

Billy Graham Center Archives

Guidelines for Donating Personal Papers

The BGC Archives collects, preserves, and makes available materials documenting the history of Protestant, nondenominational evangelism and missions efforts. The Archives collects not only the records of the organizations that coordinated these activities but also materials of evangelists, missionaries, translators, youth workers, administrative staff, medical aid workers, and many others who served in the areas of missions or evangelism.

The BGC Archives accepts a wide range of materials into the collections. An item relevant to the BGC Archives' collections does not have to be a letter signed by a famous figure or a diary entry detailing a news-making event. It can be a letter from the mission field to family members describing a typical day or an account of political turmoil in a country; it can be a prayer letter sent to supporters or a copy of a field report sent to the mission board.

A sampling of the types of materials the BGC Archives collects includes:

- Correspondence
- Diaries & scrapbooks
- Manuscripts
- Memos, manuals, reports
- Personnel files
- Newspaper & magazine clippings
- Sermon outlines and texts
- Pamphlets and tracts
- Maps & posters
- Computer hard drives
- Floppy disks, CDs, DVDs
- Photographs, negatives, and slides
- Audio recordings
- Video recordings

While there are material formats that the BGC Archives does not accept, such as textiles or objects, we are prepared to weed donations ourselves to remove any items outside our collecting policy. The Archives is happy to return any unused or duplicate material to the donor.

Materials accepted into the collections are stored in a secure, climate-controlled storage location. Archival materials can only be accessed in the manuscripts reading room under the supervision of the Archives staff.

Guidelines for Potential Donors

- Papers should be left in the order in which they have been stored. They do not need to be rearranged before being sent to the Archives.
- Donors may hesitate to offer particular items to the Archives because they contain sensitive or personal information. Some donors choose to place specific time restrictions on designated items, and the Archives staff is happy to discuss restriction options with you and determine any necessary access limitations.

- You may hesitate to send particular items because they contain sensitive or personal information. We are willing to place restrictions on access to such items for a period of time and will gladly discuss these with you. The historical record includes incidents which are unfortunate along with those of which we are proud. Because the Church can learn from these, we would ask you to consider including these and restricting them rather than excluding them altogether.
- When you package your papers, would you box them in the order in which you have kept them. If you send more than one box, please label them 1 of 5, 2 of 5, etc. Knowing that the packages may receive rough handling in transit, please package fragile items particularly well to ensure their safe arrival.
- Upon receipt of the materials, we will inventory them and prepare a Certificate of Gift for you to sign and return to us. This will make the transfer of your gift official.

The staff of the BGC Archives will be happy to answer any questions you may have about our donation process. We also welcome any information you may have regarding other sources of potential donations, such as friends or family members who may also have materials relevant to our collections. Please contact us at 630.752.5910 or bgc.archives@wheaton.edu.