

19th Century Mormon and Western Manuscripts Collection Development Policy

L. Tom Perry Special Collections
Harold B. Lee Library
Brigham Young University

I. Introduction

Collections of manuscripts related to 19th Century Mormon and Western America have been a part of BYU Special Collections since the department began in 1956, and have been known by different names, most recently The Archives of the Mormon Experience and Archives of Utah and the American West. These two collections have now been combined to make the 19th Century Mormon and Western manuscripts collection.

The collection provides a breadth of primary sources for BYU faculty and students, particularly those researching or who have an interest in early Mormon, Utah, and Western American history. The collection also supports research interests of general patrons with an interest in early Mormon, Utah, and Western American history, including genealogists and family historians.

II. Position Responsible for Collecting Decisions

Curator of 19th Century Mormon and Western Manuscripts

III. Scope and Focus of Collecting

History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1930; 19th Century history and settlement of Utah, surrounding states, and the American West in general.

IV. Priorities and Limitations

a. Priorities

i. Areas of Specialization

1. LDS cultural, family, social, intellectual, mission and religious history
2. LDS ethnic and minority history
3. LDS women's history
4. Utah and Western American cultural, family, social, intellectual, and religious history
5. Utah political history
6. Utah and Western American business and labor history
7. Utah and Western American environmental history
8. Utah and Western American ethnic and minority history
9. Utah and Western American women's history

ii. Major Faculty Research Interests

All disciplines within the University concerned with the historical experience of the Latter-day Saints, the history of Utah, and the history of the American West make use of L. Tom Perry Special Collections manuscript and archival collections, with heaviest use coming from History, Religion, American Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, English, Communications, Political Science, and Humanities.

b. Limitations

Special Collections will not openly collect official LDS Church corporate records, but will recommend such records be submitted to the LDS Church History Department.

Specifically, by agreement with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the papers of all General Authorities who were living on January 1, 1976 and thereafter are to be preserved in the LDS Church History Department, except when extenuating circumstances make it impossible to follow this policy and the Church History Department executives and the University Librarian agree that a person's papers would be more appropriately preserved elsewhere.

V. General Selection Guidelines

a. Treatment of Subject Depth

19th Century manuscripts and records support research needs and requirements for undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and scholars, researchers, family historians and genealogists, and community members.

b. Specific Delimitations

i. Type

Historical, archival, and manuscript materials of any type will be collected.

ii. Physical Format

Primary source materials, and unique historical, archival, and manuscript materials will be collected, including, but not limited to, manuscripts, photographs, journals, diaries, scrapbooks, letters and correspondence, records and archives, printed ephemera, and electronic resources and assets with 19th Century content; and, selected artifacts for exhibition purposes.

iii. Date

Primary focus is 1830-1930, the first one hundred years of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-days Saints. See separate collection development policy for materials that are pre-1830.

iv. Geographical focus

1. Utah County: Collected extensively
2. Central Utah: Collected extensively
3. Southern Utah: Collected moderately

4. Utah (general): Collected moderately
5. The Great Basin: Collected moderately
6. The Colorado Plateau: Collected moderately
7. The Inter-Mountain West: Collected moderately
8. The United States (general): Collected selectively
9. The World, with a particular emphasis on “regions” or “pockets” of LDS membership: Collected selectively

v. Subject Emphasis

1. LDS cultural, family, social, intellectual, mission and religious history

Historical collections and materials that document the lives and careers of individual Latter-day Saints and Latter-day Saint families. Historical collections and materials that document the cultural and social history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Historical collections and materials that document the religious experience of Latter-day Saints. Historical collections and materials that document the experiences of Latter-day Saint missionaries.

Collected extensively

2. LDS ethnic and minority history, including primarily the historical collections of LDS ethnic and minority groups in Utah, the West, the United States, but may also include international groups selectively.

Collected moderately

3. LDS women’s history, including primarily historical collections representative of LDS women in Utah, the American West, and the United States, but may also include international LDS women selectively.

Collected moderately

4. Utah and Western American cultural, family, social, intellectual, and religious history

Historical collections and materials that document the lives and careers of individuals and families from Utah and the American West. Historical collections and materials that document the cultural, social, and religious history of Utah and the American West.

Collected extensively

5. Utah political history, including the historical collections of Utah politicians, grass roots political movements, etc. Materials to be collected include manuscript and archives collections.

Collected moderately

6. Utah and Western American business and labor history, including the historical collections of Utah and Western American businesses and labor groups, particularly those historical materials that document or chronicle important trends or movements in Western American economic and labor history.

Collected moderately

7. Utah and Western American environmental history, including historical materials and collections that document environmental change; water use; environmental activism; and mining, ranching, and agriculture in Utah and the West.

Collected moderately

8. Utah and Western American ethnic and minority history, including the historical collections of ethnic and minority groups in Utah, the West, and the United States.

Collected moderately

9. Utah and Western American women's history, including historical collections representative of women in Utah and the American West.

Collected moderately

vi. Languages

1. English: Collected extensively.
2. Spanish: Collected moderately.
3. Other world languages: Collected selectively.

VI. Deaccessioning Guidelines

The Curator for 19th Century Mormon and Western Manuscripts may present a proposal to deaccession material to the L. Tom Perry Special Collections Board of Curators. Materials may be deaccessioned if they do not comply with the 19th Century Mormon and Western Manuscripts Collection Development Policy.

VII. Cooperation with other Institutions

Special Collections collaborates closely with our Harold B. Lee Library colleagues, and, in specific cases, allied subject specialists, including, but not limited to, American history, LDS Church history, Women's Studies, Engineering, Science, Anthropology, Latin American Studies, Maps, Film and Media, and Literature.

Special Collections collaborates and cooperates with other libraries and archives and we endorse and support collaborative and cooperative projects that promote access to shared cultural resources.

Special Collections will recommend donors and records creators to submit records to other institutions if they do not comply with the 19th Century Mormon and Western Manuscripts Collection Development Policy and more closely fit collecting policies of another institution.

VIII. Revisions

1. The collecting policies for The Archives of the Mormon Experience and Archives of Utah and the American West were combined to make this policy, by Ryan K. Lee, November 12, 2013.