The purpose of this document is to acquaint library faculty and staff with the services, polices and procedures of the Special Collections Department. It is available to any library patron upon request.

This document is updated annually by the Coordinator of Information Literacy under the supervision of the Library Dean.

I. Mission Statement
The Savannah State University Special Collections has been established to appraise, collect, organize, describe, preserve, and make available University records of permanent institutional and historical value. The Special Collections will further encourage the dissemination of knowledge pertaining to the origins of programs and goals of the University by providing facilities for the retention, preservation, servicing, and research of Savannah State University records. In addition, the Special Collections will serve as a research source for the study of the University’s history by members of the University community and the scholarly community at large.

II. Responsibilities of the Special Collections Staff
- Staff must authenticate information through the analysis of its content obtained during the process of accession.
- Staff will evaluate documents on the basis of anticipated research use.
- Staff must arrange information according to source and original order to sustain the integrity of the collection.
- Staff will store all documents in a safe environment and be prepared to convert documents to electronic format that will allow documents to become more accessible.

III. Special Collections Definitions
Within the Savannah State University Special Collections, basic archival terminology will be used. Special Collections staff will become accustomed to the terms and definitions commonly used within professional literature. Therefore a guide to terminology and definitions is included, which was published by SAA in 2005 as one of seven volumes in the Archival Fundamentals Series II.

A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology

IV. Collection Development
The purpose of the Savannah State University Special Collections as part of the Asa H. Gordon Library, is to identify, collect, and preserve materials of informational and/or historical value that document the development of the university, and to make such materials available to the public.
*Scope of Acquisitions*

The Special Collections shall collect and maintain non-current records of permanent administrative, fiscal, evidentiary, informational, legal, and historical value to Savannah State University. In addition, the Special Collections shall collect and maintain research, personal, and published papers of private persons associated with the University, including retired, resigned or deceased academic and administrative staff, students, and alumni.

*Forms of Material Collected*

The "term" material is here defined as any kind of recorded information, regardless of physical form or characteristics. The Special Collections accepts material in all of the common formats including, but not limited to documents, photographs, audio-visual material, 3-D artifacts, and published and non-published manuscripts.

*Modes of Acquisition*

Material shall be acquired by the Special Collections by means of transfer, gifts, deposit/loan, or purchase. All acquisitions must be properly documented.

(a) **Transfers**

Material may be acquired through the regular transfer of records from University offices. The transfer of records shall be governed by the Records Retention Policy set forth by the University system of Georgia. Required documentation must be received before any transfers are received by the Special Collections.

(b) **Donation/Gifts**

Material may be acquired as an outright gift to the University from individuals and organizations. Required documentation must be received before any gifts are received by the Special Collections.

[Donation/Gift Form](#)

(c) **Deposits/Loans**

Material may be accepted on a pre-determined, short-term basis when offered to or requested by the University for the purpose of exhibition or duplication. Required documentation must be received before any deposits or loans are received by the Special Collections.

(d) **Purchases**

Material may be acquired by outright purchase.

(e) **Disposal of Material**

The Special Collections reserves the right to dispose of any holdings that no longer fit the scope of its collection policy.

V. Collections

Special Collections at Asa H. Gordon Library collects and maintains non-current records of permanent administrative, fiscal, evidentiary, informational, legal, and historical value to Savannah State University.
The collection includes items of historically significance that pertain to Savannah State University, including:

- Photographs
- University Publications (Yearbooks, Newsletters, Promotional Flyers, Event Programs)
- Records of Student Organizations (meeting minutes, founding documents, reports)
- Realia (Sports Memorabilia, Trophies, Spiritwear)
- Alumni Records and Publications
- Faculty Records and Publications
- Scrapbooks

VI. Collection Processes

- **Define Collection and Distinguish Series**
  To be able to search and access the archival collection in any meaningful fashion, the collection must first be identified. A collection is defined as a group of related materials acquired for the purpose of historical research. It may be materials collected by or about a person, or an event. All materials located within the Savannah State University Special Collections will, in some fashion, pertain to the institution. Although the archive may contain materials from different donations, it all comes from the university as the source. Therefore, the archive is identified as having only one basic collection, materials from or about the university.

- **Inventory The Contents of The Collection**
  (a) To establish rough control over the contents of each box and to establish which collection(s) it belongs to, writing a container inventory is necessary, unless such a list arrived with the collection. This inventory is a rough and rapid description of the contents of each box.
  (b) If any of the content from the box seems to be missing from the inventory, please contact the Special Collections supervisor immediately.
  (c) If an inventory list does not arrive with the contents, an inventory list must be composed as soon as the material arrives. The following information needs to be notated on the inventory list:
    (i) Box number refers to the number on the box within each collection. The first box within each collection will begin with 1 and then proceed numerically.
    (ii) Collection Number - Each material type will be assigned a collection number. For example, all scrapbooks will have the same collection number all catalogs will have the same number and so on.
    (iii) Series is defined as the general categorization of materials. Common series titles may include literary works (research notes, manuscripts, memoirs, reports, and speeches), correspondence (professional or personal), and photographs.
    (iv) Contents and Description - In this section, staff will describe the contents within each folder or box. Write the year(s) that the material was created and/or the years the material covers. If additional descriptive information is needed, write a concise narrative of no more than two lines.
(d) All archival staff will be supplied with a standardized inventory list that should be completed for all materials entering the Special Collections (see supporting documentation).

