

3.5.1.1.1. Collection Policy

Draft version below is under review by the Archives Committee

1. The library's mission

The mission of the Canadian Quaker Library is to offer a resource that members, attenders, and other researchers can use to learn about Quaker thought, testimony, history, and service, and to serve as a repository for important Canadian Quaker publications, which it seeks to acquire, process, preserve and disseminate.

2. The purpose of a collection policy

The library's primary tasks are to select, maintain, and provide access to information resources. A collection policy is a guide for the Committee and the library's users. It supports collection development and assists in overall management of the collection by identifying the priorities attached to various activities, providing direction in budgeting, offering a communication channel between the library and outside constituents, and offering guidance concerning the handling of gifts, withdrawal of materials, and serial purchases and cancellations. The policy aims to reduce personal bias by placing selection decisions in the context of the aims of collection building, and thus ensure continuity and consistency, as well as to assist in training staff and new members of the Committee. In addition, it provides a sound basis for planning.

3. The collection

The collection consists primarily of published reading materials of historical, ongoing and current interest. It is intended to be a research level collection and a library of record for Canadian Quaker publications. Some materials are collected for their enduring value, and some for their topical value. The latter are retained only as long as they are of interest to users.

4. Types of materials collected

This section lists, by order of priority, the types of materials to be collected, meaning their intellectual content. Members of the Committee will aim to apply restrictions sparingly, guided by concerns such as space, price, and relevance to the library's mission.

1. Quaker materials

Items in this category should be retained indefinitely.

Introductory materials. These include works on the the history and beliefs of Quakers, biographies, and works explaining Quakerism.

Quaker procedures and practice. These are written for individuals, committees, and Meetings to explain or describe the responsibilities, purposes, business procedures, and expectations of members and Monthly Meetings. These should be retained indefinitely.

Spiritual development. The library attempts to collect exhaustively the classic works on Quaker spirituality, as well as Quaker and other works considered important for spiritual development, as space permits.

Works by Canadian Quakers. The library attempts to collect exhaustively works published by Canadian Quakers, whether or not they are directly related to Quakerism.

2. Current issues and concerns

These materials will be retained for as long as Quakers hold the concern. When Canadian Quakers are drawn into a concern (social, environmental, justice, or other) and users identify a specific work that is related to the concern, the Committee will consider purchasing that work, insofar as resources and space considerations allow.

3. Recreational reading

These materials will be retained only as long as there is interest, as measured by the frequency of use. Once interest subsides, these materials will be removed

from the collection unless it is felt that they fall within the category of introductory materials on Quakers.

The Committee will not generally consider buying recreational materials. Novels, literature, poetry, or other recreational materials that have Quaker or spiritual elements may be acquired if there is a well-identified reason to include a specific work.

5. Acquisition of materials

1. Purchase

Materials will be purchased using the annual budget of the Committee, with the selection of materials based on conformity to this policy. In addition, anyone may suggest titles for acquisition. In both cases, decisions about purchase of materials will be upon recommendation of the members of the Committee.

2. Donation

The Committee is happy to receive gifts for inclusion in the library's collection. Gifts proposed will be compared against the collection policy to determine their suitability for inclusion. Suitable items will be acquired by donation, catalogued and shelved. When items are deemed unsuitable, an attempt will be made to suggest to donors other potential recipients who might be interested.

6. Number of copies

As a general rule, a single copy of each item will suffice. However, where members of the Committee feel it is justified, additional copies can be collected. The number of copies owned is included in the cataloguing record, and these numbers should be reviewed periodically with a view to eliminating copies that are no longer useful. This is especially important when shelf space is inadequate.

7. Formats collected

Print materials, including books, booklets, pamphlets, and periodicals, form the bulk of the library's collection. Additional formats such as DVDs and CDs can be included if they conform to the criteria for the types of materials collected listed in section 4. These are shelved in a separate audiovisual section.

At present, the library holds no e-books, but since these have become popular, they should be considered for inclusion as resources allow. For this to happen, a study of what is involved technically and as regards licensing, ownership, and dissemination is necessary. In addition, the logistics of management of these formats need to be identified and planned for.

8. Missing copies

Since the library does not lend its materials, there should be no items missing. If any are not found, they are probably misplaced, although there is a slight possibility that they have been stolen.

Annual shelf reading (section 9) should find misplaced items which can then be put back where they belong.

Works that have been lost, whatever the reason, offer an opportunity to review their pertinence to the collection. If this is established, efforts should be made to replace them so that a copy is made available once again. If it is determined that a work is no longer pertinent, its cataloguing record is removed and the mention “withdrawn” is noted in the shelf list.

9. Shelf reading and inventory

These activities should be carried out annually, as a housekeeping task that also provides the Committee with an update on the state of the collection.

1. Shelf reading

This activity is the practice of comparing what is actually on the shelves to the written shelf list, which is kept up as part of the cataloguing process. It involves reading the call numbers of items on the shelves, in order to determine that they

are still there and are shelved in the correct order. The activity provides an opportunity to return to their proper address items that have been misplaced.

2. Inventory

This can be carried out efficiently in conjunction with shelf reading, and involves entering a code for each item in the shelf list as it is visited, to indicate whether the item is present on the shelf or whether it is missing.

Additional codes could be added to indicate the state of preservation of an item, e.g. "Binding damaged", "Torn page", "Fragile", "Brittle" and so on.

10. Weeding

As part of collection management, weeding should be carried out periodically, in order to recuperate shelf space. Staff and members of the Committee compare each item on the shelf list with the collection policy, in order to determine whether it should still be part of the collection or not. Items removed will remain on the shelf list, but with a "Withdrawn [date]" mention added. Such items can be offered to Friends or others.

11. Policy implementation and revision

It is useful to check future acquisitions against the collection policy, in order to ensure that it is being applied correctly. A yearly review is sufficient for this.

Periodical subscriptions should be checked against the policy to ensure they are relevant, and any that are not should be cancelled. A yearly review is sufficient for this.

In addition, the collection policy itself should be reviewed annually to detect insufficiencies, integrate new needs, and take into account any modifications to the budget or the space available, thus ensuring its ongoing relevance.

A timetable for these activities should be determined by the Committee, which should identify the most useful time of year to do this.