

Maintaining Institutional Historical Collections through
Rapid Appraisal of Employee Files

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Abstract

In the past decade, institutions like the National Agricultural Library (NAL) have not consistently preserved records documenting their history. This lack of documentation has the potential to damage the credibility and transparency of federal institutions like the NAL. This paper considers how employee's personal work files can supplement other records to document the history of federal institutions, and suggests procedures for rapid, systematic appraisal of employees' files to support efficient collection development. In an effort to fill gaps in the historical record of the NAL, Susan McCarthy, Associate Director for the NAL's Knowledge Services Division, donated her collected analog and digital work papers—amassed over a thirty-year career—to NAL Special Collections. McCarthy also hired two archives fellows (the authors) to assist Special Collections with processing her collected documents, and to conduct research on rapid appraisal methods to support efficient processing of this very large collection. We conducted an initial survey of McCarthy's files and found valuable information pertaining to events and activities in the history of the NAL. In order to rapidly appraise those materials for the collection, we crafted a collection development policy specific for McCarthy's documents by researching policies at other national libraries. The results uncovered in this process indicate that institutions should seriously consider supplementing historical collections with employee's work files, and conducting outreach for external help when appraising donations for these collections.

Introduction

Many institutional archives are not progressively creating and preserving historical collections that document the history of the institution, often due to financial constraints and limited staff. Institutions also have limited space to store processed collections, so they have the challenge of prioritizing which materials to accept, retain, or remove. During these selection processes, institutions are more likely to prioritize donor collections and digital demands over preserving their own history. Nonetheless, documenting a federal institution's history contributes to the transparency and credibility of the institution in service to the public and to policymakers.

Employees' personal work files are a valuable source of documentation of the decisions, projects, programs, and actions that constitute the history of an institution. By "personal work files" or "personal files" we mean documents produced in the course of an individual employee's regular work practices, as opposed to institution-wide documents (such as annual reports) that are often preserved in institutional archives.

Personal work files may be useful for supplementing other forms of documentation (such as annual reports and budgets) to capture institutional history in more detail. However, sorting out which employee files are worth preserving is an onerous undertaking, particularly at a large institution with many divisions.

At the National Agricultural Library (NAL), the library of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the question of whether the institution should consider using employee personal work files emerged as Susan McCarthy, Associate Director for the NAL's Knowledge Services Division, confronted her own retirement and the extensive collection of work papers that she had amassed during her thirty-year career. The Library has not consistently or systematically developed its own NAL History Collection (within its Special Collections) since 1994, and there seem to be no clear guidelines on how to accurately and sufficiently develop this collection. In hopes of augmenting the NAL History Collection, McCarthy donated her personal work files pertaining to former NAL events, information centers, and research to Special Collections in 2019.

From this moment, a lack of consensus emerged within the NAL between employees and Special Collections staff on whether personal work files should be used to supplement the gaps in this collection, how relevant those materials are for future research, and whether processing an extensive collection is feasible. These discussions bring into question the relevancy and probable use for personal files to potentially fill the gaps and add to further assessment strategies. How should the NAL supplement their historical collection when there is a lack of resources? With limited staff, pressing demands, and a lack of guidelines, how should the NAL appraise and preserve their history? This situation shows a need for an updated plan of action approved by the library's management and the USDA Records Management on how to proceed with this collection.

This paper reports on the efforts of two Digital Curation Fellows (the authors) hired to process McCarthy's papers, research rapid appraisal¹ methods, and develop a collection development policy for the NAL History Collection in relation to employees' files. The Digital Curation Fellowship program is a partnership between the National Agricultural Library and the University of Maryland College of Information Studies (iSchool) to connect students from across iSchool programs to research projects that help solve real digital curation challenges at the NAL. Mentored by iSchool Assistant

¹ There is another use of this term in rural development planning to describe a formal research method. For this analysis, we are using this phrase to describe minimal or otherwise efficient, systematic processes for evaluating archival records.

Professor Katrina Fenlon, and supervised by Susan McCarthy at NAL, we conducted research over the 2019-2020 academic year.

We argue that institutions like the NAL should use employees' personal work files to supplement their historical collections by rapidly appraising them. By establishing a clear and concise policy, institutions will have a better understanding of which personal work files from donors need to be retained. They will also be able to rapidly process these donations, so they can make them available to the general public. Institutions should also consider hiring volunteers and/or library science students under the direction of an archivist or a librarian to assist with accessioning the employees' personal work files. Overall, with limited staff, institutions would benefit from the help by volunteers and students who are more likely to have an interest in their collections.

This paper examines why and how an institution may process employee personal work files, based on our experience at NAL. In this paper, we primarily analyze former NAL collection development policies and guidelines, interviews from NAL employees, and interviews from Special Collections staff in order to gain varied perspectives on how to accurately document the history of the NAL. We also research and analyze scholarly literature in the library and information science field. The motivation for this project stemmed from the NAL's lack of consistent documentation and preservation of materials for the NAL History Collection. By analyzing these various policies and viewpoints, we are attempting to conceptualize an effective method to preserve the history of institutions while recognizing the impact of limited resources. An employee's annual report of a library is a valuable resource that gives us a window into the history of how that institution conducted business at the time.

Literature Review

Historical collections in general convey different advantages to the institutions that maintain them. These collections contain information that explains and motivates decisions made throughout an institution's history, that describes major programs and their outcomes, and that explains the source and disposition of institutional resources. Understanding the history of institutions is similar to understanding the history of the resources they possess. The utilization of resources within institutions becomes easier when the staff has knowledge of the institution's history and how the institution came to possess them. These collections can also help staff derive ways in which to advertise their resources to the public, develop public programs, and exhibitions (Viens, 2016). These facts lend these resources credibility and help staff stress the value they hold (Delsaerdt, 2015, p. 5). These collections also offer researchers the opportunity to

understand local histories of institutions in a national or global context (Viens, 2016). They contain materials that display the needs, events and concerns at specific points throughout an institutions' history, and offer resources that help researchers see who these institutions have served throughout the years and if the trends have changed. They help researchers understand the background and development of the institution and others of similar characteristics (Dyer, 1978).

In university archives, historical collections have the potential benefits of promoting awareness of a university, generating school funds, and increasing accessibility and institutional collaboration between different regional schools. In “Archives, accessibility, and advocacy”, Jennifer Welch, Susan Hoffius, and E. Brooke Fox—colleagues from the Medical University of South Carolina—explain how their university’s special collections maintain and increase the university’s profile by leveraging their historical collections. Due to the lack of state funding, the Waring Historical Library for the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) had to restrategize how to maintain their relevance to the MUSC community. In an effort to stay relevant, the MUSC university archives unit of Waring partnered with the college of nursing in 2006 by processing and digitizing their historical collection into the MEDICA, the university’s digital library. Through digitizing and enhancing accessibility to the nursing school’s collection, an opportunity arose to collaborate with the College of Charleston’s LowCountry Digital Library (LCDL) by linking related digital collections, which had been disconnected until recently. According to Welch and her fellow colleagues, the university archives staff of Waring successfully illustrated the long-term historical importance of preserving historical collections, and also the “short-term public relations value” (Welch et al., 2011, p. 60). By collaborating with both the nursing school and the LCDL, the Waring library increased their grant funding, increased the relevance of historical collections by promoting the college and preserving its history, and continued to contribute to the growth of digital libraries (Welch et al., 2011, pp. 59-60).

In most institutions, the primary stakeholder of a historical collection is the institution it belongs to. These institutions can utilize these collections in many different ways to their benefit. Institutions have a stake in these collections because they primarily use these collections to “collect, arrange, preserve, and facilitate the use of records of a parent organization” (Yakel, 1989). Institutions primarily retain these materials for the benefits they offer for the institution.

