



Society of Australian Genealogists Donations of material to the Manuscripts & Image Collection



Introduction

Thank you for your interest in donating your family history material to us. We've put together the following to assist you in determining if your material is suitable for deposit with us, as well as some guidelines on how to prepare it for lodgement.

The Society of Australian Genealogists plays an important role in preserving research material for future generations. However, we can only give a home to items which are likely to be useful to other researchers.

We will generally accept the following:

- Compiled family histories in typed or manuscript form, including good drafts of incomplete work, and relevant supporting documents such as immigration records and military service records, research notes and correspondence
- Family tree charts
- Birth, death & marriage certificates (originals, good copies or transcriptions)
- Photographs of people – preferably identified or grouped in families.

You do not have to wait until you finish your research to donate items to us. We are happy to receive good quality copies of works in progress, certificates and photographs.

We do accept donations in digital format, such as GEDCOM files from a family history software program and good quality digital images. However, it is important to discuss this with us prior to donation to ensure that the files meet our technical standards.

We do not accept materials which are readily available elsewhere, such as newspapers, extracts from published books and printouts from the internet. Family heirlooms and objects such as your grandmother's wedding dress, family bibles or a teapot presented as a retirement gift are best retained within the family.

Ownership and Access

You need to ensure that any items you donate to us are yours to give and that you have clear ownership of them. We will ask you to complete a donation form confirming this.

Once material has been lodged with us it cannot be returned to you or any other person, including your beneficiaries or descendants. Should family members wish to view it in the future they will need to either be a member of the Society or pay the standard research fee.

Our expectation is that any item you give to us can be viewed by other researchers without restriction. If there are items of a sensitive nature (such as adoption papers of a family member who may not know they are adopted) we must be made aware of this so appropriate cataloguing can be done. Some of your material may not be appropriate in a public collection, especially if the person it relates to is reasonably expected to still be alive. If in doubt don't give it to us.

We may choose to digitise items for permanent storage and in such circumstances may not retain the original.

Preparing material to give to us

The volunteers and staff who process your donation are unlikely to be familiar with the donated materials or the history of your family. It is helpful if you organise the material in a logical structure and provide a summary document. For example, you could organise your material in family groups and include a simple family tree chart to show how people are related.

If any of the material is background to a published work or a website please let us know this so we can refer to them as we process the donation.

If the material is in boxes or folders it is helpful if are numbered and identified. If you have papers stored in plastic sleeves in folders you can leave these 'as is' (we will remove items from these sleeves for long-term storage once they come to us). Sticky tape, staples pins and rubber bands can cause long term damage and are best removed prior to lodgement if feasible. Sometimes items have been stored before they reach us (such as in a garage while an estate is being sorted). Please try to ensure that anything given to us is free of insect infestation such as silverfish and mould, as this can quickly spread to other areas of our collection.

Delivering items to the SAG

Items should be delivered to our headquarters at Richmond Villa, 120 Kent Street Sydney.

We've prepared a short assessment form which will help us gauge how much material you have and what it comprises. We prefer to receive this in advance so that our Archives Officer can discuss any aspects of this with you prior to material being delivered.

Processing of your donation

When we process your donation we will remove items which are not relevant to our collection or which, in our view, will not be useful to researchers in the future because of condition or format. If you wish to have this material back please indicate this on the donation form so we can let you know when it is ready for collection. Your donation will be accessioned and catalogued as resources become available, and there may be delays if significant sorting and culling is required first.

Additional information for Executors

We recognise that sometimes donations are offered to us by Executors of an estate or by family members who have little interest in or knowledge of the research that has been done. We will try to assist as much as possible but we simply do not have the resources and space to take delivery of 'everything' on the off chance we will retain it. It is far better to discuss a proposed donation with us first so there is no unnecessary misunderstanding.

Associated library material

Our library may be interested in accepting printed books and pamphlets which have family or local history content if you also have these. Check our online library catalogue on our website at www.sag.org.au to see that we don't already hold them.

Questions?

We welcome the opportunity to discuss a potential donation with you and encourage you to make contact with us to do so. This is especially important if you are leaving material to us in a bequest and your appointed executor is not familiar with your family history and will be making decisions on your behalf.

Some donors also choose to leave a sum of money to the Society in their will to assist with the accessioning and indexing of their research papers. We encourage you to consider this option and can provide further details on bequests, and suggested wording your solicitor can use when drawing up your will.



We want to work with you to ensure that your life's work is not taken to the tip!



However, we must be realistic in only accepting items which will be able to be utilised in the future. There is no 'one size fits all' category for family history papers and it is best to make contact with us to discuss your specific situation rather than assume that we will or won't accept your donation.

All enquiries should be directed to our Archives Officer, Danielle Lautrec
(02) 9247 3953 or by email to archives@sag.org.au