Collections Management Policy

Wyoming State Archives
Division of Cultural Resources
Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources

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Wyoming State Archives

Collections Management Policy

I. Mission Statement..........................................1
II. Introduction...............................................1
III. Collecting Policy..........................................1
IV. Collection Management Policies.........................2
   A. Accession Process......................................2
   B. Use Policy.............................................3
   C. Loan Policies.........................................3
   D. Conservation Policy....................................4
   E. Deaccession Process...................................4
1. Ethics Statement...........................................5
VI. Addenda....................................................6
   A. Definitions of Collections.............................6
   B. Program Use Materials..................................7
   C. Glossary of Term.......................................8
Appendices:
   A. Appraisal Criteria.....................................10
   B. Accession Procedures...................................12
   C. Deaccession Procedures................................14
I. MISSION STATEMENT

The Wyoming State Archives preserves government and non-government records that have been determined to have permanent administrative, legal and/or historical value. These records document and interpret the history of Wyoming and the region, and serve as an educational resource that encourages administrative and scholarly research in the Archives' collections.

II. INTRODUCTION

The functions of the Wyoming State Archives and its predecessors date from 1895, when the Wyoming Legislature established the Wyoming Historical Society. The society was empowered to “collect books, maps, charts and other papers and materials illustrative of the history of this state...” The management and preservation of public records received attention in 1951 when the position of state archivist was established. The State Archives program developed from this act. In 1995 the state's collections of non-government historical records, previously administered by the Wyoming State Museum, were transferred to the Wyoming State Archives.

The Wyoming State Archives acquires, manages, and provides access to its collections under the authority of Wyoming Statutes 9-2-401 through 9-2-415. These laws authorize the Archives to serve as a custodian of the historical records of the State of Wyoming. The guidelines and procedures described in this policy have been developed to carry out the Archives' statutory responsibilities.

III. COLLECTING POLICY

In accordance with its statutorily established mission, the Wyoming State Archives acquires and manages records of state and local government scheduled for permanent retention, as well as privately donated or purchased books, collections, newspapers, journals, manuscripts, interviews, and photographs. These records provide original documentation and secondary reference sources for the exploration of the western United States, the settlement of the Rocky Mountain region, and the development of Wyoming as a territory and state. The Archives collecting activities are limited to textual, graphic, audio-visual and photographic records. Three-dimensional objects and artwork are not included in the Archives' collections unless they are part of a record file and/or are necessary to interpret or document textual information.
The acquisition of Wyoming state and local government records is governed by statute and legally established records retention schedules. Procurement of non-government historical records is authorized by law. Procedures and ownership transfer documents have been developed by Division of Cultural Resources staff with the assistance of the Wyoming Attorney General's office. This policy provides criteria for identifying records which contribute to the documentation of the region's history, procedures for legally transferring them to the custody of the State of Wyoming and guidelines for preserving them for future use.

IV. COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICIES

A. ACCESSION PROCESS

State and local government records scheduled for permanent retention are transferred to the State Archives at the discretion of the office of origin. Generally, records are maintained in the office until they become inactive. The office may then keep the records in office storage or transfer custody to the Archives. The formal transfer of custody is documented by a Transfer of Records form.

Some government records, because of the varying nature of their function and information, are scheduled for evaluation. Criteria for appraising records for their long-term value are listed in Appendix A.

The Wyoming Attorney General's office has determined that records privately donated to the Wyoming State Archives are public records. This classification places the accession and deaccession of privately donated records under the authority of the State Records Committee. Materials offered to the State Archives must be approved by the Archives' Acquisitions Review Committee, the Director of the Division of Cultural Resources and the State Records Committee.

