Guide to the Joan M. Gero records of the "Women and Production in Prehistory" Conference

Diana E. Marsh
Collection Overview

Repository: National Anthropological Archives
Title: Joan M. Gero records of the "Women and Production in Prehistory" Conference
Identifier: NAA.2016-05
Date: 1987-2001
Creator: Gero, Joan M.
Conkey, Margaret Wright, 1944-
Extent: 0.42 Linear feet (2 boxes)
50 Negatives (photographic) (1 folder)
26 Photographic prints (1 folder)
14 Cassette tapes (1 box)
Language: English.
Summary: The Joan M. Gero papers of the "Women and Production in Prehistory" Conference primarily document the work of Joan M. Gero (archaeologist known for her work in feminist, socio-political, and Andean archaeology) and co-organizer, Margaret W. Conkey, to organize the "Women and Production in Prehistory" Conference that took place April 5-9, 1988 at The Wedge Plantation in South Carolina (sometimes referred to as the "Wedge Conference"). The collection comprises Joan Gero's documentation pertaining to the conference, as well as it's promotion and publication in the seminal volume Engendering Archaeology: Women and prehistory. The collection consists of grant proposals and reports, program and participant information, photographs of the conference, audiotape recordings of papers presented, conference publicity and press clippings, correspondence between Gero and co-organizer Margaret W. Conkey, correspondence with Blackwell Publishers about the publication and royalties, and reviews of Engendering Archaeology: Women and prehistory.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
These papers were donated to the National Anthropological Archives by Joan M. Gero in December 2015.

Processing Information
The collection was donated by Joan M. Gero in 2015. Gero described and organized her collection before it was transferred to the National Anthropological Archives. For the most part, her original organization has been maintained, although a number of folders were split or renamed for research clarity or preservation purposes. The collection was processed (October 2019) and encoded (January 2020) by Diana E. Marsh.
Preferred Citation

Joan M. Gero records of the "Women and Production in Prehistory" Conference, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

The Joan M. Gero records of the "Women and Production in Prehistory" Conference are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Biographical Note

Joan Margaret Gero (1944-2016) was an American archaeologist and co-organizer, with Margaret W. Conkey, of the "Women and Production in Prehistory" Conference that took place April 5-9, 1988 at The Wedge Plantation in South Carolina (sometimes referred to as the "Wedge Conference"). The conference was, according to Gero (personal correspondence, 2015), "the first archaeological conference in the United States convened specifically to discuss women's roles in prehistory." The resulting book, Engendering Archaeology: Women and prehistory, was the first to consider women's roles in prehistory. It was re-printed six times, and has had a major impact on the archaeological field.

Gero was a specialist in feminist archaeology, the socio-politics of archaeology, the ethics of archaeological practice, global and community archaeology, and Andean prehistory. She was perhaps best known for her foundational work to create a field of gender archaeology alongside Margaret Conkey, Janet Spectre, Alison Wylie and others.

Gero was born in New York City in 1944. She completed her B.A. in English Literature at the University of Pennsylvania in 1968, her M.A. in Elementary Education from Boston College in 1970, and her degrees in Anthropology (M.A. in 1977 and Ph.D. in 1983) at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

During her career, Gero held professorships at the University of South Carolina (Assistant, 1984-1990, Associate 1990-1997) and American University (Associate 1998-2007; Emerita 2008-2016). She also held visiting professorships at the University of Cambridge (1991 and 2004-5), the Universidad Nacional del Centro de Buenos Aires, Olvarria in Argentina (1992), the Universidad Nacional de Catamarca in Argentina (1994), the University of Umeå and Uppsala in Sweden (1997), and was a Research Associate with Department of Anthropology at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) (1996-2016).

Most of Gero's fieldwork was carried out in Argentina and Peru. Gero served from 1994-2004 as co-director (with M.C. Scottolin) of Proyecto Cajón, including Excavations at Yutopian, Valle del Cajón, and Provincia Catamarca. She conducted formative work for those excavations at Valle del Cajón in 1992 and 1993. From 1985 to 1989 Gero was Director of the Callejón de Huaylas Archaeological Project (northcentral Peruvian highlands). Prior to that, Gero was a lithics analyst for the Huaricoto Project in Callejón de Huaylas, Peru (1978-1979), and a crew member on the Harvard Moche Valley/Chan Chan Project in north coastal Peru (1973). Her first fieldwork was in Hampshire, England as a crew member on an Iron Age/Roman Excavation. She also served as crew chief for a field school in the Connecticut River Valley (Massachusetts. 1976), co-director for a field school at Mulberry Mound (Camden, South Carolina, 1985), and research assistant to Smithsonian Maritime Archaic excavations in Labrador (1971 and 1983).

