

Archival institutions select, acquire, preserve, and make available the documentary heritage of civilization. Archival repositories of all types serve society in a variety of ways. The public records maintained in government archives provide evidence of operations and policies. The preservation of these records ensures that government is held accountable to and by the public and that the rights of citizens are documented and protected. The institutional archives of churches, universities, and businesses are established to safeguard organizational histories, vital records, policies, and functions. Historical societies and collecting archives often have a wider collecting scope, seeking to preserve and promote interest in the history of particular places, time periods, or themes.

Archives provide a direct link to history and the materials that exist in archival repositories are invaluable. Diverse audiences of researchers make use of archival records to fulfill immeasurable research needs. Genealogists piece together their ancestry and discover their family histories in archives. Architects use archival blueprints to restore and reconstruct buildings. Medical researchers use archives to study diseases and treatments through time. Historians, documentarians, filmmakers, many types of writers, journalists, lawyers, scholars, and all levels of students from elementary school through college explore archival holdings.

Most of the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History's extensive collections of books, manuscript and archival collections, sound recordings, artifacts, maps, photographs, and newspapers have been donated by generous individuals, families, or organizations who wished to help preserve and make publicly accessible the written, printed, oral, and visual history of their state, region, and nation.

The Briscoe Center continues to welcome the opportunity to acquire further suitable historical materials to help build its collections. Prospective donors, both individuals and business organizations, are invited to contact the Briscoe Center's Research and Collections Division at 512/495-4515 to discuss policies and procedures for donation. For additional information, continue reading below.

### **TYPES OF MATERIALS TO CONSIDER DONATING:**

The following lists are suggestive, but in no way exhaustive, examples of the types of materials accepted for donation. Keep in mind that each collection is different and may include unique materials not listed below. The archivists at the Briscoe Center can assist donors in determining what is appropriate for donation.

#### **Personal and Family Papers**

- Correspondence
- Memoirs, diaries, and journals
- Passports, birth certificates, and marriage records

- Scrapbooks and scrapbook materials such as report cards, graduation certificates, programs, invitations, other documentary mementos, obituaries, newspaper clippings, etc.
- Recorded or written oral history interviews
- Legal records such as wills, deeds, court records, contracts, and estate materials
- Photographs, photo albums, films, videotapes
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### **Business Records**

- Articles of incorporation
- Charters and bylaws
- Reports (annual, committee, etc.)
- Meeting and conference materials
- Correspondence (including email)
- Ledgers and record books
- Classified files
- Financial records, such as receipts, invoices, and inventories
- Legal records, such as contracts, deeds, and court records
- Ephemera, such as flyers, broadsides, calendars, schedules, posters, menus, and business cards
- Photographs, photo albums, films, videotapes, oral histories

### **Printed Materials:**

- Newspapers
- Books
- Pamphlets
- Posters
- Broadsides
- Maps

### **Literary Productions/Writings:**

- Essays, poetry, and fiction
- Reminiscences or memoirs
- Oral history interview recordings or narratives
- Speeches

### **Organizational Records:**

- Charters, membership lists, minutes, yearbooks, programs, press releases
- Correspondence (including email)
- Newsletters or newspapers, brochures

### **Religious Materials:**

- Church, mosque, or synagogue records; programs, brochures, bulletins, record books
- Prayer books, hymn books
- Photographs or photo albums

### **Sound materials:**

- Music on disc, cassette tape, or as sheet music
- Oral history interviews

**Artistic materials:**

- Posters
- Drawings
- Photographs

**While all donated materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis, the following items are generally discouraged:**

- Artifacts
- Clothing
- Artwork
- Medical records
- Personal financial records
- Documents or records that list Social Security numbers, driver's license numbers, credit card numbers, bank account numbers, or tax records.
- Textbooks, volume sets of books, popular periodicals, or multiple translations of books.

**PREPARING ITEMS FOR TRANSFER TO THE BRISCOE CENTER:**

Donors should make some basic preparations prior to sending the materials to the Briscoe Center. These simple measures ideally will serve to create a smooth physical transfer and to offer the Briscoe Center archivists a clearer understanding of how the collection's creator organized the materials. Utilizing the lists above and a Briscoe Center Archivist for guidance, the donor is asked to do some preliminary weeding, particularly of secure personal information such as social security numbers and medical records.

To protect the materials being sent, donations should be packed carefully in sturdy boxes. Avoid making boxes overly heavy. Packing the materials in a logical order is important. For example, pack file cabinets drawer by drawer, keeping the original order of the materials intact. Identifying the subjects and contents of photographs and audio-visual materials is very important. Each box should be numbered, labeled, and include a basic inventory of contents.

Most, if not all, of the above material types may exist in digital form. Donors of such materials can provide the Briscoe Center with information about their digital donations that will facilitate transfer and ensure the donated materials' long-term preservation and access. Please contact the Briscoe Center's digital archivist for more details.

After receiving the donation and the signed deed of gift, the collection will be processed. This includes arranging the materials, basic preservation, and storing the collection in a secure environment.

After the collection has been processed, Briscoe Center archivists create a finding aid that includes biographical information about the creator, a synopsis of the contents of the collection, a container list, and a catalog record. The finding aid is then made available online and to researchers in the Briscoe Center's reading room.

By following the preparation advice above and thoroughly filling out the donation form provided below, donors can assist the Briscoe Center in making donated collections quickly accessible to the public. The information supplied aids in both the physical processing of the

collection and the creation of the finding aid. For example, a collection that is haphazardly packed and not well-documented will take an exponentially longer period of time to process and make available to researchers. A collection that has been neatly packed, labeled, and includes the detailed information found on the donation form will become available to researchers more promptly.

**THE DEED OF GIFT, APPRAISALS, AND TAX DEDUCTIONS:**

Donors transfer materials to the Briscoe Center using a Deed of Gift form that conveys ownership of the item(s) from the donor to The University of Texas at Austin. Briscoe Center staff will prepare the deed of gift in consultation with the donor and can facilitate the transfer of materials as needed.

Donors sometimes are eligible to take a tax deduction for the market value of the materials they donate, and the Briscoe Center advises prospective donors to consult their attorney or tax advisor for information on the possible advantages of this form of charitable giving. The market value of gifted materials is best established by the donor hiring an outside, independent appraiser who will evaluate the collection to establish market value. Briscoe Center staff cannot make this evaluation. The IRS requires this outside, independent appraisal if the appraised value of a gift is greater than \$5,000. Additionally, the IRS requires that the University sign IRS Form 8283 acknowledging receipt of the gift. Your appraiser and the Briscoe Center will assist you in managing this paperwork. To be acceptable to the IRS, the appraisal must be made no more than 60 days before the date of the contribution and before the due date of the tax return.

The Briscoe Center staff can provide a list of appraisers, and if appropriate, facilitate the appraisal onsite at the Center.

**Staff Key Contact List:**

Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

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