Institutions also understand the necessity of maintaining the historical collections and enduring value these resources present for describing what the institution has done and achieved (Ashkenas, 2013). Employees of institutions create history, but if the institution

does not document that history when they leave, the information will be lost (Ashkenas, 2013). To address that issue, we need to actively conserve the history of these institutions or we may lose valuable information (Ashkenas, 2013). In order to increase understanding of the materials within the collection, documentation regarding the accession of new materials is advisable (Hackbart-Dean & Morris, 2003). Documenting the appraisers who added the materials that helped them decide what should be added to the collection, could help those in the future who will continue processing materials (Hackbart-Dean & Morris, 2003). This would increase understanding of the collection and make it more valuable.

When processing archivists do not record these details, it becomes confusing as to why they kept certain items and what should be retained at the present time. When institutions employ appraisers to assess personal files or other materials to be added to the collection, it is important that documentation is kept regarding the identity of the appraisers and their process of appraisal. Some institutions use an Encoded Archival Description (EAD), which includes an author field to record who arranged or appraised the materials, but this digital tool has not been utilized by all institutions. This approach will give future appraisers a reference point when they assess past methods of retaining items for the collection.

In order for appraisers to know which materials to retain, return, or discard for historical collections, collection development librarians need to construct policies that adequately address the information needs of its communities and the institution. In “the Necessity for a Collection Development Policy Statement,” Y. T. Feng argued why institutions like public and academic libraries need to establish written collection development policies in order to “facilitate a consistent and balanced growth of library resources” (Feng, 1979, p. 39). As an institution grows, the collection development policy should evolve as well to entail new materials over time that document the history of a community. Feng describes a collection development policy as a statement that defines an institution’s goals and objectives, recognizes the “short-term and long-term needs of the communities it serves”, evaluates the “strengths and weakness of its existing resources”, and verifies the “depth and scope of its acquisition policy” (Feng, 1979, p. 41). In the process of developing a policy outlining the objectives of the institution, policy makers attempt to provide transparency for their institution over time and a direction for appraisers to follow.

In 1996, Joanne Anderson and the American Library Association (ALA) published a guide for written collection policies, which expands on this idea proposed by Feng. In the glossary section, Anderson and the ALA define collection development as a

“process of planning, building, and maintaining a library’s information resources in a cost-effective and user-relevant manner” (Anderson & ALA, 1996, pp. 27-28). Anderson and ALA emphasize the necessity for collection development policies because of increasing expectations of accountability to an institution’s means of governing, mounting financial pressure affecting an “institution’s purchasing power”, and “growing size and complexity of the publishing world” (Anderson and ALA, 1996, pp. 1-2). Anderson and ALA go beyond the initial purpose of a policy to “identify, select, and in some cases procure locally appropriate materials” for collections by explicitly addressing the need to allocate funding for specific subjects, implement resource sharing, and building relations with patrons (Anderson & ALA, 1996, p. 28). In the context of cultural institutions, those institutions continue to create and use collection development policy for those same reasons today especially with assisting Special Collections staff and donors with guidelines on which materials to retain.

As technologies have evolved over time, institutions have experienced challenges with establishing and implementing collection development policies that take into account a diversity of analog and digital materials. Due to “limited storage space, complicated access models, declining budgets with competing interests in analog and digital material, and an increasing demand by patrons for digital content and instant access,” institutions have struggled to adapt (Morris & Presnell, 2019, p. 379). On top of a failure to change their collection development models, the current discourse of collection development practices lacks attention for the “future needs and various uses” of collections. In order to address and fill those needs, Morris and Presnell suggest institutions should retain instead of reject “books, encyclopedias, and cookbooks” from different eras because each item provides an insight into the “knowledge, culture, and thoughts” of a society during a specific time they were documented (Morris & Presnell, 2019, p. 381). Institutions can find these sorts of items in an employee’s personal papers. Although institutions make “weeding” decisions based on usage data, which threatens to exclude similar materials, Morris and Presnell argues for a removal to storage to save for future use (Morris and Presnell, 2019, pp. 382-385).

In addition, institutions experience challenges with managing “shared print retention programs, collaborative collection development policies, and ownership access versus subscription access to resources” due to budget constraints, and managing electronic and digital resources (Levenson, 2019, p. 206). The deteriorating budget constraints hamper the institution’s ability to hire sufficient staff to update collection development policies. Those institutions also do not have the funds to assess the explosion in newer developments in electronic and digital resources. These newer developments in libraries range from “open access initiatives, born digital content, streaming audio and

video resources, demand driven acquisitions, pay-per-view, to large-scale digitization projects (Levenson, 2019, p. 209). Some institutions, in particular academic libraries, have allocated and directed budgetary funding to collection development librarians, so they can address these pressing issues. These issues continue to be a challenge for most institutions who have not changed or loosened policies.

Due to the rapid development of newer resources, institutions should not discard print materials in favor of e-collections when developing new collection policies for appraisal. Indeed, when institutions appraise digital materials, they do not necessarily have to consider physical space factors, whereas with books they have to consider space when filling up shelves, and many “numerous e-books” have the capacity to be stored on “a single, lightweight device (Moore, 2015, p. 128-129). However, when appraisers encounter collection development issues with accessing digital sources, those issues usually become obsolete by the time someone addresses those issues due to the rapidly changing nature of technologies (Moore, 2015, p. 132). Another noticeable difference between print and digital materials occurs when libraries “increase their acquisition of e-books, either through ownership or subscription, the number of titles available for lending decreases (Morris & Presnell, 2019, p. 381). During this phase, only a local patron will have access to those materials because those contents do not have the same accessibility for interlibrary loans as physical materials. Therefore, policy makers need to take in consideration a diversity of concerns with offering both physical and digital materials.

Once an institution has a clear and concise policy, they should be more prepared to rapidly appraise donations. Minimal processing is considered by information professionals as another appraisal methodology used for rapidly accessioning donations into archival collections. In a paper entitled “More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing” (MPLP), authors Greene and Meissner address the issue of processing backlogs. The authors address how the number of acquisitions are being collected, how institutions have not processed quickly enough, and as a result, “massive backlogs of inaccessible collections at repositories across the country” have occurred (Greene & Meissner, 2005). Throughout the US, archives deal with this pressing issue as limiting access to research occurs and the public's availability to information decreases. The paper discusses the need to change archival practices for this problem to be solved. MPLP states that archivists must first prioritize making sure researchers and other users have access to their collections.

Instead of completing appraisal and preservation work down to the item level, archivists need to be more general in appraisal. The main goal of MPLP is to make the collections

available to the general public as quickly as possible. Greene and Meissner argue that archivists do not necessarily have the responsibility of conducting all the research concerning a collection, which instead falls on researchers using collections. The authors also discussed the fact that preservation practices aren't always necessary if archivists intend to store the materials in a controlled environment, and if the materials that archivists currently store do not have any damage. The authors recommend doing a more general overview of the collection, extracting the main topics presented in the collection, and filling out the necessary records for researchers to find and use.

Information professionals discuss different aspects of the traditional preservation practices and find it to be optional rather than a requirement for every collection. One such aspect is the arrangement of materials in the collection. While some archivists consider this practice as an essential aspect of processing, others argue that maintaining the original order of how archivists collected these files should be suitable. Detailed arrangement should only be a part of processing when archivists find compelling evidence that suggests it would be beneficiary. Limiting the number of requirements archivists must complete for a collection to be fully processed allows them to process them more efficiently. Laura McCann, an archival scholar, suggests that institutions should utilize risk management tools advocated by Greene and Meissner to “ensure collections are processed less and more accessible to researchers” (McCann, 2013, p. 33). Risk management tools are routinely used in preservation, and the emphasis is placed on managing rather than avoiding risks. In sum, institutions process and preserve these collections to educate scholars and provide them with information, not to remain tucked away and scrutinized by archivists alone.

