



Collection Development Policy

2015 rev.

I: Mission and objectives.

The Amistad Research Center is committed to collecting, preserving, and providing open access to original materials that reference the social and cultural importance of America's ethnic and racial history, the African Diaspora, human relations, and civil rights. Amistad's primary purpose is to provide a home to primary and secondary sources that document the histories of peoples, communities, and nations, and to make resource materials for writing and rewriting history accessible, giving equitable treatment to the contributions of underrepresented groups. The Center's collection development policy provides guidance to the Center's staff and directors, as well as potential donors, toward the fulfillment of the Center's mission.

A. Manuscripts Collection: The Center collects and provides access to original documentation in groups of consecutive files that are interrelated, and which provide detailed information on a person, event, organization, institution, era, or subject. The first priority is to collect manuscript materials in the form of personal or family papers and the records of organizations and institutions. The Center also collects bodies of original documents that have been brought together by a collector.

B. Library Collection: An additional focus is the maintenance of a library for printed primary and secondary documents which fit the collection scope. Serving as a complement to the manuscripts collection, the library collection also serves to document the ethnic experience in the United States by housing pamphlets, broadsides, reports, literary first and notable editions, newspapers and other periodicals, and monographs related to the Center's collection focus.

C. Art Collection: Except for works of art, the Center discourages gifts of three-dimensional artifacts that have no research value. The Center does collect works of art (paintings, works on paper, sculptures, textiles, and mixed media) that fit within its collecting scope, but generally through donations rather than purchase.

D. Service: The community served by the Center cannot be narrowly defined. A key objective is to serve the research interests and educational needs for a variety of patrons - whether scholars, undergraduate and graduate students, junior high and high school students, family historians, journalists, etc. - by promoting the collections, remaining knowledgeable about the content of collections including recent acquisitions, and maintaining professional and timely communication with research inquiries and in other aspects of public service.

E. Policy and procedures: Implementing records management through developing and adhering to policy and procedures is essential to the long-term strategic growth and ensuring optimal research value for collections.

F. Fundraising: Staff of the Amistad Research Center, because of its status as a non-profit institution, must remain vigilant and aggressively and strategically pursue funding opportunities on a regular basis. External funding, whether from individual donors or private and governmental funding agencies and foundations, are essential for the Center's long-term planning and day-to-day operations.



Collection Development Policy

2015 rev.

II: Collection scope and formats solicited.

A. Subject areas collected: The Amistad Research Center was founded to document America's ethnic heritage and race relations. With the Center's mission derived directly from the ardently anti-caste American Missionary Association, the Center's collection efforts have traditionally been focused on civil rights, race relations, and the cultural and social contributions of all underrepresented populations, including African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and Jewish Americans, as well as Appalachian whites. The Center has, through collecting practice, considered the gay liberation movement as an important experience to document as a civil rights movement and LGBTQ materials are included in the collection. This overall subject theme, of course, is quite expansive.

B. Geographic areas collected: Although located in New Orleans and containing a wide variety of materials documenting New Orleans' rich ethnic heritage, the Center's collecting scope is national and even international in scope, with several substantial and historically significant holdings documenting the AMA's work across the United States, the U.S.'s relationship with the African continent, and the African Diaspora.

C. Languages collected: Language of material is a minimal concern for collections as long as the collection meets other prescribed criteria for acquisition.

D. Formats solicited: The myriad formats of manuscript and other material accepted by the Center include correspondence (handwritten, typewritten, and electronic), minutes, memoranda, photographs, musical scores, postcards, oral histories, literary manuscripts, published works, sound recordings, moving images, and electronic records. The types of materials collected are not restricted simply to the aforementioned formats and the content remains the guiding criterion.

However, because Amistad books are regarded as archival copies, intended to be preserved for generations to come, the Center seeks to acquire and retain books in good condition in their original formats, paying close attention to the book as a physical object and other media in their original state when possible. It cannot be the Center's policy to collect duplicates. When duplicate copies are acquired with collections they are compared carefully and the better copy retained (given binding, paper condition, and freshness). On occasion, as when one copy is inscribed from the author or has associative value and the other is in better condition, more than one copy may be retained.

E. Formats not solicited: With few exceptions, the Amistad Research Center cannot accept artifacts such as trophies, plaques, or other framed non-art items since these are of little research value and are expensive to store. Also, materials such as photocopies of original manuscripts and photocopied research materials will only be accepted in rare cases.

III: Collection strengths and focuses.



Collection Development Policy

2015 rev.

