Fragments or Components: Theme Collections in a Local Setting

JOHN J. GRABOWSKI

Abstract: Archives and manuscript repositories need to determine and enforce realistic collecting policies in order to create cohesive collections for research use and keep the size of their holdings within reasonable bounds, but this is difficult to accomplish because of constituency pressures and the impulse to compete with other institutions. The experience of an old and important regional repository, the Western Reserve Historical Society, particularly its Cleveland Regional Ethnic Archives Program begun in 1971, is the central focus of this article. The author describes how the society's collecting policy was defined and examines the evolution of collecting practice within the bounds of that policy. The successful implementation of the original policy has depended especially on three factors: good working relations with ethnic group leaders, selectivity within the scope of the policy, and cooperation among repositories.

About the author: *John J. Grabowski is associate curator of manuscripts at the Western Reserve Historical Society where he has been employed since 1969. He received his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees, all in history, from Case Western Reserve University. He has published several articles and has made a number of presentations on ethnic archives at various professional meetings.*

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DETERMINING AND ENFORCING A COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY are two of the most important yet difficult tasks a manuscripts repository or archives can undertake. The need for such policies has traditionally been based on their scholarly ramifications: concise collecting within specific subject areas that results in the creation of a cohesive body of source material. Other more pragmatic factors have, however, provided incentive for such policies. With building costs at a prohibitive level and funds for adequate staff extremely difficult to obtain, it has become imperative that many institutions exercise strict control over acquisitions, particularly when many potential collections are the bloated results of the paper explosion of the twentieth century. Despite these twin imperatives, it is usually difficult to maintain even the most carefully planned collection policy. Pressure from donors, trustees, and faculty has traditionally wrenched institutional policies off course, and in many instances the spirit of interinstitutional competition has often lured curators beyond the rational limits of their collections.[1]

The problems attendant to conceptualizing and implementing policies are common to every type of repository, whether it collects nationally in a single subject area or regionally within a number of areas. In the former instance, policy development is complicated not only by the physical problem of collecting from a large geographic area, but also by the correspondingly large number of potential acquisitions in that area. For the regional repository, difficulties derive from the wide array of subject areas that might be considered collectible within a particular region. Quick consideration of the process of policy development might lead to the conclusion that the procedure is somewhat easier for the regional repository. At first glance, the regional curator seems to be operating within a well-defined geographic area (with boundaries usually set by governmental surveyors) which could come to be known quite intimately by the curator. He or she could, consequently, fine-tune collecting strategies. Initial impressions are often deceiving, however, and, if anything, policy development may be more difficult on the regional than on the national level.

Ambition and ego often make quick work of the collecting boundaries initially established by agencies such as local historical societies.[2] Though some societies may have been "about the deadest thing in the country," others expanded in countless directions, driven by collectors such as Jeremy Belknap and Lyman Draper. Propensities toward geographic expansion were eventually compounded by the Victorian collecting interests of trustees, friends, and staff, and they were finally exacerbated by the arrival of the "new history" in the 1960s. The last factor, in particular, caused the number of potential collections within even a relatively small areas, such as a city, to grow beyond count and often beyond comprehension.[3]

[1]Kenneth W. Duckett, *Modern Manuscripts: A Practical Manual for Their Management, Care, and Use* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1975), pp. 56–85. Duckett provides some idea of the influences with which the curator (particularly one in a college or university-based repository) must contend when establishing collecting guidelines.

[2]David D. Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past: An Interpretation of the Development of Historical Studies in America, 1607–1884* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960). This volume is an excellent overview of the development of local historical societies and contains several examples of societies that transcended their local boundaries.

[3]Mary A. Benjamin, *Autographs: A Key to Collecting* (New York: Walter R. Benjamin Autographs, 1963), p. 11 (as quoted in Duckett, p. 9).

The Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, Ohio, is not alien to the problems of the geographic repository. A new library building has placed it in a more comfortable position than many similar institutions, but it still faces the legacy of its forebears in terms of actual collections and a series of decisions (many of which are unwritten) that govern new acquisitions. Established in 1867 as a repository for manuscript and printed material relating to the history and settlement of the Connecticut Western Reserve, the society also gathered, almost from its inception, material relating to Ohio and the "Great West."[4] The initial collecting boundaries of the institution were elastic to say the least. During a relatively prosperous period of growth from 1880 to 1930, a wealthy, active board of trustees and Wallace H. Cathcart—the institution's president (1907–1913) and first director (1913–1942)—expanded the society's facilities and extended the geographic scope of its holdings to encompass such national subjects as abolitionism, the American Civil War, the Baptist Church, and the Shaker movement.[5] The absolute geographic limits were reached when the society accepted a variety of Napoleonic and Czarist artifacts, books, and manuscripts for its library and museum.

Though the society always collected manuscript material within its immediate locale of Cleveland, its work in this area remained rather narrow until the 1960s. The collection of local primary sources followed the general subject interests of the institution or focused on the city's early history. Other manuscript collections, which did not fit these categories, arrived because of the institution's reputation and the informal contacts maintained in the community by its trustees, friends, and staff. Unlike the established subject areas which represented comprehensive collections, these other materials represented serendipitous, but nevertheless important, acquisitions. Included among these were the papers of Myron T. Herrick, governor of Ohio and United States ambassador to France; the papers of noted surgeon George Crile, Sr.; an account book of the first Chinese laundryman in Cleveland; and the minutebook of the Franklin Club, a turn-of-the-century political forum at which propagandist Emma Goldman delivered remarks that supposedly incited the assassination of President William McKinley.[6]

The accumulation of manuscript collections by these processes was complemented by an aggressive pursuit of local printed sources, including pamphlets and newspapers. This provided the library with a diverse and rich collection

[4]Elbert Jay Benton, *A Short History of the Western Reserve Historical Society* (Cleveland: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1942), p. 7. The original bylaws of the society stated, as its principal objective, "to discover, procure and preserve whatever relates to the history, biography, genealogy, antiquities and statistics connected with the City of Cleveland and the Western Reserve and generally what relates to the history of Ohio and the Great West."

[5]Ibid., pp. 16–21. See also James Gilreath, "The Formation of the Western Reserve Historical Society's Shaker Collection," *Journal of Library History, Philosophy and Comparative Librarianship* 8 (July– October 1973); 133–142, for the history of one of the major collections acquired through the efforts of Wallace H. Cathcart.

[6]The Herrick Papers were donated to the society by Mrs. Parmely Webb Herrick and Parmely Herrick, Jr., 1942–1957; the Crile Papers by the Crile Family, 1948; the Chinese account book by its owner Wau Lee through Dr. E. Sterling in 1875; and the Franklin Club minutes by the United States marshal in 1907. In the first two instances, contacts on the board level probably insured the placement of the Herrick and Crile material with the society. In the case of the account book, Dr. Sterling felt the society an appropriate home for this curiosity. In the last instance, the U.S. marshal, who had received the minutes during the investigation following the McKinley assassination, felt the society to be the proper repository for something of historic value.

of published material relating to religion, politics, club life, military history, and ethnicity within the greater Cleveland community. It also established a precedent wherein any collections program of the society was not limited to acquiring manuscript material but included the pursuit of printed sources as well.[7]

This was the situation at the society's library at the beginning of the depression. Subsequent reductions in funds and staff caused the collecting program to remain moribund until 1957 when the institution resumed a more active posture under the directorship of Meredith B. Colket. The production of a repository level manuscripts guide became one of Colket's major goals.[8] The compilation of the guide and increasing demands of scholars in new topical areas proved to be vital factors in reasserting the library's broad scale collecting program in the 1960s. Though traditional areas such as the Civil War remained of interest, specialized collecting programs were instituted to round out the library's holdings relating to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century urban growth of Cleveland. The production of the guide had shown surprising strengths as well as major gaps in this area. Filling these gaps became imperative in the 1960s and was seen as part of the institution's chartered purpose—to preserve the entire history of the Cleveland area. Within a decade, special collecting projects in urban, black, ethnic, labor, and local Jewish history became standard aspects of the society's library program.[9]

