

Developing Collecting Policies for Manuscript Collections

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Abstract: Collecting policies should be a component of programs that seek to eliminate future problems, lessen competition, and provide an avenue for deaccessioning. Collecting policies can also assist the curator in fulfilling the mission of the manuscript collection, but guidelines for producing such policies have not yet been formulated. A method for dealing with the complexity of manuscript collecting must be devised. The American Library Association does provide a beginning with its "Guidelines for the Formulation of Collection Development Policies," but these guidelines are not designed for manuscript collections. A model that can be used to develop a well-planned, written collection policy for manuscripts is needed. Included in this study are suggested ways of developing written collecting policies for manuscript collections. Also considered are such matters as goals and objectives, deaccessioning, research potential of materials, and procedures for carrying out policies. The basis for a model outline for formulating collecting policies is developed through an examination of appropriate literature.

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Written collecting policies are not as prevalent for manuscript collections as they are for library book collections, but the failure of manuscripts curators and archivists to create such policies does not eliminate the need for them. What to collect, how to collect it, and the problems of competition and deaccessioning play important roles in archival literature and archival practice and are central themes to collecting policies for manuscript collections. Ruth B. Bordin and Robert W. Warner have advised us that "to collect successfully there must be a plan, not a spur of the moment inspiration but a carefully drawn, thoughtful program that implements the main purpose of the library."¹

Kenneth Duckett has referred to the use of manuscript collecting policies as a modern idea "based upon the intellectual concept that a scholar can best study like or related materials together and upon the economic premise that a curator who is a specialist rather than a generalist can best conserve the institution's resources of talent and money."² In manuscript collecting as well as in book collecting, guidelines for collecting are scarce, for "until recently little information has been published which could be of use in deciding how to go about producing a collection development statement."³ Currently, controversy exists in several areas of manuscript collecting, including the definition of purposes, collecting competition, the research value of materials collected, and deaccessioning of materials.

Sporadic, unplanned, competitive, and overlapping manuscript collecting has led to the growth of poor collections of marginal value. David Gracy advises manuscripts curators to "define clearly in their policy statements, the fields in which they will collect," and to "prepare formal statements of policies explaining the functions and services the archives will, and will not perform. . . . The policy matters most commonly included are the collecting purpose and goals, the name of the repository, a description of how the material will be received, handled, and used, and the establishment of an advisory committee."⁴ Gracy continued this discussion in a 1975 article in which he showed how collecting has evolved from a philosophy of collecting virtually everything to the philosophy of appraising manuscripts to weed out the nonarchival materials. In the past, archivists collected, and were grateful for, whatever they could find—whatever items had survived. Gracy stated that "the traditional approach of setting up a repository to collect like a vacuum cleaner within a given geographical area is unrealistic for twentieth-century material."⁵

Although it may be a strong motivator, competition in collecting may also be detrimental. Competition is a recurring problem; but like others, it can be alleviated by usable, well-defined, written collecting policies. Established goals and purposes can be met without competition and by communication among

¹Ruth B. Bordin and Robert W. Warner, *The Modern Manuscript Library* (New York and London: Scarecrow Press, 1966), p. 28.

²Kenneth Duckett, *Modern Manuscripts* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1975), p. 62.

³Marion L. Buzzard, "Writing a Collection Development Policy for an Academic Library," *Collection Management* 2 (Winter 1978): 317–328.

⁴David B. Gracy II, "Starting an Archives," *Georgia Archive* 1 (Fall 1972): 23–24.

⁵Gracy, "Peanut Butter and Spilt Milk: A New Look at Collecting," *Georgia Archive* 3 (Winter 1975): 22.

collecting areas.⁶ As early as 1957 archivists emphasized the need to eliminate duplicate collecting by abjuring "persistent, acrimonious, extravagant rivalries."⁷

It is clearly specified in archival literature that collecting policies should be components of programs that seek to eliminate future problems, lessen competition, and provide an avenue for deaccessioning. Collecting policies can also assist the curator in fulfilling the mission of the manuscript collection, but guidelines for producing such policies unfortunately have not yet been formulated. A method for dealing with the complexity of manuscript collecting should be devised. The American Library Association does provide a beginning with its "Guidelines for the Formulation of Collection Development Policies," but these guidelines are not designed for manuscript collections.⁸

