

Archives and Special Collections Collection Development Policy

1. Mission and Overview

A. Mission

Archives and Special Collections collects, preserves, and makes available materials relating to the history and culture of Centenary College of Louisiana and the Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church.

B. History

Archives and Special Collections traces its origins to 1938 when Centenary history professor Darrell Overdyke began collecting manuscript materials related to Centenary's history for the college's library. In 1943, Rev. W. W. Holmes donated to Centenary the *Minutes of the Louisiana Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (1847-1943). In February 1963, Centenary opened its new library, which included the Pierce Cline Room for archives, manuscripts, and rare books; assistant librarians staffed the room on a part-time basis. In June 1963, the Louisiana Conference of the Methodist Church designated Centenary's library as the depository for its historic records. In 1975, Centenary hired its first professional archivist. In 1990, Centenary opened the Sam Peters Building as a facility to house Archives and Special Collections. In 2001, Archives and Special Collections moved from the Sam Peters Building back into Centenary's Magale Memorial Library. In July 2011, Archives and Special Collections became part of the Stewardship department of the Advancement Division of the college. In July 2013, Archives and Special Collections became part of the Philanthropy department of the Advancement Division of the college. In July 2016, Archives and Special Collections began reporting to the Office of the Provost.

2. Types of Programs Supported by the Collections

A. Research

Materials collected and made available shall further the research of Centenary faculty, staff, and students, the general public, and visiting scholars in the history and culture of Centenary and United Methodism in Louisiana. In order to support all levels of research, the Archives and Special Collections shall seek to provide comprehensive resources on the history and culture of Centenary and its predecessor institutions, as well as the Louisiana Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and its predecessor conferences in Louisiana.

B. Preservation and Security

Crucial to the ongoing operation of the Archives and Special Collections program is the preservation of research materials. As collections are processed, they are stored in acid-free containers in storage areas located within Magale Library. Collections are

non-circulating and maintained in closed stacks. In addition, all visitors must register upon arrival and agree to written guidelines governing the use and handling of the collections.

C. Exhibitions

Archives and Special Collections mounts traditional and web-based exhibitions featuring and interpreting materials from the collections. Traditional exhibition areas consist of free standing and wall-mounted exhibit cases. Exhibitions are prepared by Archives and Special Collections staff and student workers. Archives and Special Collections will consider requests to loan reproductions of unrestricted materials for exhibition to other institutions at the discretion of the archivist; proper credit must be given to Centenary College of Louisiana Archives and Special Collections.

D. Outreach and Publications

Archives and Special Collections seeks to further the use and development of the collections through an outreach program that increases public awareness of the nature and relevance of the collections. This program includes exhibitions (see 2.C.), tours of the facilities, presentations by the archivist, and publications such as brochures and newsletter articles. Information about the collections is available in the Archives and Special Collections online catalog and website, the Magale Library online catalog, and national databases such as OCLC. Archives and Special Collections will seek to publicize acquisitions in the news media and professional, scholarly, and popular publications.

E. Acquisitions

Archives and Special Collections acquires materials through internal transfer, donation, bequest, and purchase. Donations of materials and funds are essential to maintaining and developing the collections, and the support of donors is consistently sought. Grant funding for special projects is also sought to contribute to the appraisal, arrangement, exhibition, or preservation of the collections.

3. Clientele Served by the Collections

The policy of Archives and Special Collections is to make materials available to researchers on equal terms, subject to appropriate care and handling by the researcher. Researchers include faculty, staff, and students, both from Centenary College of Louisiana and other academic institutions; staff, clergy, and lay members of the Louisiana Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church; independent researchers; and the general public. All researchers must fill out or have on file a current reader registration form.

4. Priorities and Limitations of the Collections

A. Present Collections Strength

Archives and Special Collections is strongest in the areas of 19th and 20th century materials related to Centenary College of Louisiana, as well as the Louisiana Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and its predecessor conferences.

B. Present Collecting Level

- The College Archives collects the official records of Centenary College of Louisiana and its predecessor institutions: College of Louisiana (1825-1845) and Centenary College [in Mississippi] (1839-1845).
- The Conference Archives, a unit within the Special Collections division, collects the official records of the Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church and its predecessor conferences in Louisiana: Methodist Episcopal Church, South (1846-1939), Methodist Episcopal Church (1869-1939), Methodist Protestant Church (1884-1939), United Brethren (1901-1921), and Methodist Church (1939-1968).
- Special Collections collects the papers of Centenary faculty, staff, students, and alumni. It also collects the papers of clergy and lay persons documenting activities of the Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church and its congregations.

