**Historical Society of Haddonfield Library and Archive**

**Collection Management Policies**

Updated 2/3/2015

**Library Collection Scope**

The collections of the Historical Society of Haddonfield Library and Archive focus on the history of Haddonfield and its environs in South Jersey.

In practice, the Library collects materials related to the people, families, organizations, businesses, institutions, land, structures, and other entities connected to Haddonfield and/or surrounding municipalities. The Library collects manuscripts, graphics, print holdings, and occasionally audio-visual and digital materials. As space allows, the Library also collects photocopies of materials that may be of use to researchers interested in the history of the Haddonfield area, especially copies of hard-to-access original items.

Though the Historical Society as a whole may be interested in objects or artifacts for its Greenfield Hall museum collections, the Library generally does not collect three-dimensional objects.

# Collecting Guidelines

The following guidelines further clarify the types of materials that the Library will and will not collect. Please note that we reserve the right to make exceptions.

**General**

Geographic scope. For most materials, our focus is on Haddonfield. We are also interested in the surrounding region if/when it relates to the history of the borough, its people, its businesses, its institutions, etc. That surrounding region may include neighboring boroughs, Camden County, Gloucester County, and even Philadelphia. For materials that do not support our geographic focus, we may offer materials to other historical societies or other repositories as appropriate.

Inventories. For manuscript collections that are larger than 5 linear feet or contain 5 or more boxes, we ask the donor to provide at least a box-level inventory along with the collection (1-3 lines summarizing the types of materials and approximate span dates of each box).

Keeping collections together. The Historical Society’s first priority is collecting whole manuscript collections rather than individual items, and we discourage donors and vendors from breaking up collections. We also seek to acquire materials that add to our existing collections, especially our image collections. If a new collection is offered to us and we know that another repository already has a part of the collection, we will encourage the donor to give the other repository first refusal on the new material.

*Donations.* The Library welcomes gifts, donations and bequests of manuscripts, graphics, print/published holdings, and occasionally audio-visual and digital materials. Gifts are evaluated according to set guidelines, as described below.

Purchases. At this time, the Library is not able to purchase items for its collections.

**Types of materials**

Artifacts. Though the Historical Society as a whole may be interested in “three-dimensional” artifacts for its Greenfield Hall museum collections, the Library itself does not collect objects such as textiles, clothing, furniture, cookware, machinery, or toys. We make exceptions for some small, easy-to-house artifacts (such as medals, coins, or political buttons) that are part of or directly related to a larger manuscript collection.

Audio-visual materials. The Library does not currently have a way to service audio-visual materials for researchers. We will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to accept audio-visual materials for our collections, based on items’ research value, the cost to maintain the materials, and other factors. This includes items in the following formats: 8mm or 16mm motion picture film, open-reel audio tape, audiocassette, compact disk, VHS videocassette, digital video disk, other video formats, 35mm film, phonograph disks, or microfilm.

Born-digital materials. The Library generally does not collect born-digital materials. We need to do more research and develop appropriate policies before we can undertake collecting.

Confidential materials. The Library generally prefers to avoid collecting records that must be closed to researchers for an extended period for legal privacy reasons, including medical records; personnel files; student records; lawyer, therapist, or social worker case files. We have a policy of destroying or blacking out Social Security numbers, credit card numbers, and certain other types of personal data when we encounter them in collections.

Deeds. The Library collects deeds and related property documents if they relate to Haddonfield land or are part of a larger manuscript collection.

Ephemera. The Library actively collects Haddonfield-related ephemera (printed materials intended for short-term use), such as flyers, pamphlets, tickets, menus, calling cards, handbills, and tracts. In most cases, the Library will add ephemera to existing Library-created artificial collections to improve researcher access.

Genealogical collections. We generally do not collect genealogical research collections, except when the research relates to an individual significant to Haddonfield, a significant period in Haddonfield’s history, or a family that spent significant time in the community. In such collections, we are most interested in original documents and photographs, secondarily in photocopies of original documents where the location of the originals is noted. We are least interested in notes and charts that lack specific citations. Original family history documents, including marriage certificates and records kept in family Bibles, are considered manuscript materials and are generally welcomed.

Graphics. The Library has limited resources for dealing with graphic materials (particularly original art) and collects selectively in this area. Most works of art will instead be offered to the Society’s Greenfield Hall museum collections. The Library primarily collects graphic items that document Haddonfield and its environs or were created by Haddonfield residents. Items might include works of art on paper such as drawings, watercolors, and prints; maps; architectural drawings; and broadsides. The Library does not collect works on canvas or wood. Framed items will be deframed.

Hazardous materials. As much as possible, the Library avoids collecting materials that contain nitrate film, significant mold, or live insects.

*Manuscripts*. The Library collects a wide variety of original and unique manuscript materials, including correspondence, diaries, notes, memoranda, minutes, ledgers, account books and other financial documents, scrapbooks, professional files, legal documents, letters of incorporation, and more.

