

Historical Collection Policies

I. The Library's Mission And The Purpose Of Maintaining A Historical Collection

A. **Library Mission.** The Mission of the Hingham Public Library (HPL) is to offer patrons outstanding library services delivered efficiently, effectively, and professionally, This includes:

- Offering a diverse collection of print, media and electronic materials that meets the recreational and educational needs and interests of our patrons, including popular current titles, literary classics, and appropriate historical works;
- Providing materials and services to contribute to and nurture the personal growth, enrichment, enjoyment, and education of our patrons;
- Encouraging early childhood literacy;
- Encouraging life-long learning;
- Enabling individuals of all ages to explore their community and the world through cultural, artistic, informational, and historical programs and displays;
- Providing service on equal terms to all individuals in the community and working toward the development of educated, tolerant, citizens committed to the well-being of the community;
- Providing a community center and destination where patrons of all ages can meet to exchange ideas, discuss issues, enjoy a congenial atmosphere, and relax.

B. Purpose Of Maintaining A Historical Collection. The Historical Collection helps to fulfill HPL's mission by collecting, preserving, sharing, promoting, and interpreting literary, artistic, and intellectual history, with particular emphasis on the heritage of Hingham and its people. The purpose of the Historical Collection is to:

1. Collect, arrange, describe, and preserve the documents, photographs, artifacts, books, and other materials that constitute the historical record of Hingham;
2. Help Hingham residents understand the history and importance of the Town and its citizens and to contribute to the economic and social enhancement of the Town;
3. Provide access to historical materials for educational, research, and scholarly purposes;
4. Arrange for exhibition of materials in the Collection, including loans to libraries, cultural institutions, government agencies, and other appropriate groups, as well as publication and distribution of items in the Collection.

C. General Responsibilities For Historical Collection.

1. The Board of Trustees of the HPL is the governing body of the Library and exercises ultimate authority over all aspects of its operations including the acquisition and disposition of items in the Collection and the use and administration of the Historical Collection.
2. Historical materials may be used for purposes that further the mission of the HPL. Appropriate usage shall be determined by the Library Director in consultation with the Library's archival and reference staff. In determining appropriate usage, the Library Director shall consult with the Library's Officers, Board of Trustees and its Committees as the Director deems appropriate or the Board may require.
3. The Collection is preserved, cared for, and administered by the Library Director and Staff in accordance with approved policies and professional guidelines.

4. The Library Director oversees archival operations and the development of reports, grants, and other documents as required by the HPL's Board of Trustees or other agencies.
5. The Library Staff engages in collection-related activities including arrangement and description, cataloging, preservation, reference services, and exhibit assistance.

D. Amendment Of Historical Collection Policies. The Board of Trustees may alter or amend Historical Collection Policies. The Board may also make exceptions to the policies in particular cases, which shall not permanently modify the policies.

II. Scope of Historical Collection

- A. **General Historical Collection.** The general Collection includes books and similar materials that are not offered as part of a special collection. This includes items written in other languages and materials authored by Hingham residents. Types of materials include yearbooks, street lists, magazines, and published biographical, historical, and fiction books. Subjects include the history of Hingham, important Hingham residents, the industrial history of Hingham, and the history of Plymouth County and Massachusetts.
- B. **Special Collections.** Special collections include, but are not restricted to, personal and family papers as well as club and organizational records that do not originate from Town departments. These materials come in many formats, including digital files, art, videos, and paper documents. The subjects of these materials include the military, commercial, familial, and political history of Hingham.
- C. **Image & Audiovisual Collection.** The image and audiovisual collection includes materials that are not offered as part of a special collection. Types of materials include photographs, glass plate negatives, paintings, film, DVDs, and CDs. The materials are related to the town of Hingham in such ways as having been created

and/or owned by a Hingham resident, depicting events and/or places in Hingham, and displaying the history of Plymouth County and Massachusetts.

D. Museum Collection. The museum collection includes many different types of artifacts, including textiles, ornaments, and tools. The artifacts are related to the history of Hingham in some significant way, such as having been made and/or used by a Hingham resident, representing an important commercial industry in the town, and depicting the town and/or its residents.

E. Genealogy Collection. The genealogy collection consists of unpublished materials that have been created by current or former residents, as well as descendants of former residents. They include genealogies and family histories that have not been donated as part of a special collection. The materials delineate the history of families and individuals in Hingham, and may include photographs, written life stories, and vital records.

F. Subject Files. Subject files include various materials, such as pamphlets, flyers, programs, and newspaper clippings, which are not associated with a special collection. They may have been collected by the Library's staff or volunteers, or donated by others. They are arranged by subject, and include information on the military, town departments, local events, residents, and businesses in Hingham.

III. Acquisition Policies For The Historical Collection .

A. Purpose of the Acquisition Policies.

The purpose of the Acquisition Policies is to provide guidance for the evaluation of historical materials offered to the HPL, in light of prevailing professional standards in the archival field.