A philosophy of planned collecting appeared as early as January 1957 when R.W.G. Vail edited an issue of *Library Trends* devoted entirely to manuscripts and archives. In his introduction, Vail defined manuscript collecting as an art. He advised manuscripts curators to systematically identify and collect the papers of distinguished families, famous authors, and great collectors.⁹ David C. Mearns emphasized that a field of collecting interest should be narrowly defined with strict adherence to an established collecting policy in order for the collection to gradually and logically

develop as a research collection. An acquisition policy presupposes a definite plan.¹⁰ Vail and Mearns stressed that single manuscript items should be acquired only if they fill gaps in already existing collections, and items peripheral to the collecting field should be refused, for waifs and strays hold no research interest.

For any collection, definition of purpose and clear identification of collection orientation—geographic, chronological, or subject—are critical. In 1964 Thomas Easterwood compiled a detailed listing of geographical-, chronological-, and subject-oriented collections and discussed several examples. He emphasized a subject approach to collecting and opposed geographically defined collecting policies, since "regionalism in collecting led to regionalism in research, or to anti-quarianism."¹¹

Bordin and Warner have pointed out the importance of proper collecting methods. Collecting areas shape the character of a library and collecting programs affect growth and development. The kinds of material sought alter collecting methods. Illuminated and medieval manuscripts require purchase; other types of manuscripts require donor solicitation. Therefore, the curator must be a shrewd purchaser as well as a diplomat. Bordin and Warner recommended that a theme for collecting be chosen, first with practical consideration of the availability of materials and then with an emphasis on quality to

⁶Steve Gurr, "The Perspective of an Historian/Archivist," *Georgia Archive* 3 (Winter 1975): 37.

⁷David C. Mearns, "Historical Manuscripts, Including Personal Papers," *Library Trends* 5 (January 1957): 314.

⁸"American Library Association Guidelines for the Formulation of Collection Development Policies," in *Building Library Collections*, by Wallace John Bonk and Rose Mary Magrill, 5th ed. (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1979), pp. 363-368. These guidelines were approved by the ALA board of directors in August 1976.

⁹R.W.G. Vail, ed., "Manuscripts and Archives," *Library Trends* 5 (January 1957): 309-310.

¹⁰Mearns, "Historical Manuscripts," p. 314.

¹¹Thomas J. Easterwood, "The Collecting and Care of Modern Manuscripts," *Call Number* 24 (1964): 5.

follow. According to Bordin and Warner, selection necessarily plays a role in all collecting, but it becomes much more important and more difficult when dealing with contemporary papers. "Selection, by its very nature, not only solves problems but creates a whole new roster of problems."¹²

Selection of contemporary papers causes problems, as do contemporary donors. Barbara Kaiser has pointed out some of these. Many donors of twentieth-century material are alive when their papers are received by a manuscript collection; therefore, a permanent and lengthy relationship must be established between the donor and the institution. Policies for retention, disposal, use, and restrictions must be clearly outlined and firmly established in the early negotiations. These policies should be provided to the donor, agreed upon, and signed by the donor and the archivist. Clarity helps to eliminate future problems and insures continued receipt of the donor's papers.¹³ Certainly proper donor relations must be considered by any institution establishing collecting policies. Maynard Brichford has described the problems encountered in collecting the papers of university faculty members. Although previously unimportant, the papers of faculty members may become an essential component of college and university archives and of some manuscript collections. Some faculty materials represent an important body of original resource items that should be preserved.¹⁴ Again, policies must be clear before collecting begins.