At no time were the materials acquired under these projects meant to be considered as separate, special collections within the library.[10] The principle underlying their creation was the preservation of an interrelated, comprehensive body of material which would record all facets of the history of the local community. This general statement of collection policy sounds simple, but it proved difficult to implement. Its universality within a small geographic area needed to be tempered. Only now, more than one and one-half decades after beginning work in new topical areas, has the institution been able to define more precisely those materials which are to be a part of its comprehensive Cleveland collection. This gulf between the establishment of a program and its eventual definition and control is primarily a result of unfamiliarity with new subject areas as well as a changing fiscal situation. No matter how narrow the geographic focus, such difficulties will always accompany a new program collecting in non-traditional areas. Nowhere was this more in evidence than in the operation of the Cleveland Regional Ethnic Archives Program. The evolution of a collection policy for this single program is well worth examining in detail, not only for the purpose of comparison with other national programs described elsewhere in this issue, but also because it provides a practical test for

[7]Benton, *A Short History*, pp. 18–19.

[8]Kermit J. Pike, *A Guide to the Manuscripts and Archives of the Western Reserve Historical Society* (Cleveland: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1972). The compilation of this guide, begun in the mid-1960s, entailed the complete review, and often the reprocessing, of every manuscript collection held by the society. It was during this procedure that new acqusitions work was begun in earnest.

[9]John J. Grabowski, "Ethnicity in Perspective, The Collections of the Western Reserve Historical Society," *Ethnic Forum* 1 (September 1981): 29–30.

[10]The tangible result of this philosophy is the placement of collections within the society's stacks. Collections are assigned a sequential identification number upon processing and are stored in this order. Thus, there is no special storage area for any of the materials received through the special acquisitions programs. Only the subject headings in the manuscript card catalog preserve thematic integrity.

current theories of collection development within the profession.[11]

In 1971 the society based the establishment of the ethnic program on three factors. Foremost was the aforementioned interest in making the society's library holdings more representative of the overall history of the community it served. This was heightened by the second factor, the tremendous influence immigrant groups had had on the economic, social, and demographic history of the city. Finally, the library's existing collections, particularly in the foreign language press, provided a base upon which to build a substantial ethnic archives.[12]

Geography provided the only firm parameter for the initial structure of the program. Fortunately, the society's charter membership in the Ohio Network of American History Research Centers (established in 1970) eliminated any vagaries as to the geographic scope of the project.[13] The network limited the society's manuscript solicitations to the five-county area surrounding Cleveland. Still, the potential field was enormous, even when only the city of Cleveland was considered. More than fifty ethnic groups lived within the metropolitan area.[14] Each group had a myriad of collecting potential. Organizational life, business, publishing, religion, folk arts and crafts, women, and labor constituted only the most obvious. Historians proved of little help in narrowing the field. Each ethnic group and each topical area seemed to have its own advocate.

Perceived scholarly needs, however, were subordinate to the importance of legitimizing the project in determining its initial collecting policy. The city's ethnic communities needed proof of the society's interest and sincerity, and the society's directors needed to see proof of collection potential. Perhaps most critically, the activities of outside repositories within Cleveland necessitated a quick and widespread entry into the field in order to counter the competition.

These considerations resulted in a broad solicitation of material. The staff contacted almost every ethnic community and a bewildering variety of organizations and individuals within each group. When collections were offered, they were seldom refused for fear of offending a new clientele or losing material of potential, albeit questionable, research value. This shotgun approach had two major drawbacks. It produced a body of collections that had little thematic integrity other than ethnicity, and the collections often included items that had no pertinence to the immigrant experience in Cleveland other than having been owned by someone of immigrant or ethnic background.

