



Smithsonian

*National Museum of Natural History*

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

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# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Scope and Contents.....	3
Arrangement.....	3
Biographical Note.....	2
Selected Bibliography.....	3
Names and Subjects .....	4
Container Listing .....	5

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Anthropological Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Joan M. Gero records of the "Women and Production in Prehistory" Conference
<b>Identifier:</b>	NAA.2016-05
<b>Date:</b>	1987-2001
<b>Creator:</b>	Gero, Joan M. Conkey, Margaret Wright, 1944-
<b>Extent:</b>	0.42 Linear feet (2 boxes) 50 Negatives (photographic) (1 folder) 26 Photographic prints (1 folder) 14 Cassette tapes (1 box)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	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 its promotion and publication in the seminal volume <i>Engendering Archaeology: Women and prehistory</i> . 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 <i>Engendering Archaeology: Women and prehistory</i> .

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## 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.

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## 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**

1944 May 26	Gero born in New York City
1968	Gero receives B.A. in English Literature at the University of Pennsylvania
1970	Gero receives M.Ed. in Elementary Education at Boston College
1977	Gero receives M.A. in Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst
1983	Gero receives Ph.D. in Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst
1988 April 5-9	Women and Production in Prehistory Conference
1991	<i>Engendering Archaeology: Women and prehistory</i> published
2016 July 14	Joan M. Gero dies in Washington, D.C.

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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 its 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*.

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## **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.

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## **Selected Bibliography**

Gero, Joan M. "Gender Bias in Archaeology: A Cross-Cultural Perspective." In *The Socio-Politics of Archaeology*, edited by Joan M Gero, David M. Lacy and Michael L. Blakey, 51-57. Amhearst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1983.

Gero, Joan M. "Socio-Politics and the Woman-at-Home Ideology." *American Antiquity* 50, no. 2 (1985): 342-350.

Gero, Joan M., and Margaret W. Conkey, eds. *Engendering Archaeology: Women and prehistory*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

Gero, Joan M. "Feasts and Females: Gender Ideology and Political Meals in the Andes." *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 25, no. 1 (1992): 15-30.

Gero, Joan M. "The Social World of Prehistoric Facts: Gender and Power in Paleoindian Research." In *Women in Archaeology: A Feminist Critique*, edited by Hilary du Cros and Laurajane Smith. Canberra: Australian National University, 1993.

Gero, Joan M. "Archaeological Practice and Gendered Encounters with Field Data." In *Gender and Archaeology*, edited by Rita P. Wright, 251-80. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.

Conkey, Margaret W., and Joan M. Gero. "Programme to Practice: Gender and Feminism in Archaeology" *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26, no. 1 (1997): 411-437.

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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

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## 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.