While the Archives occasionally purchases items, donations continue to be the chief means of expanding non-government collections. Each offer is evaluated according to several appraisal criteria, its historical value to the collections overall, as well as its probable impact on the Archives' resources. The significant costs of cataloging, storing, and preserving materials requires that the Archives be judicious in deciding to acquire items. Copyrights to offered materials owned by donors are required to be transferred to the Archives. Specific procedures for accessioning privately donated records are recorded in Appendix B.
B. USE POLICY

The collections of the Wyoming State Archives are accessible to the public at the Archives' reference room and through exhibition and other public programs. The following policies are established in order to preserve often fragile and aged materials while providing maximum access to the collections.

Use of the collections materials requires cooperation between the users, staff members, and the curators and conservators responsible for them. These parties must make every effort to safeguard historical items to ensure their long-term preservation while making them available for the use and enjoyment of the public.

Printed, manuscript, photographic, audio and moving-image items in the Archives collections may be reproduced as provided under the fair use provision of the United States copyright law. The Archives staff may refuse to permit the copying of a collection item if, in their judgment, such reproduction would violate the copyright law, violate a donor agreement, or pose a threat to the physical integrity of the item.

Publication, exhibition, or broadcast of an item from the Archives' collections requires written permission from the Wyoming State Archives. This permission is required whether or not the Archives is the copyright holder. Permission may also be required from the copyright holder.

If, in the determination of staff of the Wyoming State Archives, the terms of a publication or exhibition agreement are violated, future requests by that user may be refused. The Division of Cultural Resources may also pursue prosecution of the individual or corporate body in violation of a publication contract.

C. LOAN POLICIES

It is the policy of the Wyoming State Archives to encourage the exhibition of archival records and to loan archived records to governmental agencies and public and private organizations for exhibition. All loans are subject to conditions specified by the Archives. Formal application for a loan must be made. Archival records will not be loaned for out-of-state exhibition.

Materials approved by the Acquisitions Review Committee will be accepted on loan for duplication. Any rights to the materials
D. CONSERVATION POLICY

The staff conservator is responsible for protecting collections, maintaining proper environments, evaluating and monitoring materials used for exhibition, advising on use of records, and providing standards and safeguards for moving and exhibiting items from the collections.

The goal of the conservation program is to stabilize and maintain original materials by the least intrusive means, therefore preventive conservation measures are preferred to remedial treatment. Such treatment must respect the historical integrity of the item. Conservation treatment must be approved by the responsible conservator and by the Technical Services Unit Supervisor.

The Archives subscribes to the ethical standards established by the American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works in all conservation treatments of its collections.

E. DEACCESSION PROCESS

The deaccessioning of materials donated to the Wyoming State Archives is considered when staff determine that previously accessioned items meet one or more of these conditions:

- Beyond the scope of the Archives' collecting mission.
- Damaged or deteriorated to such a degree as to be unusable and/or a threat to other items in the collection.
- Cannot be placed in any identifiable historical context.
- Have minimal research value.
- Duplicated in the State Archives or other readily accessible collections.

An Archives and Historical Research Unit (AHR) staff member may initiate deaccession procedures by preparing and circulating a Request for Deaccession (RFD). The RFD should be reviewed by senior AHR staff and members of the Acquisitions Review Committee. If a majority of the reviewers and the AHR supervisor recommend deaccession, the items are evaluated by Wyoming State Museum staff for their appropriateness for the Museum's collections. If the Museum declines the items the deaccession request is forwarded to the Director of the Division of Cultural Resources, and the State Records Committee, either of whom may stop the deaccession process.
Items approved for deaccession are offered back to the donor, if that person can be easily located. Otherwise, records are offered to repositories in the region where they originated or which are appropriate to the subject matter of the records.

Deaccessioned records may be destroyed if they have little or no research value, are duplicated in the collections of the repository contacted, or have no historical context which can be used to determine an appropriate recipient. Specific procedures for the deaccessioning of materials from the collections of the Wyoming State Archives may be found in Appendix C.

V. ETHICS STATEMENT

A possibility for conflict of interests exists whenever a staff member personally collects items of a type collected by the Archives. When collecting, these individuals should always consider the interests of the Archives over their own personal interests. The Archives has the responsibility to inform its staff members of its collecting goals and of the potential for conflict of interest.

