

# American Heritage Center

## *Acquisitions Guidelines*

The American Heritage Center, an archival research institution at the University of Wyoming, acquires specific material relating to its core collecting areas: Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain West (including but not limited to politics, settlement, and western trails) environment and conservation, the mining and petroleum industries, air and ground transportation, the performing arts (particularly radio, television, film, and popular music), journalism, US military history. In addition, the AHC maintains one of the largest and finest collections of rare books between the Mississippi and the West Coast, and is glad to consider donations to that collection. The AHC is also the archives for the University of Wyoming. The AHC is a public research repository, and accepts donations of collections with the primary purpose of making those collections available to students, scholars, and the general public.

The following document provides guidelines regarding the responsibilities of the Center to its donors, the conditions under which a donation may be accepted, and the types of material collected by the Center for the use of its patrons.

### ***When accepting material, the American Heritage Center is responsible for:***

1. Maintaining the materials, ensuring accepted practice for preservation and security, preparing the materials for research use through professional arrangement and description and making them available in our research area to interested researchers on an equal basis during regular business hours.
2. Ensuring that the use of any material identified as sensitive by the donor is restricted from use in accordance with an agreement in writing accepted by both the donor and the AHC. The AHC cannot accept collections that are restricted indefinitely or for which the restriction cannot be enforced or applied equally to all researchers.
3. Returning to the donor, offering to another institution, or discarding materials that the AHC wishes to remove from the collection, in accordance with the donor's instructions in a written agreement accepted by both the donor and the AHC.
4. Securing legal documentation for every gift that makes clear the terms of the transfer and any instructions of the donor. The AHC only accepts collections for which legal title to the physical items is transferred to the University of Wyoming by deed of gift.
5. Asking donors to donate not only the physical papers but also any copyright in them that the donor might own. (Ownership of copyright is separable from ownership of the physical item--the letter or photo). This request is made to make it easier for researchers to use quotations from the papers in their work. However, the AHC will consider donation of the physical material without donation of copyright.

### ***When accepting material the American Heritage Center cannot:***

1. Accept donations without transfer of title.
2. Accept material for which the donor does not have clear title.
3. Provide appraisals of the monetary value of gifts. This is forbidden by IRS regulations.
4. Accept liability for loss or damage of materials due to deterioration, fire, or other disasters which befall the material or are inherent within it.

*(over)*

## *Types of Material Collected*

***Personal Papers from Individuals.*** While it is important that AHC staff be permitted to survey papers or records in order to determine which materials have enduring historical value, listed below are types of materials that are often valuable to a researcher. This list, which is suggestive and not definitive, illustrates the wide range of documentation sometimes useful for historical and administrative research. If you have any questions about this list, please ask a member of our staff.

### **AHC generally acquires:**

- Personal and professional correspondence
- Diaries, memoirs, or journals
- Research files compiled or created by the donor
- Final drafts of unpublished works (television and movie scripts may be an exception, where certain early drafts may be of interest)
- Personal or professional scrapbooks and memorabilia created by or directly relating to the donor
- Clearly identified photographs taken by or directly relating to the donor
- Clearly identified sound recordings, video tape, or movie film created by or directly relating to the donor
- Artistic or other creative materials produced by the donor or which have a direct correlation to the donor's collection
- Books, articles, scripts, music, pamphlets, or other material written or published by the donor or about the donor

### **AHC generally does not acquire:**

- Personal financial records including checks or income tax returns
- Medical records
- Duplicates of any items
- General readership books, periodicals, or other printed material not written by or about the donor.
- Art and artifacts
- Galleys, proofs, and final drafts of published works.

***Organizations and Institutions.*** Many of the records produced by an organization have long-term value. The AHC is interested in the records that best illustrate the purpose, activities, and policies of an organization. Such documents usually represent an "end product"—a final report, for example, instead of a draft. We are more interested in related groups of materials rather than individual items. Records should be inactive—that is, no longer regularly used for routine business. Before records are transferred to the AHC, an archivist should survey the organization's papers or speak with knowledgeable staff to determine which materials have enduring historical value. Listed below are some of the types of documentation that the AHC often preserves for historical and administrative research:

### **AHC generally acquires:**

- Minutes
- Correspondence
- Annual reports
- Articles of incorporation and bylaws
- Financial ledgers up to 1900
- Non-confidential personnel rosters, directories, and similar records
- Annual or semi-annual balance statements
- Subject files
- Printed material including pamphlets, brochures, catalogs, newsletters, periodicals, etc., produced by the organization

### **AHC generally does not acquire:**

- Personnel time cards, payroll documents, or confidential files
- Day-to-day financial records such as bank statements, canceled checks, receipts, daily balances
- Invoices
- General readership books, periodicals, or other printed materials not created by the organization (exceptions may be made for books, periodicals, or pamphlets of unique historical interest)
- Art and artifacts