Newspapers and serials. In general we collect only bound volumes or substantial runs prior to 1960. We may collect individual issues if they are exceptionally significant and hard to find, fill a gap in our holdings, or are part of a larger manuscript collection.

Oral histories. Oral histories should be accompanied by release forms (signed by both interviewee and interviewer) so that we can make them available to researchers. We strongly prefer that oral histories include a typed transcription.

Photographs / still images. We collect photographic prints, negatives (film and glass plate), cased photographs (daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, etc.), transparencies, and slides. Generally we will ask donors to help identify as much information about the images as possible, including the places, people and time periods depicted. We prefer to collect black-and-white rather than color photos because many color dyes are unstable. We do not collect nitrate film.

Photocopied materials. Although the Library routinely accepts photocopies as part of collections, we generally do not collect photocopies of whole manuscript collections. Depending on format, we may accept these into our print collections.

Postcards. The Library actively collects historical postcards depicting Haddonfield and its environs.

*Print / published works.* We primarily collect print holdings only when the work substantially supports our collection focus, such as works about Haddonfield or its environs, Camden County, or Gloucester County (pre-1844). We generally do not collect works created by Haddonfield authors, except where the author is significant or the work is particularly early. In rare cases, we may retain the library holdings of an exceptionally significant individual to Haddonfield if the individual annotated the works or we believe that retaining the original collection will be useful for researchers.

*Unpublished works.* We collect unpublished manuscripts such as family histories, reminiscences, and school research papers when the topic of the manuscript supports our collection focus. We will also collect such works if they are part of a larger manuscript collection.

**Collection Management Guidelines**

Accession Policies

The Haddonfield Historical Society Library and Archive relies on donations of materials to grow its collections. At this time, the Library is not able to purchase items for its collections.

The Library does not knowingly accept materials that it knows to have been illegally obtained or imported, recovered under conditions deemed unethical by professional standards, or recovered at the expense of the environment, cultural sites, or a cultural group.

Acceptance of materials for the library is not to be construed as a recommendation or estimate of its value, quality or historical significance.

Loans of Materials

The Library reviews proposals from other institutions regarding loans of its items on a case by case basis. Loans are approved only when appropriate plans are in place for transportation, display, environmental monitoring, security, insurance, and public interpretation.

The Library generally does not accept materials on deposit or on loan.

Reappraisal

Periodically, the Library may reappraise its holdings, either topically, by collection or even by item, to determine whether those materials meet current collecting scope and policies. During this reappraisal process, the Archivist/Librarian or her designate will gather information about the item(s) being reappraised, determine ownership of the item(s), and when appropriate, recommend to the Society’s Library Committee if materials should be deaccessioned. The Chair of the Library Committee has final approval to deaccession materials.

Deaccessioning

When appropriate, and only after a thorough reappraisal process, the Library’s Archivist/Librarian recommends items to the Society’s Library Committee for deaccessioning. The Library Committee, consisting of at least one chairman and two additional members, will discuss these recommendations and aim to reach a consensus about each recommendation. If a consensus cannot be reached, the recommendation will be tabled.

Deaccessioning is never taken lightly, and will be recommended only when the item(s) no longer meet collecting scope or policies, would be better utilized elsewhere, is/are in poor condition, is/are too expensive to maintain, is/are in an outdated format, duplicates materials available elsewhere, faces strict usage restrictions, etc.

There is currently no New Jersey law regarding abandoned property. If the ownership of a collection or item selected for possible deaccessioning is unclear, such as when its corresponding deed of gift or accession record cannot be found, the Library will make a good faith effort to research the provenance of the item/collection. The Library Committee will then pass its findings and deaccessioning recommendation on to the Society’s full board for review. The Board will have final authority to determine how to proceed on deaccessioning materials without clear title.

The Library will follow these protocols for deaccessioning materials:

* **Transfer the materials to an appropriate repository**, ideally one which would keep the materials open to public access and ensure long-term preservation.
* **Return the materials to the donor, donor’s heirs, or originating agency/institution**. The Library will pay for the cost to transfer the materials back to the donor/institution unless otherwise negotiated.
* **Sell the materials**. The Library will not sell any manuscripts, graphics or other archival materials during the deaccession process. We may sell deaccessioned published books, postcards, stamps or other collectibles when those items do not contain archival value. All proceeds from sales of deaccessioned Library materials will be used to support the long-term preservation of the Library’s holdings, including but not limited to archival boxes/folders, specialty preservation treatments, or digitization.
* **Destroy the materials**. The Library will destroy or discard materials only as a last resort or as mandated by law. Reasons for destroying materials may include but are not limited to: private or restricted information, extremely poor physical condition, duplicative materials, obsolete formats, pest infestations, or chemical instability.