A staff member considering the acquisition of a historically significant item that may be within the Archives collecting goals should bring the intended purchase to the attention of the Acquisitions Review Committee in a timely manner to determine whether or not the Archives is interested in acquiring the item for the collections and has funds for the purchase. If the Archives does not intend to acquire the item, the individual may then proceed with his or her personal purchase. When it is not possible to consult the Acquisitions Review Committee in advance, the individual may acquire the item but should inform the Acquisition Review Committee shortly after the purchase is made. If the Acquisitions Review Committee is interested in the item, it will reimburse the employee the amount of the purchase.

Archives staff members may not use their institutional affiliation to promote their own or their family member’s personal collecting or business activities. No staff member may participate in any dealing (buying or selling for profit as distinguished from occasional sale or exchange from a personal collection) in items similar or related to the objects collected by the Archives.

The guidelines outlined above do not apply to 1) items acquired prior to the adoption date of this policy; 2) items acquired prior to employment with the Archives; 3) items acquired through bequests or as genuine personal gifts; or 4) items that are readily available on the market.

The Archives does not acquire, by direct or indirect means, an object
that it has reason to believe has been unethically or illegally obtained or that has been obtained in violation of international agreements or federal or state laws. The Archives endorses the 1970 UNESCO convention and other applicable antiquities statutes that prohibit “the illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property”.

VI. ADDENDA

A. DEFINITIONS OF COLLECTIONS

1. GOVERNMENT RECORDS

Non-current state and local government records of permanent historical, legal or administrative value comprise the State Archive’s collection of approximately 25,000 cubic feet of paper records and microfilm. Records date from the establishment of Wyoming Territory in 1869 and include correspondence, studies, case files and recorded documents created by the state, county and municipal governments, school districts, hospitals and special districts.

2. MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

The manuscript collection is comprised of letters, diaries, minutes, reports, and related records created by individuals and organizations. The 3000 cubic feet of historical records held within the Archives date from the territorial period to the present, and range from a handful of personal letters to volumes of corporate financial journals. These collections are particularly distinguished in the areas of local history, women's history, religion, agriculture and mining.

3. MAP COLLECTION

The collection is comprised largely of maps of Wyoming Territory, the State of Wyoming, counties, cities and historical events. Types of maps include highways, geology, national parks, ranches, fire insurance maps and cities.

4. BUILDING PLANS

Architectural plans for many public and privately owned buildings, as well as residences, are maintained by the Archives.
5. ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

The oral history collection includes more than 2200 recorded interviews about pioneer life, government, communities, agriculture, business, and historical figures and events. The goals of the oral history program are to capture the everyday experiences of Wyoming residents, obtain perspectives on the past from first person accounts, and study the lives of individuals who have made a significant impact on the state, a community, or field of endeavor.

6. PRINTED MATERIALS

The collections of printed materials includes books, pamphlets, serials, and microfilm of Wyoming newspapers. Topics include state and local history, general Western history, military history, fiction, poetry and general reference sources.

7. PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION

The photographic collection consists of about 300,000 images of Wyoming people, places, buildings and sites. The photographs date from territorial years to the present and feature images captured by professional photographers, government employees, and private citizens.

B. PROGRAM USE MATERIALS

The Wyoming State Archives acquires some materials for use in its programs with the understanding that these items may be damaged or eventually discarded. Such items are not included in the state's permanent collections, but are intended solely for use as teaching aids, exhibits and interpretive tools.

Program use items typically fall in one or more these categories:

- Common and readily available.
- No Wyoming connection.
- Irreparable damage or deterioration.
- No documentation or historical context.
- Incomplete.
- Unused sample (such as a blank recording book).
C. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Acquisitions - the process by which archives add to their holdings by accepting material as a transfer, donation, loan or purchase.

Conservation - the physical aspects and processes of preservation or original archival materials.

