

Meadville Lombard Theological School Archives and Special Collections Acquisitions Policy

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All policies are subject to change

The Meadville Lombard Theological School has one of the most important archives for Unitarian Universalism in North America. Since its creation in 1844, the Meadville Lombard Archives and Special Collections have served a vital role in Unitarian Universalism by safekeeping materials of historical and cultural significance to liberal religion, Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism and we proudly continue this tradition into the twenty-first century. The Archives and Special Collections acquire and provide access to information resources that document the history, theology, culture, and people of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism specifically and religion more broadly.

Our Unitarian Universalist history and identity guides our extensive archival and scholarly expertise, so that our policies, from acquisitions to cataloging to digitization, all act to serve scholars and the larger Unitarian Universalist community. One of the most vital ways we do this is through our acquisitions policy. Our acquisitions policy looks both into the past and thinks about the future of Unitarian Universalism. We are looking into the past to recover historical materials of significance to liberal religion, Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism. We are also thinking into the future by working with other Unitarian Universalist organizations, so that we can facilitate the preservation of the history currently being made every day. When both looking into the past and thinking about the future, we are always acutely aware of the need to hear all the voices of Unitarian Universalism and we seek to bring into the historical record all the rich and diverse voices present within our movement.

Some types of materials that the Meadville Lombard Archives seek to acquire are:

- Records and personal papers of individuals
- Records of organizations
- Accumulation of historical material pertaining to a single event, theme, or movement
- Historically and culturally significant manuscripts
- Historically and culturally significant artifacts

To best serve scholars and the larger Unitarian Universalist community, all possible acquisitions materials undergo rigorous inspection. All materials acquired by the Meadville Lombard Archives must be generated by individuals and organizations historically and culturally important to liberal religion, Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism. Beyond historical and cultural importance, when inspecting a collection we also consider the condition

of the materials and expenses related to shipping and storing of the materials. After we have received a collection, we will remove materials lacking in historical and cultural significance within the collection so that we can maximize the accessibility of the collection.

Because the goal of the Meadville Lombard Archives is to make history accessible, we will only acquire materials if we are given sole ownership. While we prefer to receive materials without access restrictions, we will allow materials to have reasonable access restrictions if required by the donor.