Institutional Background

The ALA recognizes the National Agricultural Library (NAL) as one of five national libraries in the United States². The history of the NAL dates back to 1837 when Henry Ellsworth requested the construction of a library that provided agricultural scientific research (NAL History). On May 15, 1862, the U.S. federal government created the Department of Agriculture. President Abraham Lincoln also established the Department of Agriculture Library when he signed the Department of Agriculture Organic Act. (Fusonie, 1988, p.195). The establishment of the library in 1862 provided agricultural researchers with access to resources, the ability for discovery, and education in the field of agriculture. A century later, on May 23, 1962, Orville Freeman, the Secretary of

² The ALA recognizes the following four libraries as the other national libraries in the United States: the Library of Congress, National Library of Education, National Library of Medicine, and National Transportation Library.

Agriculture renamed the library as the “National Agricultural Library” and commissioned the construction of a new facility in 1965.

The employees of the NAL contribute to the public’s research needs through the information centers, databases and the digital library. The mission of the National Agricultural Library is:

to facilitate access to and utilization of needed information in any medium by agricultural researchers, regulators, educators and extension personnel; those employed in agriculture; those living in rural areas and communities; consumers of agricultural products, and the public at large, insofar as they need agricultural information.³

In addition to this mission, the NAL has responsibility for developing and coordinating a national agricultural science library information network, the Agriculture Network Information Collaborative (AGNIC).⁴ The library also provides a leadership role in US participation in international agricultural libraries and information systems to promote worldwide availability of all agricultural information (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1990). The NAL communicates with international partners to obtain the most relevant agricultural information to date (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1990).

The NAL History Collection

The Special Collections, Physical Collections Unit, Digitization and Access Branch, and Data Production Division within the NAL together maintain a collection entitled the “NAL History Collection” (MS 113). This collection contains records of reports, events, library publications, and other items that document the library’s past. The mission statement of Special Collections is:

As part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Special Collections at the National Agricultural Library is charged with arranging, describing, preserving and making available rare materials significant to the history of agriculture and the USDA.⁵

The NAL History Collection documents both internal aspects of the institution, including institutional culture and administrative records, but also its role in and contributions to agricultural research.

³ U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1990

⁴ <https://www.agnic.org/>

⁵ <https://specialcollections.nal.usda.gov>

However, the current Special Collections staff have not actively and consistently preserved and retained materials for the NAL History Collection in the last few decades, since 1994. There are many reasons for this inconsistency, such as limited staffing resulting in other activities taking priority over processing collections and large donations of materials that stem from office closings within the USDA/ARS. Prior to the current Special Collections staff being in charge of retaining materials for this collection, the secretarial staff in the Office of the Director had the responsibility of filing all records pertaining to NAL activities, events, and collections. After the Office of the Director stopped filing and removed large quantities of materials from their office, Special Collections did not receive clearer guidelines on which materials to retain for the NAL History Collection. Special Collections also are required to submit records to an ARS records manager for the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), which hinders their ability to retain files.

In addition, Special Collections does not have a formal collection development policy specific to the NAL History Collection. Special Collections did not keep documentation of how they created and maintained the NAL History Collection. They did not reference the guidelines used to appraise materials for this collection. Most of the materials currently present in the NAL History Collection are also in the book stacks, instead of in a secured and confined location. The current Special Collections staff use a general collection development policy that does not apply to any one collection. There is no explicit collection development policy for historical materials within Special Collections. This lack of structure hinders the ability of future special collections staff to update and create specific guidelines for which materials they should prioritize for this collection. They are unable to determine a criteria of relevance, and how to develop the collection in a meaningful way.

Special Collections also has competing collections that require similar materials as the NAL History Collection, which further impedes their tasks of preserving this collection. For example, the NAL had a photographer who captured images for all the NAL events and visitings in the 1990s. They turned those images into a collection known as the Library Newsletter, Agricultural Libraries Information Notes (ALIN). The NAL also has a friend's group known as the Associates of NAL whose staff conducted events and produced publications relating to the activities of the library for their own collection. Due to these former and existing circumstances, Special Collections staff do not have the proper guidance for which materials need to be retained for the NAL History Collection, so the collection has not received much recent attention.

Although maintaining the NAL History Collection is an important task for the institution, Special Collections has many other collections to consider on a daily basis. There are also, as mentioned before, many factors that impede upon Special Collections' ability to preserve the NAL History Collection. However, Special Collections staff have allotted both time and resources to improving this collection: they mentored a summer college intern in conducting archival work and writing a container list for this collection, described the collection and provided the framework for a finding aid on Wikipedia, and the Knowledge Services Division (KSD) aided them by hiring data rescue and archives fellows, including the authors of this report. They have diligently rehoused materials that need immediate attention as well as updated the container list as they added new materials.

Employee records fall under the governance of the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) records manager, who determines which materials qualify as permanent federal records and therefore belong in the archives of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The vast majority of employee documents are not permanent federal records, so the next consideration is whether they would usefully serve the NAL History Collection.

Minimal Processing at the NAL

While the library catalog lists every collection at NAL, many collections remain unprocessed. Special Collections would benefit from methods for processing collections more quickly. The Special Collections division within the NAL has their own Minimal Processing steps that they have utilized to rapidly process collections. They have two documents, Minimal Processing Steps and Processing Levels, that detail the steps to be taken as well as the differences in each level. The first document lists five general steps that archivists consult during this process: examining the collection, arranging the collection, describing the collection, finalizing housing, and promoting the collection. The five different levels are: collection, series, box, folder and item. We interviewed the staff of Special Collections to understand just how useful this process was and how much of an impact they believe this process has had in making their work easier and quicker.

Special Collections staff developed and utilized this minimal process on several collections within their holdings. The staff processed 17 small collections, totaling approximately 2 linear feet, using their minimal processing guidelines, which took them over 5 months to complete successfully. The staff collaborated and utilized everyone's skills when processing collections. While the minimal processing steps allow staff to make these collections available quickly, the staff revisited collections that they notice

researchers used more frequently. According to McCann (2013), this decision of revisiting collections that researchers frequently use stemmed from Richard Cox's model of minimal processing. McCann further states that "collections are processed after surveying and in addition, staff revisit them if new information becomes available, errors exist, and there are new accessions" (McCann, 2013, p. 31). These collections are then processed to a higher level to afford researchers more ease of use.

The special collections staff first planned to test the minimal processing steps on small collections to determine their effectiveness, and then eventually use them to process larger collections. When we inquired as to whether or not they still use this minimal processing approach, they stated that they use it but the process is more of a hybrid. There are cases where items that could comprise a sub-collection are located and appraised at a different level than the rest of the collection. However, during the initial five month experiment, the staff followed the minimal processing steps completely. We also inquired about the feedback they have received, and they stated that they have received positive feedback regarding their collections from researchers. This leads us to believe that even though collections may be processed minimally, they appear to be detailed enough in content to satisfy the information needs of researchers.

Methodology

At the NAL, under the guidance and direction of Special Collections staff, we worked on the task of examining and determining the value in retaining the files of an employee's 30-year career upon her retirement. We appraised the personal work files of Susan McCarthy, the Associate Director of the Knowledge Services Division. McCarthy donated her personal work files in boxes to help supplement events and activities missing from the NAL History Collection. As part of the University of Maryland's Digital Curation Fellows program, we spent an academic year examining her analog and digital files and assessing the materials for preservation or disposal. One of the purposes of this fellowship was to determine if materials in personal files could be used to supplement institutional historical collections, and to begin to create processes for systematic and rapid appraisal of similar collections.