Copyright - the exclusive right, granted by law, of the creator of a work (or his/her assignees or employers) to make or dispose of copies of and otherwise to control the use of a literary, dramatic, musical, artistic or other work. Ownership of copyright to a work does not necessarily pass with ownership of the work itself. The laws relating to copyright are complex and often require legal consultation.

Deposit - an addition to the holdings or collections of an archives. A deposit is usually a transfer of material but may also be a donation.

Donation - a voluntary deposit of records, involving the transfer of legal ownership as well as custody to the archives.

Intellectual control - the control established over the informational content of records and archives resulting from ascertaining and documenting their provenance, and the processes of arrangement and description.

Original order - the order in which records and archives were kept when in active use, i.e. the order of accumulation as they were created, maintained and used.

Preservation - the actions which enable the materials in an archives to be retained for as long as they are needed, i.e. the basic functions of storing, protecting and maintaining records and archives in archival custody.

Provenance - refers to the origin and ownership of a records collection and the principle of maintaining the collection in its original order.

Repository - the building or room set aside for the storage of archives and/or inactive records. Archival repositories are often constructed to meet specific environmental standards designed to ensure the longevity of the records. Also referred to as a records center or archive.
User - a person who consults records held by the archives, usually in a research room. Also referred to as researcher or patron.

Vital records - records that are essential for the ongoing business of an agency. May also refer to public records documenting an individual's birth, marriage, divorce and death.
WYOMING STATE ARCHIVES

Archival Appraisal Criteria

A. Functional Analysis: Overview of the office of origin.

1. Administrative level of the office - location in the decision making hierarchy.
2. Duties of the office - impact on the mission, policies, and functions of the agency or organization.
3. Identify which record types created by the office best document its functions.
4. Identify records which are required to be maintained by statute.
5. Identify records which are declared confidential by statute.

B. Content Analysis: Quality of information within the records.

1. Evidential value.
   a. How well do the records document the function, policies, structure, and activities of the agency or organization?
   b. Preserve the original source materials when possible, rather than secondary sources or transcriptions.
2. Informational value.
   a. Do the records contain information about significant people, events, trends, and topics affecting the history of Wyoming?
   b. Are significant policies or activities described?
   c. Are the interests, values, and experiences of the people of Wyoming well represented?
   d. Do the records provide information, insight, or perspectives not documented by records currently maintained by the archives?
   e. Is the information well documented and reliable?
   f. Consider the value of the information to genealogical researchers.
   g. Does the information in the record complement other records in the agency or organization?

C. Object Analysis.

1. Does the record have intrinsic value as a particularly significant or revered document, or because of the author or an original signature.
2. Is the physical form, material, or design of the record unique, special, or important?
3. Is the medium upon which the information is recorded difficult to access or preserve?
a. Is the record intact?
b. Will conservation measures be necessary?
c. Is the value, accessibility, or reliability of the record's content affected by its condition?

D. Accessibility and Use.

1. Assess the anticipated use of the materials based on past reference activity and the significance and popularity of the topic.
2. Assess the potential increase in the value of the record to future researchers.
3. Are there legal or donor imposed restrictions on the use of the records?
4. Can the archives preserve and use the record in its original format? If not, does an alternative format affect the value of the record and the information it contains?

E. Cost Benefit Analysis.

1. Does the value of the record, especially compared with current holdings, warrant the time, cost, and space that will be required to maintain it?
2. Does the value of the record justify the application of needed conservation measures?
3. Can the archives adequately store and access the records?
4. Does accessing the information on the record require the acquisition of special equipment or materials?
Appendix B

PROCEDURES FOR ACCESSIONING PRIVATELY DONATED RECORDS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

1. Ideally, a temporary receipt form should be prepared for any offered donation for which information on the history of the collection (provenance) would be beneficial. All information requested on the form should be provided if possible. A copy of the completed receipt should be given to the owner of the materials. This form also serves to document receipt of the offered donation by the State Archives.