C. Present Identified Weaknesses

Archives and Special Collections is weak in certain areas of 19th and 20th century Centenary and United Methodist history in regards to minorities and ethnic groups. Early college documentation is also incomplete.

D. Desired Level of Collecting

- College Archives collects on a comprehensive level materials pertaining to the administrative functions of Centenary College of Louisiana, including records generated by College presidents, provosts, deans, deliberative bodies, and public relations units.
- Conference Archives collects on a comprehensive level materials pertaining to the administrative functions of Louisiana Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, including records generated by conference offices, district offices, deliberative bodies, and closed local churches.
- Special Collections collects on a selective level papers of Centenary faculty, staff, students, and alumni; priority is given to collections that document activities of Centenary. It also collects on a selective level papers of clergy and lay persons documenting activities of the Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church and its congregations.

E. Geographic Areas Collected

- Louisiana
- Mississippi materials related to Centenary College [in Mississippi] (1839-1845)

F. Chronological Periods Collected

No limitations; primarily 19th and 20th centuries.

G. Subject Areas Collected

Archives and Special Collections collects materials in subject areas specified in 4.B. and 4.C.

H. Languages Collected

Archives and Special Collections primarily collects materials in the English language.

I. Forms of Material Collected

Archives and Special Collections acquires materials in various formats, including monographs, manuscripts, archives, maps, photographs, pamphlets, audio-visual materials, microforms, prints, machine readable records, electronic records, newspapers, sheet music, oral histories, and selected memorabilia.

J. Exclusions

Archives and Special Collections will generally not accept the following:

- materials unrelated to the history of Centenary College of Louisiana or United Methodism in Louisiana
- partial manuscript collections when major portions of the collection have already been deposited in another repository
- artwork and artifacts
- collections of purely genealogical materials
- items that are copies of originals

5. Cooperative Agreements Affecting the Collecting Policy

Archives and Special Collections recognizes that other institutions collect in the same or overlapping areas, and will seek to acquire the same unique resources for their own collections. It is further recognized that other institutions may have prior claim on such materials or be a more appropriate repository to house them. Therefore, opportunities to acquire such materials, as well as those not covered by this collecting policy, will be referred to an appropriate repository. In cases where the legitimate collecting interests of the Archives and Special Collections and another repository directly conflict, the best interest of the scholarly community will be used as a criterion in pursuing a resolution.

6. Statements of Resource Sharing Policy

Archives and Special Collections will consider requests for duplication of materials for inclusion in another repository or exhibition subject to specific limitations imposed by the terms of acquisition and subject to the reproduction policy of the Archives and Special Collections.

7. Statement of Deaccessioning Policy

Duplicates and materials that do not reflect the collecting areas of Archives and Special Collections may be deaccessioned, subject to the terms of acquisition, College regulations, and state and federal laws. Deaccessioned items may be offered to other more appropriate institutions, returned to the donor or donor's family, or discarded.

8. Procedures Affecting Collecting Policy and Its Expedition

A. Deed of Gift

Archives and Special Collections will not accept materials from outside the college or Louisiana Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church without a legal transfer of title, deed of gift or deposit, or other official acknowledgement.

B. Loans and Deposits

Archives and Special Collections will not accept loans or temporary deposits of materials.

C. Closed Collections

Archives and Special Collections will not accept collections of materials that are permanently closed to public.

D. Deaccessioning

Archives and Special Collections reserves the right to deaccession any materials within its collections, subject to the terms of acquisition and the notification of the donor or their heirs.

E. Exhibitions

Archives and Special Collections reserves the right to include unrestricted materials in exhibitions, in accordance with standard archival principles and practices.

F. Revision of Policies

Archives and Special Collections reserves the right to change the preceding policies as necessary, in accordance with recognized professional standards and principles of archival management. However, revisions will not revoke previously negotiated donor agreements.

G. Procedures for Reviewing Collection Development Guidelines

This collecting policy is designed to meet the goals of the Archives and Special Collections. In order to determine the effectiveness of the collecting policy, at the end of each fiscal year, the staff will review the acquisitions, user records, and deaccessions of the preceding twelve-month period. The policy will be re-evaluated and changed as needed to meet the goals of the Archives and Special Collections and Centenary College of Louisiana.

Reviewed and revised: September 11, 2026, Chris Brown.