Rare Books Unit Collection Development Policy, June 2010.
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Last updated April 5.
Purpose: This policy is intended to provide guidelines for developing UTSA’s rare book holdings for the next five years (2010-2015), at which time it will be fully reviewed.

Mission Statement

In support of the UTSA Libraries’ goal of building, preserving, and digitizing distinctive collections of national importance, the Rare Books Unit seeks to collect, preserve, and provide access to material documenting the history and culture of South Texas and Mexico, with particular attention given to material that is deemed exceptional due to its content, publishing history, provenance, age, format, significance or vulnerability, including, when appropriate, born-digital material. Preservation of the collection includes both environmental controls and and item-level conservation. Access to research materials is provided through cataloging, online guides and digital facsimiles, onsite assistance, outreach programs, and partnering with faculty to provide instruction for specific subjects or classes.

Introduction

The Rare Books Unit serves as the repository for published—and occasionally unpublished—codices, maps, and ephemera in the Special Collections Department. While there is no universal definition of what constitutes a rare book, it may be thought of broadly as a book with high intrinsic or research value that would be difficult to replace. Factors of age, fragility, scarcity, research value, or unique characteristics may bring books into Special Collections. Additionally, books that may not be rare or particularly valuable as individual items may be of significant research value in the context of an in-depth, tightly-focused subject collection. In some subject areas—particularly San Antonio history—there may be overlap with the general collection when the materials in question appear to be of both immediate and long-term importance. UTSA faculty and students are fortunate to have access to the library at the Institute of Texan Cultures library as well, which also documents the culture and history of South Texas. In general, duplicate acquisitions between Rare Books and the ITC will be avoided, but in the case of core materials likely to see regular use in the University curriculum, duplication may be justified.

The Rare Books Unit supports research by undergraduates, graduates, faculty, and other researchers. In response to the University’s needs over the years, Special Collections has built strong collections in diverse subject areas. Many of these, such as the Mexican Cookbook Collection, continue to be targeted for active collecting while others, such as the Anderson Napoleonic Collection, are maintained, but are not prioritized for expansion.

The Rare Books stacks have a temperature and humidity controlled environment, and security measures are taken to limit access. The collection is non-circulating, though selective interlibrary loan to other institutions able to provide appropriately supervised use of materials and adequate storage conditions, may be considered for materials that are robust and have a replacement cost of less than $300.
Acquisitions that do not fall into existing collecting areas sometimes may be made in anticipation of a new focus. In addition to scholarly research value, staff may also take into account an item’s exhibit and/or outreach value.

The Rare Books Unit may accept from the general stacks of the UTSA library transfers of materials that require special protection and care. In general, these items will meet at least one of the following four criteria:

- published prior to 1846\(^1\)
- valued at at least $300\(^2\)
- held by 5 or fewer OCLC libraries
- fragile or vulnerable physical condition.

Most accepted transfers will meet at least two of the suggested criteria. To the extent that space considerations allow, items that meet these criteria may be accepted regardless of whether the subject area(s) represented are those targeted by Rare Books as a current collecting focus. On a case-by-case basis, newly acquired materials selected by subject bibliographers may also be accepted for transfer to Special Collections based on the same criteria.

Duplicates and items that do not reflect the subject areas and/or types of materials collected by the Rare Books Unit may be transferred to the Archives Unit or the general collections as appropriate. If transfer is not viable, the materials may be deaccessioned.

**Collecting Rationale**

Special Collections has a dual responsibility to serve the research needs of the University of Texas at San Antonio faculty and students and to serve as a repository preserving the history and heritage of the South Texas border region. The Rare Books Unit seeks to collect in subject areas of substantial and sustained interest to the university and the San Antonio community, including materials that support ongoing departmental research and subjects of particular relevance to the San Antonio and South Texas area. Special Collections also seeks to serve the national and international community of scholars by building collections of particular strength in areas less well covered by other repositories. As a part of

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\(^1\) Any collection-wide cut-off date is necessarily arbitrary, since the relevant historical dates vary depending on the topic and location under discussion. Because our repository focuses primarily on Texas, we have chosen 1846 as our minimum date for transfers. In December of 1845, U. S. President James Polk signed legislation to annex Texas. This was a watershed event in Texas history, with far-reaching causes and effects. Note that the choice of this date does not mean we will not accept transfers of books published after this date, merely that we will usually do so only when there is a reason for acceptance beyond mere age. In some circumstances, such as when reviewing a potential donation or transfer comprised of a large number of related books with the potential to form a new collecting area, it may be suitable to select a different cut-off date relevant to the subject in question.

