



American Philatelic Research Library

Collection Development Policy

Prepared by Tara Murray, APRL Librarian, March 2011
Approved by Ken Martin, APRL Administrator, March 28, 2011
Adopted by the APRL Board of Trustees, August 12, 2011

The American Philatelic Research Library was founded in 1968 to accumulate, organize, and preserve philatelic information including publications and other data relating to the stamp collecting hobby and to make it available to American Philatelic Society members, staff, and the public.

Today the APRL is the largest public philatelic library in the United States. Its mission is **to gather a comprehensive collection of philatelic reference and resource materials, to organize it efficiently in useful and accessible ways, and to make it available to interested users both within the hobby and outside it, now and for generations to come.**

The APRL collection includes material in a variety of formats, including paper, microforms, audio and video cassettes, phonograph records, photographic negatives, CD- and DVD-ROM, and digital files.

I. Scope

Materials for the collection are selected based on their value as research and reference tools, not for collectability.

The APRL collects literature and research material on philately and postal history comprehensively.

The APRL collects collateral material in subjects such as transportation, geography, history, design, paper, and numismatics selectively, based on usefulness for philatelic research and availability at other libraries. The APRL maintains a small reference collection including dictionaries and other frequently-used sources but in general does not keep materials widely available in more general collections.

APRL Collection Development Policy

The APRL holds the archives of both the APS and APRL, as well as the archives and libraries of other philatelic organizations.

II. Acquisition of materials

A. Donation

Donations are the primary source of acquisitions for the APRL. Donations most frequently are gifts or bequests from APS members, but may also come from libraries, clubs, societies, publishers, distributors, authors, or other sources.

For many years, the APRL rarely refused a donation. Today, the APRL requests a listing of the literature being offered, and will redirect some materials to other philatelic libraries or accept them on the condition they can be sold by the APRL.

Donated literature is added to the collection if it fits within the scope of the APRL, is in good condition, and does not duplicate material already in the collection. Other material may be sold to benefit the APRL, offered to other philatelic libraries, or recycled.

In general the APRL does not accept gifts with restrictions or materials on loan or deposit. Any restrictions on access, use, deaccession, or subsequent sale are agreed upon when the APRL accepts a collection. The APRL does not accept collections which are closed to public access in perpetuity.

There are significant costs associated with processing, cataloging, storing, and preserving donations. Prior to the acceptance of substantial gift collections, the APRL may request funding to cover these expenses.

The APRL proactively seeks to acquire collections of personal notes, data, correspondence, interviews, photographs, and other records of selected collectors and postal historians. See “Donating Research Materials to the APRL” (in process).

The APRL proactively seeks to acquire copies of philatelic exhibits. The APS shows department asks exhibitors at its national shows to donate copies of their exhibits to the APRL. The APRL prefers electronic copies of exhibits with permission to make the exhibit available on the Library website. When an electronic copy is not available, the APRL prefers a color copy with no loan or access restrictions.

B. Purchase

The APRL occasionally purchases new publications not received as gift or review copies.

APRL Collection Development Policy

Purchase of material at auction is generally limited to acquiring first copies of out-of-print philatelic literature, especially bibliographies, indexes, and other reference sources, as well as any significant periodical runs that will make our holdings more complete. The only auction catalogs the APRL will consider purchasing are “name sales.”

C. APS affiliates

APS affiliate societies send one copy of their journal or newsletter to the APS Affiliate Coordination Committee. The committee forwards these publications to the APRL. Some also donate a copy of the publication directly to the APRL.

The APRL encourages affiliates to deposit their digital publications with the Library. See “APRL as Repository for APS Affiliate Journals and Newsletters” (in process).

The APRL may keep one copy of APS chapter publications if donated to the Library.

III. Retention of materials

The APRL deaccessions materials not needed for the collection. Deaccessioned materials may be offered to other philatelic libraries (in trade or as outright gifts) or offered for sale.

Because APRL materials are generally borrowed and returned by mail, the borrowed materials are out of the collection and unavailable to other patrons longer than those of a library that lends directly to walk-in patrons, and the materials are subject to greater wear and potential loss due to repeated packaging and trips through the mail. Thus, the APRL maintains two or more copies of each item when possible.

A. Books

The APRL keeps up to two copies of circulating books and exhibits, including books and exhibits on digital media. The APRL may keep three or more copies of highly-used items.

B. Periodicals

The APRL keeps up to two copies of newspapers, three copies of other English-language periodicals, and two copies of non-English-language periodicals. If a journal is bound, the APRL also seeks to keep a second copy unbound for copying and circulation.

C. Auction catalogs

The APRL keeps up to two copies of auction catalogs, and an additional copy of “name sales” for the name sale section.

APRL Collection Development Policy

D. Price lists

The APRL keeps up to two copies of price lists.

E. Show programs and palmares

The APRL keeps up to two copies of show programs, palmares, and other show material (three copies of APS show materials).

F. Catalogs

The APRL keeps one copy of older catalogs and up to three copies of the most recent edition of each catalog. Duplicate copies of older catalogs may be deaccessioned as newer editions are received.

G. Websites and online publications

The APRL adds links to online editions of printed material to its catalog records as they are discovered. Publications only available online and within the scope of the Library may be cataloged. When server space and permissions allow, the APRL will download online publications for storage on its own servers in order to provide reliable access.

H. New issue announcements

The APRL keeps one copy of new issue announcements.

I. Indexes, databases, censuses

The APRL keeps one copy (or more of highly-used items) of indexes, databases, census, and other reference resources in either print or electronic format.

J. Postage stamp albums

The APRL keeps one copy of selected postage stamps albums, stock books, and other collecting supplies as examples.

K. Stamps

The APRL does not maintain a collection of stamps or covers. If such items are donated, they are redirected to the APS Reference Collection for use in expertizing or sold.

APRL Collection Development Policy

IV. Format of materials

Every effort is made to maintain the materials in a format that will be both stable and readily usable by Library patrons.

The APRL maintains a collection of materials reformatted in microform (microfilm and microfiche), including the *Postal Bulletin* microfilmed by the APRL in the 1970's.

Microfilm was the medium of choice for reformatting for many years, but the APRL today favors digitization in most cases in order to provide access to its geographically dispersed patrons. The Association of Research Libraries recognizes digitization as a preservation reformatting method (Kathleen Arthur et al., *Recognizing Digitization as a Preservation Reformatting Method* (Association of Research Libraries, June 2004), http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/digi_preserv.pdf).

The APRL acquires both born-digital material and digitized material. As funds and copyright restrictions permit, the APRL digitizes items in its collection in accordance with the priorities established by the APRL Digital Resources Committee.