Donating Materials to the Images and Archives Collections of the National Library of Medicine

A Guide for Prospective Donors

Rebecca Warlow
Head, Images and Archives
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What the Library Collects

1. What materials are the National Library of Medicine (NLM) and its Images and Archives collections looking for?

   Most archives, libraries, and museums have a collection development policy that lays out what they wish to collect. The collection development policy for the National Library of Medicine is found at http://www.nlm.nih.gov/tsd/acquisitions/cdm/.

   This is a very broad policy. Within it, the Images and Archives programs have specific collecting focuses, as laid out in its own collection development policy. In brief, the Images and Archives Section is looking for:

   - Manuscripts—for example, correspondence, speeches and lectures, diaries, research materials, scrapbooks, and similar materials
   - Oral histories
   - Still images—for example, photographs, engravings, posters, postcards, and similar materials
   - Moving image materials—for example, film, videos, DVDs, and similar materials
   - Sound materials—records, tapes
   - Digital files and similar materials

   in the areas of

   - Medicine
   - Medical Informatics
   - Health Services Research
   - Public Health
   - Nursing
   - Dentistry
   - Pharmacy, and related fields

   that

   - will serve the research community for a long time
   - are of national or international importance, and
   - are not likely to be collected by another archives or similar repository.

   These materials are "within scope" for our collecting.

2. If the materials I have are "within scope," will NLM take them?

   The answer depends on a number of factors. Some of these are:

   Are the materials *dense*: do they contain a lot of information that sheds light on medical, scientific, institutional, or societal developments?

   Are the materials *complete*: are they still all together, or have substantial amounts been lost or placed elsewhere? In the case of photographs and films, do they have captions, titles, and other accompanying information?

   Are the materials' origins *clear*: is it known how they were created, who created them, and why they were created?

   Are the materials *organized*: are they largely usable as is, or will they require extensive work to make them accessible?

   Are the materials *stable*: can they be used, for the most part, without needing a conservator's intervention?

   Are the materials *unrestricted*: will most of the collection be quickly available for use?

3. If the answer to most or all of these is "yes," will NLM accept them?

   The answer is "most likely, yes." There are some further considerations:

   You need to be the owner of the materials that you are offering, through creation, inheritance, gift, or purchase. (Most often your simple statement of ownership is sufficient proof, but in exceptional cases we might ask for further documentation.)

   You need to be willing to convey ownership to the National Library of Medicine, that is, to the people of the United States. We do not accept materials on loan.

   If your materials are strongly connected to an institution that has a functioning archives, we will likely direct you to that archives first. Some examples are personal papers or oral histories of college faculty or staff, college or university lecture notes, or architectural drawings of institutions. If that archives turns you down, or you do not wish to pursue that possibility, then we would consider accepting the materials.

Making the Donation

4. How is the donation made?

   The donation is made through a Deed of Gift that sets out the terms by which the materials come into the collections.

   There are five steps to the donation:
   - the Library and the donor negotiate the terms of a deed of gift
   - the donor signs two copies of the deed
   - the Director of the Library countersigns the two copies
   - each party receives one copy
   - the materials are transferred to the Library.

   The deed of gift lays out the rights of the Library and the donor, including any conditions attached to the donation.

5. What should I do to prepare my materials for donation?

   You don't need to do anything, other than to help get the materials to us safely. If you can have the materials boxed for shipping, that would be more than enough—we are often able to help with this as well.

   You don't need to sort or cull materials. Our staff are skilled in doing this, work discreetly, and return all personal materials that may have inadvertently been sent to the Library.

Financial Considerations

6. Does NLM purchase materials for the Images and Archives collections?

   Most of the materials that come into the Images and Archives collections come through donation. From time to time we may purchase materials for the collections, and when we do, our purchases are usually made through rare book dealers or other vendors.

7. Who pays for the transfer of the materials to the Library?

   Normally, the Library will pay the cost or otherwise arrange to have the materials transferred. Any support that the donor could contribute, though, is appreciated!

8. Will the Library appraise my donation and let me know its monetary value?

   By NLM policy and according to the professional standards that prevail in archives, libraries, and museums, we do not appraise donations or otherwise provide an estimate of monetary value. However, we can suggest sources of professional appraisers who may perform this service.

9. May I take a tax deduction for my donation?

   We don't know whether your donation can result in a tax deduction. Each person's circumstances are different, and we advise you to talk to your tax consultant. Donations to the Library are tax-deductible to the extent that the law allows, and, if needed, a representative of the Library can sign a Federal IRS Form 8283, which attests to the fact of your non-cash donation to the National Library of Medicine.