\(^2\) Note that these guidelines provide only the minimum criteria for transfer, and do not represent rules to be applied across all the library’s collections. We are not suggesting, for example, that every book in the library with a value of $300 should be transferred to special collections; rather, we wish to clarify that under normal circumstances, special collections would not accept a book worth less than $300 for transfer unless it met at least one of the other listed criteria or addressed a subject area that we collect.
Special Collections, the Rare Books Unit pursues collecting areas that have the potential to enhance the university’s reputation as a center for scholarship.

Collecting Methods

Responsibility for collecting materials for the Rare Books Unit is primarily shared between the Rare Books Librarian and the Head of Special Collections, though other departmental staff may also be consulted when making collection development decisions.

Acquisitions are primarily made through purchases from dealer catalogs, auctions, and private individuals or organizations. These purchases are currently made from the spc.bks fund. Additionally, Rare Books receives a small number of newly published San Antonio and Texas titles from the library’s YBP Approval plan, paid for through the spc.apr fund. There are currently no subject-specific funds or endowments.

Donations to the Rare Books Unit are welcomed in our targeted collecting areas. Donations outside our current collecting areas may occasionally be accepted on a selective basis, based on the research value of the individual item, association value, or outreach potential.

Languages Collected

English
Spanish
German
French
Yiddish

Types and Formats Collected

In addition to published books, the Rare Books Unit collects broadsides, pamphlets and brochures, reports, organizational publications, newsletters (physical and digital), newspapers, scrapbooks, manuscript codices, maps, posters, and archived copies of blogs.

Geographical Areas Collected

The primary collecting focus is the Southwest and Mexico. However, materials may also be collected that relate to the United States as a whole. Certain subject areas may occasionally present cause to collect materials relating to other regions, such as architecture of Spain and the Middle East.

Subject Areas Collected

Collecting areas are regularly reviewed by Special Collections staff. As circumstances change, the collecting areas will be re-evaluated and modified as needed to meet the goals of the UTSA library and university community.
The RLG Conspectus provides a useful tool for assigning priority to collecting areas. However, as the conspectus is intended to apply to the library as a whole, with the lower collecting levels usually defined as primarily focusing on contemporary materials, not necessarily maintained for historical research, it is useful to tailor the levels to our situation. The following descriptions have been edited and revised from the Library of Congress’ descriptions of the RLG Collecting Levels (http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/cpc.html):

0. Out-of-Scope: Special Collections does not collect material in this area, though it may maintain existing holdings.

1. Minimal Level: Subject area is peripheral to the primary foci of Special Collections, but acquisitions may occasionally be made, if they also relate to core areas.

2. Basic Information Level: General historical materials are collected to introduce this subject area, but in-depth research would require recourse to other repositories.

3. Instructional Support Level: Materials of sufficient scope and depth are collected in this area to support most coursework-based research at an undergraduate or graduate level.

4. Research Level: Though not comprehensive, this subject area is one in which depth beyond that required in the classroom is desired. In-depth graduate and independent research is supported, and acquisitions focus on materials with relatively low representation in OCLC that could contribute to a collection of regional importance.

5. Comprehensive Level: To the extent possible, all significant, relevant material--both contemporary and historical--will be collected to build a collection that will be of national research importance.

Active Collecting Areas

San Antonio History
Collection Level Goal: 5
Strengths: Local newspapers; select newsletters of community groups, particularly in the area of preservation; local government publications.
Weaknesses: Coverage is thorough, but in some cases perhaps too much so. Exploration should be carried out to avoid excess duplication with other repositories in the area, particularly with respect to routine city publications.
Current Collecting Foci: Continuing support for broad coverage, but particular attention given to the Edwards aquifer and water management; fairs and festivals; tourist guides; food production and processing; architecture, and local women’s history. Web harvesting of local newspaper content will be preferred to physical collecting when possible.

