

MENNO SIMONS HISTORICAL LIBRARY

Eastern Mennonite University

- Collection Development Policy

**Draft of 7/7/08 Approved by HL Staff
Date approved by Hartzler Library Staff**

Mission Statement: The Menno Simons Historical Library at Eastern Mennonite University fulfills the vision and mission of EMU by collecting, preserving and providing materials that describe Anabaptist/Mennonite history, thought and life.

Vision Statement: The Menno Simons Historical Library at EMU strives to be the most extensive and best staffed library of Anabaptist/Mennonite materials in the Eastern United States.

OUTLINE

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I. Relationships

This policy statement gives direction to the collection of the Menno Simons Historical Library (HL). It describes the orientation of the collection and states the general criteria for the selection of materials. It also empowers the HL librarian to select materials and lead the HL with these guidelines. This document is important because the HL is an asset unique to EMU and can truly be regarded as the finest collection of Anabaptist/Mennonite resources in this part of the country.

It should be noted that the Menno Simons Historical Library shares the facilities and some functions with the main library of Eastern Mennonite University, but has its own identity and distinctive direction. Whereas the main library seeks to support the current curriculum of the university, HL seeks to preserve the Anabaptist/Mennonite story for the long term. Although it shares a common director and meets with the staff of the main library, the HL develops its own stated purposes and policies. Furthermore the HL recognizes that it shares some concerns with the EMU archives and the Virginia Conference Archives and will make every effort to coordinate efforts with these separate units. The HL is committed to cooperation with the archives and historical libraries of the Mennonite Church USA located in Goshen, IN and North Newton, KS.

Limited resources necessitate that the HL focus on its core functions. It is understood that criteria for the retention of gift items is much wider than that

applied to items purchased. Since collection development implies deliberate selection rather than the accepting of random gifts, this document applies fundamentally to purchased material.

HL policies are formulated by the EMU Director of Libraries, the HL librarian and staff. Although the HL has an advisory committee, the day-to-day implementation of the HL policies is the mandate of the HL librarian who gives direction to the staff and volunteers. It is understood that the librarian of the HL, under the supervision of the Director of Libraries, will interpret and apply these policies. As the chief administrator of the HL, she/he is expected to seek counsel, as needed, from the Historical Library Committee, EMU administrators and/or experts in the area of the work under consideration.

II. Purposes of the Collection

The primary purpose of the HL is to collect, preserve and provide access to the recorded history, doctrines, culture and arts of Anabaptist and Mennonite groups. It also collects materials on Shenandoah Valley history, culture and genealogy.

Although the HL is concerned about preservation, only limited and reversible repair work will be done. The focus will be on the preservation, rather than the restoration, of the item.

To achieve this purpose, the HL gathers material in print (books, journals, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, clippings, etc.), sound and visual recordings (cassettes, CDs, DVDs, etc.) and, to a limited extent, physical artifacts (display items, photographs, furniture, etc.) The HL understands that it should expand its digital presence on the World Wide Web.

III. Selection Process

The following areas are all desirable for inclusion in the collection of the HL, but budget and space limitations necessitate selectivity. HL recognizes that it is impossible to collect all materials by, about, or related to Anabaptism/Mennonitism. Nevertheless, HL will be inclusive in chronology, geography and language. (It is understood that many EMU students prefer English, but scholarship necessitates access to the original languages.) The subject matter, format, cost and anticipated use give direction to the selection of materials.

The following subject areas and the sub-areas are not in order of absolute priority, but they give some general comparative weight in the process.

- a. The Mennonite Church (broadly defined) with special consideration given to the eastern part of the United States.
 - i. History
 - ii. Thought, doctrine, issues, disputations, polemical materials

- iii. Sociology, lifestyles, edicts, indexes of prohibited books
 - iv. Liturgy and music
 - v. Arts and literature
 - vi. Genealogy
- b. Church bodies related to Mennonitism (e.g., Amish, Mennonite Brethren, Brethren in Christ, [Hutterite](#))
 - i. History
 - ii. Thought, doctrine, issues
 - iii. Significant material in other areas, but not genealogy unless otherwise related to Mennonitism.
- c. Reformation sources of Anabaptist and European Mennonitism
 - i. Anabaptist materials
 - 1. Writings by or about Anabaptists
 - 2. Topics and authors that were significant to early Anabaptists
 - ii. Reformation sources supplemental to the Anabaptist story
 - 1. Disputations and polemical works
 - 2. Edicts, indexes of prohibited works, etc.
- d. Local History
 - i. Shenandoah Valley sources
 - 1. History and culture
 - 2. Early Shenandoah Valley imprints
 - 3. Genealogy (primarily families of Germanic origin)
 - ii. Other Local Histories – studies of areas with significant Mennonite settlement and/or migration to/from the Shenandoah Valley
- e. Churches sharing Mennonite values
 - i. Church of the Brethren materials, especially those related to the Shenandoah Valley and topics of shared interest with the Mennonites (e.g., pacifism).
 - ii. Society of Friends materials prior to 1850, especially those related to the Shenandoah Valley and topics of shared interest with the Mennonites.
- f. Bibles
 - i. Those published by/for the Anabaptist/Mennonite/Amish
 - ii. Bibles containing Mennonite or local family records, if donated. Because of space limitations, it is preferable to retain only the family records or a photocopy of them.

