17	Field notes and citations organized by category, 1961

3 Folders

Box 17                      Field notes and citations organized by category, 1961-1962  
4 Folders

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### 3.2: Research and collected data, 1943-1978, undated

Box 18                      Autobiographies, original translations from Burmese, undated

Box 18                      BMIT, classification of responses, undated

Box 18                      BMIT-SERT city: Original protocols [?] and classification of responses, 1961

Box 18                      BMIT-SERT children, 1961-1962

Box 18                      BMIT-SERT: Schedule and original printouts, 1961

Box 18                      BMIT and SERT frequency tables, 1961-1962

Box 18                      SERT new dataset [?] summaries ala Kibbutz outline, undated

Box 18                      Child drawing, 1964

Box 18                      Children autobiography, undated

Box 18                      Children's schedule, undated

Box 18                      Children's schedule, 1962

Clippings:

Box 18                      Aggression, 1961

Box 18                      Astrology and palmistry, 1962

Box 18                      Buddhism and [?], 1960-1969

Box 18                      Sangha and politics, 1961-1964

Box 18                      Drawings, 1970-1971  
2 Folders

Box 19                      Draw-a-person (boys), 1970

Box 19                      Draw-a-person (girls), circa 1970

Box 19                      Friendship schedule, 1961-1962

Box 19	Parents and self drawings (boys), undated
Box 19	Parents and self drawings (girls), undated
Box 19	Parent interview schedule, 1972
Box 19	Projective Rorschach, 1962
Box 19	Projective TAT, 1962
Box 19	Projections TAT, Burmese, 1962
Box 19	Religion, 1961-1972
Box 19	Rorschach, 1962
Box 19	Rorschach analysis, James Steele, 1964
Box 19	Rorschach and TAT analysis, 1978, undated
Box 20	Sentence completions, undated
Box 20	Sentence completion: Summary charts from Burmese children, undated
Box 20	Sentence completion, undated 2 Folders
Box 20	Socialization (articles), 1943-1955 2 Folders
Box 20	Steele, 1960
Box 20	Steele's TAT, 1970
Box 20	Supernaturally-caused illness in traditional Burmese medicine, undated

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### 3.3: Photographs, 1959-1962

Box 21	Burma (slides), 1961
	Slide box I (home used): Notes:           Trays II, V, VI did not contain any slides.
Box 21	Tray I: Yugyi [?], 1961-1962
Box 21	Tray III: Yugyi, 1961-1962

Box 21 Tray IV: People (Burmese friends, Mandalay), 1961-1962

Slide box II:

Box 21 Tray I: Taungbyon, 1961-1962

Box 21 Tray II: Taungbyon, 1961-1962

Box 21 Tray III: South shore states [?], 1961-1962

Box 21 Tray IV: North shore states [?], 1961-1962

Box 21 Tray V: Hong Kong, Mandalay, 1961-1962

Slide box III (Burma and Southeast Asia):

Box 21 Tray I: Thailand, 1959 November

Box 21 Tray II: Pagan, 1962 January

Box 21 Tray III: Pagan, 1962

Box 21 Tray IV: Manan [?], dance, sacrifice, 1961 November

Box 21 Tray V: Manan, 1961

Box 21 Tray VI: Valley of Kathmandu, 1962 June-August

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## Series 4: Teaching and writing, circa 1946-2003, undated

### 1.25 Linear feet

Arrangement: This series is arranged in 2 subseries: 4.1 Teaching materials and research, 1962-2003, undated; 4.2 Writings, 1953-2003, undated.

Scope and Contents: Series 4 comprises materials related to teaching, lectures, and writings from 1953-2003. It includes course outlines and research, lecture notes, annotated articles, drafts, and book reviews.

The teaching and research materials include files related to classes and seminars Spiro taught on theory, methodology, and various other topics in anthropology. Included in this subseries is a file related to a brief period of field work with his mentor A.I. Hallowell on the Lac du Flambeau Chippewa (Ojibwa) reservation in Wisconsin prior to 1947. The writings include a limited number of published and annotated articles and drafts covering all three of his major field work expeditions.

### 4.1: Teaching materials and research, circa 1946-2003, undated

Box 22	Buddhism, course, 1977
Box 22	Childhood and society, addendum to childhood course, 1962
Box 22	Bibliography for Family, Child, Society (Anthro 114), 1972
Box 22	Child and Society continued, circa 1974
Box 22	Child and Society, overlap notes, circa 1974
Box 22	C and P (Culture and Personality seminar), undated
Box 22	Flambeau/ Ojibwa research with Hallowell and Bourginon, circa 1946
Box 22	Freud, 1987-1988 2 Folders
Box 23	231, Freud on sex, gender, society, culture, OC, 2003 2 Folders
Box 23	Functionalism, theory and methodology, undated
Box 23	Methods seminar, 1970-1972
Box 23	Talk on family, undated

### 4.2: Writings, 1953-2003, undated

Box 23	"A Typology of Functional Analysis," 1953
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Box 23	Family (Childhood and Society emphasis on family), undated
Box 23	In Childhood and Society, miscellaneous notes, undated
Box 24	Clinton paper, 2003
Box 24	Emotions, reprints (annotated) and paper by Spiro, 1952-1997
Box 24	"Factionalism and Politics in Village Burma,", 1966
Box 24	"Ghosts, Ifaluk and Teleological Functionalism,", 1952
Box 24	History of gender ideology MS, 1992-1995
Box 24	"The Oedipus Complex in Burma,", 1973
Box 24	"On symbols in anthropology" reprint with annotations, 1982
Box 24	Preface to Forsyth [?], 2001
Box 24	"Religion and the Irrational,", 1964
Box 24	Reviews: Burmese Supernaturalism and Buddhism and Society, 1969
Box 24	Reviews: Culture and Human Nature, 1989-1990
Box 24	Reviews: Gender and Culture, 1979-1982
Box 24	"Witchcraft and Paranoia: An Essay on Culture and Cognition" draft, undated 2 Folders

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