The American Association for State and Local History has demonstrated its concern by publishing technical leaflets relating to the issues of collecting. Bruce Dearstyne reemphasized the points made in earlier literature: that systematic collecting priorities should be based on geographical areas, historical topics, or time periods and should build upon the strengths of the collection. He remarked that a well-developed collecting policy can guide the institution and also "permit the agency to gracefully decline unwanted items." David Hooper has promoted the same ideas, recommending that the archivist decide on goals at the inception of the collecting program, write policy statements that establish collecting fields, and outline the administrative procedures for the collection. The collecting policy must be based on the needs of users, on other repositories' collecting goals, on budget allocations, and on complimentary and secondary research materials.¹⁵

In 1980 Linda Henry disagreed with Vail's concept of collecting papers of the elite. She argued that even subject collections are guilty of following policies that advise collecting only the papers of distinguished members of society. The historical trends of the 1960s required collecting the records of forgotten groups of people: women, blacks, the poor, and immigrants. As a result, subject repositories increased; but collecting policies are still criticized by historians and archivists for being biased in favor of the elite. Henry advocated that archivists identify themes of American history and design collecting strategies

¹²Bordin and Warner, *The Modern Manuscript Library*, pp. 25, 27, 70.

¹³Barbara J. Kaiser, "Problems with Donors of Contemporary Collections," *American Archivist* 32 (April 1969): 104.

¹⁴Maynard J. Brichford, "University Archives: Relationships with Faculty," *American Archivist* 34 (April 1971): 177-178.

¹⁵Bruce W. Dearstyne, "Local Historical Records: Programs for Historical Agencies," Technical Leaflet No. 121, *History News* 34 (November 1979); David H. Hooper, "Manuscript Collections: Initial Procedures and Policies," Technical Leaflet No. 131, *History News* 35 (October 1980).

that preserve representative samples of a particular universe. Broad coverage is now one priority for collecting.¹⁶

Priorities for collecting can also lessen collecting competition among agencies. Competition has always confronted manuscripts curators and continues to do so today. Communication of collecting priorities can help to decrease competition. David Duniway has emphasized that conflicts in collecting between historical and archival agencies center on their collecting philosophies based on geographical or subject interest. Because family manuscripts are relevant for state, local, university, business, or presidential libraries, their disposition can create conflicts among repositories.¹⁷

Washington University chose to build a collection of twentieth-century English and American literature without competing with other collections. The faculty was canvassed for "names of poets and novelists whose abilities they particularly respected and who they felt stood a good chance of being important in fifty years." The policy of describing whose works would be collected evolved from the list compiled after the elimination of the names of people whose works were already collected by other repositories. Thus competition was decreased and a defined collecting area established. Because of well-defined limits, which were adhered to, the collection has been successful.¹⁸

Other archivists have discussed the importance of avoiding competition. Mary Lynn McCree contended that competition could be minimized by communicating collecting areas and by

refusing to lure manuscripts away from already established collections. Comprehensiveness can be achieved through the exchange of information about collections and related microform collections. The collection development policy should be written, followed, and reviewed frequently.¹⁹

Competition in collecting may also bring up ethical questions. Philip Mason discussed some of them in 1977. Perhaps the most unethical collecting is the solicitation of a partial collection, the major part of which has been donated to another repository. This is particularly true if the division lowers the research value of the entire collection. Mason pointed out that sometimes collecting policies themselves border on the unethical. This occurs when an institution has far-reaching collecting programs but is unable to process and administer the collections it acquires. This has happened in many archival agencies, and they have become so overcommitted that they can neither administer their holdings nor accept additional installments to collections they have acquired years earlier. Also, this type of mismanagement can cause an institution to lose the opportunity to make important new acquisitions. Mason emphasized that archivists must "give the highest priority to establishing appraisal standards and guidelines, and to developing cooperative rather than competitive collecting programs."²⁰

Edward Kemp also deplored collecting in a field that competes with another established program. While he promoted an aggressive collecting policy, he did not advocate accepting everything

¹⁶Linda J. Henry, "Collecting Policies of Special-Subject Repositories," *American Archivist* 43 (Winter 1980): 57-58.

¹⁷David C. Duniway, "Conflicts in Collecting," *American Archivist* 24 (January 1961): 55-63.

¹⁸William Matheson, "An Approach to Special Collections," *American Libraries* 2 (1971): 1151.

¹⁹Mary Lynn McCree, "Good Sense and Good Judgment: Defining Collections and Collecting," *Drexel Library Quarterly* 11 (January 1975): 33.

