

The Carl Albert Center Congressional Archives Collection Development Policy

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Updated: 2021, 2023 April by JA Pryse, Senior Archivist III

Purpose

The Carl Albert Center Congressional Archives is home to one of the largest collections of congressional papers in the country. The Center houses the papers of 61 former members of congress, most of which served Oklahoma, along with the papers of 25 political leaders, congressional staffers, and journalists. The Center also holds the Political Communication Collection which is the largest collection of political commercials in the world and only comprehensive collection that covers all levels of political campaigning from Presidential elections to ballot initiatives. The Center's Collection Development Policy provides a framework for the acquisition of original materials to support the Center's mission to embraces three principal functions – teaching, research and public service.

Collection Rationale

The archive predominantly collects the papers of members of Congress and other elected officials from the Southern Plains region of the United States, but may also accept material from the following individuals or organizations:

- former members of Congress from all states
- individuals from Oklahoma with a career in national or congressional politics
- political organizations from the state of Oklahoma
- public or private entities with unique political commercials

The Center seeks collection materials through donation that fulfills the above criteria. Acquisitions that do not fall into existing collecting priorities may be made in anticipation of changing research needs and interests. In evaluating a prospective acquisition, the Center also considers the attendant costs of processing, housing, preserving, and providing long-term access. The Center reviews its Collection Development Policy on a periodic basis.

Collection Methods

Collecting materials for the Center's repository is the responsibility of members of the Center, to complement their own subject expertise, and have consulted with Archive specialists. The Director is responsible for the supervision and coordination of all collection development activities and must approve new acquisitions.

General Collection Priorities

At the discretion of the Director, the archive collects the following material in both electronic and paper formats:

Correspondence (including email files)

The Center actively collects correspondence of former members of congress, other individuals with close ties to congressional politics. Correspondence of a substantive nature, e.g., emails, letters and memos discussing or communicating information to a limited number of individuals electronic email selected should be donated on electronic device.

Legislative, Departmental, Campaign, Speeches, and other Press Materials (including research files)

The Center acquires a core collection of printed or electronic format materials which include: the papers and related materials of members of the Oklahoma delegation to the U.S. Congress; papers and related materials of Oklahoma political representative selected or appointed to government office; family and personal papers and related materials of Oklahoma politicians and officials elected or appointed to government office during their careers prior to or after their terms in office; and papers and related materials of individuals and/or organizations from Oklahoma involved in policymaking, local, or national public service which supports the mission of the Center.

Photographic Materials

The Center collects single works as well as carefully assembled collections that enhance our established holdings. The Center selectively acquires the working archives including negatives, contact sheets, prints, paper, and electronic media which meet the selection criteria described in 'Electronic records'.

Audio-visual material (including political advertisements/commercials)

The Center collects non-print materials related to the mission and collection rationale and supports the goals of the Archive. Audiovisual material includes, but is not limited to, formats of film, video and audio tape, video and audio discs, computer files and machine readable or encoded data embodying sound

and/or moving images; the distinctive technologies by which their content is reproduced and made accessible (obsolete playback equipment). Duplicate or existing, published audiovisual materials found on public databases will not be retained by the Center.

Electronic records, web archives, and social media channels

The Center collects web-based and born digital materials designated as open access, open content, and available via Internet, comprised of electronic documents, photographs, moving images, audio recordings, and other types of open access records, which meet the mission and collection rationale of the Center.

The Center actively pursues web archives both as independent collections as well as supplements to existing collections. Web archive collections include domain-specific web crawls which are curated based upon existing collection development interests of the Center.

Social media materials collected include services such as Twitter and Facebook that meet the mission and collection rationale of the Center. Materials collections may include captures related to groups and individuals whose records are within the Center's repository or are related directly topics of importance to the future collection of materials for the Center's repository. Collected or captured content follows the terms of service of the individual platforms.

Exclusions

Materials not collected or retained by the Center fall into three broad categories: materials better suited to other repositories, legal or rights issues, and materials duplicative of our current holdings. The archive restricts the collection of the following materials:

- Materials have no clear transfer of title;
- Three dimensional memorabilia (examples: plaques, awards, or trophies);
- Invitations and greeting cards;
- Personnel files;
- Published papers or material (examples: books, reports, or complete issues of newspapers, journals, or magazines);
- Materials duplicate digital collections found elsewhere;
- Collections exceed available resources.

Material excluded from the bounds of the collection criteria will be accessioned and returned to the donor (based on donor agreements), gifted/transferred to a more appropriate repository, or discarded.

Additional Information and Deed/Gift Agreement

All acquisitions, donations, and gifts accepted require approval from the Director of the Center. To ensure proper legal measures are taken with a collection, the archive requires a deed to be drawn for the gift. The deed acts as a contract for the opening of the collection and delineates all restrictions that will be placed on certain materials.

Additionally, the Center is not able to appraise gift items, and any appraisal information used by the donor for tax purposes. Gifts become the property of the Center which reserve the right to dispose of materials not chosen for inclusion in the collections, unless otherwise stated in the approved and signed Deed of Gift.

Polices, Agreements, and Use Information

For a list of the Center's polices and agreements, please visit the [Archives Resource Policies page](#).

Access and Use

It is the goal of the Center's Archives to provide open and equitable access to as much of the collections as possible while protecting confidential, restricted, and regulated information. Use of the materials within the Archives must comply with the Center's polices and procedures related to commercial use of trademarked names, identifying marks, or other restrictions.

Donating to the Archives

Please contact the Senior Archivist or Director of the Center if you would like further information about donating materials to the Archives at cacarchives@ou.edu and japryse@ou.edu or call 405-325-5835.