

Rare Books and Special Collections Collection Development Policy

January, 2012

I. Introduction

Rare Books and Special Collections at Northern Illinois University Library includes those materials that, because of subject coverage, rarity, source, condition, or form, are best handled separately from the General Collection. The primary materials held in RBSC are an integral part of the educational experience, in keeping with the public research and teaching missions of Northern Illinois University. We provide students, faculty, staff, and individual users from the general public at all levels an opportunity to interact with hands-on history, and to perform in-depth research, particularly in areas related to popular culture in the United States. The nature, extent, and depth of the collection have grown with that purpose to date, although the nature of the collections is always subject to review and extension depending on the research needs of the entire community.

II. Criteria for Consideration for Inclusion in the Rare Books Collection (10,297 vols.)

All inclusion decisions are ultimately made by the Curator on a case-by-case basis. Materials that meet these guidelines are *not guaranteed* to be accepted into the Rare Books Collection; the Curator may opt not to add particular items due to condition, space issues, or other considerations.

A. Date of Publication.

The simplest general guideline for materials to be included is the publication date of the book. The cut-off dates for inclusion of material with various imprints are listed below with a brief explanation of the choice of date:

1. European publications before 1801. Teaching examples of representative types of publications from this period should be sought after (i.e. herbals, early mathematical texts, emblem books, incunabula, etc.). The 18th Century English collection at Northern Illinois University Libraries is surprisingly strong, and opportunities to add to it should be seized. Where appropriate, the Curator will continue to transfer any remaining such material from the open shelves.
2. United States imprints before 1840 (or later in the cases of certain states as indicated in the attached table) that best complement the subject collections and Rare Books Collection, at the discretion of the Curator.
3. First or early editions of United States fiction to 1865. While material in this category has, in years past, been assigned to the Rare Books Collection, the American Popular Literature collection (III.B.3) holds this category of material, and is the most appropriate location for it. Authors whose works bridge the 1865 cut-off date have had their works

assigned to SpCol-American Popular Literature. When staffing permits, pre-1865 American fictional imprints should be transferred from RBX to APL as well.

4. Confederate States Imprints, 1861-1865.

5. Canadian imprints.

a. Eastern Provinces (Ontario and east): prior to 1851.

b. Western Provinces (west of Ontario): prior to 1900.

6. Latin American imprints before 1851. Although the Spanish introduced the printing press to the new world in the 1540's, production remained small until well into the 19th Century. Special attention should be given to non-religious material printed before 1851.

7. Books printed in Australia, New Zealand and Africa before 1871. Printing was introduced at a late date in these areas and early imprints are scarce.

8. Asian imprints before 1851; Asian Imprints in English before 1871. Printing began in Asia (Japan, Korea, and China) ca. 800 A.D. Early imprints are extremely scarce, and even 19th Century imprints present difficult dating problems. It is unlikely that the University Libraries will find or acquire material in this area.

B. A Market Value of \$700 or More

1. When it can be satisfactorily determined, the market value (i.e. current retail price) of a book may serve as a good indication as to whether or not a book should be included in the Rare Book Collection. The figure of \$700 is arbitrary and subject to revision as inflation directs. Keep in mind that market value is often arbitrary, and should not be used as a sole criteria for inclusion in RBSC collections: trends or fads in collecting may cause wild variations in book prices from year to year.

C. Editions of a Book.

1. First Editions. The fact is that a work is a "first edition" does not necessarily mean that it should be included in the Rare Books Collection. Each title should be individually evaluated and selected on the basis of its literary or historical importance, rarity, current market value, condition, and the Northern Illinois University Libraries' holdings and collecting goals. For textual analysis, it is important in many cases to possess not only the first but later editions of a work.

2. Duplicates. It cannot be this library's policy to collect duplicates. However, it should be noted that books printed in the hand-press period (before 1820) are rarely exact duplicates because numerous in-the-press corrections were usually made in each sheet printed, then the sheets were gathered into books with many possible combinations of variant states of the sheets going into one book. It is therefore suggested that duplicates of pre-1800 imprints be retained until it can be ascertained that they are exact duplicates. At that point, the poorer copy (considering binding, paper condition, paper

size, and freshness) will be considered for exchange as the Curator of Rare Books may decide. For exact duplicates of a later period, retention will be the decision of the Curator of Rare Books on a case by case basis.

