



DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

INFORMATION FOR DONORS

What are Archival Collections?

The Western History and Genealogy Department at the Denver Public Library is dedicated to collecting and sharing resources and services about Western history, genealogy, environmental conservation and the 10th Mountain Division. Our Western history collection supports research related to the geographical area west of the Mississippi. The genealogy, conservation and 10th Mountain Division collections are national and/or international in scope. When we refer to “archival” collections, we are referring to original unpublished papers and records. Published materials may include books, maps, and serial publications. The types of unpublished archival materials we collect include:

For Individuals and Families:

- Correspondence, personal and/or professional
- Articles written or edited
- Journals/Diaries
- Scrapbooks
- Photographs (identified, preferably)
- Drafts of creative work/manuscript drafts
- Research files
- Subject files
- Clippings and/or publicity files
- Legislative files
- Campaign files
- Papers related to community involvement
- Speeches
- Awards (certificates)
- Architectural blueprints, drawings, sketches

For Businesses and Organizations:

- Correspondence
- Photographs (identified, preferably)
- Subject files
- Meeting minutes
- Memos
- Reports
- Long-term budget/financial information
- Program and research files information
- Brochures
- Publicity clippings and announcements
- Awards (certificates)
- Architectural blueprints, drawings, sketches

Exclusions

So that we can devote our time to the preservation of and access to materials with the highest level of research value, we try to exclude certain types of materials from our collections. If you know that the following materials are in your files, it is helpful if you remove them ahead of time:

- Duplicate copies of items already in the collection
- Blank forms
- Personnel files (employee records)
- Records that include sensitive information, such as tax/financial records, account numbers, social security numbers, medical information
- Financial records (EXCEPT historical ledgers, financial planning documents/long-term budget plans, annual reports)
- Material culture and/or miscellaneous objects, such as clothing, fabric, pens, pencils. (EXCEPT items that are unique to the collection, such as an organization's promotional t-shirt)
- Moldy or damaged items
- Direct mail or mass mailings
- Voluminous clippings or old newspapers
- National or widely available publications
- Unidentified photographs, film, or music
- Awards, plaques, trophies
- Photos in frames (we will remove from frames)

Electronic Records

It is important for us to understand your electronic files, so we can describe them for future researchers and aid in their long-term preservation. Some important things to think about as you prepare your electronic records for donation include:

- Who created these materials?
- What is the content? Why is it valuable to preserve?
- What is the context? How was it used?
- What software or computer programs were used? How are the files organized? (file structure and/or file naming conventions)
- Are there any copyright, legal or privacy concerns?
- Is there any Personally Identifiable Information? (Social Security numbers, credit card numbers, medical information, etc.)
- May the library recover deleted information?
- What are your expectations for access and use by researchers?

File Formats

The library does not have the capability to preserve every file format. It might be necessary to migrate materials to another format for long-term preservation before or after the transfer. We will discuss which formats the library can support.

File Transfer

We will work with you to determine the best way to transfer the donation to the library. If you have older media please let us know. For more contemporary electronic files a few options include:

- External media (flash drives, hard drives, CDs/DVDs)
- Email attachments (for smaller donations)
- Cloud services such as Dropbox or Google Drive
- FTP (file transfer protocol)

Deed of Gift Addendum

To complete your donation, you will be asked to fill out an addendum to the Deed of Gift that addresses issues with electronic records.

Some Information on Logistics

Review Committee

All new collections and additions to existing collections must first be approved by the Department's Acquisitions Review Committee prior to being donated to the library. The Review Committee meets monthly. After the committee has approved your donation, we will be in touch with you to arrange the transfer process.

Packing

We ask our donors to keep their materials in their "original order" because this sheds light on the creation and use of the records. It is acceptable for individuals, businesses or organizations to simply transfer their file drawers into cartons or boxes and label the boxes with a marker so that they correspond to the original order of the materials. For instance, your first two boxes may look something like:

Last name/Organization name
Box 1

Last name/Organization name
Box 2

In addition to labeling the boxes, we request that you prepare a box level inventory of the contents of each box in an electronic format. Please print out a copy of the inventory to include with the physical items, and email an electronic version to the Acquisitions Librarian.

A special note about business/organization records: It is very helpful when businesses and organizations clearly identify the office/cluster/staff member who created or used the records in a particular box or series of boxes. Also, if you have current and historical organizational charts, please send them along because it is helpful for us to be able to refer to them.

Transfer to the library

Once all of the material is in boxes, please contact our Acquisitions Librarian to arrange a transfer.

Gift Acknowledgement and Deed of Gift

The donor will complete a Gift Acknowledgement form when the collection is transferred to the library. The donor has the option to indicate if he/she would like items not accessioned by the library to be returned or if the library has the right to dispose of the material as it sees fit. Once the collection is inventoried, a copy of the inventory and a Deed of Gift will be sent to the donor to be reviewed, signed and returned to the library. The Deed of Gift transfers legal ownership of the collection to the library.

Businesses and organizations often have their Boards pass a resolution designating the Denver Public Library as the official repository for the organization's records. This can help make sure successor Board members will continue to add to the collection at the library.

Appraisals

We cannot perform monetary appraisals at the library, but we can provide you with contact information for individuals who can, for a fee, appraise your donation for tax purposes. You can have your collection appraised either before or after it comes to the library.

Storage versus Donation

The Western History and Genealogy Department does not accept collections for the purposes of temporary or long-term storage. All collections must be formally donated to the library via a signed Deed of Gift.

Access and Cataloging

Every archival collection donated to the Denver Public Library receives a catalog record in the Denver Public Library catalog and a box-level inventory, which help researchers understand a collection's contents.

Donors also have the option of having a collection fully processed and having an electronic finding aid created by a staff Archivist. However, this is a costly and time-consuming endeavor, and we rely on grants and monetary donations to undertake these projects. If you are interested in having your collection processed, please contact the Acquisitions Librarian.

Researchers access archival collections in the Mullen Manuscript Room on level 5 of the Central Library. After speaking with a reference librarian at the front desk, researchers fill out an application form and place their belongings in the locker room. While we do not allow bags, pens or food/drink in the room, we invite researchers to bring in laptops and cameras. The Mullen Manuscript room is secure and monitored by a proctor. We encourage the use of photography to help preserve our collections. Researchers can make requests to get scans and photocopies of material depending on condition for a fee.

**Please contact Jamie Seemiller, Acquisitions Librarian,
with any questions:**

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