Primary Collecting Areas

Music and Performing Arts

Existing Collection Strengths: Personal papers of operatic and classical musicians and performers, such as Annabelle Bernard, Carol Brice, Anne Wiggins Brown, Thomas Carey, Jessie Covington Dent, Mattiwilda Dobbs Janzon, Hale Smith, and William Warfield; jazz musicians such as Harold Battiste, Fletcher Henderson, and Ellis Marsalis Jr.; gospel musicians, such as Moses Hogan; and writers Jason Berry and Tom Dent; hip hop and bounce music is represented by the NOLA Hip Hop Archive Project Collection and the Where They At Collection.

Current Collecting Focuses: Interviews with and personal papers of rap, hip-hop, and bounce performers; dance; performance art; and the intersection of music and social justice movements.

Fine Arts

Existing Collection Strengths: Personal papers of artists Richmond Barthe, Jack Baron, Elizabeth Catlett, Louise Jefferson, William Pajaud, John Scott, Ruth Waddy, Hale Woodruff, and Dorothy Yopez; the Amistad Research Center Fine Arts Collection of over 400 paintings, prints and three-dimensional works.

Current Collecting Focuses: Additional personal papers of leading artists and those represented in the Amistad Research Center Fine Arts Collection; records of galleries and art associations; the Center currently does not accept additions to the Fine Arts Collection.

Education

Existing Collection Strengths: Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction education in the South is documented in the American Missionary Association Archives, as is the Association's work among Native American, Latino, and Asian American communities across the United States; papers of teachers and administrators, particularly in Southern schools and historically black colleges and universities; governmental pamphlets and reports on school desegregation across the U.S.; African American School Newspapers Collection.

Current Collecting Focuses: The Center will continue to collect materials in the areas described above.

Missionary History

Existing Collection Strengths: Records of the American Missionary Association; the American Home Missionary Association/Congregational Home Missionary Association, and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries document U.S.-based missionary efforts, both home and abroad, from the early 19th century to the late 20th century; Congregational publications and periodicals

Current Collecting Focuses: African American missionaries, both domestic and foreign.

Medicine

Existing Collection Strengths: Papers of doctors, nurses, and pharmacists such as Henry Braden;; Rivers Frederick; Frederick Thomas Jones, Emile J. LaBranche Family; Alonzo C. McClennan Family, Mabel Staupers, and the records of the Women's Auxiliary to the National Medical Association; medical training is documented in the papers of the Albert Dent Family and Alexander Louis Jackson II.



Collection Development Policy

2015 rev.

Current Collecting Focuses: Records and publications of African American medical schools.

Literature

Existing Collection Strengths: Papers and libraries of Countee Cullen and Tom Dent; personal papers of Chester Himes, Sybil Kein; African American literature; the Black Arts Movement, especially in the U.S. South is documented in papers of Tom Dent and John O'Neal, as well as the records of Nkombo Publications and the Free Southern Theater

Current Collecting Focuses: small presses/little magazines; Harlem Renaissance first editions; post-World War II authors, particularly in poetry and genre fiction; comics and graphic novels; zines

Civil Rights and Social Justice Movements

Existing Collection Strengths: Modern civil rights movement is documented in records of various civil rights organizations, including the Committee of Civil Rights in Metropolitan New York, NAACP Office of Field Director of Louisiana Field Director, the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, and others; personal papers of civil rights leaders such as John L. Tilley, Mary McCleod Bethune, and Fannie Lou Hamer; legal strategies of the Movement are documented in the papers of A.P. Tureaud, Daniel Byrd, Ernest N. "Dutch" Morial, Nils Douglas, John Nelson, Carl Levin, and others; organizational records such as the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries Race Relations Department, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Community Relations Council of Greater New Orleans, Catholic Council on Human Relations, Race Relations Information Center, and similar organizations document the area of intergroup relations

Current Collecting Focuses: radical and nationalist organizations and leaders; feminism and sexism within the Civil Rights Movement; civil rights "foot soldiers", the "long civil rights movement" as well as social justice movements more broadly defined.

Journalism

Existing Collection Strengths: Papers of journalists John E. Rousseau, Evelyn Cunningham, Arnold de Mille, and Joe Madison; ethnic community newspapers.

Current Collecting Focuses: Papers of journalists and records of print and electronic news organizations, ethnic community newspapers.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

Existing Collection Strengths: Papers of scientists and mathematicians Ron Mickens, Eugene Collins, Albert Turner Bharucha-Reid, and Joseph A. Pierce.

Current Collecting Focuses: Papers of scientists and mathematicians of color, as well as records of professional organizations reflecting the interests of those communities.

Business and Entrepreneurism



Collection Development Policy

2015 rev.

Existing Collection Strengths: The topic of ethnically-owned businesses is documented in the papers of individual business leaders, as well as the records of businesses and social organizations, such as benevolent societies, insurance companies, funeral homes, and social aid and pleasure clubs.

