SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

A. Introduction

The Special Collections division of the Rod Library collects, preserves, describes, and makes available library material whose condition requires special handling. Such conditions may include rarity, age, historical value, monetary value, delicate condition, and unusual format. Because of its value or condition, Special Collections material is, with rare exceptions, used only in the Special Collections room under staff supervision. Special Collections material is primarily paper-based, but other media are also included if they meet collecting or service objectives. Special Collections material is used by undergraduate and graduate students; university faculty, staff, and administration; and researchers from the local, state, and national communities.

Special Collections is comprised of several distinct collections: the American Fiction Collection, the Rare Book Collection, the Small Press Collection, the Stageberg Collection, the University Archives, and the Manuscripts Collection. Books in Special Collections book collections and selected series in the archival collections are entered in the UNISTAR system. Archival and manuscript material is also listed and described in classification systems developed and maintained in Special Collections.

Special Collections acquisitions policies, in so far as they are different from regular library policies, are outlined in a separate document, Materials Gifts to Special Collections.

B. American Fiction Collection

The American Fiction Collection began in 1973 with a purchase from Serendipity Books in Berkeley, California, using UNI Foundation funds. It has been supplemented regularly since then by approval shipments from Serendipity and occasional purchases from other dealers. This collection is a research collection. Criteria for inclusion are:

1. First editions of novels written by citizens and long-term residents of the United States who first published a novel between the inclusive dates 1960 and 1979; also included as very rare exceptions are authors who first published a novel in the late 1950s but whose work is most closely associated with themes and genres of the 1960s; writers whose primary work is science fiction, mysteries, gothics, pornography, espionage, and thrillers are generally excluded;

2. If the true first edition of a novel which meets criterion #1 is published outside the United States, add both the true first edition and the first United
States edition;

3. First editions of novellas and collected short fiction written by those who meet criterion #1;

4. First editions of novels about the Viet Nam War written by citizens or long-term residents of the United States without regard to date of author's first publication;

5. Later editions, incorporating major textual variations or significant editorial changes, of novels written by those who meet criterion #1;

6. First editions of poetry and non-fiction monographs written by those who meet criterion #1 will be added on a select basis with special attention to the closeness of the relationship between the themes of the poetry or non-fiction to the themes of the author's fiction;

7. First editions of books or anthologies edited by those who meet criterion #1 will rarely be added;

8. First editions of books with forewords, prefaces, or introductions by those who meet criterion #1 will rarely be added;

9. First editions of individually published short stories and broadsides will rarely be added;


Material in the American Fiction Collection has the UNISTAR location SPEC COLL F.

C. Rare Book Collection

The Rare Book Collection was kept as a separate, locked collection for at least 40 years before it became part of Special Collections in 1975. The collection was largely a miscellaneous accumulation of old, rare, and valuable volumes which needed special housing and supervised use. The Rare Book Collection currently functions in at least three major ways:

I. First, the Rare Book Collection functions as the focal point for several areas of collection development relating to local interest and responsibility.

1. Special Collections is the center for studies on James Hearst, whose papers are in the University Archives; the Rare Book Collection includes at least two copies in mint condition of all separately published editions of Hearst's work.
2. The Rare Book Collection includes mint copies of books by UNI faculty and alumni whose work appeals to a mass, national audience. Currently, Nancy Price, Mona Van Duyn, and Robert Waller are in that category.

3. With a view to UNI's history as a teacher training institution, the Rare Book Collection includes a small number of nineteenth and early twentieth century school texts and children's books in good condition and covering a variety of subjects. This part of the collection is developed primarily through gifts and on a select basis.

4. The Prairie Press, operated by Carroll Coleman until his death, is probably the premier twentieth century Midwest small press. As funds permit, the Rare Book Collection will continue to develop a complete collection of the publications of this press.

5. The Rare Book Collection focuses its local history collection by concentrating on material relating to Black Hawk County and all counties bordering on Black Hawk: that is, Black Hawk County as well as Bremer, Fayette, Buchanan, Benton, Tama, Grundy, and Butler counties. The Special Collections Librarian seeks all significant historical publications relating to these counties and their townships, towns, cities, and other subdivisions. S/he also seeks publications relating to religious, ethnic, political, social, professional, and trade organizations in these counties. Over the course of many years, the library aims at a collection of great breadth and depth. This focus relates closely to collections of similarly focused unpublished material in the University Archives and in the Manuscripts Collection.