²⁰Philip P. Mason, "The Ethics of Collecting," *Georgia Archive* 5 (Winter 1977): 45-47.

offered. Guidelines are needed that consider the types of materials, size and scope, and subject specialties of the collection. Only those materials within the repository's collecting spheres should be accepted. Written collection policies assist in establishing recognition of these spheres and should contain a discussion of what a donor can expect in terms of processing, use, and maintenance of materials.²¹ Copies of policies should be given to potential donors.

Cooperation can be extended when repositories take the responsibility to inform others of the location of special subject materials and urge donors to deposit materials in the most appropriate locations. To do this, repositories should develop comprehensive collecting strategies and coordinate field work and survey projects. Archivists should cooperate, once policies are reoriented to define collecting areas. Archivists should be aggressive collectors in order to broadly cover subjects.²² F. Gerald Ham, in speaking to an American Association for State and Local History conference on collecting in the twentieth century, advocated a "need to change our perspective, from our egocentric need to build up our own archival institutions to a common concern to build up information linkages between institutions."²³

Another serious concern in manuscript collecting is deaccessioning. Although the subject has not been readily accepted by manuscripts curators and archivists, one article on deaccessioning has appeared in print. Leonard Rapport

discussed the problem of deaccessioning public records; however, his concerns apply to manuscript collections as well. He questioned how records of peripheral value come into repositories and why they are kept. Rapport proposed that holdings be periodically and systematically reappraised in order to avoid problems and eliminate nonarchival materials.²⁴

A symposium on the deaccessioning of research materials in rare book and manuscript libraries was held at Brown University in June 1981. Approximately seventy rare book and manuscripts curators, book dealers, auctioneers, collectors, scholars, and donors attended. The impetus for the symposium was the sale by the John Carter Brown Library of nineteen Western illuminated manuscripts dating from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. The Brown Library's Committee of Management authorized the sale as part of the formulated "plans for the future growth and development of the Library as a scholarly institution" and "to strengthen the financial base of the Library, carry out that growth, and meet the needs imposed by the uncertain state of financial support shared by all cultural institutions today."²⁵

Historian Oscar Handlin, Director of the Harvard University Library, dislikes the term "deaccession" but agrees that the process of deaccessioning should be part of collection development. Handlin added his support to other symposium attendees who argued that collecting policies must reflect changes in environment and society with viable acquisitions

²¹Edward C. Kemp, *Manuscripts Solicitation for Libraries, Special Collections, Museums and Archives* (Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1978), pp. 92-94.

²²Henry, "Collecting Policies," p. 63.

²³Betty Doak Elder, "Collecting the 20th Century," *History News* 36 (November 1981): 11.

²⁴Leonard Rapport, "No Grandfather Clause: Reappraising Accessioned Records," *American Archivist* 44 (Spring 1981): 143-150.

²⁵Thomas R. Adams, Introduction, "Walpole Catalogue," Sotheby, Parke, Bernet and Company, London, May 1981.

policies.²⁶ Deaccessioning, like collecting, must be done rationally. Each item must be examined to determine whether it should be sold, transferred, or returned to the donor. The mission and purposes of the collection must always be kept in mind. Also important is the relationship of the item to the scope of the collection, and this scope should be under constant review. Before gifts can be sold, transferred, or discarded, the terms of the original gift must be reviewed carefully. Donors are of great importance to manuscript collections, and deaccessioning must be done only if legal under the original terms. A statement regarding deaccessioning and its moral and ethical implications must be part of every collecting policy. Deaccessioning centers on the fact that "first and foremost must be the question of what your institution is attempting to do and whether the continued retention of certain materials is in keeping with that mission."²⁷

If they are to alleviate many of the problems discussed above, policies must precede active collecting rather than be developed as an afterthought. Richard Lytle has discussed the importance of setting priorities. These priorities "should be to define a rational collection program, to gain elementary control over all archives/manuscripts materials, and to communicate knowledge of holdings to the scholarly community."²⁸ Paul McCarthy stressed this further by suggesting that all institutions identify and build on their

strengths while taking into consideration the needs of the institution's public and the institution's resources.²⁹ Mary Lynn McCree emphasized the importance of collecting policies that aid in gaining prestige and recognition from the scholarly world. She stated that collecting should be defined by subject, geography, or time period; should take into consideration the institution's resources, funds, and secondary sources; and should assess the collection's users, the collecting policies of other institutions, and the responsibility to establish a collection that will be of continuing research value.³⁰