3. Limited Editions, Signed Copies. Significant books signed by their authors and/or limited to editions of 500 copies or fewer should be considered for inclusion in the Rare Books Collection. Certain publications, though issued in larger limited editions, should be considered on an individual basis, taking into account the date, size of edition, printing quality, association interest (signature of author, designer, printer, illustrator, etc.). The Curator of Rare Books will decide on inclusion or exclusion in such cases.

4. Books In Unusual Or Special Formats Requiring Special Care:

- a. Miniature books measuring less than 7.5 cm high (about 3").
- b. Early maps not assigned to the map library (e.g. maps designed to accompany volumes in the Rare Books Collection)
- c. Early or valuable broadsides, posters, etc.
- d. Books with moving parts or additional removable materials (inserts, maps, etc.)

D. Association Copies.

Copies of books bearing autographs, marginalia, or bookplates of prominent persons. Such books indicate possible influences upon their former owners and can thus be identified as source works for the study of an author. "Prominent" should be taken to mean recognized literary or historical figures, the final decision resting with the Curator.

E. Non-Book Materials.

This category includes material illustrative of the history of books and printing. Such "non-book" materials as scrolls, palm-leaf books, clay tablets, and printing equipment might be included as examples of the development of the book.

F. Fine Printing and Binding.

Material in this category emphasizes the aesthetics of the book as an object rather than its content. In cases of overlapping with the Private Press Collection (SpCol), the volume should be assigned to SpCol-Private Press. The cut-off date for material included under this heading is 1850 (material later than 1850 is assigned to SpCol-Book Arts).

1. Representative Examples of Fine Printing and of The Work of Noted Printers and Type Designers (e.g. Baskerville, Bodoni, Didot). An exhaustive list of persons whose works would be included would be difficult to compile. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis by the Curator.

2. Books Bound by Famous Binders or Binderies (Edwards of Halifax, for example), including Fore-edge Paintings. Very few items are likely to be added to the collection on the basis of binding alone.
3. Books Bound In Unusual Materials Which Require Special Handling and Care (e.g. especially fragile bindings, bindings with bosses, clasps, etc.).
4. Books Containing The Work of Famous Illustrators In First or Early Editions, Especially Color Plate Books and Those With Tipped-in Illustrations. Illustrators included, for example, would be Blake, Hogarth, Bewick, Vertue, Eisen, etc.

G. Manuscripts.

At the present time, the Rare Books Collection contains a small amount of manuscript material. Future acquisitions of manuscript collections will either be added as separate special collections or processed for the manuscript special collection (see III-B-22, SpCol-Manuscripts). Updating catalog records to reflect the presence of manuscript material in printed items should be completed whenever possible. For material which is laid-in volumes, the laid-in material should be removed and, if it is important, placed in a separate folder marked with the same call number as the volume receives. A file of these separate folders will be maintained in the Manuscript Special Collection.

H. Books On Local History.

At present, the Rare Books Collection does not anticipate making an effort to acquire material in this subject area. When any such material is acquired, the Director of Regional History Center should be consulted to determine whether the material would best be housed in the Archives, in the Regional History Center, or in the Rare Books Collection.

I. Exotica.

Pornography or sensational literature will not be included solely on the basis of its sensationalism, but will be included if it meets other criteria for Rare Books or Special Collections.

Table of Cut-Off Dates for Americana Imprints

Alabama 1865

Alaska: 1910

Arizona: 1890

Arkansas: 1865

California: San Francisco 1865

California: Los Angeles: 1885

Colorado: See SpCol- Colorado-Henkle

Connecticut: 1839

Delaware: 1839

District of Columbia: 1839

Florida: 1865

Georgia: 1839

Hawaii: 1890

Idaho: 1890

Illinois: 1865

Illinois: Chicago: 1871

Indiana: 1849

Iowa: 1865

Kansas: 1870

Kentucky: 1839

Louisiana: 1865

Maine: 1839

Maryland: 1839

Massachusetts: 1839

Michigan: 1849

Minnesota: 1865

Mississippi: 1865

Missouri: 1850

Montana: 1890

Nebraska: 1879

Nevada: 1890

New Hampshire: 1839

New Jersey: 1839

New Mexico: 1876

New York: 1839

North Carolina: 1839

North Dakota: 1890

Ohio: 1849

Oklahoma: 1880

Oregon: 1880

Pennsylvania: 1839

Rhode Island: 1839

South Carolina: 1839

South Dakota: 1883

Tennessee: 1839

Texas: 1865

Utah: 1880

Vermont: 1839

Virginia: 1839

Washington (State): 1880

West Virginia: 1839 [Note: WV was part of Virginia until 1863]