Personal Work Documents

We began this process by conducting a general inventory of the materials within McCarthy's files. The inventory allowed us to have a better understanding of the types of materials within these personal files and gave us a general overview of the employee's background. Under the direction and guidance of Special Collections staff,

we conducted a collection assessment survey of McCarthy's files in an effort to rapidly establish basic intellectual control and processing priorities over the acquired files. We generated collection numbers for each file, and recorded the name of the surveyor, date and duration of the survey, collector's name, subject terms within the files, and a brief synopsis of the contents. For the subject terms, we recorded terms based on a brief examination of the contents with a collection box. The scope of the collection has materials primarily ranging from the early 1990s to the present on topics pertaining to the Plant Genome Data and Information Center (PGDIC), the Blue Ribbon Panel (BRP), and the Biotechnology Information Center (BIC). The collection also has topics on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), the Animal Welfare and Invasive Species Information Center (AWISIC), and other events and activities during that time. The documents we found pertaining to those topics within McCarthy's files were: personal notes, emails, agendas, meeting minutes, reports, assessments, data, library publications, and materials used during research. Within the digital files were: presentations, lectures, NAL publications, databases, interactive programs, educational materials and information resources.

Next, with the addition of a second archives fellow, we changed our strategy to an itemized appraisal of McCarthy's files and separated the federal from the non-federal records. The staff within Special Collections gave us two documents to help us distinguish between the two types of records (see Appendix A, 1A & 1B). Prior to adjusting to this strategy, we did not know the scope of the current NAL History Collection and the guidelines for what type of materials Special Collections considered essential. Later we learned the current NAL History Collection has materials dating back to the mid to late 19th century. While the NAL has an extensive history, we did not have any knowledge on how or when this collection came into being. We asked Special Collections staff about the history of this collection and they had very little knowledge of its existence due to the collection predating them.

However, they sent us a file documenting most of the contents within the collection and where we could locate them. We began by looking specifically for materials within the collection that we believed related to the materials we found in McCarthy's files. We located several boxes in the collection relating to materials we found in the personal work files pertaining to: the different information centers McCarthy worked with, NAL assessment reports, NAL information packets, programs, objective statements, NAL information notes, and etc. McCarthy had possession of these similar items because she actively worked with the projects, and NAL distributed those contents to library employees. After our search, we received further instructions from the digitization and access branch chief to conduct a literary review and examine the appraisal methods

found in other federal institutions. We discuss this process in greater detail later in this paper. From this step, we constructed a Collection Development Policy, which we utilized as we continued to assess McCarthy's boxes of materials.

Special Collections staff, the Collection Development Librarian, and management within the Data Production Division (DPD) were concerned with appraising employees' personal work files. Their concerns stemmed from the vast amount of material they had to examine while working under financial constraints, having limited staff, and dealing with the demands of donors for other collections. They also questioned the value of personal work files and whether those files should be kept as historical records. In an article entitled "Early Records of the U. S. Department of Agriculture" Pinkett discusses the use of personal records in the early history of the NAL to preserve its history (1962). He specifically mentions the retention of papers of NAL administrators and scientists. While Pinkett (1962) refers to the former days of the library, it is no less important to maintain historical records today. If prior staff viewed personal files as essential historical sources of information then, why not now? The administrators and scientists play a vital role in the library's discoveries and community engagement. Many other personal files belonging to NAL employees have been stored outside of the institution in various locations. This transaction demonstrates the value of these records and raises the question, why does the institution not appraise the contents before sending them out of the library?

The materials found within the personal work files of Susan McCarthy contained documentation representing the history of the NAL, especially in regard to the Knowledge Services Division (KSD) within the NAL. Many of the programs and projects present in McCarthy's files pertain to her past work with KSD and her other activities involved in and with the other information centers, including the different information centers McCarthy worked on and helped create. The library sponsored these information centers, and each center had separate records. While these information centers had roots in the library, only an employee who worked with those centers may have the files necessary to document their history. The records from these information centers have vital information that Special Collections should retain for the NAL History Collection because those records document one of the ways in which the library engaged in community outreach and provided patrons agricultural information. McCarthy's personal work files also contained information pertaining to other programs and publications that were products of the centers. We also found items that detailed the creation of different databases and how the creators developed them. Databases are key tools used in research, and they display at different times the various information needs of researchers. Being able to know when developers built a database

allows us to understand contextual information about the agricultural community at that time. These databases are just a few examples of important materials that we located in McCarthy's files.

In addition, we found materials relating directly to the NAL such as annual reports, assessment reports, publications and copyright permissions for exhibitions and publications. After examining the contents, we observed that McCarthy's personal work files contained not only materials directly related to her experience at the institution but also materials associated directly with the institution. For example, we found Blue Ribbon Panel meeting files, files pertaining to the information centers, and research material pertaining to George Darrow, a horticulturist and strawberry breeder. For the benefit of the staff, the NAL distributes materials published by or about the library to their employees so they can be aware of the other branches in the library.

Lastly, we appraised Susan McCarthy's personal work files at the item level mainly due to the fact that we attempted to answer the question: can personal work file materials supplement historical collections? While our appraisal of Susan McCarthy's personal work files has been initially conducted at the item level to answer this question and discern which documents need to be retained, we have not rearranged her files. The documents from each box are marked and the materials that will be retained from that box have been kept together in order to maintain the provenance of the collection. Future appraisers of personal work files may be able to conduct a more general overview of these files, if the value in retaining them has already been established. Conducting minimal processing with personal files would allow appraisers to quickly ascertain the different subject areas covered and which subjects are considered of interest enough to preserve.

Collection Development Policy

Once we completed our initial appraisal steps, as previously mentioned, the Digitization and Access Branch Chief, Scott Hanscom, recommended we conduct a literature review of other federal institutions and their guidelines for their own collections. After researching, we were able to find three other institutional guidelines we could analyze: the National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian, and the National Library of Medicine. We examined the contents of the current NAL History Collection located in Special Collections at the USDA National Agricultural Library as well. Each of these institutions had very similar collection development policies for their collections. They collected similar forms of documentation that describes their institution's past such as annual reports, transcripts, architectural designs, photographs, and audio and video content.

The National Gallery of Art had a short list entailing the contents of what they had in their archives and what art records they had available. The Smithsonian had a very lengthy and descriptive guide entitled “Smithsonian Institution Archives Appraisal Methodology”, which detailed what was and was not considered a record (the particular pages used were 12-16). The National Library of Medicine’s *Scope and Coverage Manual* was also highly detailed and descriptive. Both institutions’ manuals included specific guidelines for determining what does and doesn’t constitute a record (the pages examined were 9-20). To compare and contrast between these institutions, we created a comparison table that looked at the different aspects included in each of the guidelines (see Appendix B, 1A). Some of the criteria matched more than one institution such as: “the institution retains annual reports containing relevant statistical data on institutional services”, “The institution collects research proposals, reports, or dissertations composed by institutional employees’ in regard to a mission statement or service provided for the institution”.