This manner of collecting continued for two years. Despite its admitted problems, it was a success in that it set the stage for a second, more logical phase of acquisitions work. In addition to the odd cookbook, general European history, and nationalistic novel, the program did

[11]See Faye Phillips, "Developing Collecting Policies for Manuscript Collections," *American Archivist* 47 (Winter 1984): 30–42, for a recent review of policy development. Phillips's notes provide an excellent synopsis of library and archival literature relating to policy development.

[12]John J. Grabowski, "WRHS—In Search of Ethnic History," *Ohio Archivist* 2 (Fall 1971): 4.

[13]"Ohio Network Research Centers Reach Agreement," *Ohio Archivist* 3 (Fall 1972): 10–11.

[14]*Greater Cleveland Nationalities Directory 1974* (Cleveland: Sun Newspapers and the Nationalities Services Center, 1974), p. 3.

procure important local manuscript and published material.[15] Of greatest consequence was the identification of those communities with which the society could work most effectively. These included the Czechs, Germans, Jews, and Poles. Once entree was gained within each of these groups, planned methodical collecting was inaugurated. This was assisted in part by the increased familiarity of the staff with important factors, events, or movements within the community. For instance contacts made in the Czech community led to recognition of the strong socialist movement within that group.[16] Generally, staff members contacted every locally-based organization (including surviving agents of defunct bodies) as well as each newspaper or periodical publication. The solicitation of personal papers from within the groups, however, continued without direction. Occasional newspaper obituaries and tips from existing contacts provided the impetus for this aspect of the program.

During this initial phase, it also became apparent that certain communities would be difficult to approach. Commitments to other repositories or plans to build local cultural centers created major impasses. Such problems were anticipated at the outset of the program, but plans for their resolution could be formulated only on a case-by-case basis as work progressed. The program's field staff discovered, for instance, that even the promise of acid-free, fireproof protection for the records could not dissuade groups such as the Transylvanian Saxons and Irish from working toward their own cultural center in which the artifacts and records from their respective communities would be housed. The insularity of other communities also proved stronger than anticipated. The society's entreaties were often refused, not so much because of the organization's traditional white Anglo-Saxon Protestant overtones, but because its associate curator, though of European ethnic background himself, was not of the "right" ethnic background in many instances. Such contingencies defied planning, and in the society's case, their resolution had to await some means of copying and sharing collections and the provision of new, ethnically correct, field staff.

It took nearly four years to implement a workable solution to one of these problems. In 1976 the society began an in-house microfilming program. Although instituted primarily as a preservation and space-saving function, microfilming also became a part of the collection policy of the ethnic project.[17] It allowed the institution to copy those materials which were destined for other repositories or inseparable from their source. The availability of filming equipment, however, had to be accompanied by a change in basic institutional policy before it could become a collections tool. The society's library had traditionally valued its manuscript collections not only for their content but also for their importance as objects. This derived from the prestige of owning the original and from the institu-

[15]The early phase of collecting produced several noteworthy acquisitions, including an extensive run of *Radnicka Borba*, a Serbian-language Socialist Labor Party newspaper; the records of University Social Settlement, which operated in the city's major Polish neighborhood; and the records of the Nationalities Services Center, the city's principal immigrant social service agency, and a direct descendant of Cleveland's International Institute.

[16]The Cleveland Czech Socialist materials, which include a newspaper run, records of the paper's publishing house, and an extensive collection of minute books remain as one of the most cohesive units within the general ethnic collections and serve as an example that should be emulated in future work.

[17]The microfilming program was established with the aid of the Board of County Commissioners of Cuyahoga County, Ohio.

tion's ability to periodically display library collections within its museum wing. It took time, therefore, before microfilm became an integral part of collection policy. Its utility for this purpose was also tempered by the funds available for film and prior commitments to other filming projects. The change in attitude and the availability of funding, such as a National Endowment for the Humanities grant administered through the Immigration History Research Center of the University of Minnesota, have since allowed the society to obtain the records of agencies such as the Alliance of Transylvanian Saxons.[18]

During the second phase of the project, approximately 1973–1980, the society concentrated on collecting within those ethnic groups most supportive of its efforts. Though contacts continued with other communities, efforts had to be focused on existing strong points because a limited field staff could not devote large amounts of time to work with problem communities.

