

Cline Library

## Special Collections and Archives Collection Development Policy

*Last updated June 9, 2021.*

### Overview

Special Collections and Archives (SCA) serves Northern Arizona University (NAU) and community researchers as a repository of archival (primary source) and published (secondary source) materials that relate to the human and natural history of Northern Arizona University, the Colorado Plateau, and the broader geographic region. The department acquires materials with myriad formats within this geographic framework, striving to address gaps in existing holdings and collect as many perspectives and reflect human diversity as much as possible. Through collaboration, SCA seeks to increase awareness of and provide access to collections focused on under-documented and otherwise marginalized subjects, topics, and people.

The Special Collections and Archives Collection Development Policy supports Cline Library's [strategic goals](#).

### Accessions

**Accession** - *Materials physically and legally transferred to a repository as a unit at a single time; an **acquisition**. To take legal and physical custody of a group of records or other materials and to formally document their receipt. To document the transfer of records or materials in a register, database, or other log of the repository's holdings.*

**Acquisition** - *The process of seeking and receiving materials from any source by transfer, donation, or purchase. Materials physically and legally transferred to a repository as a unit at a single time; an **accession**.*

The Head of SCA, together with the Archivist for Collections Management and other SCA staff, evaluates potential acquisitions and makes decisions about accessions and deaccessions. Collections being considered for accession to the

Cline Library SCA will be reviewed using the department's general collecting criteria, detailed below. Accession decisions will be made as quickly as possible after materials are offered for donation to the department. SCA commits to open and transparent communication with donors regarding acquisition decisions.

SCA may choose not to acquire materials which otherwise fit its collecting criteria due to:

- significant literary and legal rights conflicts, or the possibility thereof;
- issues related to rights of possession for Native American archival materials, as outlined in the [\*Protocols for Native American Archival Materials\*](#), or the possibility thereof;
- issues regarding cultural sensitivity, or the possibility thereof;
- issues regarding personal or third-party privacy, or the possibility thereof;
- records management issues, or the possibility thereof;
- poor physical condition of materials (e.g. pest infestation, mold damage, degraded media);
- resource or financial implications for access, use, preservation, or conservation.

SCA adheres to the guidelines laid out in the [\*Protocols for Native American Archival Materials\*](#) (2006) in its collection development and management activities. SCA staff initiate conversations with donors who hold and wish to donate Native American archival materials to explain and contextualize the department's commitment to the *Protocols for Native American Archival Materials* and their implications for proffered donations. SCA endeavors to consult with donors, cultural and tribal partners, and other relevant parties to understand the implications of acquiring or choosing not to acquire such materials.

All decisions regarding accessions are made with resource and staffing implications in mind. SCA may decline an accession where the department determines that it cannot provide responsible care for materials of any format. These include materials which are extensively damaged, fragile, and/or obsolete or near-obsolete, or whose physical or digital storage needs exceed the department's available space or capacity. SCA commits to open and transparent communication and consultation with donors who wish to donate archival materials which may exceed SCA's capacity and resources for responsible stewardship.

Please [contact the department](#) to learn more.

## General Collecting Criteria

## Material Types and Formats

### Published Materials (Special Collections)

***Published material** - published material includes, but is not limited to books, journals, magazines, motion pictures, websites, CD-ROMs, videotapes, sound recordings, and other document formats. These may be works that are widely distributed, especially by a commercial publisher, as well as works of limited distribution, such as those issued by a vanity press or professional literature.*

SCA collects and acquires published material (also referred to as secondary sources) which fits its general collecting criteria, within the broader collecting policies of Cline Library. These materials are collectively referred to as "Special Collections." Special Collections encompasses publications and sources of information in many different formats (e.g. books, journals, maps, films, audio recordings) focused on the Colorado Plateau/Four Corners region.

### Archival Materials (Colorado Plateau Archives & NAU Archives)

***Archival material** - materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs that are preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator. Examples of archival materials include correspondence; ledgers and diaries; government, church, and business records; oral histories; audio recordings; photographs, motion pictures, and videos; audiovisual and multimedia materials; maps and land records; microforms; and blueprints.*

SCA collects and acquires archival (unpublished) material that fits its general collecting criteria. The "Archives" in SCA are unique, archival, primary source materials which exist in their most original state and in their original context, including relationship(s) between items and among records.

## Geographic Focus

SCA collects archival (primary source) and published (secondary source) materials which focus on the geographic region of the Colorado Plateau and Four Corners area of the American Southwest. Please review [this map of the Colorado Plateau](#) (NAU.MAP.548.1) to learn more.

Materials related to other parts of Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Colorado, southern Nevada, and southeastern California may also be considered for acquisition.

## Subject or Topical Focus

### Northern Arizona University History

SCA accepts transfers of permanent historical records of Northern Arizona University, including presidential papers, administrative records, and materials which document campus activities. Such records must not be in active use at the time of transfer. SCA adheres to the [guidance laid out by the Arizona State Library Archives and Records Program \(ASLPR\)](#) in determining the permanent historic value of records created and kept by Northern Arizona University. Please [contact the department](#) to learn more.

### Colorado Plateau

The primary collection emphasis is the human and natural history of the Colorado Plateau, including geology, politics, natural resources, economy, peoples and cultures (both Indigenous and immigrant), water and land use, recreation, linguistics, art, religion, environment, and tourism.

## Deaccessions

*[Deaccession](#) - the process by which an archives, museum, or library permanently removes accessioned materials from its holdings; to remove archival resources from intellectual and physical custody*

The Head of SCA, in collaboration with the Archivist for Collections Management and other SCA staff, makes decisions about deaccessions. Deaccession decisions will be made periodically, on a case-by-case basis. Please [contact the department](#) to learn more.

*To explore Special Collections and Archives' Collection Development Policy in depth, please [contact the department](#).*