Wisconsin: 1865

Wyoming: 1890

III. Criteria for Inclusion of Material in Special Collections.

A. Introduction.

"Special Collections" should not serve as an inferior rare book collection. A special collection is created to keep together material in one subject area which would be scattered in the Library of Congress classification and might otherwise not meet the usual rare book criteria. "Special Collections" (abbreviated SpCol or SPX) is a part of the call number. Collection names are traced in the online catalog, although not all items have had collection names added retrospectively to their records.

B. Presently Existing Special Collections.

As of January 2004, the following designated Special Collections existed and will be continued; a brief sketch of each is appended:

1. **African-American Collection.** A collection of books and other materials in all subject areas by and about African Americans and other people of African descent throughout the world. Special emphases are placed on black history, civil rights movements in the United States, literature by African-American authors and pamphlets by black authors on slavery, emancipation and the black experience in the United States. Acquisitions level: active.

2. **Horatio Alger Collection.** Horatio Alger Jr.'s works originally were part of the American Popular Literature Collection. In 1994, the Horatio Alger Society (HAS) selected the Northern Illinois University Libraries to be the official Horatio Alger Society Repository. In that same year, the Horatio Alger Collection was created. The main focus of the collection is to include Horatio Alger Jr.'s works published and reprinted by various publishers. The collection was begun with materials by or about Horatio Alger, Jr. owned by the NIU Libraries and added to with newly acquired and donated materials from HAS members. The NIU Horatio Alger collection is now the most comprehensive collection of materials in the world of this all-time, best-selling boy's series writer. The Horatio Alger, Jr. Endowment endowment supports this collection. Acquisitions level: active.

3. **American Popular Literature.** The American Popular Literature collection includes first or early editions of best sellers, predominantly of the period 1866-1920, but it also reflects America's reading habits over the period including popular history, gift books, poetry, and other publications with mass appeal such as boys' and girls' series books. An indication of popularity would be the number of editions of a work issued within a few years of its first appearance. Three or four trade editions should fairly well define "popular." Later works of authors whose early works fall within the scope of the collection should be included (e.g. Booth Tarkington), as should authors who began publishing before 1866 (e.g. Harriet Beecher Stowe). The Gordon W. and Jeanne Huber Endowment supports this collection. Acquisitions level: active

4. **Edward Ardizzone.** An extensive collection of publications written and illustrated by Edward Ardizzone, a notable contemporary English author and illustrator. This collection was purchased by the Friends of NIU Libraries. Acquisitions level: minimal

5. **Autographed Books.** A heterogeneous autographed collection of authors, writers and artists which has no existing special collection of its own. Limited editions with authors' autographs are also included in this collection. This collection is a prime candidate for dispersal among other collections (i.e. Rare Books, Gender Studies, American Popular Literature, etc.). Acquisitions status: inactive. Newly acquired autographed books, when appropriate, are added to the Rare Books Collection.

6. **William Blake.** Work by and about the author, including critical works and variant issues of single and collected works. No cut-off date has been set. The Martin Kallich Library Endowment is established to support this collection, along with other 18th century materials. Due to the escalating costs of original Blake works, the bulk of this collection is composed of facsimiles. This collection is a prime candidate for incorporation into the Rare Books Collection. Acquisitions status: minimal.

7. **Book Arts.** This collection brings together the work of famous printers, type designers, book designers, book artists and illustrators, as well as documentation on print processes from 1850 forward. Includes our collection of pop-up books. In case of overlapping with SpCol-Private Press, books should be assigned to the Private Press Collection. No cut-off date will be set. Acquisitions status: active.

