BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

The Library has been a depository for federal documents since 1883 and was designated a regional depository in 1976, one of fifty-three in the nation. The collection’s scope is thus very broad, as all depository items are automatically sent by the Government Printing Office to regional depositories. The legal basis for the depository library program is Title 44, U.S. Code, which mandates that the depository collection be made available to the public and that the needs of the public, in addition to the library’s primary clientele, be considered in selection and retention decisions. Moreover, the Library is expected to comply with Legal Requirements & Program Regulations of the Federal Depository Library Program, publications of the Government Printing Office, the agency administering the depository program. A primary responsibility of a regional depository is to ensure the comprehensiveness and integrity of the region’s depository resources. This mandate is accomplished by the purposeful development of a comprehensive collection and by the careful supervision of discarding by selective depositories in the region. The regional depository is required to accept discarded publications not already in its collection.

HOUSING

The collection is housed on the first floor of the Williams Library. A few selected items are housed in the cataloging department of the Williams Library. These items include the Library of Congress classification schedules and certain cataloging manuals. Pre-1920 items are housed on the top floor of the library annex, the library’s office site storage facility.

PUBLICATION TYPES

Depository publications take tangible form as paper, microforms, CD-ROMs, software, and audiovisual materials. Among the publication types represented are monographs, serials, maps, posters, and pamphlets.

More than 95% of current depository publications are now available in full-text via the Internet. Records for these electronic documents are added to the library’s online catalog, along with records for tangible documents, with active hyperlinks. Strategic planning for the future of the depository program over the
past decade has emphasized this transition to electronic formats. In the future regional depositories may be expected to accept full-text digital deposits of selected electronic documents, in an effort to assure permanent public access.

ACQUISITIONS

Commercial Publications: Reference publications and reprints of significant documents in microform or paper format are purchased from commercial publishers as funds permit. Reference items purchased include handbooks, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, periodicals, software, CD-ROMS, and bibliographies. Major commercial microform acquisitions have included the CIS U.S. Congressional Committee Prints, the American Statistics Index Microfiche Library, United States Decennial Census Publications (1790-1960) from Research Publications, the Checklist of U.S. Public Documents, 1789-1970, and backfiles of the Official Gazette, the Federal Register, and the Code of Federal Regulations. Subscriptions to print indexes have been replaced by subscriptions to their electronic counterparts, such as ProQuest’s Congressional Publications and the Congressional Serial Set, a significant retrospective purchase. Anticipated usage and historical significance are governing factors in retrospective purchases. Priorities in purchasing are: 1) to maintain a current reference collection, especially through the purchase of commercial databases that provide much improved access to the collection; and 2) to complete retrospective collections of major series, serials, and annuals.

Replacements, Duplicates, and Binding: Replacements are obtained through gifts and exchange using the "Needs and Offers List," by photocopying items borrowed through interlibrary loan, and by purchase. Every attempt is made to replace lost, worn, or damaged items, which have permanent value. Attempts are also made to obtain depository items not received when claims are exhausted, and non-depository items identified through patron request. Considerations in deciding to purchase microform replacements for paper depository items include space, condition of the original, and usage. A relatively small number of duplicates are acquired through "Needs and Offers" and through purchase. The decision to duplicate an item is based on its current significance, historic value, and usage. Examples of duplicated items are documents relating to Mississippi, such as the census, and heavily used documents such as the Statistical Abstract. Federal documents are selected for binding using similar criteria as regular library materials: complete units of significant serials, significant series such as those from the Census Bureau, reference materials, and any heavily used item. Significant older, fragile materials are placed in phase boxes or pamphlet binders.

DISCARDS

Depository materials are not gifts, but loans, and remain the property of
the U.S. government. Parameters for discarding are detailed in the Regional Discard Policy, Government Publications Authorized for Discard by Regional Depository Libraries, and in Weeding a Depository Collection. There are limitations to the amount of weeding allowed regional depositories. While there is a list of superseded documents that may be discarded by selective depositories, regional depositories may only discard publications that are superseded by later editions or cumulative compilations.

MISSISSIPPI STATE DOCUMENTS

BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

The depository system for Mississippi state documents was established on May 27, 1966. The Library was designated a "complete" state depository on October 31, 1966. Since March 1, 1976, the Library's policy has been to develop as comprehensive a collection of state documents as possible. As a result of this effort and of the fact that our depository is third in priority of distribution, the State Recorder of Documents has described the present collection as "probably the best in the state." Accordingly, the collection serves a wider public beyond its primary clientele. The depository is expected to conform to the guidelines set forth in the publication, State Depository for Public Documents: Handbook for State Agencies and Depository Libraries.

DEFINITION

As defined in the Handbook, a Mississippi public document is:

"Any item published by the state government, for the state government, or at state government expense, that would be available without charge upon request from any person other than the employees of the producing agency, and which bears the imprint of any state government agency."

HOUSING

The bulk of the collection of Mississippi state documents is housed on the bottom floor of the annex, the Library's off-site storage facility, in the Modern Political Archives stacks. Rare materials, such as the Territorial Papers, and publications of the University are housed in the Library's Archives and Special Collections Department. Oxford municipal publications, which are not state documents, are also housed in Archives.
ACQUISITIONS

Claiming: Claims can be made by checking the Mississippi State Government Publications' Index against acquisitions. Non-depository items can be obtained through direct correspondence with the issuing agencies. Between one-third and one-half of current acquisitions are obtained in this manner.

Purchase: A very limited number of state documents are purchased. Examples of these include the Mississippi Statistical Abstract and special publications produced in cooperation with commercial publishers, such as archeological reports from the Department of Archives and History.

RETENTION AND DISCARDING

Retention guidelines from the Handbook state that documents should be retained at least three years, unless they contain information that becomes outdated more quickly, or if a cumulative edition supersedes them. After three years, documents that are obsolete, little used, or have no historical value may be discarded with discretion. A local weeding policy states that after five years, a state document may be discarded if it is obsolete, damaged beyond repair, or of limited historical value.