Gero was Head Series Editor for the One World Archaeology book series, and served on the advisory board for Archaeologies: The Journal of the World Archaeological Congress.

Gero was an active member of a number of professional organizations, including the World Archaeological Congress, where she was senior North American representative from 1999-2008, and member of a Standing Committee on Ethics from 2007 to her death in 2016.
Gero received a number of awards and honors during her career. In 2013, she was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the World Archaeology Congress. In 2007, the American Anthropological Association presented Gero with the "Squeaky Wheel" Award for her work affecting change for women in archaeology. In 2016 the World Archaeological Congress created the Joan Gero Book Award in her honor.

The conference that this collection pertains to was planned with funds from two successful grants Gero wrote with Margaret Conkey. The first was from the National Science Foundation. The second was from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. Both were entitled "Women's Production in Prehistory: An International Conference" and received in April 1988.

Gero was married to Stephen Loring, an Archaeologist in the NMNH's Department of Anthropology and Arctic Studies Center.

### Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Joan M. Gero born in New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Gero receives B.A. in English Literature at the University of Pennsylvania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Gero receives M.Ed. in Elementary Education at Boston College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Gero receives M.A. in Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Gero receives Ph.D. in Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Women and Production in Prehistory Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Engendering Archaeology: Women and prehistory published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Joan M. Gero dies in Washington, D.C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Scope and Contents

This collection comprises Joan Gero's documentation pertaining to the "Women and Production in Prehistory Conference," also known as the "Wedge conference," as well as it's promotion and publication in the seminal volume *Engendering Archaeology: Women and prehistory*. The collection consists of grant proposals and reports, program and participant information, photographs of the conference, audiotape recordings of papers presented, conference publicity and press clippings, correspondence between Gero and co-organizer Margaret W. Conkey, correspondence with Blackwell Publishers about the publication and royalties, and reviews of *Engendering Archaeology: Women and prehistory*.

### Arrangement

The materials are largely arranged in the original order in which they were received. A chronological order was imposed on a few correspondence files, and a few original folders were split or renamed due to preservation or access considerations.

### Selected Bibliography


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**Names and Subject Terms**

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

**Subjects:**

- Archaeology
- Feminism
- Gender identity
- Sex discrimination
- South America

**Types of Materials:**

- Manuscripts
- Photographs -- 1900-2000 -- Black-and-white negatives -- Acetate film
- Photographs -- Color negatives -- Acetate film
- Positives (photographs)
- Sound recordings
## Container Listing

| Box 1, Folder 1 | NSF proposal, evaluations, report, 1987-1989  
| Language: English.  
| Notes: Contains letters with NSF debating removal of term "Women" in the conference title and report. |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Program and participants, April 1988 |
| Box 1, Folder 4 | Conference photos--color, April 1988  
| 25 Photographs (25 negatives and 21 color prints) |
| Box 1, Folder 5 | Conference photos--black and white, April 1988  
| 25 Photographs (25 negatives, 2 prints, 1 annotated photocopy, and 1 contact sheet) |
| Box 1, Folder 3 | Conference location ephemera  
| Language: English. |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Joan M. Gero "Gender Paper", 1988-1989  
| Language: English. |
| Box 1, Folder 7 | Conference publicity, 1988  
| Language: English. |
| Box 1, Folder 8 | Conference publicity news clippings, 1988  
| Language: English. |
| Box 1, Folder 9 | Correspondence with Margaret W. Conkey, 1987-1990 |
| Box 1, Folder 10 | Wenner-Gren Foundation Correspondence, 1989  
| Language: English. |
| Box 1, Folder 11 | Correspondence with Blackwell Publishers, 1991-2001  
| Language: English. |
| Box 1, Folder 12 | Correspondence with Blackwell Publishing regarding royalties, 1987-1998  
| Language: English. |
| Box 1, Folder 13 | Reviews of Engendering Archaeology, 1992  
| Language: English. |
| Box 2 | Women and Production in Prehistory Conference recordings of presentations and discussion, 1988  
| 14 Cassette tapes (Tapes I-VII numbered by Gero; two additional tapes labeled Gero I and Rue I)  
| Language: English. |