The field staff shortage was partially alleviated by the establishment of the Cleveland Jewish Archives Project in 1976. Separately funded and eventually endowed by the local Jewish community, this project grew out of the liaison established with the community during the first phase of the ethnic project. The program has since become a model for effective collecting within a single ethnic group. The dedicated staff position has allowed for systematic and exhaustive lead work in a single area, and the project's close linkage with the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland has provided a broad endorsement of its efforts. Its endowed status assures that records will continue to be collected and even appraised as they are created.[19] The duplication of this project within other major ethnic groups would provide an ideal solution to the various problems confronting the ethnic collecting program.

The lessons learned during the second phase of collecting and through the Jewish Archives Project are critical to the society's current ethnic work. Still lacking an expanded field staff, the library has begun annually to target several communities not yet well represented in its collections. The approach to these communities is through an intermediary, a person or persons respected within the group, interested in its history, and in sympathy with the needs and goals of the ethnic project. It was such an individual who provided the basis for successful work in the Jewish, German, and Czech communities. The process of establishing this type of liaison is not easy. Most ethnic groups have local historians, but it is difficult to find such an individual who is acceptable to the various factions within a group and who also understands and honors the collecting guidelines of an outside institution. Recent work with a committee in the city's Hispanic community has shown that, with persistence, such arrangements can usually be worked out. The Cleveland Hispanic community is young, rife with factions, and fiercely proud of its growing position in the city. Despite the potential for friction inherent in this combination, the committee has

[18]The records of the Alliance of Transylvanian Saxons were filmed as part of the Immigration History Research Center's Ethnic Fraternal Project which was supported by the NEH. A Rockefeller Foundation grant, administered by the Pilsudski Foundation of New York, enabled the society to microfilm the records of several local Polish fraternal organizations. These materials were not available to the society in the original.

[19]*A Guide to Jewish History Sources in the History Library of The Western Reserve Historical Society* (Cleveland: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1983). The front matter in this guide presents an excellent synopsis of the circumstances under which the Cleveland Jewish Archives Project was established.

functioned smoothly and has ascribed to the collecting goals established by the society. This type of liaison work, no matter how difficult or pitfall-prone, will have to continue until such time as funds permit the employment of additional field workers.

A decade of experience has also provided the expertise to judge the importance and the need for various types of ethnic source material. Time has also created an awareness of the interests and holdings of other ethnic repositories. Together these factors, born of experience rather than planning, have allowed the society to be more selective when accessioning new material. Redundant collection of published items such as newspapers and almanacs, which are known to be held in other institutions, has been eliminated. No longer does the library accept every passport, naturalization certificate, or wedding photograph that comes its way. The foregoing may seem but a minor step in the development of a collection policy, but it has proved an important and cost effective step. Refusal of even a limited number of publications can, for instance, save considerable amounts of cataloging time, particularly when proper cataloging involves difficult translation work.[20]

It is only with this maturity, based on time and experience, that the ethnic archives project has come to be viewed as it was initially intended—an integral part of the overall program of the society's library and one whose collections complement the remainder of the holdings. The development of expertise and confidence has finally permitted the establishment of acquisition priorities at the collection level. The library can now state what it will collect. This is certainly still a large order of material, but it is one that shows recognition of the institution's broader mission as well as sensitivity to the history of any particular ethnic community.

The Jewish Archives Project has produced the library's first written set of manuscript collecting priorities. Targeted areas of Jewish collecting, which include religious life, Zionism, business, socialism, labor, service agencies, and fraternal and educational organizations, fit neatly into the library's overall program. They parallel its existing strengths (religion and social service) as well as new areas to which it is generally committed (labor and socialism). They also reflect significant aspects of local Jewish history such as Zionism and education.[21] Both organizational records and personal papers relating to these areas are being sought. Emphasis will also be placed on locating and preserving material relating to the everyday life of individuals in the community. As avant-garde as this may seem, it is but a continuation of one of the society's oldest collecting traditions, one which has brought numerous travel accounts and diaries to the library since 1867.