2. A donor form should be signed by the donor at the time the offered donation is delivered to Archives staff. Unless the donation contains no more than a few items, the description portion should be completed by an archivist after the collection has been reviewed. Donors should be directed to indicate whether or not they own copyright to the offered materials as required by the form.

Note: A Receipt for Donated Publication form should be used to document donations of published works.

3. The temporary receipt (if available), donor form, and donation, will be forwarded to the Acquisitions Review Committee Chairman to hold for the next Acquisitions Review Committee meeting. The donation will be stored in the Records Room (Room 153) until a final decision on acquisition is made.

4. a. Upon receiving a favorable recommendation from the committee, the Chairman will sign the donor form and forward it to the Director of the Division of Cultural Resources.

   b. If the committee votes not to accept the donation, it will be returned to its owner or discarded, if so directed by the owner.

5. a. If the Director signs the form, the donation will be listed on the agenda for the next State Records Committee meeting.

   b. If the Director does not accept the donation, it will be returned to its owner or discarded, if so directed by the owner.

6. a. Legal ownership of the offered materials is transferred to the State of Wyoming when the State Records Committee approves the acquisition.

   b. If the State Records Committee does not accept the donation, it will be returned to its owner or discarded, if so directed by the owner.
7. The accession will be assigned an accession number and entered in the accession log.

8. The donor will be sent a copy of the donor form signed by all required parties.

9. A copy of the approved donor form will be forwarded to Archives South for security filing.

10. The original donor form will be filed in a donor file, or, in the case of photographs, in a photograph accession file.*

11. The collection will be arranged and described as soon as is practical. See “Guidelines and Procedures for Processing Privately Donated Accessions.”

* - Mixed accessions.

Donations containing both textual and photographic materials will be treated according to the following additional procedures:

1. Both an H and a P number will be recorded on the donor form.

2. The original form will be filed in the donor files, a copy in the photograph accession files.

3. Photographs will be physically separated from textual materials unless separation in some way affects interpretation. Xerox copies of separated photographs may be placed in the textual collection, if the processing archivist determines they add value to the collection, or aid with interpretation. If photographic prints are retained with the textual collection, they may be copied and added to the Historical Photograph Collection so they can be cataloged as separate items.

4. The finding aid for the textual materials should note the existence of the photographs in the historical photograph collection if they complement the textual materials in some way.

Rev. 9/2003
Appendix C
Wyoming State Archives
DEACCESSION PROCEDURES FOR NON-GOVERNMENT HISTORICAL RECORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE COLLECTIONS OF THE WYOMING STATE ARCHIVES (Rev. 2/5/2002)

In accordance with W.S. 9-2-405(a)(i)(F) the State Records Committee has determined that records donated to the Wyoming State Archives by an individual or non-government entity are public records of the State of Wyoming. The following deaccession procedures refer to such records.

Note: The term "donor" as used below refers to the actual donor of the records, or, if this person is no longer living, his/her heirs or legal representative. These procedures assume the Wyoming State Archives owns the records considered for deaccession. Any questions concerning ownership or terms of use or disposition placed on the records by the donor which might affect deaccessioning should be submitted to the office of the Attorney General prior to the initiation of these procedures.

REQUEST FOR DEACCESSION

1. A senior staff member (Cultural Resources Specialist I), the Photograph Curator, or the Archives and Historical Research (AHR) Supervisor may request a deaccession by completing a Request for Deaccession form.

2. A copy of the request shall be circulated for input by senior AHR staff, and by other members of the Acquisitions Review Committee.

3. After the request has been circulated and reviewed, it will be submitted to the AHR Supervisor.

4. If the AHR Supervisor approves the request, he/she will sign the form and forward a copy to State Museum collections staff.

5. a. If the materials are determined to be appropriate for the Museum’s permanent collection, Museum staff will prepare documentation for the transfer. Archives staff will prepare a Receipt of Records form (AR-11) for materials transferred to the Museum’s educational collection or library. The Archives’ copy of the transfer document should be attached to the Request for Deaccession. Both forms will then be filed in the appropriate accession file.

   b. If the materials are determined not to be appropriate for the Museum’s collections deaccession procedures will be carried out.