8. **Robert Burns.** Works by and about the poet, including critical works and variant issues of single and collected works. No cut-off date has been set. This small collection is a prime candidate for incorporation into the Rare Books Collection. Acquisitions status: minimal.

9. **Lord Byron.** Works by and about the poet, including critical works and variant issues of single and collected works. No cut-off date has been set. This small collection is a prime candidate for incorporation into the Rare Books Collection. Acquisitions status: minimal.

10. **Chess Magazines.** A depository for chess magazines from the Midwestern Regional Chapters of U.S. Chess Federation and the U. S. Chess Federation. As to date, the University Libraries has received fifty nine titles. It is unlikely that the University Libraries will continue to acquire material in this area. Acquisitions status: static.

11. **Chicago Opera Collection.** The collection contains the scenes, costumes, maquettes and archival material of the Chicago Civic Opera. The archival material reflecting the productions of Chicago Civic Opera for the period 1910-1931. It consists of production notebooks, programs, photographs, touring information, drawings, inventory records and funding lists, correspondence, expense records, design plates, pictorial source material, and miscellaneous. One-hundred and seventy-nine especially noteworthy production notebooks that reflect the productions of seventy-seven operas in great detail are part of this collection. Acquisitions level: minimal.

12. **Colorado-Henkle.** En-bloc purchase of a private collection relating to the state and territory of Colorado. No cut-off date has been set, but this collection is minimally used and rarely added to. Acquisitions level: static.

13. **Comic Book.** A collection of approximately 1,200 titles (over 4000 issues) of comic books, graphic novels and trade editions, trade magazines and fanzines. This collection has been actively added to via gifts and exchanges with other institutions, along with minor purchases of trade editions of key titles. Acquisitions level: active.

14. **Alan Denson.** Manuscript material, mostly letters to and from Denson in correspondence with English literary figures (up to about 1960). The manuscript material is still unprocessed; the restrictions were placed on its use expired in the late 1990s, but there have not been the resources to process this collection and add it to the Manuscripts collection. Acquisitions level: static.

15. **John Dos Passos.** Books by and about John Dos Passos, in various editions. Many manuscript materials, periodicals, and newspaper criticisms are also included. No cut-off date has been set. Acquisitions level: minimal.

16. **Fine Arts.** A collection of the works of various artists, mostly catalogues raisonnées and other expensive fine arts materials. Before 1992, many of its titles were included in the Book Arts collection. "Art Books" or portfolios of fine or loose plates of recent date will be considered for this collection. Works included in this collection are recommended or consulted by Arts Librarian. Acquisitions level: minimal.

17. **Gender Studies.** A collection of books, manuscripts, and other materials pertaining to gender studies, including gay, lesbian, transgendered, bisexual, and women's studies. Special emphases will be on gender studies materials as they relate to religious organizations, winners and nominees of the Lambda Literary Foundation's Lammie Awards, and winners and nominees of the American Library Association's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Round table (GLBTRT) Awards, now called the Stonewall Award. Emphases will also include periodicals of the Midwest not already held in microfilm. Also includes first editions, limited editions and signed copies whenever possible. Materials include and supplement items in the In All Things Charity Collection on homosexuality and religion, and other items already held in Rare Books and Special Collections. No cut-off date has been set. Acquisitions level: active.

18. **Grahame Greene.** Works by and about the poet, including critical works and variant issues of single and collected works. No cut-off date has been set. Acquisitions level: minimal.

19. **James Hanley.** A collection of manuscripts (some of them unpublished) and books by Hanley (1901-). The collection has the potential to become an important one, and opportunities to add to it should be seized. No cut-off date has been set. Acquisitions level: minimal.

20. **Johannsen Collection.** Copies of dime novels and similar American publications of the late 19th Century. Also includes Prof. Johannsen's working papers and notes for his History of the House of Beadle & Adams, as well as papers, notes, glass plate negatives, and memorabilia from his career as a geology professor. Much of this latter material is now in process. Acquisitions Level: minimal.

