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University Archives & Special Collections Collection Development Policy

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University Archives & Special Collections Collection Development Policy

University Libraries, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Kay Walter, Chair, Digital Initiatives and Special Collections, and Mary Ellen Ducey, Archives and Special Collections Librarian. Rev. Nov 2009

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- I. History:** While rare books and manuscripts have been acquired since the University of Nebraska was founded, it was not until the 1970s that a concerted effort was made to create a separate Rare Books and Special Collections unit. During the 1970s, librarians identified rare books or special collections within the existing general collections, identified new space for these materials, cataloged them, created collection development criteria, and began providing services through the assignment of the first full-time special collections librarian. One role for the special collections librarian was to seek funding through donations for continued development of the special collections. The University Archives were formed officially in 1968 with the appointment of the first University Archivist. In 1978, the UNL Archives were merged with the Rare Books and Special Collections unit and became the University Archives & Special Collections. Collection development policies and criteria for the University Archives & Special Collections have evolved through the years and the different versions of the documents are available in the Archives' management files under "Collection Development Policy."
- II. Mission:** The mission of the UNL Libraries' University Archives & Special Collections is to select, preserve, arrange, describe, provide reference assistance for, and promote the use of rare and unique research materials. The unit maintains these research materials because they are best managed separately from the general collections due to their rare or unique qualities, source, physical form, or subject area.
- III. Collecting scope:** The University Archives & Special Collections' subject area concentrations spring from major research/education areas at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The collections are composed of rare and unique documentary materials created and accumulated by UNL and its members as well as from individuals and organizations external to the University. The collecting interests and the extent of collecting activity in them increases and decreases over time as academic research programs develop and diminish at UNL. The purpose of this approach is to provide the UNL research community with the rare and unique research materials these users require. Collections will, to the extent possible, anticipate future research needs.

Collection strengths are reflected in the University Archives, manuscripts, rare books, ephemeral print materials, photographic collections, and in digital texts. Areas of strength include the following:

Agriculture

Examples: Permanent records of the Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Station, UNL Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Women in Farm Economics (WIFE)

American Art and Artists' Books

Examples: The Stuart Embry Library of American Art and the Blue Heron Press Artists' Books Collection

Ethnic American Collections

Examples: Czech Heritage collections, Japanese American/Asian Collection, Karlis Ulmanis, Latvian and Baltic History Collection, Native American heritage materials throughout many collections.

Folklore

Examples: B.A. Botkin Collection of Applied American Folklore, Harold W. Felton papers

French Revolutionary War materials

Examples: Fred Morrow Fling Collection, including manuscripts of Mirabeau

Great Plains History and Literature

Examples: Nebraskana throughout many collections; Willa Cather collections, Mari Sandoz papers, Wright Morris papers, Weldon Kees lyrics, and other authors

History of U.S. Wartime or Military History

Examples: WWI poster collection; WWII collections (Rainbow Division Veterans Association Records, Sandberg-Hallgren Collection, Japanese American/Asian Collection, etc.)

Natural History and Sciences

Examples: Charles Bessey papers, Lawrence Bruner papers, Frank Shoemaker collection including naturalist glass plate negatives, Sigma Delta Epsilon papers, Raymond Pool papers, Paul Johnsgard papers

Quilt-making and Quilt History

Examples: Sally Garoutte Quilt Collection, American Quilt Study Group materials, Penny Mc Morris papers, International Quilt Study Center & Museum records

Railroad (U.S.)

Examples: Charles Kennedy Collection; B.A. Botkin Collection of Applied American Folklore, John F. Stover collection

Russian History

Example: Mazour Collection

Social Sciences

Examples: Edith and Grace Abbott papers, Alvin Saunders Johnson papers, Robert Chambers papers

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

University Archives, Buildings and Grounds Collection, UNL Biographical/Bibliography Records.

Materials that fall outside the collecting scope: generally, realia (three-dimensional objects) and duplicates are not actively collected or retained.

IV. General Guidelines for Collecting Rare Books at UNL

A. Material of typographical and/or historical interest. Decisions are determined by date of printing and country of publication. Among this category are:

1. Materials printed in Western Europe prior to 1801
2. Materials printed in the United States prior to 1865
3. Nebraskana printed prior to 1900
4. Materials printed in Canada, Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Australia prior to 1850

If a serial began publication within the date guidelines given above and continued after the terminal date, only those volumes which fall within the guidelines are appropriate for Special Collections.

B. Unique material or material existing in a limited number of copies.

1. One of an edition of 300 copies or less.
2. Autographed or association copies. The latter includes items belonging to an author, annotated by an author, belonging to someone famous or interesting in his/her own right, or belonging to someone particularly associated with the book's contents.
3. Books with significant manuscript notations or other material laid or fastened in.
4. Editions of textual and/or bibliographic significance or books of literary or historical importance.

5. Manuscripts, typed materials, and archival materials of interest to scholars, especially if related to existing collection strengths.
 6. Ephemeral materials such as broadsides, leaflets, pamphlets, and posters.
 7. Materials published by non-commercial or small Nebraska presses.
- C. Books and other materials of importance as works of art in themselves. Examples: exceptionally fine binding, printing, or illustration (especially hand-colored plated) or of importance in the history of printing. Among these are books published by outstanding early or private presses such as these:
- Ashendene, Cuala, Doves, Golden Cockerel, Gregynog, Kelmscott, Shakespeare Head, and Strawberry Hill.
- Also the work of fine binders, works illustrative of styles of binding and type design, such as Bruce Rogers, Frederick Goudy, Cobden-Sanderson, or Zaehnsdorf.
- Other examples are books with fore-edge paintings, and artists' books.
- D. Materials liable to loss or damage because of their physical format or condition, such as miniature books (under 10 cm or 4" tall), fragile books—especially early works in original paper wrappers or boards, books with loose or tipped in plates. Note: this does not include books simply in bad condition.
- E. Monetary value may be a consideration depending upon the uniqueness of the material.

V. Procedures Affecting the Collecting Policy

- A. Transfer of Records Procedure: The University Archives & Special Collections will accept the transfer of University records which are scheduled for permanent retention only. It will not accept records which are scheduled for destruction. University records considered for transfer to the University Archives for permanent retention must be reviewed and approved by the University Archivist, the Assistant Archivist, or the Chair of Digital Initiatives & Special Collections prior to transfer acceptance.
- B. Deeds of Gift. The University Archives & Special Collections will not accept materials without a legal transfer of title through a deed of gift, deposit agreement, transfer of records form, or other official acknowledgement. All transmittal forms must be signed by a professional archival or special collections staff member and the donor/official from the transferring office.
- C. Loans and Deposits. Materials loaned or deposited with the University Archives & Special Collections will be accepted only when the conditions for acceptance are favorable to the department and the UNL Libraries.

- D. Closed Collections. The University Archives & Special Collections will not accept materials that are closed to the public in perpetuity. All restricted material will be designated with an opening date prior to the donation or transfer acceptance.

- E. Deaccessioning. Materials that do not reflect the University Archives & Special Collections' collecting scope or do not possess sufficient archival value may be deaccessioned, subject to the documented terms of acquisition, university regulations, and state and federal laws.

- F. Revision of Policy. The University Archives & Special Collections reserves the right to amend its collection development policy at any time.