However, these three institutions’ collecting policies differed in the contents they attempted to acquire. For instance, each institution represents a different sector of American society: art, medicine, zoology, air and space, and different cultures in the U.S. Therefore, each institution appraises donations pertaining to different contents and research interests. The National Gallery of Art contains materials that relate to the museum’s past and the history and culture of the United States (What’s in the Archives). For example, they collect papers from art historians, World War II files of monuments and fine art, scrapbooks, artist postcards, and etc. On the other hand, the Smithsonian, being made up of 21 libraries, has a much broader mission, which results in various different areas they covered within their collections (About Us). Specifically, one of their libraries may collect materials pertaining to zoology and another collects memorabilia on African artwork. The National Library of Medicine is the world’s largest biomedical library and is concerned mainly with items pertaining to the history of medicine (About the National Library of Medicine). They collect annual hospital reports, catalogs of medical equipment, hospital journals containing original research, and etc. The different contents in these policies results from the different purposes of each of these institutions.

While none of these institutions directly collect employee personal work files, they do include other works from the employees in their collections. The National Gallery of Art collects oral histories to “record the recollections and insights of participants and observers of the Gallery’s past” (What’s in the Archives). Some of the staff within the museum, the National Gallery of Art, have contributed to Oral Histories. In this way the

National Gallery of Art retains the insights provided by past employees and their role in the gallery. The Smithsonian has a detailed section in their *Smithsonian Institution Archives Appraisal Methodology* that discusses the retaining of personal papers and how useful they are. In a section entitled “Who Should Save?”, they list scientists, administrators, instructors and research collaborators (Smithsonian). They also stated that the final product of research can never be considered the whole story, so it should be a requirement that institutions preserve personal papers. The National Library of Medicine collects publications discussing its history and will eventually collect articles written by staff (Stain, 1977). Each of these libraries collects information pertaining to employees, albeit to different extents.

Once we located these guidelines, we compiled our research into a spreadsheet and organized the information by each institution (see Appendix B, 1B). Then, we searched and checked for similarities between the criterias of each institution. The NAL general collection development policy also gave us ideas as to what other aspects we might include in our policy such as: material formats, research guidelines, and research value (Collection Development Policy). Upon completing these tasks, we examined each institution and its guidelines separately to distinguish how their standards could be applied to the NAL History Collection.

After conducting research, we created a Collection Development Policy for the NAL History Collection (see Appendix B, 1C). While we wrote these standards to help us appraise the personal files we examined, we also hoped these standards would be able to serve the needs of the NAL employees who wish to contribute their work to the NAL History Collection. Then, the employees would be able to utilize these standards to contribute materials that pertain to this collection throughout their career. We also decided that this policy should be available to potential donors outside of the library. This guideline will be a useful tool for future appraisers of the collection because it will allow them to understand what materials exist within the collection and the resources that the appraisers analyzed to determine this policy. They will be able to collect and appraise items much more quickly because this policy exists.

Discussion

Based on our findings, we believe institutions should provide resources adequately for their staff to maintain and preserve historical collections, and staff should appraise employees’ personal work files donated to institutions. However, while we believe personal records contain items that would be of value to historical collections, we also

agree that every file should not be retained because not all files have useful and relevant information. We do not seek to collect personal work files documenting the history of the employee, but rather files pertaining to the history of the library. Any documentation employees possess or create detailing a part of the library's past should be retained. We initially assumed that if institutions had retained some personal work files, those files could only be from senior or higher-level employees.

Personnel records themselves were historically valued based on an employee's position in the hierarchy of the agency (Alldredge, 1955). For example, a personnel record of a federal employee used to be retained based on the employee's length of service in an agency. The importance of the personnel records was determined "not in his capacity as a federal employee but rather because of his position in the hierarchy of the agency or because of his personal fame or notoriety" (Alldredge, 1955). This idea of personnel records being valuable in a workplace hierarchy was reflected in the NARA Capstone program in 2015. We believed that if institutions kept personnel records only for higher placed officials it would therefore be the case with personal work files as well. However, after discussing this matter with Special Collections, they informed us that essential historical items have been found in the files of all employees. In fact, there are individuals in the library who keep items belonging to certain units in the building, and on some occasions, those individuals pass down items from person to person, which eventually is donated to Special Collections. Therefore, all NAL employees' personal work files potentially contain records of value, and Special Collections should consider assessing those files, regardless of their place within the organizational hierarchy.

In order to accurately preserve the history of the NAL, the institution should consider rapidly appraising and retaining employees' personal work files. Richard J. Cox, a scholar in the field of library and information science, emphasizes how valuable records created by library institutions and associations are for understanding the "normal transactions of their business" (Cox, p.570, 1991). Cox identifies these records as "the minutes of a library board of trustees, directors' fields, correspondence, collection records, and other similar records" (Cox, p.570, 1991). Cox argues that institutions need to take more responsibility in "identifying, preserving, and maintaining" archival records until they receive a significant increase in resources (Cox, p.571, 1991). In order to maintain the history of the NAL, they need to reconsider how they document these enduring records of value with limited staff.

By rapidly preserving the NAL History Collection, the general public, policy makers, and organizations can retrieve information about how previous events occurred. Therefore, the NAL needs to continue maintaining and preserving their history because they

provide transparency of who created, used, or lived within the context of the records (Archibald, 1993). Through maintaining historical collections, information professionals at institutions play a role in bridging an alliance of trust between institutions and communities based on shared and accurate information (Archibald, 1993). By developing these collections, information professionals allow researchers to draw connections between the past and present, which allows them to see growth and impact (Archibald, 1993). Special Collection staff show how the library has played an influential role in changing the world of agriculture, the advances they made, and the achievements through the NAL History Collection.

Those staff members organize the materials in this collection to show all the contributions the NAL made to society and the importance of maintaining the library itself. As a society, we value history, and we preserve and maintain it to ensure future generations will be able to learn from the past and utilize that knowledge. Carpenter and August claim that libraries embody history, stating:

The library is an artifact of our historical landscape that offers unique perspectives on important themes in the development of American culture: the history of leisure and work; the emergence of the professions; the formation of gender, class, and racial identities; the evolution of civic architecture; and the organization of knowledge and intellectual property. (2003)

Historical collections are valuable to libraries because without an institution's history, none of this information can be learned. Knowing a library's history provides evidence to support the continued maintenance of it.

Throughout this paper, we have also established the importance of historical collections and the use of personal files to supplement them. We find the appraisal process to be more successful when completed by individuals outside of the institution (MacBride, 1977, p.1). The main reason this explanation holds true for this particular institution is that the outsider can determine the value of bequests and donations without advocacy or adverse interest (MacBride, 1977, pp. 1-2). These outsiders would benefit from having a point of contact who is familiar with the library and its history and could assist them in certain aspects of appraisal. This opportunity would enable them to better distinguish between what materials the institutions would consider as truly essential to the NAL History Collection, and which ones they did not.

In 1970, the Associates of the National Agricultural Library (NAL) was founded and this organization consisted of outsiders who worked with the NAL. The Associates of the NAL promoted "the development of the library by encouraging donations of gifts and materials and providing direct financial assistance for the purchase of unique items".

The associates also promoted the NAL by aiding the library with public relations, informing the community about library services and challenges, and presenting the information needs of the community to the library (USDA NAL). In the 1990s, the Associates of the NAL disbanded and no longer provided these services.

When cultural institutions consult with outsiders, they should be more cautious of outsiders' intentions and play a more active role in setting the frameworks of the agreements. In "the Future of Access to Public Records", Adam Kriesburg cautions public institutions on how they collaborate with outsiders to process their records. With the acceleration of privatization and public-private partnerships and the advent of digitization due to lack of adequate funding for institutions, archivists feared access to their records became too commercialized and commodified, which ultimately led to the disruption of the *fonds*, the original order of the records. For example, private sector companies, mostly in the genealogical industry like Familysearch.org and Ancestry.com, prioritize digitizing birth, marriage, death, census, military, and other records, which they ultimately end up separating the records from their original order. When users search online for those records, they generally develop the misconception that they received those records from private entities, not archives. This viewpoint of alienating records from public archives essentially will harm users' perceptions, and the institution's ability to maintain transparency and accountability in the government (Kriesberg, 2017, pp. 22-23).