21. **Edward T. LeBlanc Collection.** A collection of American and British dime novels, story papers, novels, and novelettes ca. 1850-1925 acquired by the NIU Libraries in 1998. Titles such

as Aldine Half Holiday Library, Boys of the Empire, Dick Turpin, Gem Library, Happy Days, Lovell's Library, New York Ledger, Oliver Optic's Magazine, Pluck and Luck, Rocket, Seaside Library, Secret Service, Wide Awake Library, Yank, Young Britain, and Young Glory are well represented in this collection, many with fairly complete runs. The above list is a small fraction of the titles contained in the LeBlanc Collection, the majority of which is still in the process of being unboxed, preserved, and cataloged. This collection complements the Horatio Alger, American Popular Literature, Albert Johanssen Dime Novel, Merriwell, and Edward Stratemeyer Collections. Acquisitions level: minimal.

22. **H. P. Lovecraft.** A collection of material by and about Lovecraft. Includes some manuscript material. A few additions may be made to this collection. No cut-off date has been set. This collection is a prime candidate for inclusion in the Science Fiction and Manuscripts Collections. Acquisitions level: minimal.

23. **Manuscripts Collection.** This collection houses manuscript materials ranging from single items and small groups of letters, to full archives, predominantly, but not exclusively, of science fiction and fantasy (SF/F) literature authors. Materials are accepted in paper and numerous electronic formats. Materials are added to this collection at the discretion of the Curator of Rare Books and Special Collections. The base requirement for SF/F authors is SFWA eligibility. Acquisitions level: active.

24. **Maps.** A collection of rare and historical maps from all over the world from the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. There is a special emphasis on maps from Southeast Asia. Acquisitions level: minimal.

25. **Merriwell Collection.** A collection of books and serials of Frank and Dick Merriwell stories. Some first editions are included in this collection. Serials such as Tip Top Weekly and Merriwell Series are present in complete runs. The majority of this collection was a gift from Fred King and Edward T. LeBlanc. This collection complements the Horatio Alger, American Popular Literature, Edward T. LeBlanc, Albert Johanssen Dime Novel, and Edward Stratemeyer Collections. Acquisitions level: minimal.

26. **Willard Motley.** Works by and about the author, including length manuscripts of his books, phonographs, recording, articles, correspondence, and diaries. Acquisitions level: minimal.

27. **Music Special Collection.** The Raya Garbousova papers (a working archive of the famous cellist), original manuscripts by Frank Skinner, and other sheet music are included. Materials are added to this collection in consultation with the Music Librarian. Acquisitions level: minimal.

28. **Nisbet-Snyder Drama.** A collection of some 2,000 late 18th Century and 19th Century English and American plays, many of them acting copies or annotated prompt books. The collection is supplemented by University Library Drama. Acquisitions level: minimal.

29. **Private Press.** A growing collection of material issued by private presses, particularly in the Middle West. An authority file for private press names is maintained by the Catalog department. Many additions are current publications and no cut-off date will be set. Acquisitions level:

minimal to active, with particular emphasis to filling in exemplars from “big name” private presses (i.e. Kelmscott, Doves, Gehenna, etc.)

30. Radical Pamphlets. American publications, ca. 1880-1955, by or about the radical labor movement, socialists, communists, and the radical right (including American Nazis). The bulk of this material is uncatalogued, but there exists a card file for the material. Large scale additions by purchase are unlikely, but pieces will be added from various sources from time to time. Acquisitions level: minimal.

31. Science Fiction. A rapidly expanding collection of currently published books deposited by the Science Fiction Writers of America through their Circulating Book Plan. The collection also includes a retrospective collection of SF/F magazines, 1926-1967, and a selection of significant, currently published SF/F magazines and fanzines. There has been significant “fill-in” of earlier SF/F titles via donations from individuals. Complemented by the Lovecraft Collection and the archival collections of over 50 SF/F authors in the Manuscripts collection. Acquisitions level: Active.

32. Southeast Asia. A significant collection of unique manuscripts, maps, and rare books relating to Southeast Asia. Books or materials with controversial religious or political contents are also included in this collection. The materials are selected by the SEA Curator. Acquisitions level: active.

33. Vincent Starrett. Works by and about this author of the "Chicago Renaissance." First editions, limited editions, and signed copies. Much of the manuscript material is in photocopy form rather than original. No cut-off date has been set. This collection could be incorporated into the Rare Books and Manuscripts collections. Acquisitions level: minimal.