Daniel R. Porter reviewed some recent collecting problems and echoed the theme of those who became activist archivists. Certainly this movement evolved from the social movements of the 1970s and the opinion, held by most scholarly communities, that scholars should be active, not passive, in their work. Porter indicated that controversies regarding collecting and administration of manuscript collections developed in part because of the change from collecting for consensus history to collecting for the purpose of documenting human progress laterally as well as horizontally. He stressed that collection policies must serve the institution's public and stand as guideposts to use in time of crisis.³¹

In library literature authors have recognized that written collecting policies assist libraries. The American Library Association has long been con-

²⁶Daniel T. Traister, "Selling Off: A Plain and Easy Pathway to Health for Rare Book and Manuscript Libraries," *American Book Collector* (September-October 1981): 35-43.

²⁷David H. Stam, "'Prove All Things: Hold Fast That Which is Good'; Deaccessioning and Research Libraries," *College and Research Libraries* 43 (January 1982): 5-13.

²⁸Richard H. Lytle, ed., "Management of Archives and Manuscript Collections for Libraries," *Drexel Library Quarterly* 11 (January 1975): 4.

²⁹Paul McCarthy, Jr., "Overview: Essentials of an Archives or Manuscripts Program," *Drexel Library Quarterly* 11 (January 1975): 6.

³⁰McCree, "Good Sense and Good Judgment," pp. 21-33.

³¹Daniel R. Porter, "Principles for the Long Haul," *Georgia Archive* 3 (Winter 1975): 16-19.

cerned with planning and evaluation and in 1976 developed a set of "Guidelines for the Formulation of Collection Development Policies." Manuscripts curators can and should evaluate and emulate ALA's work in this area. ALA's stated purpose for these guidelines is "the belief that collection development policy statements must be comprehensible, and that they must be comparable, particularly if they are to prove useful in the implementation of long-range goals for sharing of resources."³² While the sharing of resources of manuscript collections differs in some ways from that of book collections, the ALA's "Guidelines" are helpful for formulating collecting policies for manuscript collections.

ALA states that a written collection development policy statement is a tool that assists acquisitions personnel in working consistently toward defined goals, thus insuring stronger collections with wiser use of resources. A written policy also informs patrons, employees, and administrators of the nature and scope of the collection and of future plans for development. Libraries should identify the requirements of their patrons and establish priorities for fulfilling them. A collection development policy statement should address the breadth and depth coverage of the collection's focus, whether it be geographic, subject, or periodic. Policy statements should be regularly reviewed so that changes in collecting areas can be indicated. Detailed analysis of the collection development policy for form collections (microforms, manuscripts, and maps) is suggested by ALA. Where possible a form collection should follow a subject classification and its policy

should include the following elements of the ALA guidelines:

Detailed analysis of collection development policy for subject fields. For each subject category (i.e., classification number or group of numbers), indicate the following:

- (1) Level of collecting intensity codes to indicate:
 - (a) existing strength of collection
 - (b) actual current level of collection activity
 - (c) desirable level of collecting to meet program needs
- (2) Language code or codes
- (3) Chronological periods collected
- (4) Geographical areas located
- (5) Forms of material collected (or excluded)
- (6) Library unit or selector with primary selection responsibility for the field³³

Discussion of collection development policies for books contains suggestions that are applicable to manuscript collecting policies. The best recent monograph on book collection development is *Collection Development in Libraries: A Treatise*, by Robert D. Stueart and George B. Miller, Jr. Stueart and Miller discuss the early days of book collecting in the United States as an era of *laissez-faire* when all gifts were accepted. This led to collections that were "uneven in quality and varied greatly in quantity." In their study of American library collection growth, they found that development was limited to individual libraries and that no cooperative programs existed. Today, however, more planning goes into collection development, and quality is a recurring theme.³⁴

Sheila T. Dowd added to Stueart's and Miller's discussion. Although libraries and manuscript collections can

³²ALA "Guidelines," p. 363.