Processing Your Donation

10. What happens to the materials after I donate them?

    Our staff of archivists and specialists will accession your donated materials. This means that we will record preliminary information about them and assign them a temporary location. The materials will then be inspected; preliminary preservation and conservation work done; and the materials prioritized and queued for further work, according to the resources of the Library.

    At the conclusion of this preliminary work, we may provide you with a listing of the materials in the donation.

    After we accession materials, they move on to final processing:

    - For manuscript and oral history materials, final processing includes arrangement and description of these materials, and creation of a catalog record for our on-line catalog, and of a finding aid, which is a detailed listing of contents with supplementary contextual information.
    - For still image and moving image materials, final processing includes creation of a catalog record and preparation of a digital copy.

    In all cases, more detailed preservation work is done, including evaluation and treatment by a conservator, if needed.

11. How quickly will the Library process the materials once I donate them?

    Materials are accessioned and given preliminary processing within a few weeks of their arrival at the Library.

    We would like to take all materials on to final processing immediately, but circumstances don't always allow that. It may take a considerable time before we can turn our attention to your materials for final work.

12. How will scholars and other people learn about my donation?

    Scholars and the public find out about our collections chiefly through the World Wide Web.

    All Images and Archives materials that have been processed have a catalog record created in the Library's online catalog, LocatorPlus, http://locatorplusv2.nlm.nih.gov/. These catalog records are shared in a large database of catalog records from hundreds of institutions, WorldCat, with widespread access and usage.

    In addition:
    - All processed manuscript collections have finding aids, which are found online and in the Library's History of Medicine Reading Room.
    - Many oral history transcripts are found online.
    - Some manuscript, prints and photographs, and audiovisual materials have online subject guides or other descriptive aids.
    - All still images have catalog records with digital images in "Images from the History of Medicine," a database with specialized search capabilities, at http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/ihm/index.html.

    Online information on our collections may be found through the History of Medicine Division's home page at http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/.

13. Will people know that I donated the materials to the Library?

    Catalog records in our online database, LocatorPlus, identify the donor of the materials. In addition, our finding aids and subject guides also include the donor's name.

14. Can I help have my donation processed?

    You can assist in getting your materials processed by financially supporting our processors and catalogers in their work. Please contact the Head of Images and

Archives, Rebecca Warlow, to learn details. (Her contact information is below, at § 34.)

Digitizing

15. Will the Library digitize the materials that I have donated?

We are digitizing much of our collections.

All still and moving image collections are digitized as a matter of policy, as resources allow:

- The still image digital collections are found at "Images from the History of Medicine," at http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/ihm/index.html.
- We prepare DVDs of the moving image collections, which may be viewed in the Library.

Profiles in Science, at http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/, is a Library project to digitize portions of our manuscripts collections and set them in historical context. Because of the costs involved, the program is highly selective with respect to the collections digitized, as well as the materials within a collection. The current focus of Profiles in Science is on contemporary biomedical research and public health, and cardiac surgery.

Over 800 letter of the Henkel family are digitized with full transcripts in "Physician's Lives in the Shenandoah Valley: Henkel family Letters, 1786–1907" at http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/digicolls/henkel/index.html.

Many of our still images are available as part of online exhibits: recent topics have included Chinese public health, as in "Chinese Anti- Tuberculosis Posters" at http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/chineseantitb/index.html.

A selection of historical audiovisuals is available online through the library's "Digital Collections" at http://collections.nlm.nih.gov/.

The Images and Archives Section continues to explore many different options for digitizing our collections.

Access, Reproduction, and Publication

16. Who may access the materials after I donate them?

Unless the materials are restricted for some reason, anyone may ask to see the materials and may read, consult, or view them in our reading room in the Library.

17. Can the Library restrict people from getting access to the materials?

The Library can restrict people from getting direct access to the materials for three reasons:

- The materials contain personal health information.
- The materials are too fragile to use.
- The materials are not fully processed: we have not yet done all the work needed to make them usable.

In each of these cases we have policies that allow as much access as possible, consistent with responsible management of these materials.

18. Can I restrict people from getting access to the materials?

Yes, but in the interest of promoting the greatest use of the materials, the Library suggests that you do not restrict access to the materials that you donate.

19. Can I restrict people from copying the materials?

As part of the terms of your donation, you can restrict people from copying materials found in the collection. You may disallow copying of the materials, or may only allow copying with your permission, or only of parts of the collection, or with a suitable notice. These terms would be laid out in the deed of gift.