34. Edward Stratemeyer Collection. A collection of first editions by Edward Stratemeyer acquired from a noted collector. The Friends of NIU Libraries made this purchase possible. This collection complements the Horatio Alger, American Popular Literature, Edward T. LeBlanc, Albert Johanssen Dime Novel, Merriwell Collections. Acquisitions level: minimal.

35. Jeremy Taylor. Collection of the writings of the 17th Century English divine, including books referring to Taylor and influencing him as well as his own works (some editions in multiple copies). A strong and unique collection including some manuscript material and supplemented by some of our rare book holdings. Acquisitions level: minimal.

36. Tobin / Van Zelst Collections. A collection of materials on Japanese woodblock prints collected by James D. Tobin, specializing in prints of the late Meiji, Taisho, and Showa periods (from about 1890). Included in this collection are books on prints, photographs and negatives, extensive notes, rare brochures and catalogs, correspondence, and some tapes and films made at conferences. A recent donation from the Van Zelst Family enhances the collection by documenting the lives and works of Japanese woodblock printers Un-ichi Hiratsuka and his daughter Keiko Moore, including personal letters between the two families, exhibition materials, materials on printmaking, and catalogs of Hiratsuka's works. An inventory is available. Acquisitions level: minimal.

37. **University Library Drama.** Includes 212 volumes of 18th and early 19th Century comic operas and acting editions of plays popular on the English stage (Part 1; partially cataloged). 19th Century plays and 45 programs for the St. James Theatre (London) covering the period 1879-1888 (Part 2: 121 volumes, partially cataloged). Acquisitions level: minimal (often through the Adra Baker endowment, selected by the English Librarian).

38. Walt Whitman. Works by and about the poet, including critical works and variant issues of single and collected works. A collection of approximately 237 titles. Includes virtually all editions of Leaves of Grass. This collection is a prime candidate for incorporation into the Rare Books Collection as time permits. Acquisitions level: minimal.

39. Angus Wilson. A collection of material by and about Angus Wilson, including many periodical articles and contributions. Acquisitions level: minimal.

40. Wordsworth. Works by and about the poet, including critical works and variant issues of single and collected works. This collection is a prime candidate for incorporation into the Rare Books Collection as time permits. Acquisitions level: minimal.

C. Discontinued Collections:

Imprint Society. A collection of various works reprinted by the Imprint Society of Barre, Massachusetts. Many items in the collection are travelers' accounts of North America in the late 1700s and 1800s along with other topics of that time period, such as items written by Benjamin Franklin. **This collection was incorporated into the Private Press Collection in the mid-2000s.**

Franklin Skinner. The collection was donated to University Libraries in 1989 by an individual who requested anonymity. The collection consists of musical scores from motion pictures. With one exception, they are all original pencil manuscripts in Skinner's hand. The exception is *Magnificent Obsession*, which is an ozalid copy of a studio copyist's manuscript. Excepting *My Man Godfrey* and *Written on the Wind*, which are fragments, the scores are believed to be complete representations of all the music Skinner wrote for the respective films. **This collection was incorporated into the Music Special Collection in the mid-2000s.**

Western Fiction Magazine Collection. This collection contains many titles such as *Gunsmoke Western*, *Frontier Stories*, *Range Riders Western*, *The Lone Ranger*, and others in runs of varying lengths ca. 1905-1955. This collection was incorporated into the American Popular Literature Collection in 2011.

D. As a general policy, the University Libraries will continue to expand the existing collections when allocated budget permits.

IV. Forming New Collections

It is a general policy that the new collections will only be created with the consultations of the Associate Dean of Collection Development and the Dean of the University Libraries. As new Special Collections are formed, a "Specification sheet," briefly stating the contents and

sketching the criteria for possible additions to the new collection will be prepared by the Curator of Rare Books & Special Collections to bring the present document up to date.

A. The University Libraries will consider accepting an entire collection as a gift from any donor to support the instructional and research missions of the University.

B. Books and materials purchased to be housed in the Rare Books & Special Collections by subject bibliographers or librarians should consult with the Curator of Rare Books and Special Collections before the book acquisition. This also applies to transfer books from open shelves.