³³*Ibid.*, section 2.2.2, p. 367.

³⁴Robert D. Stueart and George B. Miller, Jr., *Collection Development in Libraries: A Treatise, Part A* (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1980), p. 3.

be developed without a collection development policy statement, most great ones have developed with the aid of one. Dowd outlined design requirements for the policy statement, the subject structure, the elements of the statement, and a standard language and gave useful procedural suggestions for formulating the policy.³⁵ Marion L. Buzzard provided guidelines and models to follow in writing collecting policies. He provided a step-by-step method for writing a policy and a sample selection policy. Buzzard believes policies are needed, as budgets and space shrink, to plan, develop, and evaluate the collection. He is particularly concerned with collection development policies for academic libraries.³⁶

What consensus on collecting policies can thus be ascertained from the literature? Although papers of the distinguished, famous, and great are still being collected, subject-oriented collections have gained new importance. The problems of what to collect, how to eliminate competition, and deaccessioning still remain. Even though the American Library Association has developed a set of guidelines, they must be modified for the purposes of manuscript collections. Model collection policies are needed that take into consideration competition, research needs, ethics, institutional resources, and deaccessioning.

In order to develop collecting policies and to carry them out, the manuscripts curator must be a planner who can develop policies that serve as guidelines to direct decision making in a tactical manner. In planning a collecting policy

for an already established collection, change is inevitable. Considerable effort is required to achieve change in manuscript collections because the services they provide tend to be complex and difficult to evaluate. Most collections are part of nonprofit organizations, which must respond to changes in community norms, legal systems, and technology, especially if they are to survive. Operating in such a complex and dynamic environment necessitates constant change on the part of an organization in order for it to adapt to the instability. Alternative courses of action and flexibility are necessary components of collecting. A manuscript collection in today's environment must introduce changes more frequently than in yesterday's less complicated society. The complexity and the inherent instability of the environment, however, make the management of change more complicated.³⁷

The manuscripts curator must set the collection on a predetermined course of action. Written planning documents are outlines of the steps to be taken to reach future goals and are "today's design for tomorrow's actions." Policies should be: (1) reflective of the objectives and plans of the organization; (2) consistent; (3) flexible, so they can be changed as new needs arise; (4) distinguished from rules and procedures (policies allow for latitude but rules and procedures remain firm); and (5) written.³⁸

We need models to follow in planning, evolving, and changing collecting policies for the future. A model should assist manuscripts curators in developing written collecting policies. Also, if

³⁵Sheila T. Dowd, "The Formulation of a Collection Development Policy Statement," in *Collection Development in Libraries*, by Stuart and Miller, p. 67.

³⁶Buzzard, "Writing a Collection Development Policy for an Academic Library," pp. 317-328.

³⁷Robert A. Cooke, "Managing Change in Organizations," in *Management Principles for Nonprofit Agencies and Organizations*, Gerald Zaltman, ed. (New York: American Management Association, 1979), pp. 156-157.

³⁸Robert D. Stuart and John Taylor Eastlick, *Library Management* (Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1981), p. 32.

the form of, and the terminology used in, collecting can be standardized, it will enable comparison among institutions and encourage cooperative programs. Thus a model collecting policy for manuscript collections should contain the following elements:

- I. Statement of purpose of the institution and/or collection.
- II. Types of programs supported by the collection
 - A. Research
 - B. Exhibits
 - C. Outreach (community programs)
 - D. Publications
 - E. Other (specify)
- III. Clientele served by the collection
 - A. Scholars
 - B. Graduate students
 - C. Undergraduates
 - D. General public
 - E. Other (specify)
- IV. Priorities and limitations of the collection
 - A. Present identified strengths
 - B. Present collecting level
 - C. Present identified weaknesses
 - D. Desired level of collecting to meet program needs
 - E. Geographical areas collected
 - F. Chronological periods collected
 - G. Subject areas collected
 - H. Languages, other than English, collected
 - I. Forms of material, other than manuscripts, collected
 - J. Exclusions

- V. Cooperative agreements affecting the collecting policy
- VI. Statement of resource sharing policy
- VII. Statement of deaccessioning policy
- VIII. Procedures affecting collecting policy and its expedition
- IX. Procedure for monitoring development and reviewing collection development guidelines.

