General Guidelines for Determining University Library Materials
Under the Care of The Rare Book & Manuscript Library

Pursuant to University Library policy, the Rare Book & Manuscript Library (RBML) formulates guidelines for determining which general University Library materials should belong in the Rare Book & Manuscript Library or at the Rare Book & Manuscript Library Oak Street location. RBML is also responsible for all rare books and manuscripts held in departmental libraries outside the Special Collections Division and is working with these libraries on issues of curation, use, and location of rare materials. These guidelines correspond in large part to ALA’s Guidelines on the Selection & Transfer of Materials from General Collections to Special Collections (http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/selctransfer).

Generally, books belonging to any of the following categories are to be sent to The Rare Book & Manuscript Library:

1. All imprints issued prior to the dates indicated below:

Europe: 1851
Asia: 1851
English language imprints from any location: 1851
United States and Possessions: 1851 except
   - Alaska 1901
   - Arizona 1901
   - Arkansas 1901
   - California 1876
   - Chicago 1876
   - Colorado 1901
   - Florida 1876
   - Hawaii 1901
   - Idaho 1901
   - Iowa 1876
   - Kansas 1876
   - Minnesota 1876
   - Montana 1901
   - Nebraska 1876
   - Nevada 1901
   - New Mexico 1876
   - North Dakota 1901
   - Oklahoma 1901
   - Oregon 1876
   - South Dakota 1901
   - Texas 1876
   - Utah 1901
   - Washington 1876
   - Wyoming 1901

All Confederate States imprints: 1860-1865

Africa: 1851
Australia: 1851
Canada: 1851, except
   - Alberta 1901
   - British Columbia 1901
   - Manitoba 1901
   - Saskatchewan 1901
Mexico and Latin America: 1851
South America: 1851

(Note: In the case of periodical, newspaper and other serial sets started prior to and continued after the dates indicated above, only those “early imprint” or otherwise notable volumes known to be rare or reflecting high market value are to be sent to RBML.)

2. Works of high market value (generally over $1,000 per volume).
3. Works printed in editions of 100 copies or less.
4. Exceptionally finely produced books, including superfine facsimiles.
5. Examples of private press publications.
6. Ephemeral works of special importance (e.g., scarce pamphlets or broadsides).
7. Delicate works whose storage or use requires special care or mediation.
8. Valuable maps, original art, original photographs, or plates--especially plates with hand-applied or lithographed color--either as issued or as part of extra-illustrated volumes
9. Works with important provenance or association (e.g., presentation copies signed by important authors).

10. Manuscripts, except those within the scope of the University Archives or the Illinois History and Lincoln Collections.

11. Books with movable parts, e.g., pop-up books.


13. Material that may enhance one of the named special collections or collection areas of The Rare Book & Manuscript Library (e.g., Wells, Sandburg, Merwin, Mark Twain, Proust, Milton).

14. Items for which five or fewer copies are reported in the national online bibliographic database (OCLC WorldCat) or items for which only one copy is held in the geographic region (examples of library materials that are scarce or rare)