San Antonio Authors
Collection Level Goal: 5
This collection consists of literary output (fiction, poetry, drama, creative nonfiction, etc) that features
San Antonio as a central topic or setting, and is written by a San Antonio author. For the purposes of this collection, “San Antonio author” is defined as any writer with at least one published book, born in the city of San Antonio or Bexar County, or definitely associated with the city or county. For non-native writers, a definite association may include a substantial period of residence and/or a sustained topical focus on San Antonio. Authors whose writing focuses on San Antonio’s history and culture are collected comprehensively, while authors whose sole association is birth or residence are collected selectively.

Weaknesses: This collection has suffered in the past from the lack of a clear definition of what constitutes a San Antonio author, and also from the difficulty of identifying them.

Existing Collection Strengths: John Igo Collection (works by himself and his students); miscellaneous works by authors associated with San Antonio and South Texas.

Current Collecting Foci: Identifying and collecting works by San Antonio authors whose writing is substantially “about” the locale.

San Antonio and South Texas Art and Artists (new collecting area)
Collection Level Goal: 4 for San Antonio art; 3 for South Texas art; 2 for Texas artists
A “San Antonio artist” for the purpose of this collection, is considered to be any artist working in a visual medium, born in the city of San Antonio or Bexar County, or definitely associated with the city or county. For non-native artists, a definite association may include a substantial period of residence and/or a sustained topical focus on San Antonio. Artists whose work draws on the history and culture of San Antonio and South Texas will be the primary focus of the collection.

Weaknesses: Although we have some material in this subject area that was collected because of its relevance to San Antonio’s history and culture, this is a new collecting area and our existing holdings are relatively light.


Current Collecting Foci: Identifying significant artists and artistic movements in San Antonio and South Texas that would be appropriate for inclusion in this collection. Although it is possible that there may be occasional acquisitions of prints and other art objects, the primary objective of this collection is to collect books written about the art and artists of San Antonio and South Texas.

Texas History
Collection Level Goal: 3 for Texas in general; 5 for South Texas
Strengths: John Peace Collection of Texana; Broad coverage during the periods of Spanish Colonial, Mexican Republic, Republic of Texas, and Statehood; Texas involvement in the Civil War; the development and culture of the cattle economy; 20th century culture and politics.
Weaknesses: A generally strong collection, but with scope for developing more specific foci within this broad topic.

Current Collecting Foci: Continue to support broad topical coverage, but particular focus on history of the Spanish missions; Texas travel accounts, especially those written by women; water use and the development of renewable energy.

Mexican History
Collection Level Goal: 2 for Mexico in general; 5 for Texas-Mexico Border

Strengths: Sons of the Republic of Texas Book Collection (18th-19th c.); Kathryn Stoner O’Connor Mexican Manuscript Collection (16th-20th c.).

Weaknesses: Entire strength of the collection rests on materials not owned by the University. Lack of materials focused specifically on the border region. Collection has not been fully cataloged and is therefore not accessible. There is relatively little material on 20th century history.

Current Collecting Foci: History, culture, and environment of the Mexico-Texas border region and connections between the two regions.

Mexican Cookbook Collection
Collection Level Goal: 5

This collection includes both cookbooks published in Mexico, and cookbooks published in the United States about Mexican cuisine. Additionally, it includes cookbooks featuring Texan and “Tex-Mex” cooking.

Strengths: Broad coverage, but particularly strong in regional Mexican Cuisine; Texan and Tex-Mex Cooking; and “American” interpretations of Mexican Cuisine.

Weaknesses: Very light coverage prior to 1960, and almost none prior to 1920.

Current Collecting Foci: Pre-1900 Mexican cookbooks; 20th century Mexican cookbooks, with an emphasis on pre-WWII titles; manuscript cookbooks; selected San Antonio and Texas cookbooks. Selected contemporary Mexican Cookbooks to maintain currency of collection.

Architecture and Urban Development of the Southwest
Collection Level Goal: 3 for Southwestern and Mexican Architecture; 4 for San Antonio and Spanish Missions.

Strengths: Ralph Haywood Cameron Collection of Architecture (provides a broad mix of titles on European, American, and Mexican architecture, as well as technical works on draftsmanship and design); San Antonio historic architecture and its preservation.

Weaknesses: Relatively little material on architecture outside of San Antonio.

Current Collecting Foci: San Antonio architecture and development; Texan and southwestern architecture (especially Spanish missions); Mexican and Spanish architecture; historic furnishings and ornaments.