In sum, Kriesberg suggests archives should instead collaborate more with users (i.e. genealogists) who offer the benefits of "volunteer work and word of mouth outreach" (Kriesberg, 2017, p. 8). While Kriesberg believes cultural institutions should only negotiate with corporations when confident, stress the value of their records, and point to language that will honor their missions (Kriesberg, 2017, p. 9). In the case of the NAL History Collection, Special Collections staff would best serve their interests and the needs of the institution by hiring students and volunteers to perform the appraising process.

In addition, a collaboration of students and volunteers utilizing rapid appraisal methods could be useful in data rescue projects. Teams of selected individuals involved in data rescue often require understanding of the data being presented to them before they can begin their work. This stage could be achieved by interviewing scientists, researchers, and experts who formulated and crafted the datasets. Interviewing past or present users of the data, the creator, if available, would give the researchers context as to what materials they received, how one uses it, and the most important aspects to retain. This step may not be rapid as it can be difficult to locate information pertaining to users of

specific material. If this happens to be the case, it would be best to locate experts in the field of the material the data pertains to. These individuals will be able to understand the data and offer information concerning what is being represented. Once these individuals obtain this information, they can then begin to identify the research needs and decide which processes they want to utilize to ensure sustainability and reuse of the data. The format the data exists in will be the determining factor in the length of time required in this step. Data that one stores in digitally old, unused file formats may prove challenging to users when trying to convert into existing formats. Throughout this process, members of the team would be able to offer their expertise in various areas and debate ideas that arise throughout the process.

Institutional Functional Analysis could also serve as an alternative option available for appraisal methodology when special collections staff or outsiders appraise materials donated for an institution's historical collection. This analysis centers on the idea of "identifying and evaluating the function that created a record, rather than the record itself" (Robyns & Woolman, 2011). When examining materials that document the history of an institution, one should consider the context of the record and why an information professional generated it. While some records may be of obvious value to appraisers, others may seem obscure. For example, a correspondence may not appear as a record of enduring value but it may actually document an event that the institution created. For the initial step in this analysis, appraisers must determine the role and goals of the institution. Institutional functional analysis also requires archivists to investigate the different branches within these institutions, determine the role they play in achieving the mission, and then collect those records (Robyns & Woolman, 2011). Retaining these materials means that the collection will show the growth and change of each branch over time, and how the collection met the mission of the institution. The process of this methodology also serves as a way to collect historical data. One of the most critical aspects of Institutional functional analysis is creating administrative histories (Robyns & Woolman, 2011). This process would be considered the first step in a documentation plan. Following this step, the archivist would need to set up meetings with liaisons from each division or office to collect data on the functions and make any revision to the administrative histories; decide which functions they consider as most important in completing the office mission; and, to assess the scope of the archives' documentation for each function (Robyns & Woolman, 2011).

Overall, we recommend institutions should consider utilizing systemic rapid appraisal methods to address the information needs of the researchers by supplying as much information as possible. In order to begin the first steps, these researchers should know who to contact concerning the materials and the importance of it to the institution. Any

information the institution can supply to these researchers pertaining to the use, maintenance and origin would be useful to researchers throughout this process. Ideally, the institution should appoint each team an expert to consult when questions arise concerning the materials.

Future Research

Future studies may want to examine what should be done with the remnants of personal work files that are not considered federal records and do not serve the purpose of any collection. When employees leave, they often take a vast amount of knowledge with them that is crucial to the continuation of the institution. Could these materials possibly be a way of retaining that knowledge? New employees' may benefit from having access to their materials so they can gain an understanding of the job, resources available and past projects. New employees' face many challenges, among them "gathering knowledge relevant to their jobs" (Argarwal & Islam, 2015). Preserving this knowledge in institutions or libraries with high turnover rates would be worth discussing in the future. Knowledge retention should be a constant part of institutional policy in order to ensure the continued and uninterrupted flow of work (Argarwal & Islam, 2015). Could these files be a part of Knowledge Retention practices? When appraising personal files for a collection, such as the "NAL History Collection", Special Collections will not retain many records. Should staff consider keeping these documents long enough for the new employee to examine them before disposing of them? This could be a way to aid in the retention of institutional knowledge and provide important information to the new employees.

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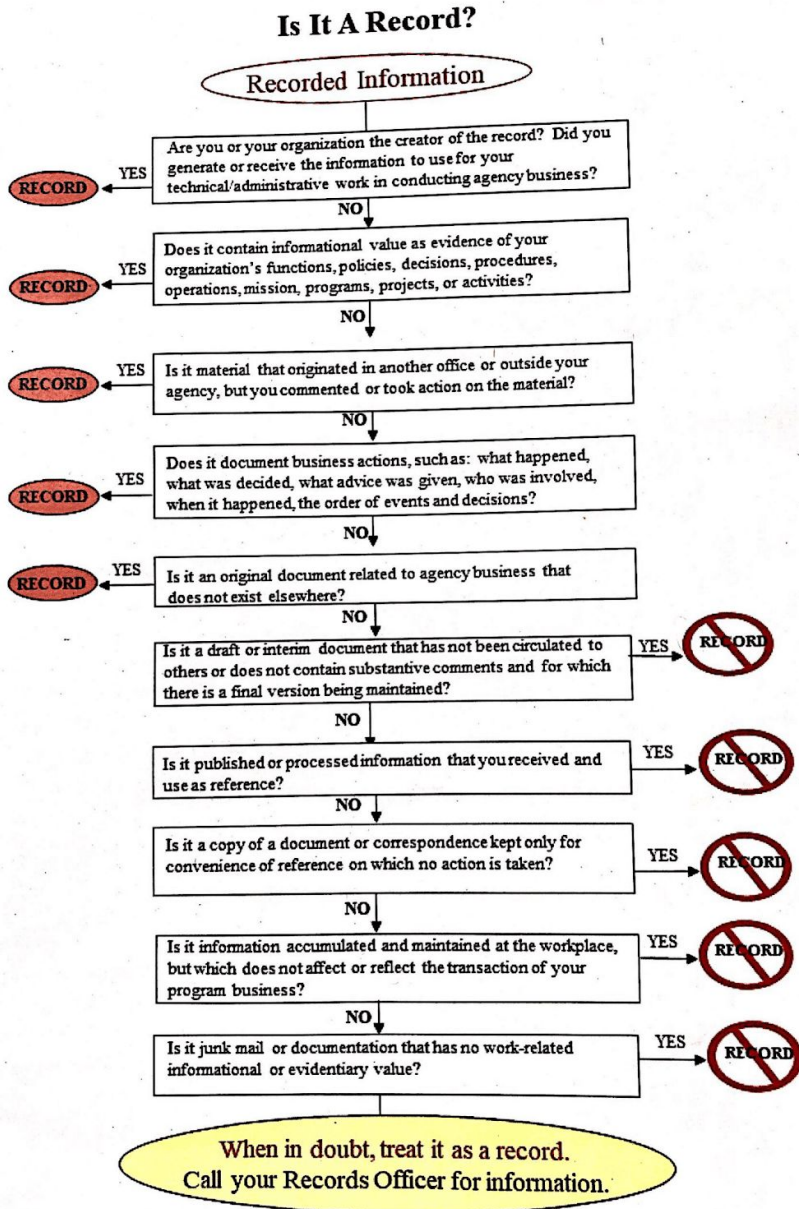
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Appendix A

This appendix contains materials that aided us in determining the federal from the non-federal records.