II. A second function of the Rare Book Collection is to provide a display or demonstration collection on the printer's art and the history of the book. To carry out this function, the collection includes examples which illustrate: the work of the earliest printers and their techniques; the work of the classic printers and binders; high points and significant trends in printing, binding, and illustration; changing publication styles and formats, especially as they reflect intellectual trends; and the work of modern fine presses. Special Collections currently includes items which illustrate the broad points of printing history outlined above. As funds permit, Special Collections will add occasional additional items on a highly select basis.

III. The Rare Book Collection functions as a caretaker collection for material needing special attention because of age, monetary value, delicate condition, association value, unusual format, or susceptibility to loss. Material in these categories seldom is purchased specifically for Special Collections. Rather, it usually is transferred into Special Collections from another library collection with the concurrence of the appropriate bibliographer and the Special Collections Librarian. General criteria which can guide this transfer decision include:

1. Publication date before 1850, although this date will vary with the introduction of printing in a particular area;

2. Strong and significant association with the UNI community: for example, a book written
by Homer Seerley and inscribed by him to James Hearst's father;

3. Deteriorated texts which must be retained in their original format;

4. Editions of fewer than 1000 copies;

5. Current market value exceeding $250;

6. Unusual and delicate formats such as miniatures, vellum, special bindings, and manuscripts;

7. Books autographed by their authors or by famous people;

8. Material which is frequently lost but difficult to locate in the out-of-print market: for example, Iowa county histories.

This caretaker function is more properly collection maintenance or preservation than collection development. In this case, development is done by others; the Rare Book Collection simply provides a secure physical environment for the use of special materials.

Material in the Rare Book Collection has the UNISTAR location SPEC COLL.

D. Small Press Collection

The Small Press Collection was initiated in 1978 as the result of a recommendation from the Special Collections Librarian to collect the work of selected small and fine presses in Iowa. Investigation at that time also revealed the presence of fine presses in LaCrosse (Wis.), Vermillion (S.D.), and Omaha (Neb.) along Iowa's borders. Those presses were included in the early collecting profile.

The functions of this collection are: to acquire inexpensive examples of modern virtuoso printers' and illustrators' art in or very close to Iowa; to provide access to regional avant-garde poetry and prose; to document the tastes and trends of small presses in or very close to Iowa; and to help support the work of local small presses.

Special Collections attempts to acquire in mint condition a complete set of publications which these presses produce while they are located in or very close to Iowa. Standing orders cover current publications. The partial backsets purchased when the standing orders were originally established and subsequent purchases in the out-of-print market have left few gaps in the library's holdings. As funds permit, Special Collections will continue to try to fill those gaps. The Special Collections Librarian and the Head of Collection Management will consult on the appropriate course of action when a new press begins operation or an established press changes focus or leaves the Iowa area.
Standing orders are inactive or have been dropped for:

- Grilled Flowers--(1977-1979); inactive
- Meadow--(1975-1977); inactive
- Spirit Mound--(1974-1976); inactive
- Spirit That Moves Us--(1975-1990); moved to New York City
- Toothpaste--(1970-1987); moved to St. Paul, Minn.
- Whale Cloth--1974--inactive

Standing orders are currently in effect for:

- Abbatoir--(1973- ); Omaha
- Corycian--(1955- ); Iowa City
- Cummington--(1957- ); Omaha
- Juniper--(1963- ); LaCrosse
- Seamark--(1972- ); Iowa City
- Stone Wall--(1958- ); Iowa City
- Windhover--(1967- ); Iowa City

Small Press Collection material has the UNISTAR location SPEC COLL P.

E. Stageberg Collection

The Stageberg Collection was donated to the Rod Library under terms of the will of Norman C. Stageberg, long-time professor in the UNI Department of English Language and Literature, who died in 1984. This collection, focused on linguistics and language, includes a substantial number of old, rare, and valuable titles. However, most of the collection is composed of twentieth century monographs, dictionaries, and essays. The primary function of the Stageberg Collection is to provide students and faculty with a professional linguistics reference collection with a special strength in historical linguistics.