- **Locate All The Contents of The Collection**
  Any written agreements, packing slips, or collection inventories that accompany the container must be filed in a storage area that has been designated for that purpose.

**VII. Accession of Collection Materials**

The Savannah State University Special Collections has adopted a standardized scheme for accessing the materials in its collections following fundamental archival principles.

- If the contents of records are tied with the life of the individual or the functions of the organization from which they originated, and cannot be fully understood apart from them, then those records must be contained as a whole. This is a clear and straightforward principle that in turn dictates the nature of the documentation that the archivist must assemble, and the manner in which it is presented to the user. Archival staff must ask themselves the following questions when organizing the collection. Who was the person who created or assembled these things? What was the nature of the organization that created these documents? What was the governmental function or life activity that produced these materials?

- The organization and arrangement of records reveal much about the forces, activities, and functions that produced them. Where there is little or conflicting information about the individuals or institutions responsible, internal evidence may be the archivist’s best source of information about the documents. Preservation of original order is important, too, for validating their authenticity. Unfortunately, not all materials come into archival custody in a discernible, let alone pristine order. When a pre-existing internal organization is not apparent, or is actually counterproductive to the effective analysis and use of the collection, the archivist must construct a rational order that is sensitive to the nature and uses of the collection. However, materials must not be arbitrarily divided and reorganized on other principles such as geographical focus, subject matter, or time period (see supporting documentation).

- “Do No Harm” is a primary archival principle. Any processes should be reversible. Staff should avoid doing anything to historical materials that cannot be undone. Use pencil, not ink, when working with documents. Do not staple, fold, laminate, or apply ordinary tape to any archival material. It is inadvisable to store historically important materials in filing cabinets or in regular office folders, because the sharp edges of file drawers can tear pages, and the high acidity of normal folders discolors and embrittles documents. Archival preservation involves housing historical documents and photos in pH-neutral folders and boxes that are specially made for Special Collections. Paper clips and other commonly encountered metal fasteners are removed from important records, because the iron in these fasteners oxidizes and stains paper. Likewise, cellophane tape invariably leaves its mark on paper, and should be removed.

**VIII. Access to Collections**
Library staff provide access to special collections materials and research assistance in-person or by email, phone, or fax. Researchers may request in-person assistance during operational hours.

Researchers need to register with the department and provide a picture ID (SSU ID, driver's license, or passport). The registration form describes the special conditions under which Archives materials may be handled, used or copied.

Researcher Registration Form

IX. Use of Collections
In order to keep secure and preserve the materials collected in Special Collections, all researchers, including administrators, faculty, staff, students, and alumni are asked to observe the following rules:

- Materials in the SSU Special Collections do not circulate.
- All materials are used only within the Special Collections.
- All visitors must sign-in.
- All personal materials including purses, briefcases, book bags, and backpacks must be left at the service desk.
- Eating, drinking, and smoking are not permitted.
- Notes taken while using archival materials may be taken only in pencil. No pens, highlighters, etc. are permitted.
- Patrons may use only one box of materials at a time, and will be careful to maintain the order of the documents within a folder. If any of the contents of a box or folder appear to be out of order, please bring this to the attention of the staff.
- All photocopies and scans are made by the staff or with permission. Restrictions may apply to the photocopying of some materials.
- The staff reserves the right to examine research materials, personal notes, etc. at any time.

X. Reproduction of Collections Materials
To facilitate scholarly and official use of its collections, reproduction services are offered to researchers on a fee for service basis. In order to protect the materials from inadvertent damage, all reproduction services are performed by the Special Collections staff. Researchers may not use their own equipment. All requests for reproduction must be approved by a staff member. Requests may be denied if the item is too fragile, if it cannot be duplicated with available equipment, or if the size of the request will place an unreasonable strain on available staff resources. Special Collections reserves the right to set limits on the amount of copying it will undertake.

Permission to reproduce does not constitute permission to publish. The researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming to copyright law.

- Photocopy Requests
  Photocopy requests should be made directly to Archives staff. The turnaround time is a minimum of 24 hours. Exceptions may be granted for requests of 10 pages or less. Photocopy orders over 25 pages will incur additional wait times. Fees are posted to the Special Collections website.
Reproduction Request Form

- **Scanning Requests**
  Please allow 4 business days to complete orders of 10 scans or less. Orders with more than 10 scans may require additional time. The possibility of rush service is based on staff availability and number of scans requested. Permission to publish is still required. Fees are posted to the Special Collections website.

- **Publication Requests**
  Permission to examine material is not an authorization to publish it. A separate written application for permission to publish should be submitted to the Special Collections for approval by the Dean of Library Services.
  
  As regards for-profit use of archival materials, fees are determined on a case-by-case basis. Special Collections requires patrons who copy materials for publication to complete a permission to publish agreement and agree to use a standard citation for archival materials and to give a copy of the published work to the Special Collections.

Publication Request Form

Commercial Use Form

X. Forms

- [Researcher Registration Form](#)
- [Donation/Gift Form](#)
- [Publication Request Form](#)
- [Commercial Use Form](#)
- [Reproduction Request](#)