



Types of Material Collected

The American Heritage Center (AHC), is the University of Wyoming's manuscripts repository, rare books library, and university archives. We are among the largest non-governmental repositories in the nation, and in 2010 were awarded the archival profession's highest honor in recognition of our innovations, the "depth and scope" of our operations, our outstanding service, and our efficiency.

The AHC acquires specific primary source material relating to its core collecting areas: Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain West (including but not limited to politics, settlement, and western trails), environment and conservation, the mining and petroleum industries, Western political and business leadership, air and ground transportation, the entertainment industry (particularly radio, television, film, and popular music),

journalism, and U.S. military history. In addition, the AHC maintains one of the largest and finest collections of rare books between the Mississippi and the West Coast, and is glad to consider donations to that collection. The AHC is also the archives for the University of Wyoming, and accepts materials documenting student life as well as teaching materials from faculty and administrative records of UW's various units. The AHC is a public research repository, and accepts donations of collections with the primary purpose of making those collections available to students, scholars, and the general public.



A student worker retrieves collections material from an AHC storage room.



Geology Department, University of Wyoming, 1916. Samuel H. Knight Papers, American Heritage Center.

As is true for almost every repository in the country, we usually do not accept everything that is offered to us because of staff and space constraints as well as a desire to present future researchers with collections of utmost value to their work. One of our archivists can help you determine what documents or materials fall within the scope of the repository, and please, never hesitate to ask if you have questions.

Personal Papers for Individuals

The AHC accepts donations of as little as a single item and as large as hundreds of boxes. Material need not be organized; it need

not be “old”; and it need not relate to a famous individual, event, or organization in order for it to be historically significant. Generally, however, we are more interested in a coherent body of material rather than individual items; photos, tapes, and films should be identified. We ask that historical material itself not be mailed or dropped off without first consulting with the staff; our repository must evaluate all material offered and we will ask the donor to sign a donation agreement.

While it is important that AHC staff be permitted when possible to survey analog or digital papers and records in order to determine which materials have enduring historical value, listed below are types of materials that are often valuable to a researcher. ***This list is suggestive and not definitive***, but illustrates the wide range of documentation sometimes useful for historical research.

As a general rule, we hope to be able to preserve material that gives insights into a donor’s professional activities and accomplishments, but also to his/her relationships (community, family, friends, and professional connections), thoughts and opinions (sometimes captured in letters/email, diaries, blogs, or Facebook pages), and civic/political/social/business/philanthropic involvement.

If you have any questions about this list, please ask a member of our staff.

AHC Generally Acquires (*in either analog or electronic forms*):

- Letters.
- Memoirs/reminiscences.
- Diaries.
- E-mail.

- Scrapbooks/photo albums/snapshot of Facebook page.
- Professional papers.
- Genealogical information.
- Speeches/lectures (final drafts).
- Rare books.
- Business and organizational records.
- Final drafts of unpublished works (on occasion earlier drafts



Student using materials in the Reading Room at the American Heritage Center.

- can be important, as with scripts for a groundbreaking television special).
- Legal documents.
- Minutes/reports.
- Visual materials produced by the donor such as posters, designs, blue prints, etc.
- Publications, scripts, music, or other materials written by the donor.
- Brochures and flyers.
- Photographs (labeled)—standard and digital.
- Films/videos/audio tapes or CDs/DVDs (labeled).
- Personal Web sites (snapshot) and podcasts.

Files relating to the individual’s civic, business, religious, political, and social activities may also be of interest (please see “Records from Organizations and Institutions”).

AHC generally does not acquire:

- Personal financial records including checks or income tax returns.
- Greeting cards (unless they contain substantive correspondence).
- “Junk” mail/email spam.
- Medical records.
- Duplicates of any items.
- General readership books, periodicals, or other printed material not written by or about the donor (rare books or special collections of books, periodicals, or pamphlets of unique historical interest may be collected by the AHC).
- Art and artifacts.
- Early drafts, galleys, proofs, and final drafts of published works.

Records from Organizations and Institutions

Some of the records produced by an organization have long-term value. The AHC is interested in the records that best illustrate the purpose, activities, and policies of an organization. Such documents usually represent an “end product”—a final

report, for example, instead of a draft. We are more interested in related groups of materials rather than individual items. Records should be inactive—that is, no longer regularly used for routine business. Before records are transferred to the AHC, an archivist should survey the organization's papers *or* speak with knowledgeable staff to determine which materials have enduring historical value. Listed below are some of the types of documentation that the AHC often preserves for historical and administrative research. ***This list is suggestive and not exclusive.***

Listed below are some of the types of documentation which the AHC often preserves, ***in either analog or digital form***, for historical and administrative research. If you have any doubts or questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

- Annual and/or quarterly financial records.
- Architectural records.
- Articles of incorporation, charters.
- Audio recordings.
- Budgets (annual).
- Bylaws and revisions.
- Clippings (about the organization).
- Constitution and revisions.
- Correspondence of officers.
- Directories.
- E-mails.
- Financial ledgers up to 1900.
- Handbooks.
- Legal documents.
- Memoranda.
- Minutes of meetings.
- Membership lists.
- Motion picture film and videotape (labeled).
- Newsletters and other publications (generated by the organization).
- Organizational charts.
- Personnel rosters, directories, and similar records (if not confidential).
- Printed material including pamphlets, brochures, catalogs, newsletters, periodicals, etc.
- Photographs (labeled)--standard and digital.
- Planning documents.
- Podcasts.
- Press releases.
- Reports (annual, committee, etc.).
- Rosters.
- Scrapbooks.