The collection is comprised of approximately 1250 volumes. With the exception of preserving and cataloging these volumes, there are no plans to develop this collection.

Material in the Stageberg Collection has the UNISTAR location
SPEC COLL S.

F. University Archives

The institutional archives of UNI have been organized since the middle 1930s. By the late 1950s, the Archives had come under library administration. Currently, the Archives is a research collection devoted primarily to the history of UNI. The collection attempts to document, in a variety of media, all facets of life in the UNI
community. This wide-ranging charge requires that acquisition decisions be guided by sound archival and manuscript evaluative criteria, including: legal and fiscal requirements, research value, relationship to existing collections, depth and breadth of coverage, safety in current location, gaps in current archival holdings, and costs of processing and storage. Areas of emphasis include:

1. **Administration**: minutes and other papers of the Board of Regents, administrative councils, study groups, and committees; selected files of presidents, vice-presidents, deans, department heads, and their assistants; files relating to building construction and physical alterations of campus; budgets and fiscal reports; biographical information; collections or codes of policies; lobbying efforts; transportation and infrastructure;

2. **Faculty and staff**: biography; governance, including Faculty Senate and other deliberative bodies; curriculum development; class notes; collective bargaining; committee work; files of distinguished faculty and staff; diaries and journals; organizational records;

3. **Students and alumni**: all UNI theses, specialist papers, and dissertations; class notes; papers and examinations; scrapbooks and memorabilia; directories; academic records; government; statistical studies; organization records; recreation; employment;

4. **Publications**: official UNI publications; official and unofficial student publications (multiple copies of important series and items);

5. **Extra-institutional**: records associated with accreditation and consultants' surveys and reports; documentation of the College Hill community; significant publications, studies, reports, and news stories about UNI by non-UNI sources.

Material in the University Archives is arranged by a classification system developed and maintained by Special Collections staff. This system uses the traditional archival principle of authority as the basis for arrangement: that is, material is arranged in accordance with the person or office which created it rather than by subject. The University Archives classification system closely follows the UNI administrative organization chart. Finding aids, inventories, and indices are available in Special Collections to describe material in the University Archives.

Selected material from the University Archives is also entered in UNISTAR with the location SPEC COLL A.

**G. Manuscripts Collection**

Since 1977 several kinds of unpublished material were included under the title of the
University Archives even though they did not fit the definition of institutional archives. This material was placed in individual, stand-alone collections outside the Archives classification system. These individual collections were shelved apart from and conceptualized as being distinct from the University Archives. In association with the drafting of an overall Special Collections collection development policy in 1992, these collections were designated the Manuscripts Collection. Most of these individual collections fall into one of the following categories: records of professional education associations; or papers of prominent people and noteworthy organizations with a local connection.

With respect to the first category, UNI faculty often leave their mark on state chapters of professional education associations. These groups are generally in the vanguard of curriculum development and educational services; their records can provide good sources of historical information on trends and personalities in the Iowa educational community. The Manuscripts Collection currently includes papers from: the Iowa Educational Media Association; the Iowa Association for Counseling and Development; the Iowa Speech and Hearing Association; and the Iowa Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. The Manuscripts Collection seeks incremental additions to these existing collections. On a highly select basis, the collection also seeks papers from other professional education associations.

Second, in accordance with a careful and select documentation strategy, the Manuscripts Collection pursues papers and records of prominent people and organizations whose influence is especially important to Black Hawk and bordering counties. Included is material from distinguished alumni; mayors and other public officials; distinguished community leaders; members of the General Assembly; the Congressional representative whose district includes Black Hawk County; and influential organizations whose records may provide insight into community attitudes and local political action. This area of the collection was developed in the 1970s and early 1980s, but, with the exception of the addition of the Grassley papers, recent progress has been limited.

Finally, the Manuscripts Collection should, on rare occasions, acquire material which is outside of regular collecting profiles if the material has exceptional historical value and is in grave danger of being destroyed. Any such departure should proceed only after consultation between the Special Collections Librarian and the Head of Collection Management.

Material in the Manuscripts Collection is described in finding aids prepared and maintained by Special Collections staff.

G. Peterson
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