In addition to restrictions based on your donation of the physical items, if you own the copyright in the materials you may also restrict people from copying the materials.

However, in the interest of promoting the greatest use of the materials, the Library suggests that you do not restrict the materials from being copied.

20. Can I restrict people from publishing the materials?

As with copying, you can restrict people from publishing materials found in the collection. These terms would be laid out in the deed of gift.

However, in the interest of promoting the greatest use of the materials, the Library suggests that you do not restrict the materials from being published.

21. How will people know about any restrictions on the materials?

The staff in our reading room will advise users of special restrictions when they request the materials. Also, our online descriptions of the materials contain information about these restrictions.

22. Do I have access to the materials that I have donated?

Yes, you retain full rights to access the materials— to read, consult, or view them in the Library. However, you cannot take the materials out of the Library once you have donated them.

23. Does this access extend to materials that are restricted?

Yes, you have the right to access *any* materials that you have donated, even restricted materials.

24. Can I reproduce materials that I have donated?

You have the right to reproductions, for your own use, of any of the materials that you have donated.

We will supply copies of the materials to you at no charge, if the request is small, in the neighborhood of 10 items. If the request is larger, we may ask you to pay for the cost of reproduction.

25. Can I publish the reproductions of materials that I have donated?

Yes, you may, with one caution: U.S. Copyright Law governs the publication of materials. While you may have copies of materials for your personal use, if you do not own the copyright in these materials, you may not publish them without securing permission from the copyright holder.

26. Can I also reproduce—or even publish—parts of my donation that are restricted?

Yes, you may, as laid out in §§ 24 and 25, with two further caveats: (1) If materials are restricted to protect personal health information, you need to consult with Library staff first, and (2) if you publish something you have restricted, we will then allow others to see that material—though not to reproduce or publish it.

27. Can access and reproduction rights be passed on to spouses, children, or other heirs?

    Yes, but we advise against it, as it often interferes with the best use of the collection. We would like to see any restrictions that you make eventually come to an end after a definite period of time.

28. Can access and reproduction rights be deeded or sold to others?

    These rights are intellectual property and may be disposed to anyone—like any other property—by gift or sale.

    However, we advise against this, as it makes administration of the materials—and thus our researchers' use of them—much more difficult.

Borrowing and Exhibition

29. May I borrow the materials back after they have been donated?

    We do not lend Images and Archives collection materials to individuals—not even to their donors!

30. Can other people borrow these materials?

    From time to time upon request, the Library lends materials to other institutions for exhibitions. We only lend to approved institutions, after an examination of the conditions of exhibition, and under the terms of a signed Exhibition Loan Agreement.

    We may also charge out materials for short periods of time to experienced and approved vendors, for conservation, reproduction, and similar archival purposes.

    We lend copies—not originals—of Images and Archives materials to other Libraries, under our Inter-Library Loan program.

31. Will you put my materials on exhibit?

    The Library has a vigorous exhibition program, producing both large exhibits that stay up for years and smaller exhibits of a few months' duration. Our curators decide which materials are used in exhibits.

Disposing of the Collection

32. Can the Library give the donated materials to another archive?

    We always reserve the right to give the materials to another archives or similar repository. However, we offer the materials back to the donor, or the donor's heirs, before sending the materials elsewhere. These provisions are part of the deed of gift.

33. Can the Library dispose of the materials that I donated?

    There are three situations where this might occur.

    First, when processing collections, a great deal of extraneous material is often encountered. Examples are travel brochures, supply catalogs, blank calendars, and similar materials. These materials are routinely disposed of in the course of processing, unless the donor asks to have them back.

    When processing collections, we often find materials that are out-of-scope. Examples include birthday cards, bank statements or cancelled checks, films of family occasions, and similar materials. In these cases, we return these materials to the donor or the donor's heirs.

    Finally, once a collection has been processed, we reserve the right to determine its disposition. In extremely rare cases, we may decide that it no longer belongs at the Library. However, before disposing of it, we would offer it back to the donor or the donor's heirs, and we would try to find a home for the materials in another archives or similar repository. Again, this provision is part of the deed of gift.

Further Information

34. How can I get further information?

    Contact the Head of Images and Archives in the Library's History of Medicine Division, Rebecca Warlow, at rebecca.warlow@mail.nih.gov.

Thank you for considering a donation to the Images and Archives Collections of the National Library of Medicine.