1A. This is one of the documents Special Collections provided us to assist us in determining if an item was a federal or non-federal record.



1B. This is a document provided from Special Collections that was a part of a training presentation for Special Collections staff. It was another tool to help us discern if an item was a federal record or not.

Recognizing Federal Records

When in doubt, ask yourself the following questions:

- Did I generate or receive the information while conducting agency business?
- Does the item document my agency's activities or business transactions?
- Is the item a business-related document that does not exist elsewhere?
- Even if copies exist elsewhere, did my agency originally create the item?

If you answered "yes" to any one of these questions the document is probably a Federal Record.

Records vs. Non-Records

What is a Record?

- Created in the course of business correspondence, agreements, studies
- Received for action
FOIA requests, controlled correspondence
- Documents ARS activities and actions
calendars, meeting minutes, project reports
- Mandated by statutes or regulations
administrative records, dockets
- Supports financial obligations or legal claims
grants, contracts, litigation case files
- Communicates ARS requirements
guidance documents, P&P
- Can be in any format
paper, electronic including e-mail, photos, videos, maps, sound recordings, posters, slides

What is not a Record?

- Personal papers not related to ARS business
soccer schedule, PTA roster
- Reference materials
vendor catalogs, phone books, technical journals
- Convenience copies
duplicate copies of correspondence, directives or ARS publications
- Draft documents*
drafts with no substantive revisions/comments
- Working papers*
rough notes, calculations

*Unless needed to support the decision trail or required in the records schedule

Email/ Calendars

- Email is a record when it documents the ARS mission or provides evidence of an ARS business transaction.
- Email records including all documentation should be printed out and maintained in the same manner as any other paper correspondence. The documentation includes transmission data, sender, receiver, date, and time of the email.
- Calendar items used in transacting ARS business qualify as federal records and must be kept in an organized recordkeeping system. This also includes daily diaries, planners, appointment books, and journals.
- Calendars should also be printed and maintained.

Need More Information on ARS Records Management?

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USDA/OCC Web Site
<http://www.ars.usda.gov/records/index.html>

ARS Records Management web site
<http://www.ars.usda.gov/records/index.html>

Scanned with CamScanner

Appendix B

This appendix contains materials relevant to the Collection Development Policy.

1A. Institutional Criteria for Historical Collections

This spreadsheet compares the different criteria met by the guidelines each institution we reviewed uses. While we examined the guidelines we had a set of questions, and we wanted to see if the guidelines for the institution met the criteria in the questions or not.

Requirements	An Institution's Criteria for Historical Collection				
	<i>The National Agricultural Library</i>	<i>The National Library of Medicine</i>	<i>The Smithsonian</i>	<i>National Gallery of Art</i>	
Does the institution only collect and processes artifacts, manuscripts, published materials, correspondences, electronic formats, photographs, and etc. if the record has a clear and concise date (day, month, or year)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Does the institution have a policy in place for identifying what constitutes a document as a federal record to be collected by the National Archives (NARA)?					
Does the institution have a policy for how to document emails containing mission statements or provides evidence of transactional information?					
Only accepts the final versions of a record	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Does the institution document budgetary and annual financial reports?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Does the institution has a policy for collecting calendars documenting transactional and relevant information including planners, appointment books, and journals?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Retains annual reports containing relevant statistical data on institutional services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Appraises correspondences between donors & sponsors in regards to records submitted to the institution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Retains information pertaining to the functions of a branch, service, or department within the institution			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Does the institution include photos of events, administrative meetings, and noteworthy individuals associated with the institution?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Does the institution collect research proposals, reports, or dissertations composed by institutional employee in regard to a mission statement or service provided the institution?	☑	☑		☑	
Does the institution provide a detailed explanation on the basis of the requirements for the institution to collect materials that need digitization and or require special storage or conservation treatment?	☑				
Does the institution provide a list of criteria for the format of the materials the institution will accept from the donor?	☑				

1B. Institution Archival Records Guidelines

This spreadsheet contains the actual materials that were found in each of the guidelines. It contains what these institutions found to be considered records or non-records. While the 3 institutional guidelines are in here, the last section is also from the current historical collection of NAL. We pulled specific things from the collection that we had seen in the employees files, so that we could compare these to the items found in the guidelines. The spreadsheet is found in a Jupyter Notebook in which this paper also resides on GitHub.

Library	Arhival Records	Non Archival Records
National Gallery of Art https://www.nga.gov/research	Press Releases Calendar of Events Annual Reports NGA Publications Design Drawings for NGA building Photos of gallery events, architecture and personalities Records of exhibitions Records concerning museum activities during World War II and the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas materials from other sources that relate closely to the mission, programs, and interests of the museum	
Smithsonian https://siarchives.si.edu/site	Documentation regarding Smithsonian policy development and creation Final budget proposals and submissions Budget planning, advocacy and final appropriations Records of endowment earnings Samples of Standard Forms Annual Financial Reports Documentation of advertisement and recruitment of research staff Selection committee minutes and reports Announcements of selections Trust Fund personnel records Smithsonian-produced manuals (final products), and lists of training materials Unit Directors' policy, planning and management files, including employee training initiatives, and the implementation of applicable laws and guidelines regarding human resource activities Design and construction files for major construction and renovation projects Annual security incident reports Horticultural design and development files Records of interaction with applicable municipal and federal agencies Documentation of planning and decision-making concerning construction and renovation, including funding and architectural competitions Documentation regarding Smithsonian policy, planning and development for public programs, national and international museum community outreach (e.g., National Museum Act), audience development and fund-raising Publications, including significant newsletters, magazines and reports Selected websites chosen according to importance and uniqueness Smithsonian-wide and unit-level press information, including press releases, press kits and packages, public service announcements Press coverage, including news and broadcast clips Summaries of visitor services activities Visitor statistical reports Summaries of planning, execution and success of membership campaigns, including event files for significant events, ephemera, correspondence, and meeting minutes Summaries of planning, execution and success of fund-raising campaigns, including event files for significant events, ephemera, correspondence, and meeting minutes Summaries of demographic analyses and membership plans Documentation regarding significant Smithsonian-wide and unit-level events and programs, including their planning, production and public and participant responses Documentation regarding significant campus-wide groups and organizations, including charters, annual reports; Directors' and Committee Chairs' records (including correspondence, meeting minutes, reports, etc.), final drafts of papers or speeches (unpublished), meeting minutes, photographs of significant events and people, program files (including correspondence, memoranda, email, interim and final reports pertaining to the planning, development, and execution of programs), organization newsletters (2 copies each), summary financial reports (including audit reports, and annual reports), summary membership data and annual member publications Documentation regarding Smithsonian policy, planning and development for significant information technology systems, programs and special projects Policy and guidelines for archival and records management Documentation of management and use of Smithsonian records Documentation of significant information resource programs and services for Smithsonian staff Policy and guidelines for use of services by Smithsonian staff Summary reports of Smithsonian information service and use Records documenting overall SI legal business and activities (central reading files of OGC) Litigation case files of significance (including court records) which document legal precedence, SI procedures and policies, SI legal obligations and mandates, or the legal status of the Smithsonian Records of gifts, bequests, deeds, wills and estates Legal records concerning special projects, programs, policies or other initiatives	Accounting working files (e.g., bank statements, canceled checks, and cuff files) Chronological Administrative Files (if significant information is documented elsewhere) Equal Employment Opportunity case files Time and Attendance Files Non-Smithsonian manuals Manual production files (research and information files, drafts) Facility Services Requests Intern and participant files, including applications and agreements Membership renewal forms Pledges Gift and Prospect Listings Reference requests and responses Rights and reproduction files Maintenance files for computer systems