B. Guidelines for Acquiring Items.

The Library generally accepts into the Historical Collection only donated items, but depending on the circumstances, items may be added by means of gifts, bequests, purchases, exchanges, or loans. Gifts to the HPL may or may not qualify for deductions under federal or state tax codes. Donors are advised to obtain legal guidance on the deductibility of a prospective donation and their own appraisals for tax purposes. When deciding upon an acquisition, the Library considers many factors, including but not limited to the following:

1. Are the materials consistent with the desired scope of the Historical Collection?
2. Is the condition, size, and physical nature of the material such that the Library can properly store, care for, and maintain them?
3. Do the materials complement other items in the collection?
Duplicates are acceptable when appropriate.
4. Generally, there should be no undue restrictions on materials, such as those allowing only certain individuals to access them, imposing long periods during which the materials are closed to research, and the like. Exceptions can be made for rare and extremely valuable materials.
5. Are the materials currently useful or likely to have significant historical value in the future?

C. Conditions for Accepting Materials Into The Collection.

Unless otherwise agreed,

1. All donations are considered outright and unconditional gifts to be used at the HPL's discretion.
2. All donations include any necessary permissions, including copyright, for the reproduction by HPL of materials for commercial, scholarly, and educational use, provided that proper credit is given.

3. For works of art, photographs, audio-visual materials, and manuscripts, HPL reserves the right to reproduce the work(s) for use in catalogs, brochures, and any other publications by the HPL or to use them to publicize the HPL and/or its collections.
4. There is no guarantee that accepted materials will be permanently exhibited.
5. There is no guarantee that Special Collections will be kept physically intact.
6. Subject to the rules and regulations of the HPL governing access, materials accepted into the Collection may be accessed by all members of the public.
7. Donors' contributions will be publicly acknowledged, but personal contact information will not be released. Anonymous gifts to HPL are appreciated and can be specially arranged.

D. Procedures For Acquisitions.

1. Anyone wishing to add something to the Collection or to suggest any additions to the Collection should contact the Library through the Director, or any Trustee, Staff member, or volunteer. Proposed acquisitions are reviewed by a Collections Committee, consisting of two HPL staff members appointed by the Library Director and a member of the Board of Trustees appointed by the Library President.
2. After a due diligence investigation of the provenance and other available information on the proposed materials, the Collections Committee shall meet to evaluate the proposed acquisition and its terms and shall recommend whether to accept or not accept it into the Historical Collection. Two members constitute a quorum. Two votes in either the affirmative or the negative shall constitute a recommendation. The Committee shall report its recommendation to the Library Director.

3. After any additional investigation, analysis, or evaluation deemed appropriate, the Library Director shall decide whether to make an acquisition and the terms of the acquisition. The Library Director's decision shall be communicated to the Library President and is final, unless the Library President refers the decision to the Board of Trustees for review.

E. Documentation Of Accessions.

1. Upon the acceptance of a donation, the Donor will be given a Deed of Gift form to complete. The HPL will retain the original and a copy will be furnished to the donor.
2. Once the materials have been accepted, a timely letter of appreciation or other statement of gratitude will be sent to the Donor.
3. The materials will be assigned an accession number based on the current year and the number of collections that have been donated during that year. This will be documented both in a physical record book and a digital spreadsheet or database. This documentation procedure may be amended from time to time by a majority vote of the Collections Committee.
4. Documentation related to the acquisition of the materials, including the Deed of Gift and any correspondence, will be placed in a permanent accession file.
5. Materials will be processed and/or cataloged according to prevailing standard archival practices.

IV. Deaccession Policies For The Historical Collection.

A. General Statement

1. The Hingham Public Library recognizes that the process of removing material from the Historical Collection is a serious action that requires thorough deliberation and careful reflection upon the

interests of the public, scholarly and cultural community, and HPL's mission and resources. Material shall be deaccessioned only when it serves the best interests of the Library, not because it benefits any other organizations or individuals.

2. Materials are considered deaccessioned when they have been formally and permanently removed from the Historical Collection.

B. Criteria for Deaccessioning Materials.

Materials will not ordinarily be deaccessioned within three years after the date they were acquired. HPL considers many factors in making a deaccession decision, including but not limited to the following questions, which should be seriously considered and answered before deaccession takes place:

1. Does the material reflect the mission of the HPL and the purpose of the Historical Collection?
2. In what ways would deaccessioning of the materials affect public access to information and historical research?
3. Would it be more useful to patrons and educators if the materials were located at another organization?
4. Is this duplicate material or can the information it contains be found in another format?
5. Has the material deteriorated so much that it is no longer useful? Is the cost of restoration/preservation higher than the materials warrant or budgets permit?
6. Are the materials accessible? Are the resources available for processing, cataloging, and preserving the materials?
7. Are there any restrictions, including Donor agreements or other legal issues, affecting whether/how the materials can be deaccessioned?

8. Does the material lack physical integrity leading to a loss of historical value (e.g. the materials were found to be inauthentic or were heavily and badly restored)?
9. Does the condition of the materials pose a danger to the HPL, its collections, its staff, and/or visitors (e.g. biological and chemical threats, flammability, size, etc.)?

