

Hoffman Research Library at the Minnesota Genealogy Center

Collection Development Policy

1. Mission

The Minnesota Genealogical Society (MGS), organized in 1969, is a 501(c)3 educational organization whose purpose is to:

- Foster and increase interest in genealogy by providing an association for those interested in family, state, and local history
- Collect, preserve, and publish genealogical and historical records and information
- Hold meetings, classes, and workshops to educate members and the public on current genealogy-related topics.

The goal of MGS and its fifteen Branches, Affiliates, and Interest Groups (MGS partners) located at the Minnesota Genealogy Center (MGC) is to provide education on methods of genealogical research; social activities for individuals with similar genealogical interests; as well as a place for patrons to engage with researchers of similar ancestral backgrounds. With support from its partners, MGS is financially responsible for the Hoffman Research Library (HRL) and the library manager.

2. Vision of the Hoffman Research Library

The HRL is located within the MGC. It supports MGS's mission by providing a wide variety of information such as unique compiled family histories; vital birth, marriage, and death data; military and immigration records; religious records; local histories; historical maps; reference materials on how to conduct genealogy research; access to online subscription databases; and many other areas of research. The primary geographic emphasis includes Minnesota, but also genealogical source materials pertaining to localities from which immigrants came to Minnesota. Because of the rare, fragile, and/or unique nature of the items in the HRL, materials are not available for circulation.

3. Purpose

The purpose of the HRL Collection Development Policy, approved by the MGS Board of Directors, is to provide guidelines to staff and volunteers for selecting, accepting, managing, and withdrawing materials to and from the collection, and to guide long-range planning and resource allocation. In addition, the policy provides a resource to potential donors of materials who may wish to place their materials in our care, so they know what donations will be accepted by the HRL.

4. Collection Development

HRL actively seeks sources which will build on current strengths as well as enhance underrepresented time periods and people. Acquisitions are made through donation or purchase and are based on the ability to properly care for and provide access to the items.

- Scope of Collection

Formats such as print items, monographs, maps, periodicals with significant genealogical content, and electronic materials as long as they are accessible with HRL equipment.

Language materials in English is the predominant focus. However, consideration may be given to non-English materials if they are of significant importance for the various ethnicities represented in the ancestors of Minnesota researchers.

Dates of publication include a range of dates if relevant to the history and topics in the collection. However, materials with outdated information which may be of disservice to patrons may be deaccessioned.

The HRL collection includes materials that record the social and cultural heritage of past and present native, ethnic, immigrant, and religious groups represented in Minnesota. Therefore, it contains, but is not limited to the following secondary sources providing:

- Collated genealogical materials such as collections of family group records, pedigree charts, as well as published or unpublished compiled genealogies
- Civil and religious vital records
- Other records related to deaths and rites of passage
- Census records or their substitutes
- Local histories
- Military and selective service records
- Passenger lists and migration records
- Ethnic and national group records and histories with useful background
- Newspaper clippings of gathered collections of vital information such as birth, marriage and death/obituary articles
- Digital copies of Family Record pages from Family Bibles including title page of the Bible showing the date of publication, and any pages which record dates of births; marriages; deaths; or other important family information
- Minnesota city directories
- Minnesota church directories with significant genealogical information (e.g. genealogical annotations; photographs; index of names)
- Research guides and finding aids
- Bibliographies, record inventories, directories and holdings lists of repositories with genealogical or historical collections
- Plat maps, atlases, maps, gazetteers and place name guides
- Periodicals with genealogical content and their indexes
- Published collected or individual biographies, autobiographies, journals, or other accounts that contain substantial genealogical information, predominantly from the Midwest United States
- Hereditary and lineage society records of qualifying ancestors
- Compiled and published indexes of significant genealogical materials for which MGS does not own the original work

- Selection Criteria

Ultimate responsibility for the selection of materials lies with the library staff within the framework of this policy set by the MGS Board of Directors. Direct selection of library materials is delegated to staff qualified for this duty by education, training, interest, and job classification. Factors considered when adding, maintaining, or deaccessioning material to or from the collection include, but are not limited to the following:

- Relevance to the history of Minnesota and surrounding areas
- Suitability of the subject to the collection
- Available space in the HRL to house materials
- Non-duplication of material within the collection
- Authenticity and completeness of record
- Quality of the physical form of material
- Ease of use for patrons
- Ability to store, display, or otherwise care for the item properly
- Cost to preserve, store, and process
- Security requirements to store and/or display
- Lack of restrictions by donor

HRL makes no attempt to be exhaustive with all of its materials, though it does strive to obtain a well-rounded selection of relevant materials for Minnesota history and people. However, constraints such as, but not limited to: budget, space, staff, and time may impact the feasibility of achieving this goal.

- Donations

HRL welcomes monetary and significant genealogical material donations to its collection with the understanding that such materials become the property of MGS. Therefore, any or all donations may be added to the HRL collections; offered free to other interested repositories or to members; sold; traded; or discarded as deemed appropriate.

All donors must complete a Donation Record form in order to establish the transfer of ownership of donated materials to MGS. Once the Donation Record is signed by the donor, the donated materials become the unrestricted property of MGS.

Except in special circumstances, HRL will refrain from collecting photocopies of material held by other repositories and individuals.

HRL reserves the right to refuse an offered donation; and will not accept material that shows damage from mold, mildew, water, insects, smoke, or dirt, as such material can harm other items in the collection. HRL may also refuse a donation based on the Selection Criteria.

HRL reserves the right to decide how the donated material will be displayed or stored, how the material may be used, and how long the material will be retained. Donated materials may be scanned and placed on the Internet for viewing or otherwise reformatted.

HRL will not, and cannot, conduct any monetary appraisals for donors nor give tax advice. If donors plan to take a tax deduction for their donations, they should consult a tax accountant or attorney. Any monetary appraisals are the responsibility of the donor and should be conducted before transferring materials to HRL.

- Deaccessioning

From time to time, the collection will be reviewed, and the deaccession of some materials may take place. Objects may be deaccessioned if they meet one of the following criteria:

- It does not fall within the scope of HRL's mission or this Collection Development Policy
- It is a photocopy which may violate copyright Fair Use
- It cannot be salvaged, even with conservation, because of advanced deterioration
- HRL is unable to maintain it
- Corporate; non-profit; governmental publications; or school directories that are not milestone or group anniversary editions with significant genealogical component (e.g. genealogical annotations; photographs; index of names)
- Primary materials such as original photo albums and other family heirlooms
- Family history conference syllabi
- Travel/road maps, unless historical in nature
- Picture books of foreign lands or artists of note
- Works of fiction
- Biographies of non-Minnesota notable individuals without significant genealogical information (e.g. genealogical annotations; photographs; index of names)
- Reference materials over 15 years old which may be a disservice to patrons because of outdated or confusing usefulness
- School yearbooks outside of Minnesota and the four contiguous state that border it
- Other criteria at the discretion of the library staff

5. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed by a Collection Development Policy Task Group every five years or as needed.

Approved by the Minnesota Genealogical Society Board of Directors on 20 March 2021.

Portions of this document were added, with permission from collection policies of several repositories, including the Georgia Historical Society. *Georgia Historical Society Research Center Collection Development Policy*. Savannah, Georgia, 2015.