	Legal records concerning the discontinuance of programs, bureaus, museums, or other initiatives	
	Records of standards of conduct and conflicts of interest	
	Records regarding legislation and legislative history of concern to SI (Smithsonian Institute)	
	Legal records regarding discrimination in hiring and employment	
	Legal opinions, advice and assistance	
	Records concerning SI copyrights, patents, trademarks and licenses	
	Records which document the conduct of business in a bureau or office.	
	Special project records, where applicable.	
	Audits	
National Library of Medicine	Academic Dissertations (see link for specifics)	Bibliographies
https://collections.nlm.nih.gov	Bulletins of alumni associations of centers of biomedical education	Membership Directories
	Annual Reports	Directories of Organizations
	Materials relating to Architecture of NLM	Fact Sheets
	Congresses/Conferences Final Programs with ABSTRACTS	Personal Narratives (unless they comprehensively describe health conditions in historically significant time)
	US Congressional committee reports	Photographic collections
	US public laws relating to health, health delivery	Popular Works
	Administrative manuals that outline organizational structure and policies of major health related institutions	Press Releases
	Pamphlets that outline the standards or position of health-related institutions (see link for more specifics)	Promotional Materials
	Progress Reports (annual administrative or research reports)	Radio/Television Scripts
	Reprint Materials will be collected if NLM doesn't have them	
	NLM publications	
	Reprints of journal articles and copies of other publications written by NLM staff	
	Reprints of journal articles about NLM written by non staff	
	Publications of which NLM is the subject or a main subject	
	Proposed and Final legislation pertaining to NLM and its programs	
	Lectures/Speeches in core subjects	
	Newsletters (see link for specifics)	
	Unpublished Materials (manuscripts of present or potential historical interest)	
History of NAL Collection	Biodiversity symposium (info and research from the national institute for the environment's biodiversity symposium	
*materials that exist in NAL	Symposium planning (symposium committee agenda, planning notes)	
	Speakers (speaker biographies, outline of remarks)	
	Announcements (flyers advertising symposium)	
	Symposium timeline (timeline of planning events for the symposium)	
	Checklists (to do and checklists for symposium)	
	NAL Information packet (info folder on NAL and ARS for April 12th opening events)	
	Animal Welfare (reports from AWIC, resources/biographies on handling of food for animals and ethical treatment)	
	Plant Genome Program (Genome maps and research on the impact of pathogens compiled by Kalinski, Program aids, outlines of the research project)	
	Pamphlets and Brochures (info on various USDA programs and info centers)	
	Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (correspondence and reports for SARE program)	
	NAL History Coll. 113 Series II Diglot open house 1/03 (photos from diglot open house and the DCRC move)	
	NAL Assessment (Assessment of the NAL Final Report to Secretary)	
	Charles Valentine Riley exhibit dedication (photos of picture of Riley's wife, granddaughter and Al Fusonie)	
	This week at NAL (Weekly schedules)	
	Programs (Programs and financial plans)	
	Report of the Library	
	NAL (Overview of the library and its functions)	
	Objective statements (Internal NAL objective statements for various projects-includes goals and milestones)	
	Data for the Blue-Ribbon Panel (data compiled for the panel including memorandum and articles)	
	End of Year update (report of accomplishments for the fiscal year)	
	National Agricultural Library Information Notes (Information on NAL video laser disks, contact information, and information center pamphlets)	
	Technology applications at the National Agricultural Library (* Forest Service Photo/Video laser disk fact sheet * Sample costs * Ground rules for demos * Agricola on CD-ROM fact sheet)	
	USDA Organization (Binder containing staff directories and organization charts for all field libraries and the USDA)	
	Miscellaneous (Information on InterCat - searchable internet catalog; circulation statistics; ARS admin directory; emergency procedure information; AGRICOLA information sheet)	
	Pamphlets and Brochures (Information on various USDA programs and information centers)	

1C. Collection Development Policy

This is a paper that was written for the use of the Special Collections staff within the National Agricultural Library as well as employees and potential donors. This policy details the types of items that would be accepted to the “NAL Historical Collection” and the requirements that must be met.

NAL History Collection (MS 113)

Collection Development Policy

July 2020

Introduction:

It is the responsibility of the Special Collections staff in USDA’s National Agricultural Library (NAL) to work with current NAL staff, retirees, or external donors to ensure the selection of appropriate materials for addition to the NAL History Collection (MS 113). This document serves as a guide for Special Collections staff and donors in assessing potential additions to MS 113. Because employees participate in activities and events in the library and serve as representatives of the institution, each person helps to shape the library’s history and may possess items to contribute to the collection. Furthermore, former employees and retirees, as well as their relatives, may be in touch with NAL staff to donate materials or may serve as sources from which to request items to fill gaps in the existing collection.

Contact Information:

Donors are required to contact Special Collections via email or telephone and fill out a survey regarding material type, quantity, date range, and condition. Special Collections staff (or their designated representatives) will evaluate the materials submitted by donors. Once this is complete, a staff member contacts the donor regarding whether the materials met the criteria for acceptance into the collection.

- Email: NALSpecialCollections@usda.gov
- Telephone: 301-504-5876
- Website: [Http://specialcollections.nal.usda.gov](http://specialcollections.nal.usda.gov)

Materials Collected:

- NAL publications
 - NAL Directors Roundup
 - NAL newsletters
 - Assessment reports (i.e. Blue Ribbon Panel)
 - Reports for NAL as a whole and division reports, including those of information centers and library services (All Hands meeting reports as appropriate for documenting program and budget)
 - Organizational charts
 - Press releases
 - Calendar of institutional events (as posted electronically); event programs
 - Pamphlets pertaining to information or resources affiliated with the NAL

- Documentation regarding NAL policy planning and development of public programs and information technology systems (includes research reports of significance to programs of NAL)
- On-going (well-established, long-standing, older than 5 years) committee minutes integral to mission, programs, and interests of the library
- Photographs of staff and significant events at NAL (captions preferred as separate document and include names of people, guests, and their title/role at the library)
- Digital video or recording of lecture created by NAL or staff partnered, including adequate description of the contents
- Bibliography of staff publications; publication itself if award-winning or represents a significant accomplishment of NAL staff
- Original building and landscaping plans

Evaluation Criteria:

Research Value:

- Do the materials document the activities of people, innovations, or programs significant to the history of NAL?
- Do the materials pertain to the development of NAL policies or programs?
- Do the materials provide evidence of changes recommended to the NAL?
- Do the materials provide information concerning NAL's role in the history of agriculture?
- Is the material original, rather than reprints or copies?

Materials considered non-records:

- Personal emails and/or notes
- Employee/intern personnel-related files, including applications and agreements
- Manuscript drafts of published articles, papers, and research results (on a case-by-case basis)
- Printouts of online materials used as references (articles, scans of books)
- Routine correspondence
- Conference programs unrelated to NAL (meaning NAL did not hold or sponsor them)
- Reprints, unsigned
- Presentations (unless documents significant NAL activity not held in report form)

Materials belonging in another collection in Special Collections, General Collection, or other NAL office:

- Administration Office keeps financial and budget-related materials (in conjunction with ARS records manager based on records retention schedule)
- Copyright Approvals for digitization of materials go to Digitization Unit
- Records of exhibits at NAL go in Special Collections Administrative Files
- Working copies of facility design and construction files pertaining to NAL's Abraham Lincoln building go to Facility Engineer (NAL/ARS Administration Office and/or subset of files for use in Collection)
- Gifts to staff/library belong in the NAL Office of the Director Gifts Collection in Special Collections
- Programs for which the library has made agreements to house materials such as Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (correspondence and reports for SARE program) belonging in General Collection]