

COLLECTION POLICY

It is understood that the records of the various agencies of the Church of the Brethren are to be preserved. In fact, records generated while in the employ of the church are the property of the Church of the Brethren and not of the person who created them. Since preservation and disposition are the prerogative of the former, not the latter, no original records may be released to any other agency or individual for deposit elsewhere without the approval of the BHLA director as the representative of the Brethren Historical Committee. Guidelines for the collection and preservation of such records are available from BHLA. The remainder of this collection policy applies to records and manuscripts from outside or private sources. Such records and manuscripts may be purchased or received as gifts or loans.

Because few of the early records of the Brethren have been preserved in repositories, BHLA has a responsibility to locate and, if possible, acquire any pre-1900 records pertaining to the Brethren that are still extant. These include Ephrata, Sauer, and Leibert imprints, books, and documents listed in the Brethren Bibliography, pamphlets and broadsides, minutes, membership or other records of local churches or districts, personal records of ministers or other church leaders, diaries or letters that depict aspects of Brethren life, photographs, genealogical data, and all other materials relating to Brethren, no matter in what form. They may also include carefully selected artifacts specifically related to Brethren, such as limited examples of the plain dress, medicine glasses or other articles given out at early Annual Meetings, or items that were a part of early church life, such as examples of communion ware.

Another period for which few records survive is from 1919 through 1932. The

General Mission Board files for these years apparently were discarded at some time.

Special efforts should be made to locate and acquire information pertaining to both home and foreign mission activities during those years. Persons having correspondence with Elgin personnel from 1919-1932 in their possession are strongly encouraged to make that information available for preservation at BHLA.

In addition to records of official church agencies, all pre-1900 documents, and 1919-1932 mission materials, the following post-1900 materials are collected by BHLA:

1. Books and documents listed in the Brethren Bibliography (not already in the holdings of BHLA).
2. Books by Brethren authors (two copies if the subject relates directly to the Church of the Brethren; otherwise, one copy as evidence of the literary activity of the Brethren).
3. Books about Brethren (two copies).
4. Books on other subjects containing significant information about Brethren (one copy).
5. Genealogies of Brethren families.
6. Periodicals of all Brethren groups tracing their origins to Schwarzenau.
7. Sound recordings produced by or about Brethren, such as films, filmstrips, and interview tapes.
8. Diaries, wills, sermons, and memoirs.
9. Personal papers of Brethren. (Anything, however trivial, is worth keeping if it relates to important individuals.)
10. Letters, diaries, or other records of missionaries and Brethren Service personnel.

11. Articles about Brethren in non-Brethren journals.
12. Theses, dissertations, or research papers bearing on Brethren life and thought.
13. Photographs.
14. Publications and records of Brethren institutions (such as homes, hospitals, orphanages, and camps).
15. College catalogs, alumni bulletins, and other selected materials.
16. District materials, such as minutes, conference booklets, and newsletters.
17. Regional records and newsletters.
18. Records of congregations.
19. Artifacts that are of wide significance to the church.
20. Other items that are in harmony with the purposes of BHLA.

Records, documents, manuscripts, or other items being considered for collection should be assessed by the BHLA director to determine if they will strengthen the research resources and/or help to meet future research needs.