- Speeches.
- Topical files.
- Web sites.

The AHC, like most repositories, may not accept everything that is offered to us because of staff and space constraints. An archivist can help you determine what documents or materials fall within the scope of the repository.

Material Generally Not Having Research Value

While there may be exceptions, the following types of material are usually not accepted by the AHC as collections or parts of collections:

- Personnel time cards, payroll documents, or personally confidential files.
- Day-to-day financial records such as bank statements, canceled checks, receipts, daily balances.
- Drafts and mock-ups of graphics material (e.g., brochures, posters, pamphlets).
- Invoices.
- Duplicates.
- General readership books, periodicals, or other printed material not written by the donor. (Rare books or special collections of books, periodicals, or pamphlets of unique historical interest may be collected by the AHC.)
- Art and artifacts



Charles J. Belden collection, American Heritage Center.

Additional Important Information

The information in the following paragraphs is adapted from the Society of American Archivists' *A Guide to Donating Your Personal or Family Papers to a Repository* (<http://www2.archivists.org/publications/brochures/donating-familyrecs>) and *A Guide to Donating Your Organizational Records to a Repository* (<http://www2.archivists.org/publications/brochures/donating-orgrecs>).



Students studying collection materials in the AHC Owen Wister Western Writer's Reading Room.

Donations. The AHC can only invest materials and labor in the preservation of items which it owns. Therefore, we accept donations of collections, but will not accept such material on deposit or on loan. Donors are asked to sign a donation agreement, which formally signifies that the papers become the actual property of the archives.

Restrictions on Access. Sensitive material that may exist in a collection should not be removed by the donor. Instead, the donor should discuss with the archivist the possibility of restricting part of the collection to protect the privacy of the donor or others. While the AHC desires to make all papers freely accessible to researchers, we will agree to reasonable and equitable restrictions for limited periods of time.

Copyright. Assignment of copyright is often complex, and AHC staff will be glad to discuss this with you. Generally, copyright belongs to the creator of writings and other original material (such as photos and music), but can be legally transferred to heirs or others. Moreover, ownership of copyright is separable from ownership of the physical item (the letter or photo). The AHC asks donors to donate not only the physical papers but also any copyright in them that the donor might own. This request is made to make it easier for researchers to use quotations from the papers in their work. However, the AHC will consider donation of the physical material without donation of copyright.

Conditional Gifts. The AHC is not able to promise that donated materials will be placed on exhibit or used in some other specific fashion as a condition of accepting the gift.

Monetary Appraisals for Tax Deductions. In certain circumstances, it may be possible for a donor to take a tax deduction for the donation of a manuscript collection to a repository. Donors are encouraged to speak with their tax accountants or attorneys about this possibility. **Repository staff cannot give tax advice, nor are they permitted to appraise the monetary value of a collection.** AHC staff may be able to provide you with a list of local manuscript appraisers who can (for a fee) make monetary appraisals for the donor. It is up to the donor to arrange for and bear the cost of any such appraisal. One place to start is with the American Society

of Appraisers, <http://www.appraisers.org/ASAHome.aspx>.

Monetary Donations. The AHC is part of the University of Wyoming, and is therefore a non-profit educational organization. Preparing papers for use by researchers is the most expensive operation in a repository. Although such grants are NOT a prerequisite for the acceptance of a collection, donors who are able to assist us by making grants or establishing endowments toward the arrangement, cataloging, digitization (for web access), and/or conservation of their donations of papers are encouraged to discuss this possibility with AHC staff.



Photo from the movie set, *The Lady Eve*, with Barbara Stanwyck's handwriting noting, left to right, Henry Fonda, Preston Sturges, and herself.



Digital Scan Lab, American Heritage Center.

THE FIRST WOMAN GOVERNOR

Wyoming's Governor

THE WOMAN WHO MADE GOOD



NELLIE TAYLOE ROSS
Businesslike—Able—Courageous. She Has Earned Re-election

1926 campaign brochure cover from the Nellie Tayloe Ross Papers, American Heritage Center.

AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER

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Location

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ahc@uwyo.edu (General)
ahcref@uwyo.edu
(Reference Dept.)
www.uwyo.edu/ahc

Hours of Operation

Monday, 10am-9pm
Tuesday-Friday, 8am-5pm

Director

Mark Greene
307-766-2474

Associate Director

Rick Ewig
307-766-6385

Geology Collections

Ginny Kilander
307-766-2553

Collections Manager

William Hopkins
307-766-6836

Toppan Rare Books Library

Anne Marie Lane
307-766-2565

For questions not relating to donations
of collections, contact our Reference Desk
307-766-3756



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