



Cultural Archive of Modern Paganism

2024 Fiscal Year Annual Report

Mission Statement

The Cultural Archive of Modern Paganism exists to preserve, interpret, and promote the history and culture of the contemporary Pagan community as it exists in the United States. Through the acquisition of historical evidence and ongoing research, we will document our community and its unique cultural and spiritual nature. Our collections will be held in a digital repository, available in its entirety to researchers, with curated informative and educational materials made available to the public through our website. In these ways we seek to promote the discipline of Pagan studies and add to our community's sense of identity by providing access to the foundations of its past.

2024 Board of Directors

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Letter from the Board

CAMP is a long anticipated endeavor of the Pagan community manifesting at the time and place that the right skill sets, and technology, have come together to make it possible. We are a small, yet dedicated, group of people focused on preserving the history and culture of the community we all love. By supporting the mission and staff of CAMP the board can contribute in ways that we would not be able to as individuals. From humble roots we are growing CAMP into an organization that will serve Pagans for years to come.

“CAMP's work excites me because there is such a wealth of stories it can capture and preserve not only for academics but for anyone treading down the same road as our pagan elders. By knowing their history, one can learn and build upon what they've already accomplished rather than just reinventing the wheel once or twice a generation.”

-Tim Knight

Executive Summary

2024 was a year full of projects and hard work. Our biggest achievements were our two Legacy Amendment grant projects. Through these projects our collections policies were developed and finalized, allowing CAMP to pursue active acquisition of materials, and the Wiccan Church of Minnesota was documented through oral histories. Additionally, we added to our team by creating an Advisory Committee whose duties include collection approvals and long-term project planning.

This year has been an important and successful period of creating organizational stability and a solid framework for future work.

Community and Organizational History

Contemporary Paganism emerged in the Twin Cities in the 1960s. In 1970 Carl Weschke opened Gnostica Bookstore which served as the Pagan community's first gathering space and saw the birth of many of the institutions that continue to this day. From 1971 through 1976 this bookstore hosted the Gnostica Aquarian Convention (Gnosticon), a first of its kind gathering of Pagans and Witches bringin national attention to the Twin Cities. In 1976, Phil Flom established the Minnesota Church of the Wicca (MCoW) as the first legally recognized Pagan Church in the state. In 1987, a group of individuals broke with MCoW to form the Wiccan Church of Minnesota (WiCoM), which gained legal recognition in 1989. These groups were part of fostering the growth of the Twin Cities Pagan community into one of the largest in the country.

In the early 2000s, WiCoM provided encouragement and support to the New Alexandria Library (NAL). Located in Minneapolis, NAL was a subscription library with a mission to create an archive that preserved Pagan history, culture, and heritage. This was an early attempt at documenting the Pagan community. It was met with great community support but lacked professional resources to continue its work. NAL folded in 2005, and its materials were eventually entrusted to the care of Lou Gastuch.

In the mid-2000s, cultural anthropologist Dr. Murphy Pizza began researching the Twin Cities Pagan community. She published her doctoral thesis in 2009 and a monograph in 2014. In partnership with WiCoM the Cultural Archive of Modern Paganism (CAMP) received its first Minnesota Historical Society Legacy Amendment grant in 2020 titled, "Development of the Minnesota Pagan Oral History Methodology and Template" to continue the documentation of the local community. Through this work, it became evident that our elders were stewards of significant private collections documenting the history of the Twin Cities Pagan community. An increasingly urgent need to find and preserve this information became apparent as community members age and/or downsize their belongings.

In 2022, CAMP and WiCoM received their second MNHS grant to explore establishing the official archive. This project surveyed 10 private collections of archival material related to the Twin Cities Pagan community and 83 boxes of material from NAL. It also created foundational documents to help guide establishing CAMP. At the successful completion of this grant project, it became evident that CAMP was about to become too large to remain a side project of WiCoM and needed an independent organization to support the continuing work. In March of 2023 the Cultural Archive of Modern Paganism incorporated as a non-profit in the state of Minnesota and received its 501c (3) determination in June of the same year.

In late 2023 CAMP received two MNHS grants of their own, which were completed over 2024. These grants were the "Development of Collections Management Policies," and "Collection of Oral Histories of the Wiccan Church of Minnesota." Collections management policies are the backbone of how an archive handles and protects the materials left in its trust. Completion of this project opened CAMP up to be able to actively acquire collections of material. By collecting the oral histories of the Wiccan Church of Minnesota the story and history of a foundational group of the Twin Cities contemporary Pagan community was document. Allowing researchers and the public to deepen their understanding of an important era of our collective history.

Ongoing Work

CAMP seeks to document and preserve the history and stories of Pagan communities and individuals involved in those communities across the United States. In line with our new collections policies and with the guidance of the advisory committee it has been decided that CAMP's archival collections will be primarily arranged by state. Using our established collecting areas the Minnesota Phased Development Plan was created to lay out the next 5 years of archival projects and community digitization priorities for our state. As we grow a similar plan will be developed for each state or regional community.

To accomplish our goals the following preliminary collecting priorities for each community were identified:

- Personal papers of individuals involved in pagan communities
- Oral histories with community elders
- Organization records of community groups and churches
- Reference materials, biographical data, and ephemera
- Publications by and about community members and organizations

Community Digitization Priorities for 2025-2030:

- Older individuals and elders with failing health.
- Historically underrepresented individuals in communities, including but not limited to Indigenous, Black, Latino, Asian, LGBTQ+, women, veterans, and people living with disabilities.
- Individuals and groups located in rural areas.
- Recordings on fragile media, including audio cassette tapes and VHS tapes.
- Materials related to significant activism efforts.
- Born-digital material, including organization and personal files, web pages, blog posts, and events advertised on social media.

Financial Goals

CAMP has been fortunate in our ability to grow and accomplish our goals in no small part due to the generous donations from individuals and the support of Legacy Amendment grants through the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS). In 2025 we will continue to pursue grant funding for projects from MNHS and operational support through building relationships within the extended Pagan community and charitable foundations. This will enable CAMP to build the infrastructure needed to preserve the history of our community. Our top fundraising priorities are to acquire digital storage media and build a portable digitization lab. Combined with our basic operating expenses our fundraising goal for 2025 has been set at \$10,000.

Digital Storage

A primary responsibility of CAMP is to provide a trusted digital repository for the materials given into our care. To do this our holdings will be maintained on three different mediums; dark archive cloud storage, a NAS RAID array, and Blu Ray discs or microfiche stored at a separate physical location in a different climate disaster zone. We have begun incrementally developing our storage; however, it is likely that we will have reached capacity early in 2025. The estimated cost of this project is \$2000.

Portable digitization lab

The benefit of a portable digitization lab is its flexibility allowing us to serve communities of a larger geographic area. With the right equipment we will be in the position to work with people and communities who cannot afford their own set up, as well as conduct preliminary work for large projects with long delays between planning, applying, and grant approval.

The additional benefit is that we will begin host community digitization events to actively engage with the community by giving individuals an opportunity to participate in the historic preservation process. In this way we will gain access to material and donors in a social context, expanding our knowledge of possible future acquisitions and growing community relationships. Our plans are based on a community centered approach to collections development which is relatively new to the history world. This makes our lab nearly impossible to fund through grant projects, however we feel that it is the best way to benefit the Pagan community and fulfill our mission statement. Our equipment needs include overhead document scanners, laptop computers, external hard drives, and suitable storage bags for transport. We estimate that this project will cost \$5000.