I. Statement of purpose

The business of the organization should be defined in the statement of purpose or mission statement. It must be periodically reviewed and analyzed. The manuscript collection's statement of purpose must be in agreement with, and flow from that of, the institution of which the collection is a part. A manuscript collection in a university must function within, and help fulfill the mission of, the university as a whole. For example, the mission statement of the Winthrop College Archives, which contains a manuscript collection, is "to provide physical protection for historically valuable materials and to make them available to individuals interested in researching and writing about the history of South Carolina."³⁹ The statement of purpose of the Troup County Archives, which maintains a manuscript collection, is "The Troup County Archives collects, protects, and makes available for research the local government records of Troup County and LaGrange, Georgia; and manuscripts, audio-visual, and printed materials relating to the history of Troup County and LaGrange, Georgia."⁴⁰

³⁹Francis X. Blouin and Ann Morgan Campbell, "Planning for Archivists." Paper delivered at the 45th annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists, September 1981, in Berkeley, California.

⁴⁰Troup County Archives, Policies, 1982. Typescript.

II. Types of programs supported by the collection

A. Research: The manuscripts curator must be aware of the level of research to be served by the collection. This is tied closely to the collection's clientele and should reflect the needs and requirements of that clientele. Is the collection to be an exhaustive one in a certain field or a complementary one to other resources? Few, if any, manuscript collections can become exhaustive sources of manuscripts for a given subject, geographic designation, or time period. Therefore, manuscripts curators should define research as it applies to their organization. *B. Exhibits:* Manuscripts curators who plan to make exhibits part of their programs should specify this in the collecting policy. The physical type of exhibit—exhibit cases, traveling exhibits, free-standing exhibits, etc.—is also important to explain. Patrons and donors need to know if exhibits of manuscripts will be available as an aid to research and as a use of their donations. Some donors may request that their gifts not be exhibited. *C. Outreach:* Community programs referred to as outreach are significant to manuscript collections in the way that exhibits are. They provide advertisement for the collection, draw researchers and donors to the collection, and inform the public about the work of the collection. If outreach programs—slide presentations, lecture series, workshops, tours, classes, etc.—are a part of the collection's programs, the clientele and the donors need to be informed. Permission to display items must be obtained from donors. *D. Publications:* Manuscripts curators who plan publications should outline the types of publications that will be part of their program. These should be stated in the collecting policies; and donor gift forms, which allow for the acquisition of literary rights, should be developed.

Rights or permission to publish should be obtained with an eye toward future publications. Publications also serve as outreach activities. In addition to publishing manuscripts from the collection, a curator may develop newsletters or bulletins, journals or magazines, or even pictorial publications. *E. Other:* Other types of program activities should also be specified. Many programs can overlap as outreach, exhibits, and publications. A lecture series, for example, would be part of an outreach program; and exhibits and publications could result from it. Acquiring grants from agencies such as the National Endowment for the Humanities is another program type. Patrons and donors will want to know when funds are available for special projects such as microfilming or retrospective cataloging. Inclusion of these elements in collecting policies serves to inform the public, the administration, and staff of the planned activities and programs of the collection while providing for flexibility in program planning. It also enables curators to avoid becoming involved in unplanned activities.

III. Clientele served by the collection

Programs of the collection are affected by the clientele served, and programs must be geared to them. *A. Scholars:* A definition of terms is a critical part of the collecting policy. Are only professors considered scholars or are free-lance writers and others included? If letters of introduction or identification are needed for access, this should be specified in the policies. *B. Graduate students:* Although self-explanatory, some clarification may be needed as to credentials. *C. and D. Undergraduates and general public:* Some manuscript repositories do not permit amateur historians, genealogists, and pre-college students to use their

materials. The manuscripts curator must specify for whom the materials are being collected. A manuscript collection for the use of genealogists can vary distinctly from one for post-graduate scholars, and collecting activities will vary accordingly.

