

Preface

Archives are the pillar of the history of each society. Since 1968 the Federation Executive Committee has discussed the necessity of creating a professionally maintained archive. No final solution was found about where to deposit Federation documents. In the early eighties William Cobb, then having just finished his term as Past-President, was given the task of writing a Federation history book. This was published with the title *Wave Length: a History of the IFSECN*. The book was given to all registrants at the Federation's 1985 London Congress.

Documents of the first 30 years of the Federation have been preserved only sparsely. This is also true for records about the journal since Elsevier had not kept records from the early decades. By the mid-nineties these archive issues again arose when the Executive Committee sought to know when and under what conditions certain rules were drawn up, or when named lectures or special meetings were held. Attempts again then to establish a Federation archives were side-tracked by a belief that General Assembly minutes were published and that the *EEG Journal* represented the IFCN archives. That resource, however, was fragmented and incomplete. Many minutes published in the journal were incomplete, mentioning reports as attachments to the original meeting materials, but attachments that were not incorporated into the formally printed minutes in the journal. Many past printed congress programs are lost, along with information about their key speakers, scientific and educational emphasis, venue and registration details, and social events. Deliberations of committees were lost over time. The journal sources were insufficient, scattered and fragmented as was noted very clearly in preparing this book.

Later the Executive Committee suggested that archiving might be a responsibility assumed by the successive Past-Presidents. The Long Range Planning Committee sought to preserve the documents accordingly at a formal professional archive institution that was prepared to maintain materials and make them available as needed. No institution yet was identified. A Permanent Executive Secretariat was considered as an alternate place for an archive, but those firms were more expert in organizing activities than in archiving per se.

For the present, the Executive Committee decided to compile an updated history book. In 2007, we two authors were asked to write this book because of our long experiences within the Federation. Both of us have served the Federation for more than 20 years as President, Past-President and Committee members. Our personal files contain many documents from Fiscal Periods since 1985. Additional source materials were obtained from other Presidents, Executive Committee members, Chapter officers and Congress conveners.

This history book aims to add the most recent 30 years to the history of the first three decades as written previously in *Wave Length*. The text of Cobb's book, with minor editing, is included here to complete this as a comprehensive historical overview. This certainly is in accord with the idea of the late William Cobb who himself wrote asking one of us (CHL) in 1996: "I wonder if you would like to consider a second edition of '*Wave Length*,' bringing it up to date."

This book is written by three authors, if one includes Cobb who was the original author of the first set of chapters. Each has brought different writing styles and individual approaches to the material. All have tried to be as objective as possible, but could not totally eliminate some subjectivity and story telling in selecting the presented facts and telling about events. In one sense, the book aims not just to tell the what, where and when, but also the how and why of Federation history.

The authors wish to give a historical background for the decision-making of the Federation officers and for all those who are interested in the history of the Federation. The book will be presented as a gift to the participants of the International Congress in Kobe, 2010. That followed the suggestion of W. Cobb as he expressed it in the same 1996 letter encouraging that an updated history book be “a gift at a congress” so that all who are interested can share in the story and facts behind the Federation and how it came to be as it is now. We hope this book meets those goals.

Marc R. Nuwer
Los Angeles, CA, USA

Carl H. Lücking
Freiburg, Germany