

OHIO GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

The Ohio Genealogical Society accepts member-donated manuscripts as part of its mission to acquire, preserve, and disseminate genealogical and historical information. A manuscript is defined as “any text in handwriting or typescript (including printed forms completed by hand or typewriter) which may or may not be part of a collection of such texts. Examples of manuscripts are letters, diaries, ledgers, minutes, speeches, marked or corrected galley or page proofs, manuscript books, and legal papers” [Society of American Archivists].

The Ohio Genealogical Society actively seeks manuscript materials from genealogists, fraternal organizations, trade organizations, schools, churches, chapter lineage societies, other lineage societies, funeral homes, township records, businesses, and family Bible records, etc. The addition of such unusual and non-published materials provides greater research opportunities for our members, provides a greater incentive to become a member, and places OGS in a truly competitive position with other libraries/archives and genealogical societies.

The Ohio Genealogical Society will strive to provide environmental controls for this category of materials. Special acid-free containers and folders are required for preservation. A system of access is in place for both security and preservation. Indexing and calendaring enables the researcher to know the nature of the materials and the possibility of locating specific individuals.

In keeping with the OGS Materials Selection Policy, the Ohio Genealogical Society seeks to build the best collection in the United States for researching Ohio genealogy, and to preserve and make accessible documents, manuscripts, and published works in any format that supports Ohio genealogical research. We therefore seek out and accept donations of manuscript collections in any format that have genealogical value and definite Ohio connections. We encourage monetary donations to assist with the processing and preservation of these collections. Collections with reasonable restrictions upon their use will be considered for acceptance. The primary focus of the OGS library collection will be on Ohio materials. Secondary consideration will be given those materials from states that border Ohio, and those which made up the original thirteen colonies. OGS assumes ownership of all donated materials.

OGS also reserves the following rights:

1. OGS will accept and select materials which are consistent with the aims of our organization.
2. OGS will deselect and discard materials which are inconsistent with the aims of our organization.
3. Materials donated to OGS will be placed in the proper collection and will be made available to OGS members and the public for examination.
4. OGS will not assume responsibility for restricting access to materials, except when such materials are deemed rare or fragile.

In processing manuscript donations to the Ohio Genealogical Society, our staff and volunteers look at three things:

1. Is this material genealogical important?
2. Is it arranged for ease of use by the patron?
3. Are we following archival practices?

During the rough sort, we pull out any published books, periodicals, pamphlets, or book-form manuscripts that might serve members best in the open access library area. We toss any non-genealogical or non-historical items. This might include book advertisements, blank charts, outdated computer software, etc. We remove any pins, paper clips, binders, plastic sleeves, and tape, if possible. Documents are unfolded to fit in a legal size acid-free folder. Photographs, negatives, newspaper clippings, etc., are photocopied. The copies are placed with the collection. The other items are removed and stored in separate files so their chemical disintegration does not damage neighboring documents.

In the final sort process, items are arranged by surname, correspondence date, geography, and record type if the donor did not have an original system of organization. A description of the collection is made and also a finding aid if warranted. Citings are then given in our online library catalog with copies provided to NUCMC, the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections.

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