



How to donate
your papers
or records
to the
ARCHIVES



DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES

Welcome to the Archives

Since 1935, the Denver Public Library Special Collections and Archives (SCA) has grown as the result of generous donations of rare and unique materials. The Library continues to welcome such gifts in order to enhance the research value and diversity of its collections. This guide will help answer your questions about what SCA collects and how to make a donation.

The Scope of the Collection

The Special Collections and Archives (SCA) at the Denver Public Library is dedicated to collecting, preserving and sharing historical resources related to Colorado and the West. The SCA is one department with two locations - the Central Library and the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library (BCL). The collection at the Central Library focuses on Denver and the American West, genealogy, environmental conservation, and the 10th Mountain Division. BCL preserves the heritage and contributions of African Americans in Colorado and the West. We collect records from individuals, families, organizations, businesses and social movements that reflect our diverse and complex history. Your donations will provide community education as well as encourage scholarly research.

Here's a list of the types of archival materials we collect:

For Individuals and Families

(paper, audio-visual, and/or digital):

- Correspondence, personal and/or professional
- Articles written or edited
- Journals/Diaries
- Photographs (identified, unframed)
- Creative work/manuscripts
- Legislative/Campaign files
- Community involvement and advisory board activity
- Speeches

For Businesses and Organizations

(paper, audio-visual, and/or digital):

- Correspondence
- Photographs (identified, unframed)
- Meeting minutes
- Reports
- Annual budget/financial information
- Brochures, fliers, programs
- Bylaws, organizational charts (governance documents)

Items accepted on limited basis:

- Books
- Scrapbooks
- Research files
- Newspaper clippings and/or publicity files
- Awards (certificates only, no trophies or plaques)
- Material culture and/or miscellaneous objects
- Architectural blueprints, drawings, sketches (architectural sets only)
- Art
- Maps
- Artifacts (Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library only)
- Oral histories

Here's a list of the types of archival materials we do not collect:

- Duplicates copies of items already in the collection
- Blank forms
- Personnel files/Membership forms
- Records that include sensitive information, such as tax/financial records, account numbers, social security numbers, medical information
- Financial records (EXCEPT historical ledgers and financial planning documents/long-term budget plans)
- Tax files
- Moldy or damaged items
- Direct mail or mass mailings
- Voluminous clippings or old newspapers
- National or widely available publications
- Unidentified photographs, audio-visual material, or music
- Awards, plaques, trophies

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How to Donate

- **Tell us about your donation** - Please contact us at history@denverlibrary.org to arrange a time to discuss your donation. If you live outside of the Denver metro area, you can email a box-level inventory and/or photos of your donation. Unsolicited drop-offs are not accepted.
- **Staff Review Committee** - All potential donations are reviewed by a committee. Donors will be notified when a decision has been made by the Committee.
- **Transfer** - Once materials are accepted, we will arrange a time to transfer the materials to the library either by staff pickup, donor drop off, mail or electronic transfer.
- **Deed of Gift Form** - During the transfer process, donors fill out a Deed of Gift Form. The Deed of Gift transfers legal ownership of the collection to the library. The donor has the option to indicate if they would like items not retained by the library to either be returned to donor or disposed of as the library sees fit.
- **Inventory and Catalog Record** - Once the materials are transferred, a box level inventory and a catalog record are created. A copy of the inventory will be sent to the donor.
- **Appraisals or Storage** - Library staff will not appraise collections, but we can provide you with contact information for individuals who can, for a fee, appraise your donation for tax purposes. We do 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** - All our collections are cataloged and available in the Denver Public Library online catalog and the Special Collections and Archives archives database. You can access archival collections in person on Floor 5 of the Central Library. The history website has some excellent resources about doing archival research.
- **Adding to a collection** - Donations to existing collections require an inventory and are reviewed by the Staff Review Committee.
- **Additional Services** - The donor can provide funding to help support the care of the collection. This can include processing the collection, a conservation treatment or digitization. All additional services must be reviewed to ensure that resources and staff are available and that the project aligns with the priorities of the library.

Frequently Asked Questions

What do you mean by a box level inventory?

A box-level inventory is a simple inventory that helps us understand what you would like to donate.

For example:

Box 1

Board Minutes 1972-1989

President Correspondence 1990-2000

Brochures, fliers 1970-2000

Can you scan the entire collection and make it available online? We do not typically scan entire collections. We can scan and catalog select items in a collection for an additional scanning fee.

Can the library pay for shipping my collection? We normally ask donors to pay for shipping, but will make exceptions on a case by case basis.

Who owns the collection once it is donated? Once the deed of gift is signed, your donation becomes the legal property of DPL and cannot be given back or returned once it is a part of the DPL collection. This allows the library to properly care for and provide access to the collection.

How can I support the Special Collections and Archives (SCA) at DPL? We invite you to join us as members of the Denver Public Library Friends Foundation. Your designated gifts to the Friends Foundation are dedicated to supporting and enhancing the status of Special Collections and Archives at the Denver Public Library as one of the world's pre-eminent centers for research in Western Americana and related disciplines.

Donations to the Foundation are greatly appreciated. Funds of \$100 or more may be designated for Special Collections and Archives and used to enhance collections, produce programs, and for other ongoing departmental needs not covered by the library's general operating budget. When making this donation, please mention that your gift should go to Special Collections and Archives. For more information: <https://www.dplfriends.org/how-to-help/donate/>