Though the society has recently issued an institutional collection policy, the ethnic collecting program has, as yet, no written guidelines.[22] Decisions have been made, however, as to what types of material will be collected. Within every

[20]Though the cataloging of foreign language materials can be handled through volunteers if staff members do not have the necessary linguistic skills, this still involves the expenditure of time in finding volunteers and in waiting until they are available to do the work.

[21]Internal memorandum prepared by Scott Cline, archivist, Cleveland Jewish Archives Project, 10 February 1983.

[22]The institutional collections policy was adopted by the society's board of trustees on 23 April 1984. The five-page policy defines the society's purpose, its collecting objectives, and its acquisition and deaccession policies and provides guidelines for its disclosure to donors and prospective donors.

group, work will center on the preservation of the local ethnic press and the records of fraternal organizations. This is in line with the policies of national repositories, such as the Immigration History Research Center, which have found these types of materials to be among the most useful ethnic sources.[23] Records relating to ethnic political activity, religion, business, labor, and social and cultural organizations will also be given priority. These areas follow the traditional emphases of the society. For specific ethnic groups, these guidelines will be expanded when necessary. For example, the library seeks material relating to the important role Cleveland Czechs and Slovaks played in the creation of the Czechoslovak state. Normally there would be no interest in material relating to largely European political matters. The library will not seek material in areas such as folk arts and literature since other agencies in and around Cleveland have shown interest in these fields. If such collections are offered and cannot, for some reason, be placed in another local repository, however, they will be seriously considered for accessioning.

Inherent in these guidelines is the obligation to refuse collections. This rather drastic step will be taken when materials offered to the library bear little relation to Cleveland, contain materials of marginal informational value, or fall into a subject area which is alien to the society's existing collections but well represented in another repository. In the latter instance, collections will be referred to a more appropriate institution.

The refusal of collections and their referral to other repositories means that personal pride and ambition—traits important to the drive to collect—will have to be tempered. Control over these impulses is necessary if curators are to best serve history and their own institutions. Competition can cost money. Though auction bidding for ethnic collections does not appear to be a major threat, rivalry between repositories is still expensive in terms of staff time, storage, and cataloging. The principal cause of unnecessary expense would seem to center on the accumulation of large amounts of marginal material gathered in haste or material that could be handled more economically at another institution. This is particularly true in the field of ethnic history where certain institutions may have the linguistic skills to more effectively analyze and catalog various foreign-language materials. In a period of low budgets, grant reductions, and general archival retrenchment, institutions can ill afford head-to-head competition.

The evolution and maturation of the Western Reserve Historical Society's ethnic collecting program has paralleled that at other repositories such as the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies and the Immigration History Research Center.[24] Because of this, a degree of cooperation between such repositories appears to be evolving. This is both a result and the ultimate extension of sound collection development policy. If, as now appears to be the case, nationally-oriented institutions seek only materials from organizations with a national constituency and local repositories concentrate on their

[23]Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Immigration Studies Collection of the University of Minnesota," *American Archivist* 32 (April 1969): 139-145, and "'Diamonds in Your Own Backyard': Developing Documentation on European Immigrants to North America," *Ethnic Forum* 1 (September 1981): 2-16.

[24]R. Joseph Anderson, "Managing Change and Chance: Collecting Policies in Social History Archives," *American Archivist* 48 (Summer 1985): 296-303, and Susan Grigg, "A World of Repositories, A World of Records: Redefining the Scope of a National Subject Collection," *American Archivist* 48 (Summer 1985): 286-295.

own regions, collecting programs and history will be better served.[25] The sharing of information and referral of collections among such institutions will save field work time, eliminate confusion among potential donors, and better serve scholars who will probably find more collections processed and ready for use, rather than held in dead storage while the curatorial staff remains engaged in acquisitions competition. The cooperation of the historical society and the Immigration History Research Center (IHRC) in the filming of the Transylvanian Saxon materials was a first step that has since been followed by work with the Latvian and Finnish communities. In the latter instance the ethnic community itself expressed a desire to see its records collected throughout the country by responsible and capable repositories.[26] The IHRC, which is respected in both communities, recommended the society as a repository for local records, thus providing entree into these communities. Since this country is a nation of immigrants, it seems logical that the enormous task of preserving records relating to immigration or ethnicity can only be undertaken in a cooperative manner. The final step in the society's ethnic collection policy must, therefore, include cooperation.

