



Archives Collections Management Policy

1. Introduction

This document sets out the Greenbrier Historical Society's (GHS) policy framework for the archive collections that it manages. The policy covers collections development, collections procedures, and access.

The Archives Committee and GHS staff oversees the stewardship, management, and access arrangements for the GHS collection. The Greenbrier Historical society, founded in 1963, has an archival collection that supports the museum research, academic research, genealogy, and local historical information. GHS recognizes its responsibility to preserve these pieces of our history and provide appropriate access to these collections.

1.1. Mission

The Greenbrier Historical Society collects, preserves, protects, and exhibits historical materials and objects, provides education experiences and activities, and supports historical inquiry and research.

The Greenbrier Historical Society Archives collects, preserves, and shares documented information of significant historical interest as well as such items of potential future historical significance.

2. Collections Development

The GHS archives shall be the official repository of all digital and paper materials donated to the GHS.

2.1. Scope

The primary geographic scope of the Archives is the Greenbrier River Valley (Greenbrier County, Pocahontas County, Monroe County, and Summers County).

The Archives collect items related to the history of the Greenbrier Valley including that of schools, churches, towns, communities, and businesses, and commercial industries.

Records are accepted, regardless of date. The Archives do not have a chronological cut-off date for acquisitions.

2.2. Type of Collections

The majority of the archive collections comprise paper records: Photographs, diaries, historic books, maps, letters, family papers, paper documents, government documents,

family genealogies, high school and college annuals, account books, ledgers, early business records, newspapers, telephone and city directories, court records, magazines, journals, school and college catalogs, photographs of known people or places, scrapbooks that clearly delineate dates and sources of cut outs or are associated with an significant person in history, and bibles that are a representation of a period of time or contain genealogical information.

A small portion of the archival holdings are digital files that contain photographs, Oral histories, videos, sound recordings

All prints, paintings and artwork will be managed by the GHS museum curator and held in collections storage.

2.2.1. Reference Library Collections Vs. Archival Collections Vs. Rare Books

Reference library collections are collected to support research at GHS. These are published works and are not classified as rare books.

Archival materials are unpublished materials of historic significance to the mission and collecting scope of GHS.

Rare books are classified as 1st additions, limited additions, works of major aesthetic or historic significance, or books in danger of loss or deterioration if kept in the general collection. These books have a historic value and possibly monetary value.

3. Reference Library

The purpose of the Reference Library is to act as additional resources for research into the Greenbrier Valley area. The Reference Library is not a lending library and books are not permitted to be loaned or removed from the Library. The books may contain broader subjects that are relevant for understanding the history of the Greenbrier Valley. The library contains only published material. The Library collection contains materials not readily available at the Greenbrier County Public Library or through interlibrary loan from public and/or academic libraries.

3.1. Scope

The geographical scope of the Reference Library encompasses the Greenbrier River Valley (Greenbrier County, WV., Pocahontas County, WV., Monroe County, WV., and Summers County, WV), Nicholas County, WV and Alleghany County, VA., Bath County, VA., Highland County, VA., Rockingham County, VA., Augusta County, VA., Rockbridge County, VA., Botetourt County, VA., and Amherst County, VA.

4. Rare Book Collection

Rare books are classified as 1st additions, limited additions, works of major aesthetic or historic significance, or books in danger of loss or deterioration if kept in the general collection. These books have a historic value and possibly monetary value. This collection will be kept separate from the archives and reference library collection in a protected area where the general public does not have access.

5. Family & Genealogy Collection

The GHS will collect relevant historical materials for family and genealogy research. Photocopied or printed materials will not be kept in the files, rather an additional resource page will be included with historic materials to provide researchers with additional places to search for history.

6. Loans

Items from the Archives may not be loaned to patrons or removed from the Archives Room. For any loan or use outside the Archive proper paperwork must be done and notations made in the collections catalog of updated location.

6.1. Exhibit Use

Archival materials may be used by GHS for exhibits being held in any of its owned properties. Whenever possible copies should be made of originals for display. When copies are not possible every precaution should be taken when displaying items to ensure a safe display environment.

6.2. Temporary Loans

Loans to other qualified museums or historical institutions are permitted as long as the material is not judged to be too fragile, the requesting organization has the ability to properly care for the item, and the item will not be in use by GHS during the agreed upon loan period. Loans will be approved by the Archives Committee and terms agreed upon between GHS and the requesting organization. Proper paperwork needs to be filled out for all outgoing loans and signed by both GHS representatives and the requesting organization. Loans

7. Accessioning and Deaccessioning

Archives are acquired through gifts, bequests, or purchase. Archives may be accepted on long-term loan, although the preference is for outright gift. Purchases of archival material must be considered by the Archives Committee and the material must be of exceptional significance to the collection.