IV. Priority of Factors Determining Selection for the HL

- a. Marginal subject matter
 - i. Due to rising prices of both current and rare materials, any marginal items should be very limited (e.g., Schwenkfelders, Waldensians, etc.)

- ii. When marginal material is considered, priority should be given to quality of the work and potential usefulness to researchers of the core subjects of this collection.
- b. Availability
 - i. Rare or out of print materials

Although the HL holds a large number of rare books, it does not define itself as an antiquarian collection. Age is subservient to subject matter. Special efforts will be made to obtain original Anabaptist/Mennonite materials when available and if affordable.
 - ii. Current Items
 1. Purchase may be postponed to the next budget year if the item is published by a major publisher, because such items are usually available for several years from the publication date.
 2. Purchase should not be postponed if the edition is limited, if purchase is by subscription, or privately printed, or considered to be important or in high demand, or offered at substantial savings for pre-publication price.
 3. HL can subscribe to a limited number of major academic journals of Mennonite interest, publications of the regional Mennonite Conferences, local Mennonite items and some popular material related to the core topics of the collection.
 4. The HL will try to acquire all significant titles published by Herald Press. It will also try to obtain books published by smaller Mennonite publishers in the eastern United States.
 5. The HL may select representative educational, curricular, juvenile and devotional materials within the Mennonite tradition on a case-by-case basis.
- c. Editions and printings
 - i. All editions and significant printings may be considered for purchase in the primary fields of the collection; others may be accepted as gifts.
 - ii. Revisions and reprints of books held for use (as opposed to preservation) may be obtained if the new edition has significant new features (e.g., an index) or the older copy has heavy use or is considered rare or is deteriorating.
- d. Duplicates
 - i. Normally the HL does not buy duplicates, but it may consider a second copy if the copy in the collection has heavy use, is considered a basic source, is deteriorating or is likely to be difficult to replace later.
 - ii. HL may keep a gift book as a duplicate if its condition is better than the copy in the collection or is an association copy or a memorial.
- e. Gifts
 - i. The HL encourages the donation of items, but the donor must understand that any valuation for tax purposes must be done by a

- qualified and disinterested appraiser before the gift is given. The staff of the HL cannot legally determine the value for tax purposes. Such donations should be given without expectations or implied promises (e.g., to return undesired materials to the donors).
- ii. The HL librarian is responsible to decide if the item(s) belongs in the collection and to dispose of unneeded materials in a responsible manner.
 - iii. Donations related to the core material (Anabaptist/Mennonite related) may be added to the collection if they are in good condition.
 - iv. Donations of marginal material may be accepted if the edition or printing is deemed useful to the collection.
- f. Format (print and microform) – Format is secondary to content in the selection process. When material is available in more than one format, the following guidelines may be useful in the selection process:
- i. Book bindings
 1. Preference is given to hardback over paperback.
 2. Paperback should not be rebound, unless usage demands it
 - ii. Paper copy vs microform – When both print and microform are available, the HL will give preference to print, if the price is not prohibitive.
 - iii. Original material that receives heavy use should be photocopied onto acid free paper. The researcher will use the copy rather than the original.
- g. Language
- i. Books within the core area will be considered in any language.
 - ii. Although English is preferred, other languages of the same work can be considered if the other language is the original, more authoritative, or the English translation has an overt interpretive bias.
- h. Manuscripts - Generally the HL does not purchase manuscripts, but will accept some items as donations.
- i. Artifacts – Generally the HL does not buy artifacts, but it will accept some items as donations if the item is closely associated with the core collecting areas.
- j. Photographs – Photographs may be acquired in the core areas of the collection.
- k. Art
- i. Selections from representative Mennonite and local art would be appropriate for the collection, but such items would probably need to be donations.
 - ii. Local fraktur are desirable for the collection but Mennonite fraktur from other areas could be accepted if donated.
- l. Audiovisual materials – Audio and visual material can be added on a very selective basis if related to core areas of the collection. If the same content is available in more than one format, preference will be given to the more durable one. Because Learning Resources is located in the same building,

the HL carries no responsibility to provide the equipment necessary to use such media.

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