

Walt Whitman Collection Development Policy

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

I. Introduction

The Walt Whitman Collection is one of five research collections covering a specific author housed in Special Collections. Whitman was the foremost American poet of the 19th century, and the Walt Whitman Collection complements Special Collections' other collections by major figures in 19th century American and British literature.

II. Position Responsible for Collecting Decisions

The Curator of Rare Books is responsible for collecting the material contained in the Walt Whitman Collection.

III. Scope and Focus of Collecting

The Walt Whitman Collection is comprised of primary and secondary works relating to the life and career of author Walt Whitman. The collection supports teaching and research through the Ph.D. level in 19th century American literature and 19th century American history.

IV. Priorities and Limitations

a. Priorities

i. Areas of Specialization

The collection seeks to collect editions of Whitman's poetry, prose, and correspondence and secondary sources on Whitman, his life, and his works, including criticism and reference works.

ii. Major Faculty Research Interests

The Walt Whitman Collection supports major faculty research interests in 19th century American literature and American history as well as book history.

b. Limitations

Though Special Collections owns manuscript material created by Whitman, the Walt Whitman Collection is primarily a print collection and time and financial resources will be devoted to developing print holdings only.

V. General Selection Guidelines

a. Treatment of Subject Depth

Special Collections seeks to collect for and maintain the Walt Whitman Collection at a level which supports undergraduate and graduate-level teaching and research.

b. Specific Delimitations

i. Type

Collected at a comprehensive level: American and British editions of works by Walt Whitman.

Collected at a research level: Secondary works about Walt Whitman, including biography and criticism; adaptations and parodies; and depictions in popular culture. Artists' books and children's books incorporating Whitman's poetry.

Collected at a teaching level: Secondary works on contemporaries of Walt Whitman which devote major portions to discussion of the life and literature of Whitman.

Collected at a representative level: Translations of works by Walt Whitman.

ii. Physical Format

Collected at a research level: Monographs, periodicals

Collected at a teaching level: Ephemera, video recordings. Reprints of secondary works are added to the collection only if the original cannot be obtained for the collection.

Collected at a representative level: Print-on-demand editions, ebooks.

Excluded: Realia.

iii. Date

Subject to limitations outlined above, any imprint date is collected, but generally 1830-present.

iv. Geographical focus

Collected at a research level: United States, Great Britain

Collected at a representative level: Materials published elsewhere in the world

v. Subject Emphasis

Collected comprehensive level: Whitman's prose and poetry, correspondence.

Collected at a research level: Walt Whitman – biography, criticism and interpretation, bibliography, influence, travels, homes and haunts

Collected at a teaching level: Whitman’s contemporaries, sources

vi. Languages

Collected at a research level: English

Collected at a representative level: Languages other than English

VI. Deaccessioning Guidelines

The Curator of Rare Books will make proposals to deaccession materials to the Special Collections Coordinating Committee. Materials may be deaccessioned if they do not comply with the Walt Whitman Collection collecting policy or if they are duplicates of material already in the collection.

VII. Cooperation with other Individuals

The Curator of Rare Books is responsible for collecting the material contained in the Walt Whitman Collection. The English Language & Literature librarian is responsible for collecting duplicate copies of literature by and about Whitman for the general stacks. This is done with coordination and cooperation on the part of the two librarians.

Fine press editions of Whitman’s works are acquired in consultation with the Curator of the Fine Press Collection. Manuscript material created by or related to Whitman falls under the Literary Manuscripts Collection Development Policy and would be acquired by the Curator of 19th Century Mormon and Western Manuscripts in cooperation with the Curator of Rare Books.

VIII. Revisions

Whitman Collecting Policy, Nov. 2010