



# Information for Donors

## Description of the Avery Research Center

The mission of the Avery Research Center (ARC) is to collect, preserve, and promote the unique history and culture of the African diaspora, with an emphasis on Charleston, the South Carolina Lowcountry, and beyond. The ARC holds primary and secondary source materials that document the history, traditions, legacies, and influences of African Americans and their place in the American narrative. Local, national, and international scholars frequently engage the Avery Research Center Archives as one of the only archives dedicated to African American history and culture in the region.

The Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture is located on the site of the former Avery Normal Institute. It was a hub for Charleston's African-American community from 1865–1954 that trained its students for professional careers and leadership roles. In 1985, the alumni of the Avery Normal Institute, spearheaded by the Honorable Lucille Whipper, formed the Avery Institute of Afro-American History and Culture. It joined with the College of Charleston, as a part of the College's library, to establish the Avery Research Center to preserve the legacy of the Avery Normal Institute and educate the community on the history and culture of African Americans in Charleston, the South Carolina Lowcountry, and South Carolina at large.

Holdings in the Avery Research Center Archives date from the late eighteenth century to the twenty-first century, and include documents, images, oral histories, audio-visual materials, printed materials, and cultural artifacts. The collections contain over 900 linear feet of archival holdings, more than 6,000 printed volumes, and over 1,700 hundred artifacts. Most of the collection documents African American life in Charleston and the surrounding Lowcountry region. Major themes of the collections include education, civil rights activism, labor rights activism, and documentation of the African American Gullah-Geechee culture.

Processed collections have Encoded Archival Description (EAD) finding aids available in the [ArchivesSpace finding aid system](#). Collections can also be found within the library catalog, and OCLC's WorldCat. Unprocessed collections receive an initial inventory conducted and made accessible by archives staff with a brief record in the system. Efforts are underway to provide brief records in the College's OPAC for all unprocessed collections. Digital materials are available through the College of Charleston's [Lowcountry Digital Library \(LCDL\)](#). As of the writing of this assessment, the Avery has 47 digitized collections on the LCDL, comprised of both artifact and archival collections.

## Importance of Donating

Thank you for considering taking this important step in preserving your legacy and contributing to a fuller historical record. The Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture depends upon the support of individuals, families, businesses, associations, churches, and organizations to assist in fulfilling its mission. Collections at the Avery Research Center for African American History and

For more information contact us at

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Culture are used by a variety of people including scholars and researchers locally, nationally, and internationally; K-12 students and teachers, genealogists, politicians, media representatives, etc. Additionally, we use collection items for instruction sessions, physical and digital exhibits, and in publications.

## Examples of Types of Materials for Donation

Materials that are generally accepted:

- Letters, notes, and e-mails
- Diaries and blogs
- Photographs
- Genealogical information and charts
- Brochures and flyers
- Obituaries/funeral programs
- Awards and certificates
- Selected newspaper clippings
- Memoirs and reminiscences
- Scrapbooks and albums
- Professional or business/legal papers
- Speeches and sermons
- Social club and church programs
- Audio and video of individual (professional and home movies)
- 3D artifacts and ephemera (i.e. school uniforms, varsity jacket, etc.)
- Art pieces on or about the African Diaspora

Materials generally not accepted are:

- Widely published publications and newspapers
- Personal financial documents (bank statements, pay stubs, checkbooks, utility bills, etc.)

## Things to Consider

- Keep materials in original order the staff will arrange and organize the records
- If you can name people and/or places in photographs, please do so as it helps for future access to the collection
- As you put records together to donate, refrain from using tape, staples, rubber bands, and paperclips or binder clips as they can rip or warp materials
- Consider any potential restrictions or copyright concerns in the material

## Abbreviated Acquisition Procedure

- Fill out the donor interest form and submit an inventory of the records, which is available on the website. The form is reviewed by the archival staff and you will get a response within eight (8) weeks.
- If your donation is conditionally approved the Avery Research Center staff will visit to appraise materials based on collection development policy and mission, but not for monetary value.
- Records are sent to the Avery Research Center for custody and a temporary custody form and deed of gift are filled out at this time
- Records undergo further faculty and administrative review
- Final signed documents are sent to donor

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