

Washington and Lee University Library Special Collections Collection Policy

This policy revises and expands the previous policy dated April 1989.

I. Rare Books

A. We actively seek to acquire the following categories of books:

1. Books from the libraries of earlier incarnations of Washington and Lee University.
2. Books that include Washington and Lee University in their subject content.
3. Books about Robert E. Lee, George Washington and other prominent individuals associated with the history of Washington and Lee University, including fictional works.
4. Books about Washington and Lee University alumni.
5. Books about Stonewall Jackson, Sam Houston and other prominent individuals associated with the history of Rockbridge County including the cities of Lexington and Buena Vista, including fictional works.
6. Books from the libraries of the Franklin Society (kept in a separate collection), Graham Philanthropic Society, Washington Literary Society or similar literary societies with a W&L or other local connection.
7. Confederate imprints (1861-1865).
8. Books by local authors. Local authors ordinarily includes Rockbridge County but may also include immediately neighboring counties (these include Augusta, Nelson, Amherst, Bedford, Botetourt, Alleghany and Bath Counties).
9. Books on the genealogy of families with a connection to Rockbridge County. Where appropriate this includes families from immediately neighboring counties.
10. Books on the history of western Virginia and its localities and counties including our local area. Western Virginia includes those areas of Virginia west of the Blue Ridge mountains and extending from the Tennessee line in the south to Harpers Ferry in the north. This designation also includes nearby counties of West Virginia that border Virginia or that have significant connection to the Appalachian history and culture of the area. Appalachian history and culture as it applies to the geographic area of our collection is a focus.
11. Books on the history of other parts of Virginia especially the most basic volumes of county and town histories. These are not collected to the same depth as books on western Virginia.
12. Imprints of regional presses. Regional presses for our collection purposes are defined as those within Virginia west of the Blue Ridge mountains.
13. Autographed books of exceptional interest.
14. Books already within the library's main stacks collection that are especially subject to loss or damage.

15. Books with a direct connection to manuscripts in our holdings.
16. Reference material supporting research pertinent to our collections.
17. The Basse, Cole and Rockwell gift funds are to be used for significant items that are valued at \$100 or more in the collection categories listed above. These gift funds may also be used for manuscripts purchases or preservation services.
18. Nineteenth century newspapers of western Virginia with a particular focus on Rockbridge County and neighboring counties.

B. In addition to the active collection categories specified above, we will seek with less priority or accept as gifts the following additional categories:

1. Where appropriate and significant, books from the personal libraries of prominent individuals associated with the history of Washington and Lee University. These can include administrators, faculty, students, donors, alumni or others with a significant W&L connection. Books containing significant annotations by the owner are particularly noteworthy.
2. American imprints at least 150 years old (or more recent depending on content, rarity, etc. at the discretion of the Special Collections Librarian).
3. European imprints (including British) prior to 1800.
4. Books not in any other category with a significant monetary value.
5. Limited editions.
6. Imprints of fine presses.
7. First editions of well known authors especially Southern and Virginia authors.
8. Books of unusual aesthetic value due to binding, illustrations, typography, etc.
9. Books of unusual consideration because of size, format, condition, or subject (books that have become historically or socially dated such as social etiquette guides from earlier eras) .

II. Archives

We collect:

1. Washington and Lee University publications of all kinds (two copies).
2. Student publications including newspapers, yearbooks, literary and political publications, etc (two copies).
3. Student honors theses (as determined by those listed in the commencement program).
4. Student papers on the architectural history of buildings in Rockbridge County from the classes of Dr. Pamela Simpson.
5. Faculty publications both during and before a faculty member's tenure at W&L.
6. Alumni publications.

7. Photographs reflecting the history of Washington and Lee and Rockbridge County.
8. Records (Record Groups) which show the operational history of Washington and Lee. These include Trustees records, records of the President and Dean of the College, records of the various academic departments, records of various W&L offices and records of student organizations.
9. Architectural blueprints and other designs of campus buildings.
10. Maps and prints of the Washington and Lee campus.

III. Manuscripts

We actively collect in the following categories of manuscripts:

1. Resources on the history of Washington and Lee University since its beginnings in 1749.
2. Resources illustrating student life at Washington and Lee throughout its history.
3. Resources on the lives and careers of prominent Washington and Lee alumni.
4. Resources on the Lee family with particular emphasis on the two family members who served as President, Robert E. Lee and George Washington Custis Lee.
5. Resources on the history of Rockbridge County and of western Virginia.
6. Resources on the Civil War with a focus on the war in western Virginia.
7. Maps of Rockbridge County with a focus on historical maps.

Because of limited space available we are unable to collect individual faculty research unless it pertains to any of the categories listed above.

IV. Photographs

We collect photographs on:

1. The history of Washington and Lee University showing W&L people, buildings and events.
2. The history of Rockbridge County, Virginia and including the cities of Buena Vista and Lexington.
3. Robert E. Lee and other members of his family.
4. Jessie Ball DuPont, Alfred I. DuPont and other subjects of significant manuscripts collections in our holdings that already include photographs.

V. Additional Collection Goals

To augment our collections we are especially seeking books and manuscripts in the following categories not already listed above:

1. The history of canal and river travel, a significant facet of the first century of Rockbridge County, Virginia.

2. The development of the railroad in western Virginia.
3. The iron industry of western Virginia with particular focus on Rockbridge County.
4. Literary figures who have figured prominently in Shenandoah, the literary periodical published at Washington and Lee.

VI. Additional statements

We collect audiovisual material pertaining to Washington and Lee University and Rockbridge County, Virginia including Buena Vista and Lexington. This material is generally filed by subject rather than type (it is interfiled with our print material) .

We house on permanent loan the manuscript, photograph and ledger collections of the Rockbridge Historical Society. Additions to these collections are made through the RHS. The Rockbridge Historical Society has its own collection policy.

We do not collect artifacts (material objects). Responsibility in this area lies with the University-wide Special Collections committee through our museum collections.

Primary responsibility for collection development in Special Collections lies with the Special Collections Librarian.

Vaughan Stanley
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