

# Donegal County Council County Archives Acquisition Policy

## Introduction

This document is a Policy Statement regulating the acquisition of items as part of the collection of Donegal County Archives.

This statement represents the aim and plans of Donegal County Council at the time of its adoption and as such will be subject to revision as the County Archives Service develops, and revised statements will be submitted to the Council for its agreement.

This Policy Statement supersedes all previous and existing practices and policies, formal or informal, relating to the acquisition of archival material for Donegal County Archives.

## Statement of Purpose

The role of Donegal County Archives is to 'preserve the inheritance of the people of Donegal for present and future generations by preserving, acquiring, and making accessible the documented heritage of the County.' (*Saol agus Saoithiúlacht, 2001 - 2004*). In order to do this the County Archives will acquire archival material which reflect Donegal's political, social and economic history and development; will provide suitable secure and safe accommodation and preservation facilities for acquisitions, and list the acquired material according to its annual plans, thus encouraging use of the acquisitions by researchers of various interests and backgrounds, including genealogists, local historians, sociologists, journalists, political scientists and students.

## General Acquisition Rules

1. The County Archives accepts the general principle that it is its responsibility to ensure to the best of its ability that all of the collections in its care are adequately housed, conserved and documented. Primary consideration will be given to the Archives' ability to provide proper care and storage for any deposited archival material. No archival material should be considered for acquisition if its physical condition exceeds the County Archives' financial ability to provide for its care and preservation.
2. The County Archives will not acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any item, unless the Archivist is satisfied that valid title to the item in question can be acquired. In particular, no item will be collected which has been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin, or any

intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned, in violation of that country's law.

3. Where an item is offered as a gift in good faith and the prospective donor is uncertain of the identity of the legal owner/s and the County Archives is unable to find this out as a result of its own reasonable efforts, the Archivist shall be permitted to accept the item, provided a permanent and detailed note of the circumstances and known facts is made at the time of acceptance.
4. The County Archives will abide by all laws regarding archives and recognises the jurisdiction of other authorities in this area.
5. The County Archives shall at all times, be aware of and sensitive to the concerns of all communities and traditions within the county when considering the acquisition of archival material.
6. The Archivist will normally have delegated authority and responsibility for the acceptance or rejection of potential gifts or bequests to the County Archives; for soliciting gifts of archival material within the terms of this policy; and for making recommendations and taking action on the purchase of material in accordance with this policy and within the Council's normal standing orders.
7. Potential depositors will be encouraged to donate archives rather than sell them to the Council. However, the Council will consider purchase in certain circumstances, particularly if the only alternative is loss of the item to the county. As it is extremely difficult to place a monetary value on archives, professional assistance (e.g., from other archivists, reputable auctioneers, booksellers, map librarians etc.) will be sought in assessing value, prior to purchase of items.
8. The acceptance of items on loan, normally for a finite period for exhibition or specific research, may be authorised by the Archivist. In exceptional cases, a privately owned item of major importance that falls within the scope of this policy may be accepted on a finite long loan. No item will be received on 'permanent loan,' a term which has no legal status. The period of all loans will normally be agreed in writing between the Archivist and the owner of the item at the time of deposit. Where the term of a loan has expired, it may be renewed or extended for further finite periods, at the discretion of both the owner and the Archivist.

## **Agreement between Depositor and Donegal County Council**

- The depositor and the Archivist, on behalf of Donegal County Council, will sign a joint agreement prior to the acceptance by the Council, of any gift of archives.
- The depositor will agree to assign full legal title and copyright to Donegal County Council (unless deposit is by loan or official transfer). All acquisitions are to be outright and unconditional.
- All legal instruments of conveyance and warranty of title, signed by a donor / seller / agent setting forth an adequate description of the objects involved and the precise conditions of transfer shall accompany all acquisitions.
- The depositor will agree that the collection in the form in which it has been deposited with Donegal County Council may change, in accordance with archival principles, through sorting, listing, arranging and conservation work.
- The depositor must accept Donegal County Council Policy on Access to Archives, including policy on uniform access (i.e. if a collection is being processed, access to it will be refused to everybody until it is ready).
- The depositor will agree that the listed collection will be made accessible to the public for research and that material from the collection may be used for exhibitions, computerisation, microfilming or photocopying. The depositor will understand that certain items within the collection may be withheld from the public while conservation and/or listing work takes place.
- Normally the Council will not purchase or receive donations of archival material unless access by the public to the greater part of the collection is ensured. Nonetheless the depositor and the County Council may agree certain restrictions (if any) on access to items within the collection.
- The County Council undertakes to do everything possible to ensure the deposited items are preserved to the highest standards.

- The Collection is to be listed (catalogued) as part of the County Council Archives Service's programme of listing of collections in its custody and in accordance with best archival practice. A copy of the list will be provided free of charge to the depositor if requested. Ownership and copyright in the list is vested in the Council.
- The County Council Archives Service reserves the right to refuse to accept as part of the collection material it deems to be extraneous or of no historical value.
- The Council hereby confirms its acceptance of the principle that archives are held in trust for future generations. The deaccessioning of any items from any collection will not take place unless the depositor is in full agreement and the Council agrees that the item in question is no longer considered an item worthy of permanent preservation in the County Archives.

## **Collecting Area**

- The primary aim of Donegal County Archives Service is to ensure the inheritance of the people of Donegal for present and future generations by preserving, acquiring, and making accessible the documented heritage of the County. The Archives will seek to collect items that are associated with or help to illustrate the history and culture of this geographical area.
- Items made in, at some point used within, or otherwise provenanced to the Donegal County Archives Collecting Area, may be acquired, regardless of their location at the time of acquisition. Where this involves the collection of items from the place within the geographical sphere of influence of another Archives a principle of open actions and good communications will apply.

## **Appendix**

Form of Terms of Deposit of Gift Agreement between Depositor and Donegal County Council.