C. Procedures for Deaccessioning Materials

1. The Collections Committee shall review the Historical Collection to evaluate materials suitable for deaccession and consider suggested removal of materials.
2. A list of all Historical Collection items being considered for deaccession shall be made available to the public at the reference desk.
3. After review and investigation, the Collections Committee shall recommend to the Library Director whether deaccession should occur, and if so, whether a particular disposition is recommended. The Library Director's decision shall be final unless the Library President determines in his discretion that the decision should be reviewed by the Board of Trustees.
4. After the materials have been deaccessioned, all identifying numbers and marks shall be removed if feasible.
5. After the materials have been disposed, all written records of the material will be marked "DEACCESSIONED" in red ink in a prominent position. Digital records will have a note containing the word "DEACCESSIONED" in bold, capitalized letters.
6. A deaccession form must be filled out and all applicable documentation placed within a permanent deaccession file.

D. Disposition Of Deaccessioned Materials

At the discretion of the HPL staff, deaccessioned materials may be returned to the Donor or the Donor's family. Otherwise, the procedures for disposition of deaccessioned materials are as follows.

1. **Transfer or exchange materials with/to another organization.** The preferred method of disposition is to contact other non-profit organizations and seek to transfer items or exchange them for materials of similar value.
2. **Sale to another non-profit organization.** In some cases materials would be better served at another repository. The Library can sell materials of value to other non-profit institutions after determining their value.
3. **Sale.** The sale of materials to individuals or organizations that are not non-profit should not be considered until the previous two options have been fully explored. The preferred method of private sale is at a public auction when feasible.
4. **Destruction.** This option should not be invoked until all other options have failed, or the materials have deteriorated so much that the other options are not applicable. Materials may be destroyed no earlier than 72 hours from the time of this decision.

E. Documentation. After the disposal of the deaccessioned materials, the Collections Committee will assemble all the documentation related to the deaccession transaction into a Deaccession File

1. A deaccession form will be generated describing the complete details of the deaccessioning process.
2. All related documentation of the deaccessioning process should also be included in the Deaccession File. Such documentation includes:
 - a) Correspondence (including email, faxes, and regular mail);
 - b) All reports generated by staff and outside appraisers (if applicable);

- c) HPL receipts and checks;
- d) Signed authorization by the Library Director;
- e) Final disposition;
- f) Photographs.

V. Access Policy Historical Collection

1. The Historical Collection is primarily housed on the upper floor of the Library in two climate-controlled rooms, the Loring and Wilder Rooms. These materials may be accessed during regular library hours as staff and time allow, and therefore it is strongly recommended that patrons contact the reference department and make an appointment before coming to use the Historical Collection. Researchers who cannot come to the HPL may also contact the Reference Department for research assistance.
2. Access to the Collection is subject to special rules and regulations designed to insure the integrity of the Collection and to assess the continued usefulness of items in the collection. These are set forth in the Access Policy of the Hingham Public Library Historical Collection, which may be changed from time to time by the Library Director as circumstances may require.
3. Patrons must adhere to the rules and regulations. Violation may result in restriction or denial of access to the Collection by a Staff member. Appeal from a restriction on or denial of use, should be made in writing to the Library Director, whose decision will be final.

Access Policy

Hingham Public Library Historical Collection

A. Where and How to Access the Historical Collection

1. Individuals who wish to use the Historical Collection are required to show a photograph ID. They must also fill out and sign a research form.
2. Patrons have access to the Loring Room, on the upper floor of the library, in order to look at materials in the Historical Collection. Patrons are not allowed access to the Wilder Room. Materials that are located in the Wilder Room will be brought into the Loring Room by a staff member for patron use.
3. No materials may be taken out of the Loring Room without the permission of a staff member.

B. Reproductions & Publications

1. Photographs, photocopies, and scans of materials cannot be taken without the permission of the reference staff.
2. Materials may be used for publication purposes only if written consent has been obtained from the HPL.
3. The patron assumes sole responsibility for any infringement of the literary rights, copyrights, or other rights which pertain to the use and/or publication of historical materials.

C. What Can and Cannot Be Brought Into the Loring Room

1. Food and beverages are not allowed in the Loring Room for any reason.
2. Patrons may only bring pencils, paper, notebooks, or computers into the Loring Room. Patrons must obtain permission to bring in cell phones, cameras, and portable scanners. All other belongings will be held in the storage area outside of the room.

D. Using the Historical Collection

1. Only pencils may be used in the Loring Room. Pens, markers, and other writing utensils are not allowed.
2. Patrons may not write on any materials or trace them.
3. All cell phones must be in silent or vibrate mode when taken into the Loring Room. Cell phone conversations are only allowed in the café, lobby, and outdoors.
4. All materials must be placed on the tables. They may not be placed in the patron's lap or propped against the edge of the table. In some cases the use of gloves may be required.
5. Patrons must put all materials back in the proper folders and boxes in their original order. The staff will instruct patrons on how to note the materials' original location.
6. The patron assumes all financial responsibility for any damage to the materials caused by his/her use.
7. The HPL may restrict access to items that are in fragile condition. If available, suitable reproductions will be provided for those who wish to use these materials.