Current Collecting Focuses: The Center will continue to collect the papers of business leaders and entrepreneurs, as well as the records of business and social organizations.



Collection Development Policy

2015 rev.

GLBTQ Rights

Existing Collection Strengths: Personal papers of activists Larry Bagneris and Gene Elder, as well as records of organizations such as Just for the Record and the Impact Collection of GLBTQ newspapers.

Current Collecting Focuses: The Center will continue to collect in this area with particular focus of GLBTQ individuals of color.

Africana

Existing Collection Strengths: Records of the American Committee on Africa/The Africa Fund and Operation Crossroads Africa, as well as the personal papers of Victor DuBois, James H. Robinson, Maida Springer Kemp; George H. Houser Film and Slide Collection; pamphlets, newspapers, and periodicals published by African nationalist organizations or expatriate support organizations.

Current Collecting Focuses: The Center will continue to collect the papers of individuals and records of organizations that document U.S.-Africa relations.

Freemasonry

Existing Collection Strengths: Records of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons for the State of Louisiana; personal papers of Masonic leaders such as George Longe and John Wesley Dobbs; printed proceedings, rites, and histories of Freemasonry, particularly those that pertain to African American Masons.

Current Collecting Focuses: Papers of individual Masons, as well as records of lodges and organizations on the local and state levels.

IV: Acquisition methods, deeds of gift, and copyright policy.

A. Collection donation: Donation is the preferred method of acquisition for the Center, which solicits gifts of materials from individuals and organizations. Donation of materials occurs through active solicitation and through passive receipt of materials delivered to the Center. Donations must adhere to the scope of the collection and should be appraised in advance of submission to the Center. Gifts received without appraisal are accepted on the condition that processing staff have the right to return, discard, or donate unwanted materials to another institution. Donations to the library are welcomed and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for physical condition and adherence to the collection scope. In most cases, printed materials which accompany manuscripts donations will be physically separated from the manuscript collection and housed in the library, with a cataloging note and relocation form or separation list to indicate provenance.

B. Collection purchase: When materials are not available through gifts, acquisitions are made through the purchase of items selected from dealer catalogs, by way of auction, and from private individuals and organizations. Only in rare cases are manuscripts collections acquired through purchase. The Center incurs considerable expense in the form of staff time for processing and materials for housing collections; therefore, except in rare cases, the Center simply cannot afford an added expense of acquiring a collection. Purchase of materials is limited primarily to published material for the library collection.



Collection Development Policy

2015 rev.

C. Methods of acquisition not accepted: The Amistad Research Center does not accept any collections on deposit or loan. Collections are accepted only on the condition that the donor surrenders full property rights. The Center will not accept collections permanently closed to research or with restrictions which place unreasonable limits on their use.

D. Deeds of gift: Signed deeds of gift must be executed upon receipt of the collection. This document describes the condition of the gift. Amistad staff can guide donors through this process in advance of the donation.

E. Copyright policy: The copyrights may be retained by the donor, and in this case researchers wishing to publish or reproduce portions of the collection must contact the donor, donor's family, or agent to receive permission.

F. Retrospective collecting and prospective collecting: Attention is given to "filling in gaps" in "major" author collections to assure completeness of first editions or significant editions of an author's work. Lesser known authors' works of fiction, poetry, and drama in the same period are added, especially those that give an impression of publishing trends and literary styles. Preference is given to first editions of works in original bindings. Contemporary authors are collected based on a list of authors whose work is deemed representative of trends and styles in contemporary fiction. All new books by these authors are purchased as they are published to assure comprehensiveness. Following reviews and current writers, other texts are purchased that document trends in genres mentioned above. Preference is given to the acquisition of primary materials, that is, first editions of works or other significant editions. Significant new scholarly editions of works are acquired as are publications of letters, diaries, sketch books, and other primary sources. Biographies of note will be acquired. Critical works are generally not acquired.



Collection Development Policy

2015 rev.

V: Appraisal criteria.

The basic appraisal criteria is the enduring research value weighed against the cost of acquiring, arranging, preserving, and storing the collection as elucidated in Gerald Ham's *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts*. The Center does not limit its collecting activities to the papers of celebrities, politicians, or other recognizable figures, as the content and historical value of the collection is vastly more important than the reputation of the person who generated the records. Some of the Center's richest collections are organizational and institutional records as well as the personal papers of more ordinary citizens who were methodical and skilled collectors.

VI: Procedures for revising and implementing collection policy.

This document is intended as a guide for long-term planning, to ensure that new acquisitions are acquired strategically to serve research interests in the distant future, and as a manual for assisting donors through the initial stages of acquisition. This policy is intended for periodic revision; collection practices should continuously be reevaluated in response to the demonstrated needs of researchers, whether based on expressed need or usage statistics.