There is a degree of naivete in contemplating such cooperative prospects. Even in the best of archival networks with all parties bound by legal agreements, conflicts can and do arise. More importantly, such curatorial fellowship would seem to be predicated on a large scale metamorphosis wherein ruthless, acquisitive impulses are transformed into bonds of mutual trust and historical concern. It is difficult to imagine the curatorial Mr. Hyde permanently reforming into the docile Dr. Jekyll; however, a scholarly attitude and a view toward long-term goals can keep Hyde in check even while his natural acquisitive drives are given rein within a prescribed area. Inevitable disputes over collections which do not fall clearly into the area of one repository or the other can be resolved, if necessary, through photocopying or microfilming. Either, of course, is an expensive solution which should be used as a last resort. A shared copy of the finished finding aid to the disputed collection would provide a more fiscally sound solution. Filming probably should be reserved only for those collections that would have an audience broader than the two concerned repositories, or for collections in serious need of preservation measures.

The society's experience with its ethnic collecting program has ramifications both for its other programs and, generally, for other institutions. Primarily, the ethnic collections program has shown that, in the case of collections development policies for new subject areas, initial guidelines must be broad—a finer focus can be achieved only with time and experience. Only an evolutionary process can provide information concerning the collection types, research trends, and parallel solicitation programs that will permit the full definition of a collection policy. Then, it must always be borne in mind that fiscal need, space considerations, and other pragmatic factors will further define and change the policy. In the case of the historical society, the only possible initial ethnic collecting policy was the geographic limits dictated by the institution's status as a member of the Ohio network. Its focus came only after

[25]Grigg, "A World of Repositories," 291.

[26]*Heritage Preservationist: A Supplement for the Finnish American Newspapers by the United Fund for Finnish American Archives*, November 1983.

materials were acquired and evaluated and after parallel programs also began to evaluate their sources. Similar evolutionary processes are working within its Black History Archives and its labor collecting program. The refinement of each of these programs has provided the society's library with a series of collections that, though valuable within their particular subject area, also have a broader importance in illustrating the evolution of a major city. It is reasonable to surmise that new endeavors in ethnic collecting at other institutions may result in a well defined initial collections policy because of the work at the historical society and other institutions. In one sense, ethnic collecting is becoming more traditional and hence models for policy development will have greater utility.[27] When other new areas are pioneered, however, abstract planning will have little use other than providing a starting point for collecting.

Overshadowing this is the increasingly apparent value of cooperation in manuscripts solicitation. Much has been said of the value of viable state and regional networks.[28] The same can be said of broader systems working within a particular subject area such as ethnicity and immigration. The areas popularly associated with the new history are represented on every level of American society; their records are ubiquitous. They cannot be gathered in one national repository, nor can any local repository, with a myriad of other responsibilities, hope to adequately harvest its field alone. Given the exigencies of time and money, cooperation seems the best route to serving history as well as to providing the keystone to sound collection policy.

[27]See Phillips, "Developing Collecting Policies." Phillips presents a concise model outline for a collecting policy; however, much of the utility of the model presupposes knowledge of use of collections, type of material to be collected, and parallel programs, and hence would have been of only general use at the outset of a program such as the Cleveland Regional Ethnic Archives.

[28]Richard A. Cameron, Timothy Ericson, and Anne R. Kenney, "Archival Cooperation: A Critical Look at Statewide Archival Networks," *American Archivist* 46 (Fall 1983): 414–432. Though this article indicates that all has not been perfect in statewide networks, it does conclude that networks can serve a number of purposes and (at least in the case of statewide systems) will endure with some modifications in structure.