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Newspapers - United States

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I. Scope

The Library of Congress maintains the largest collection of United States newspapers in the country, spanning the colonial era to the present day. The collection is comprised of titles representing the diversity of the American people through broad geographic representation, language, and formats. The United States newspaper collection includes titles published in all states and territories from 1704 to present. Holdings include newspapers published in a variety of formats, including, but not limited to, issues printed on rag and pulp paper retained as bound volumes or portfolio collections; microfilm; current issues on newsprint; and digitized content in database subscriptions, from cooperative conversion programs, and from Library-produced content. Once the Library establishes a system for digital archiving and access, the Library will acquire digitized and born digital newspapers using the same collecting guidelines as those of current acquisitions. Future holdings will incorporate web harvested newspapers.

For purposes of this statement, a newspaper is identified as a serial publication which is mainly designed to be a primary source of written information on current events, local, national, or international in scope. Newspapers contain a broad range of news on all subjects and activities; they are not limited to any specific subject matter. They are intended either for the general public or for a particular ethnic, cultural, or national group. The format is also defined by physical characteristics. Modern print newspapers usually lack a cover, include a masthead or banner, and are normally larger than 12 x 17 inches (297 mm x 490 mm). Individual issues appear chronologically or numerically, usually at least once a week. These physical and content characteristics define elements which distinguish newspapers from other serial publications that report general news (e.g., periodicals, journals, newsletters, etc.). Born digital newspapers which lack the physical properties of the print newspapers are identified by their breadth of coverage, the geographic boundaries of their primary local audience, and their inclusion of local news.

Newspapers published outside the United States are addressed in the Collections Policy Statement for Newspapers - Foreign. Newspapers published to serve a particular ethnic or cultural group within the United States are addressed in the Collections Policy Statement for Ethnic Publications. Periodicals in newspaper format that serve a particular industry (e.g., *Advertising Age*, *Hollywood Reporter*), association (e.g., *Jewish Chronicle*), or subject (e.g., *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Coin World*) are addressed in the subject Collections Policy Statements.

II. Research Strengths

The Library's collection of newspapers published in the United States is notable for its historic breadth of coverage, size, and diverse viewpoints represented. As early as May 1789, Congress resolved that each member of the House and Senate should be furnished one newspaper of his choice at public expense. Each state, region, and United States territory is represented, which makes research by broad geographic areas and/or chronological time periods possible. Patrons access the collection onsite through the Newspaper and Current Periodical Reading Room; newspapers on microfilm are available to remote researchers through interlibrary loan.

Notable special collections of United States newspapers include:

1. Collection of original eighteenth century United States newspapers in paper and on microfilm
2. Historic Events Newspaper Collection of original United States and foreign newspapers covering notable events in United States and world history from 1801 to the present, including a special collection of September 11, 2001 newspapers
3. German and Japanese Prisoner of War camp newspapers
4. Japanese-American internment camp newspapers

In addition, the Library's collection of digitized content of United States newspapers is anchored by *Chronicling America* web site of the National Digital Newspaper Program. While in its infancy now, it will contain selected digitized content of United States newspapers published between 1836 and 1922, all freely available via the web. The Library also subscribes to digitized content from commercial vendors providing access to a substantial number of current and historical United States newspapers. The Library has an extensive collection of newspaper histories and indexes that support the physical and digital collections.

III. General Collecting Policy

The Library is not comprehensive in its collecting of United States newspapers. Instead it seeks representative coverage of newspaper publishing in each state and territory to reflect the news and reading habits of the public over time and to support the information needs of Congress and researchers. The Library relies on state libraries and other local and regional repositories to acquire and preserve local newspapers and make them available for research. In the past, the United States Newspaper Program (1984-2009), a coordinated effort funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and coordinated by the Library, was a national effort to identify, catalog and selectively preserve on microfilm newspapers published in the United States and its territories. The bibliographic and holdings data from the Program is freely available in *Chronicling America*.

On a select basis, current issues of newspapers not intended to become part of the permanent collections (CIO - current issue only) may be acquired, in consultation with the Congressional Research Service, to support the current information needs of Congress. These current issues will be housed and serviced in the Serial and Government Publications Division. Such need for CIO titles has diminished as the Library acquires increased access to digitized current United States newspapers.

With some exceptions as noted in the specific collecting guidelines, the preferred format for permanent retention is silver-gelatin-on-polyester-base 35mm roll microfilm. When available, microfilm

that has been processed with a polysulfiding treatment, such as IPI Silverlock (tm) or its equivalent, is preferred. [Collection Policy Statement Microforms - Quality]

IV. Specific Collecting Policy

The Library acquires and permanently retains current United States newspapers which are:

1. national in scope and coverage
2. reflective of regional views and coverage. The Library will acquire more than one paper published in the same city if each meets criteria for retention.
3. in the top 100 papers, by circulation
4. from a state or United States territorial capital
5. of recognized journalistic quality, including those known for exceptional coverage of specific subjects
6. of recognized importance for their political, ethnic, or cultural perspectives

For retrospective acquisitions, the Library will also consider the following criteria:

1. research value
2. importance of political parties or social conditions represented by the newspaper
3. cost of acquisition and preservation

In the case of pre-1827 newspapers, the Library collects comprehensively to best document the development of the United States from a colony to a republic and the emergence of the American press. Newspapers published prior to 1870 on "rag" paper are retained in original ink-print format if they have high artifactual value. The Library also acquires reformatted content as a result of cooperative microfilm or digitizing projects.

V. Acquisition Sources: Current and Future

Mandatory copyright law, purchase, and gifts are the primary means by which the Library builds its collection of United States newspapers. For the collecting of newspapers published in the United States, the Library follows guidelines in Copyright Circular 7b, *'Best Edition' of Published Copyrighted Works for the Collections of the Library of Congress*, Part IX, "Works Existing in More than One Medium." The preferred format for permanent acquisitions of newspapers is microfilm for post-1826 newspapers. However, this does not preclude the Library from acquiring for historical documentation individual ink-print issues. For pre-1827 newspapers, the preferred archival format is original ink-print in order to document the events of colonial and early republic eras and the variability of the physical newspaper format during this time.

When possible, the Library acquires selected newspapers published or distributed in the United States on microfilm via copyright, either through group registration (as specified in Copyright Circular 62b,

Group Registration for Daily Newspapers) or mandatory deposit (as specified in Copyright Circular 7d, *Mandatory Deposit of Copies or Phonorecords for the Library of Congress*).

Retrospective material in ink-print or microfilm is acquired by purchase or gift. Digitized newspapers are acquired via subscription database purchase and repository accessioning following National Digital Newspaper Program guidelines. The Library may also acquire digitized content by scanning ink-print newspapers with copyright clearance or by digitizing master negative microfilm owned without restrictions by the Library. Born digital and web-based newspapers will be acquired via electronic deposit, purchase or gift as archiving technology and policies will allow.

VI. Collecting Levels

	Collecting Guidelines	Collecting Levels
Current newspapers	Selectively with microfilm preferred format	4
Post-1826 newspapers	Selectively with microfilm preferred format; originals selected for artifactual value	4
Pre-1827 newspapers	Comprehensively with ink-print preferred format, but microfilm also acquired	5
Historic events newspapers	Selectively with in-print preferred format, representing artifactual value (to provide support for interpretive programs)	4
Digital historic, public domain newspapers	Selectively following NDNP guidelines and LC digital scanning	4
Born digital or web newspapers	Selectively (not presently acquired)	4

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