DEACCESSIONING

1. The staff member who initiated the request or the AHR Supervisor will prepare an Analysis of Records form (AR-1) which will serve as the instrument of deaccession. Information will be entered as follows:
a. The accession number assigned to the records will be recorded in place of a disposition number, ex. H96-1. If no accession number can be identified enter "none."

b. The Department, Division, and Section lines will be filled in as "State Parks and Cultural Resources," "Cultural Resources," and "Archives," respectively.

c. Enter "none" on the Statutes Affecting Retention line.

d. Describe the records under Description and Use.

e. Enter "deaccession" after Continuing Authority Action Requested.

f. The AHR Supervisor will sign the form on the line above Attorney (local records), which should be crossed out and replaced with the proper title.

g. The director of the Cultural Resources Division will sign above Department Head/Records Officer.

2. Information about deaccessions will be provided to the Parks and Cultural Resources Commission.

3. The completed AR-1 will be submitted to the State Records Committee for approval, through the secretary to the committee.

4. Upon approval of the request for deaccession by the State Records Committee, a reasonable effort will be made to contact the donor and offer to return the records.

5. If the donor is unknown, does not want the records, claimed a tax donation within two years of this action, or cannot be contacted using information available in the accession records or readily accessible directories, then Archives staff will determine if the records are appropriate for another repository. Collection records should be checked to see if other items from the collection were deaccessioned and claimed by another repository in the past. If so, then the newly deaccessioned records should be offered to that repository. When deaccessioned records are records are donated to a research institution a Receipt of Records (AR-11) should be completed and signed by the donee. The receipt should be filed in the donor file.

6. Prospective new owners of the records must agree to abide by any conditions or restrictions originally placed on the donation, unless the donor agrees to rescind them. Any such conditions will be recorded on the receipt.

7. Copies of the original accession records may be supplied to the new owner of the records if requested. The new owner should also receive any duplicates of the records maintained by the archives. These will be destroyed if the new owner does not want them. Finding aids to the records should also be offered to the new owner.

8. Any existing microfilm of the deaccessioned records should be given to the new owner if the film does not include other records. Otherwise, the donor and prospective new owners should be informed of the existence of the retained microfilm prior to transfer of ownership of the original records.
9. The records will not be offered to an individual for that person’s private collection.

10. If an acceptable recipient is not found, the records will be destroyed by means of recycling, if possible. If the material cannot be recycled, or the nature of the information in the records precludes this action, the records will be shredded or discarded in a manner that will limit opportunity for retrieval.

11. The AR-1 should be annotated to indicate the final disposition of the records.

12. Record keeping to be completed by the staff person who initiated the action, or by another designated member of the staff:

   a. All records concerning the deaccessioned materials will be placed in the associated donor file. If such a file does not exist it should be created to maintain the deaccession records. If the donor is not known, the records shall be filed in chronological order in a miscellaneous deaccessions file. A copy of the AR-1 should be filed at Archives South as a security copy.

   b. If the deaccessioned records were part of a collection, the collection inventory should be annotated to indicate the records deaccessioned. If no accession records were filed for a collection from which records are deaccessioned, the appropriate accession log entry should be copied and annotated. This copy should be placed in the donor file.

   c. All finding aids (collection descriptions in binders, subject cards, web pages, databases, etc.) for collections affected by deaccessioning, should be deleted or updated to reflect the changes to the collection.

13. The AHR Supervisor must approve the final disposition of deaccessioned materials.

MICROFILMING BEFORE DEACCESSIONING

If space saving is the sole motivation for deaccessioning records, the records may be microfilmed prior to returning them to the donor or giving them to a new owner. The donor, if possible, and prospective new owners should be informed of the existence of the microfilm prior to the transfer of ownership of the original records.