South Texas Archaeology
Collection Level Goal: 5 with respect to CAR’s output; 4 with regard to South Texas in general.

Strengths: Nearly complete run of UTSA Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) publications.

Weaknesses: Collection consists almost entirely of CAR publications, with little supplementary material.

Current Collecting Foci: CAR publications; Historic titles relating to archeology in Texas.

History of Jews in Texas and Yiddish Language Collection
Collection Level Goal: 0 for Yiddish; 2 for the history of Jews in Texas.

Strengths: Collection of Yiddish books, the core of which consist of a gift from the Jewish community in Mexico City; recent titles on the history of Jews in Texas.
Weaknesses: Very little historical material on the history of Judaism in Texas or Mexico.
Current Collecting Foci: contemporary and historic titles relevant to the history of Jews in Texas.

San Antonio and Texas Fine Press Collection
Collection Level Goal: 4
Strengths: Encino Press; Texas Western Press under the leadership of Carl Hertzog; the Book Club of Texas; Pecan Grove Press; Trinity University Press, Maverick Publishing Company, Wings Press, and numerous small press poetry chapbooks housed in Rare Books but part of the Naomi Nye Manuscript Collection, many of which were published by Texas small presses.
Weaknesses: The presses mentioned above do not constitute a comprehensive list of small presses in South Texas.
Current Collecting Foci: Current standing orders will be maintained for the Book Club of Texas; Pecan Grove Press; Trinity University Press, Maverick Publishing Company, and Wings Press. In the future, efforts may be made to identify other San Antonion and South Texas fine presses.

Tourism/Fairs and Festivals (new collecting area)
Collection Level Goal: 4 for general materials; 5 with regard to San Antonio fairs and festivals
Strengths: HemisFair materials (largely held in Archives Unit); some peripheral material elsewhere in the collection; early 20th century San Antonio guidebooks and souvenirs.
Weaknesses: Relatively little material on the San Antonio Fiesta, Rodeo, Folklife Festival, Mud Fest, or other annual festivals in the area. Very little coverage of the tourist and convention activities that form a large part of the city’s economy. This is a newly established collecting area.
Current Collecting Foci: Fairs and festivals in Central and South Texas (in conjunction with the Manuscripts Unit); analytical works on festivals as cultural events; tourism and conventions in San Antonio.

History of Hydrogeology, and water resource management
Collection Level Goal: 3 for general materials; 5 for South Texas.
Strengths: Edwards Aquifer; San Antonio water management
Weaknesses: Coverage within San Antonio is not comprehensive; coverage outside the city is very light and scattered. This is a newly established collecting area.
Current Collecting Foci: General materials on hydrology and hydrogeology; civil engineering in relation to water management; conflicts over water in the United States and Mexico, with particular focus on the South Texas watersheds and aquifers.

History of Renewable Energy Development
Collection Level Goal: 2 for general materials; 4 for Texas.
Strengths: Very little collected in this area in the past.
Weaknesses: This is a newly established collecting area.
Current Collecting Foci: General materials on 20th century developments in renewable energy, focusing primarily on wind and solar energy throughout Texas, as well as other forms of energy.

Static Collections
The following are areas of significant strength in our collections, but in which we are not currently collecting: western Americana not relating to the southwest; Napoleonic France; 19th century English literature. All three of these areas have been assigned a collection level goal of 2. As this goal is met by our current holdings, the current active collecting level is 0 for these collections.
Digital Collections

As alluded to previously, digital collections play a role in both collection-building and in making collections accessible. To address the latter first, opportunities to build online collections of digital facsimiles will be pursued in current collecting areas for which we are able to gain permission from copyright holders. Collections that we hope to target in the near future include the publications of UTSA’s Center for Archaeological Research and the Sons of the Republic of Texas Kathryn Stoner O’Connor Mexican Manuscript Collection.

In conjunction with Archives and Manuscripts, we are also looking into building collections of born-digital materials in these areas: San Antonio history and culture, Texan and Mexican cooking blogs, fairs and fiestas, and water resources. Other areas may be added as relevant, valuable born-digital material is identified.

Have a question?
For questions regarding the Rare Books Collection, please contact:

Special Collections Department, Rare Books and University Archives
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John Peace Library 4.03.10

Special Collections, JPL Reading Room Hours:
Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.