IV. Priorities and limitations of the collection

A. What are the present strengths of the collection? How do these strengths meet the needs of the clientele served and the programs of the collection? Identifying present strengths may include specifying which fields—literature, history, etc.—are represented most voluminously or qualitatively in the collection. *B. Present collecting level:* What manuscripts, fields, types, or subjects are collected to an exhaustive or comprehensive degree? Is the collection's purpose to collect all manuscripts relating to a particular person or subject, or is it to collect a representative sample of all fields and subjects for a particular time or region? It is necessary to specify which collecting areas are comprehensive and which are minimal. A minimal collecting level would indicate that only a few general manuscripts would be collected in a specified subject, time, or place. *C. Present identified weaknesses:* This tells the manuscripts curator what types of manuscripts are minimally represented in the collection and if these are to continue to be accepted or if they are to be concentrated on to a comprehensive level. *D. The desired level of collecting to meet the program needs:* This will affect all of the priorities and limitations of the collection. Once program needs are identified, collecting can become more focused. *E. Geographical areas collected:* Specify if the collection is limited to a particular area. *F. Chronological periods collected:* Is the collection focused on a specific time period or

does it include manuscripts from all periods? This information helps the manuscripts curator to focus collecting activities and to avoid acquisitions of inappropriate materials. *G. Subject areas collected:* The collection may be a theme collection, such as women's history or the history of science; or a geographical area such as the southeastern United States or Troup County, Georgia can be the subject. *H. Languages, other than English, collected:* Again, this information aids the manuscripts curator in planned acquisitions. *I. Forms of material, other than manuscripts, collected:* Specify what will be collected—microforms, audio-visual items, printed materials, computer records, or others. *J. Exclusions:* Mention of any exclusions must be included in the collecting policy. For example, an archives might collect twentieth-century American organizational records except for those of labor unions or professional associations.

V. Cooperative agreements

Each individual manuscript collection will, in some manner, overlap with another. Family records may contain the papers of congressmen, academicians, scientists, women, blacks, and organizations, and may cover numerous time periods and places. Cooperative agreements may be developed that state that although a collection focuses on a certain time period, the papers of a specific individual will not be collected because another repository covers that person comprehensively. Of course, cooperative agreements can take many forms and may be as simple as an agreement to inform a fellow curator of acquisitions in a certain field.

VI. Statement of resource sharing policy

Resource sharing can be a viable part of a manuscript collection's program.

Manuscript groups that have been divided among institutions pose a problem for researchers in terms of time and travel. If institutions develop microfilm programs to share these resources, problems can be minimized for researchers and a wider audience can be reached. Other resource sharing may include duplicating audio-visual items for, or donating duplicate printed items to, another collection. These policies must adhere to gift terms, must be legally acceptable, must not adversely affect the collection, and must be within the budgetary constraints of the collection.

VII. Statement of deaccessioning policy

The deaccessioning policy of a collection must reflect the mission statement, be legal under the terms of gift agreements, and specify the need for deaccessioning.

VIII. Procedures affecting collecting policy

These procedures should indicate what a collection's staff will and will not do in regard to gifts, purchases, exhibits, special programs, research, photocopying, and liability. Of course, there are other functions that can also be contained in collection procedures. The main purpose of these procedures is to give staff, administration, and patrons

guidelines for carrying out the collecting policy.

IX. Procedure for monitoring and reviewing

A built-in evaluation monitor that is continuous should become part of the total program operation, for it can detect early any imbalance between objectives and policies. A time framework should be part of the monitoring plan. Whether part of a six-month or five-year plan, all policies and procedures must be evaluated by staff, administrators, and even patrons to determine if the mission of the collection is being met.

Manuscripts curators must plan for the remainder of this century as well as the new century. Acceptance of the model presented above can aid in improved quality of manuscripts collections, decreased competition, and more careful use of limited resources. It is hoped that presenting this model to the archival community will generate discussion of the theory of collecting policies. Further research will then be stimulated in the areas of competitive collecting, quality collecting, and deaccessioning. Models can be developed on which to base deaccessioning. Without application of the model, sporadic, competitive, and low-quality manuscript collecting will continue.