



WILLIAM READY DIVISION OF ARCHIVES AND RESEARCH COLLECTIONS

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

MISSION

The William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections is the principal repository for rare books, archives, antiquarian maps, and related historical material at McMaster University in support of teaching, education, and scholarship.

The Division serves a broad range of users, including McMaster students, faculty, staff, and alumni, as well as a national and international community of researchers and scholars, and members of the general public, both locally and beyond. Archives and Research Collections aims to collect materials that will support the research and teaching activities of the McMaster community and to be an engaged participant in the scholarly work of the University.

EXISTING COLLECTION STRENGTHS

The Division has built strong collections in several areas, which form the core of its holdings. A number of these have been active collecting fields since the 1960s, while others are more recent additions to or expansions of historical areas of activity.

- Eighteenth century books and journals
- Bertrand Russell
- Canadian literature and publishing
- Pacifism and peace movements
- First and Second World Wars, with an emphasis on the Canadian and British experience
- The Holocaust
- Underground Resistance during Second World War
- Canadian labour unions
- Music archives
- Canadian poetry collection
- Anglo-Irish book collection

CURRENT COLLECTING AREAS

Collecting activity for the Division is guided by the general philosophy that we seek collections which are national and international in scope. This is in keeping with our larger goal to maintain a research-oriented collection that supports an active program of scholarship at McMaster and beyond.

Archival Fonds and Collections

Primary Collecting Areas

- Canadian authors and literature
 - Primarily but not exclusively authors working in fiction
 - Developing interests in First Nations, younger writers, and writers of genre fiction (science fiction, graphic novels, etc.)
- Canadian music
 - Focusing on performers, composers, and conductors
- Canadian participation in war or armed conflict, especially the First and Second World Wars. Canadian participation in other conflicts will be considered on a case by case basis.
- The Holocaust and the Underground Resistance
- Pacifism and peace movements
- Bertrand Russell

Secondary Collecting Areas

In addition to building on many existing strengths of the collection, we actively seek new initiatives and acquire new collections in anticipation of or response to changing academic needs and interests. We are also committed to developing unique and distinctive collections in areas which have little coverage elsewhere.

- Canadian publishing, especially small and private presses
- Canadian business and advertising
- Canadian labour unions
- The West Indies and West Indian diaspora in Canada
- Canadian and local history, including Hamilton, with due consideration of the collection mandates of neighbouring institutions such as Hamilton Public Library and other university special collections
- Communities/groups that may be under-represented in our collections (e.g., First Nations, ethnic minorities, GLBT, etc.). Ideally, collections in this area will be related to the Division's primary collecting fields, but other areas will be considered as opportunities arise.

Areas Not Collected or Collected Selectively

- Temperance
Though a historical collecting area for the Division, these materials see relatively little research use. Collecting additional materials in this area is not currently a priority.
- Ephemera and exhibit pieces
While these do have a role in research and teaching activities that we aim to support, they are not a primary collecting focus in themselves and will be acquired only selectively.
- Research data
The archiving of research data is a growing role of the research library generally, but is out of scope for the Division's activities. Support for archiving and using archived research data is available elsewhere in the McMaster Library.
- Records of McMaster University offices, officials, faculty, or programs
McMaster has not established a formal university archives program. While the Division is in many ways a logical home for such a program, it is not staffed or resourced nor does it have an official mandate from the University to collect such records or faculty papers. Only selective materials are acquired in this area.

Published Materials

In collecting books, journals, and other publications, the Division's interests lie in the following areas:

- Rare Books and Journals
 - Items published before 1800, especially groupings of such material gathered by knowledgeable collectors. Primary geographic focus areas are Great Britain and the Empire and Western Europe. Other areas may be collected when they support research and teaching activity at McMaster or present an opportunity to acquire exceptional items.
 - Pre-Confederation Canadian imprints
 - First Nations and Native Americans
 - Other subjects that may be brought to our attention from time to time by McMaster faculty for research or graduate studies, such as:
 - Animals in literature and culture [*History and English & Cultural Studies*]
 - Buddhism, Islam, and Eastern religions [*Religious Studies*]
- Pamphlets and other "grey literature" that support subject area interests of the Division
- New editions of Bertrand Russell's published works and new publications about Russell's life, work, and activism
- Modern (i.e., published after 1800) volumes that support the Division's archival and subject-based collecting interests or form a core of research material on a topic of interest, including:
 - Canadian authors and literature

- Canadian publishing and small presses
- History of printing and publishing
- Canadian popular culture
- Canadian history and politics
- Canadian participation in war or armed conflict, especially the First and Second World Wars
- Pacifism and peace movements
- The Holocaust and the Underground Resistance

Languages

Acquisition of archival fonds and collections generally focuses on English language material. Some specialized subject areas (e.g., the Holocaust and resistance movements) are collected in other languages.

Book and journal acquisitions may occur in a variety of languages, as appropriate to the subject and time period. Existing collection strengths are in English, French, Latin, and German.

Media Types

The Division acquires material in all media types, including electronic/digital, with due consideration of the Division's ability to manage such material.

METHODS OF ACQUISITION

The Division acquires new materials primarily through donation. A Deed of Gift or Donation Agreement will be prepared and signed by both the donor and the University. All gifts must comply with McMaster University's Gift Acceptance Policy.

(<http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/advancement/GiftAcceptancePolicy.pdf>) Purchases of archive fonds or collections are exceedingly rare due to the limited acquisitions funds available.

Both rare or historical and contemporary monographs and journals are purchased for the collection when they fit with current collecting interests. Purchases of large book collections are, as with archival fonds, a rare occurrence due to limited acquisitions budgets.

The Division does not normally accept materials on deposit; that is, a receipt of materials without transfer of ownership to the University. Such agreements will be considered only when there is a clear benefit to the University in securing the materials in advance of a transfer of ownership. Deposit agreements will be made in writing, will contain specific details of the materials included and the Library's commitments, and will have specified time limits after which ownership of the materials will be transferred to the University or the materials returned. No deposit agreement may be entered into without the approval of the Associate University Librarian, Collections or the University Librarian, as appropriate, nor may it contravene in any way the Gift Acceptance Policy referenced above.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

Archival Appraisal

In keeping with standard archival practice, the contents of all archives received in the Division will be assessed for historical, informational, evidential, and research value. In most cases, portions of the archive will not be kept. Material identified for removal from the archive will first be offered for return to the donor or creator. If not returned to the donor, items will be discarded or destroyed as appropriate to the nature of the material.

Books, serials, and other published materials included with archival fonds or collections will also be appraised during processing. These may be retained in the Division's collections, sent to general stacks in the appropriate University Library collection, returned to the donor, offered to another institution, or discarded, as appropriate to the items in question.

Deaccessioning

Collections or archival fonds in the Division's holdings that no longer align with its collecting areas may be deaccessioned. These will generally be offered first to another institution where they have a better subject fit and can continue to be accessible for research and study. Decisions regarding the removal, return, transfer, or disposal of previously accessioned archives

will be documented in writing, approved by the Associate University Librarian, Collections and the University Librarian, and kept with other administrative records of the affected archive.

Books, serials, and other printed materials in the Division's research holdings may be deaccessioned following the same procedures. More typically, it is anticipated that the withdrawal of books or serials will focus on reference and other supporting materials, where periodic weeding is beneficial for both currency and accuracy of information, rather than on the Division's research-oriented collections.