



COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Georgia Historical Society (GHS) is the premier, independent, statewide educational and research institution responsible for collecting, examining, and teaching Georgia and American history. Founded in 1839, GHS is the oldest continuously operating historical society in the South and one of the oldest in the nation. Since its founding nearly 200 years ago, GHS has fulfilled its mission to collect, examine, and teach history by collecting, preserving, and providing access to primary and secondary sources that fit its mission; maintaining archives and library buildings for the preservation of its collection; and by creating and maintaining a research center where scholars, teachers, students, and the general public may explore and study documents and other archival materials that provide a window on the past. These primary and secondary sources form the foundation upon which all GHS educational resources, public programs, historical scholarship, historical markers, and teacher training are based and thus help to foster a deeper understanding of the present and shape a better future.

MATERIALS COLLECTED

Acceptance of materials is limited to those collections that have a primary emphasis on Georgia and/or Georgians and their significance in the history of the United States. This does not preclude the acquisition of materials that focus on other states (particularly in the South) or the nation in general, especially if those materials describe conditions or events influencing Georgia and its development.

ACQUISITIONS

GHS actively seeks primary and secondary sources that will build on current strengths as well as enhance underrepresented time periods and people and contribute to specific areas of focus identified by GHS leadership. These acquisitions are made through donation, deposit, or purchase and are approved by the President and CEO and/or the Executive Vice President/COO in accordance with the purchasing and deposit policies. Acquisitions will also be based on the ability to properly care for the items. Therefore, financial support that accompanies donated materials and facilitates their timely processing are especially welcomed and encouraged.

Primary sources include, but are not limited to, the following: personal and professional papers and correspondence, including letters and emails; corporate archives and business records; family letters and Bibles; personal financial records; journals and diaries; genealogical records and research; rare and/or first edition books; and photographs, prints, postcards, maps, architectural drawings, speeches, lectures, unpublished writings, and newspaper or other media clippings that illuminate a person's life and career or that of a business or organization.

These primary sources may be both hard copy and digital-born format (materials that originate in digital form). Digital-born collections may contain a wide variety of digital content including documents and spreadsheets, images, audio, video, text, email, databases, architectural designs, scientific data sets, geographical data, one-of-a-kind software, and website and social media records.

Secondary sources include monographs, general histories, biographies, articles, pamphlets, and other materials that interpret and analyze Georgia history, and include books written by Georgia authors (fiction and nonfiction), even if the subject is not Georgia. Secondary sources may also include genealogical source materials pertaining to states from which immigrants came to Georgia, specifically Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, and New England as well as materials related to migration/movement from other parts of the world such as Africa and the West Indies.

Except in special circumstances, GHS will refrain from collecting photocopies of material held by other repositories and individuals. Although GHS prefers not to collect materials with access restrictions, collections that can be opened upon the donor's death or within a reasonable period of time (not to exceed 25 years) will be considered. GHS will not accept collections that are closed to public access in perpetuity.

If GHS determines previously accessioned materials are unsuitable for its collections, those materials will be deaccessioned in accordance with donor restrictions as stated on the Deed of Gift form and the GHS Board-approved Deaccession Policy.

COOPERATIVE COLLECTING

GHS recognizes that the collection focus of other institutions may replicate or be very similar to that of our own. In some instances, there may be a more appropriate repository available for materials initially offered to GHS. In an effort to establish institutional cooperation while adhering to the Development policy of GHS, materials under such consideration will be referred to an appropriate repository. If the legitimate collecting interests of GHS and another repository directly conflict, GHS will consider the best interests of the materials and the research community in pursuing an amiable resolution.

In keeping with national standards for best practices, acquisitions are not capitalized and are not considered a financial asset of the Georgia Historical Society.

COLLECTING AREAS / SCOPE

Types of Material Collected:

- Paper archival records (including letters, diaries, maps, architectural drawings, meeting minutes, genealogies, business records, etc.)
- Photographic material and portraits
- Books and pamphlets (including rare, first editions, contemporary publications, current historical studies, published county history/genealogical materials, books about Georgia and by Georgia authors, both non-fiction and fiction, etc.)
- Artifacts (usually accompanying archival collections)
- Audio-visual materials (including magnetic and digital media)
- Born digital records (including digital images and documents)

GHS collection strengths:

- Colonial period
- Revolutionary War/Early National period
- Antebellum era, especially politics, military, plantation records
- Civil War
- Savannah, Atlanta, Georgia
- Architectural drawings and photographic materials
- Native American (Cherokee and Creek)
- African American, especially pertaining to slavery
- Georgia Businesses and Business Leaders
- Georgia and Georgians in World War II

GHS collection opportunities for growth:

- New South industrial development
- Post-World War II era
- Civil Rights era
- Women's history and studies
- Areas of Georgia outside of Savannah and Atlanta
- Science and industry
- Technology, such as biomedical research and artificial intelligence
- Environmental studies
- Hispanic history
- Legal history
- Music, portraits, film, writing and other forms of art and entertainment that as primary sources shed light on the state's historical development

Collection types GHS is actively collecting:

- Materials that build on existing strengths and address opportunities for growth
- Materials related to the second half of the twentieth century (esp. Civil Rights Movement) and the twenty-first century
- Papers of contemporary statewide/national public figures
- Collections or portions of collections of relevant materials compiled by individuals
- Papers and research files of scholars researching Georgia history and related subjects
- Records of businesses, corporate archives, and related organizations
- Personal papers and records of prominent Georgians in the fields of business, law, military, science, and environment
- Methods of Collecting
- Donations by individuals and organizations, including bequests and anonymous gifts
- Transfer from local and state government entities
- Acquisitions by trade or exchange with other collecting institutions
- Purchases from auctions, dealers, vendors and individuals
- Abandoned materials; objects in collections for which the institution has presumed ownership after a good faith effort to locate and return to owner. See [GA Code § 10-1-529.4 \(2014\)](#)