

Special Collections Policy

Update: July 2026

1. Introduction

1.1 The Special Collection Policy provides the framework for managing the Library's Special Collections.

1.2 Library staff defines Special Collections as collections of print and non-print material that are distinguished from the library's general, Child Life Council, Edmonds and other disparate collections. Special Collections consists of Central New York Welsh imprints, Welsh music, Utica imprints, early American imprints, rare books, local history, microfilm and manuscripts.

2. Mission

2.1 The principle mission of library staff regarding Special Collections is to:

- Support and contribute to learning, teaching and research for the Utica University community and others.
- Extend access to content by making it available for research through personal visits and selective digitization in the future.
- Promote awareness and use through web sources, electronic discovery tools and other means.

- Catalog and preserve collections content according to professional standards.
- Develop the range and depth of collections through highly selective acquisitions from donors and, as appropriate, de-accessioning (weeding).

3. Management

3.1 Special Collections are managed by the Frank E. Gannett Library, the Director of the Library & Learning Commons and professional library staff.

4. Collection Strengths

4.1 Strengths in Special Collections include items from Colonial America, Early Republic, pre-Civil War and modern United States, as well as New York State.

4.2 Particular strengths and key collections include:

- United States imprints before 1856
- Utica, New York imprints before 1859
- Central New York imprints in Welsh
- Local history

5. Acquisition Policy

5.1 The majority of Special Collections material has been received through gifts and donations. The Library does not normally have funds available for the purchase of rare books, manuscripts or other valuable material.

5.2 The Library will expand its Special Collections by accepting gifts and donations that enhance its strengths.

5.3 Inclusion criteria listed below are used to determine whether items are to be added to Special Collections:

- Central New York Welsh imprints (that is, about the Welsh/Wales, printed in the Welsh language in the Central New York region by the Welsh).
- Unique or rare Utica imprints printed before 1859.
- Unique or rare United States imprints printed before 1856.
- Rare books or periodicals (that is, out of print and highly uncommon).
- Unique or unusual local history material (that is, items about Utica, New York and the Mohawk Valley region not held by numerous institutions).
- Standard published titles (not vanity press or self-published titles).

5.4 Items are not accepted if they do not meet the above criteria or if:

- The Library does not have adequate storage space or lacks storage facilities.
- Storage accommodation, accessibility, condition are better served by another

collecting institution.

- The donor does not accept the terms of the Library's standard material gift and donation document.
- Items are in poor condition (that is, water damage, mold, torn and/or missing pages, etc.) or in need of conservation treatment, or constitute a duplicate.
- Items are in non-print formats, except in unusual circumstances.

6. Storage

6.1 Special Collections are stored on open shelves and in microfilm cabinets, in a small, secure but untended room.

6.2 There is currently no climate control capacity in the room.

6.3 The room is nearing its maximum storage capacity.

6.4 The room is not to be used to store realia (that is, three-dimensional objects from everyday life).

6.5 The room has limited capacity for manuscript, archival or cartographic material.

7. De-accessioning

7.1 The Library reserves the right to remove from Special Collections items that do not meet acquisition criteria outlined in section 5 above.

7.2 Items that form the core or key strengths of the Library's Special

Collections are not to be de-accessioned except in exigent circumstances.

8. Gifts, Donations and Bequests

8.1 The Library encourages gifts, donations and bequests that fall within the scope of the Special Collections Policy on the understanding that:

- Donors must sign a gift and donation form.
- The Library reserves the right to dispose of items in poor condition (defined above), duplicates, or that fall outside the scope of Special Collections.
- Library staff endeavor to catalog donated material according to established professional standards.

- Materials may not be forced open causing damage to the spine.
- Gloves may be required for handling certain materials.
- When working with Special Collections, only pencil can be used for notes.
- All material must be returned directly after use to the attending librarian.

9.5 Photocopying is permitted only for microform materials. Photocopying other types of material is at the discretion of the attending librarian.

9. Special Collections Use Policy

9.1 Use of Special Collections is granted by permission, or prior arrangement with a librarian.

9.2 A Special Collections User Information Form must be completed.

9.3 Special Collections materials are for in-library use only. A librarian will retrieve material from Special Collections. Use of items must be supervised.

9.4 Special care should be taken when using Special Collections material.

- Materials may not be marked in any way.

Contact Information

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