7.1. Accessioning

The GHS will accept donations that fall within its collecting scope and will evaluate the long-term value and significance to the institution with the presumption that it will be a permanent addition to the collection. Any collection accepted commits GHS to the task of organizing and preserving it, which involves labor and cost of supplies. Donors are encouraged to include a monetary donation to fund the cost of processing and preserving. All donations are subject to the review and approval of the Archives Committee.

When a donation is accepted, the donor must sign a deed of gift. GHS may refuse a donation that comes with any restrictions, the preference is for unconditional donations. GHS is a nonprofit organization which allows donations to be tax-deductible. However, under IRS regulations, no library, archive, or museum can perform an appraisal. The appraisal is the responsibility of the donor.

Appropriate catalog records will be created for newly accessioned items and collections. All collections must remain together and should never be separated.

7.1.1. The GHS archive does NOT collect:

- Materials that are irreparably damaged or infested by insects or mold.
- Materials in which the donor's ownership is in question or disputed.
- Duplicate materials will not be accepted due to lack of space.
- Collections that contain materials that do not fit within the scope of the GHS Archives.
- Photocopies of materials donated to another repository.
- Collections for which the Archives is unable to provide sufficient support to preserve and provide access to archival records.
- Collections for which the Archives is unable to provide suitable space, staffing, supplies, and equipment.
- The Archives will not accept permanent loans of materials and will not assume liability for materials not owned by GHS

7.2. Deaccession

Accessions of archival material are taken in following an evaluation of their long-term value and significance. Material is accepted on the understanding that it is a permanent addition to the collection; there is a strong presumption against later disposal or deaccessioning. However, earlier accessions were not subject to the same appraisal process. The Archives Committee reserves the right to review its holdings to assess their ongoing relevance and where appropriate explore deaccessioning and disposal. GHS will maintain records of all deaccessioned items.

7.2.1. Reasons for Deaccession include:

- Does not address any of GHS's collecting themes or fit within the scope of collecting
- Has deteriorated beyond usefulness and can no longer be preserved
- Is a duplicate in the collection with a better or more representative example of that item.
- Would be of more benefit to the public in a different institution.

7.2.2. Methods of disposal

Some methods of disposal are preferable to others, but each item being deaccessioned should be evaluated and the best method determined by the Archives Committee.

7.2.3. Transfer

The preferable option for disposal is to transfer the collection or item to an appropriate organization such as another archive, museum, library, or historical society.

7.2.4. Return to Donor

After the transfer to another organization, this is the next best option for disposal. Where a donation agreement is in place the donor or their heirs should be contacted

and it should be explained to them the basis for their decision and how it was reached. You should record steps taken to contact owners and take every reasonable step to trace owners.

7.2.5. Sale

The sale of archives is highly controversial and can only be considered ethical if the donor gives permission or the material is a duplicate, non-archival material, or ephemera. The sale can not be solely financially motivated and should only occur if a transfer or return to donor is not possible. Proceeds from the sale should be used to maintain and develop the existing archival collection. If objects are offered for sale, this must be done in a public auction house or in the public marketplace. No deaccessioned item can be purchased by an employee or volunteer of the museum.

7.2.6. Destruction

Destruction of archives is an irreversible act and therefore is one that should be considered as a last resort. The destruction of archives should be carried out securely, respecting the needs of the donor.

7.2.7. Reference Library Disposal

Disposal of reference library materials are not subject to the same requirements as archival materials. Due to their limited historic value and being readily available to the public to dispose of these books GHS will first offer materials to a relevant historical society or library and give them 3 weeks to respond. If there is no response then GHS has the right to sell or donate as desired. If reference materials can not be disposed of in the above ways, then destruction is the final option.

8. Access

Access to the GHS Archives is open to members of the public doing research. All visitors to the Archive should be supervised by a member of staff or trained archives volunteer. Materials may not be removed from the archives room. Researchers must abide by outlined procedures that are to be supplied and discussed upon entry to the Archives room.

8.1. Copyright and Citation of Records

Copies of archival material are allowed as long as there is no risk of damage to the document in question. Copies are subject to fees determined by the Archives Committee.

Unless there is a specific GHS copyright involved, the burden of determining copyright status and permissions falls on the researcher. Archives staff does not routinely research the copyright status of materials for clientele.

It is expected that researchers ask permission before publishing GHS owned archival material and will give full and proper credit to the GHS Archives as their source of quotations and citations, and to cite those sources completely so that others may refer to them easily.

Use the following credit line:

Greenbrier Historical Society Archives. Accession # and Collection Title (if available)