

Somerset Public Library

Local History Collection Development Policy



April 20, 2021

The Somerset Public Library exists to serve as a center of informal learning, individual growth and recreation for the citizens of Somerset. The Library expects to make a contribution to the learning process and to aid individuals in the lifelong process of growth and appreciation and understanding of themselves, their neighbors, and the world around them. In addition, the library makes its building available as a setting for appropriate events according to the needs and interests of the community.

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Mission

The Somerset Public Library's Local History Collection exists to serve the citizens of Somerset as a resource for local history books, documents, periodicals, and the published works of local authors as well as a center for local family history and genealogical research.

Audience

The Local History Collection serves the citizens of Somerset and out of town patrons interested in Somerset's history and genealogical research. Patrons may use the local history room on a walk-in basis or by making an appointment with the Reference librarian, and patrons may conduct research in the local history room by studying the available resources at the conference table or taking advantage of the microfilm machine. Patrons may access some materials online on the local history page of the library's website. Patrons may also call or email the Head of Reference with particular local history and/or genealogical questions and be provided with digital copies of relevant documents when they are available.

Collection Statement

The Local History Collection is a small archive of books, newspapers, maps, photographs, artifacts, historical documents and records which begin shortly before the Town of Somerset's incorporation in 1790 and continue to the present day. This archive strives to provide a chronological history of Somerset and includes: Somerset's Annual Town Reports, vital statistics, Somerset High School yearbooks, directories, maps, news clippings, scrap books, pamphlets, books published by local authors, books on local family history and general genealogical research, microfilm for two local newspapers, limited photographs, two Town of Somerset time capsules, and a special collection of Somerset Public Library's history.

Acquisition

The Somerset Public Library actively seeks to add to its Local History Collection. Primary areas of collecting include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Materials that record the history, development, and current state of affairs of the Town of Somerset.
- Personal manuscripts and other materials that record and demonstrate a significant contribution to the history, experience, and ancestry of Somerset individuals and families.
- Records that chronicle the history of Somerset organizations and institutions.
- Materials that record the social and cultural heritage of past and present ethnic, immigrant and religious groups in the community.

- Materials that contribute to a better understanding of the area's geography, demographics and architecture.
- Materials that record and provide context for understanding the lives of historically significant figures associated with the Town of Somerset.
- Materials that provide instruction in the practice of genealogy, local history, preservation, oral history, similar topics.

Formats

Formats collected include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Atlases and maps
- Books
- Broad sides, brochures, pamphlets and other ephemera
- Cemetery records
- Census records
- Digital files
- Government documents
- Institutional or organizational records
- Manuscripts
- Microfilm
- Military records
- Newspapers
- Periodicals and journals
- Personal papers: account books, diaries, financial records, letters, memoirs
- Photographs
- Scrapbooks
- Town histories
- Town directories
- Yearbooks

Three dimensional artifacts will not be added to the collection unless, in rare instances, they are deemed appropriate to the collection and can be properly housed and displayed. In most cases, the Somerset Historical Society will be a more appropriate destination for such items.

Selection Criteria

- Relevance to the history of Somerset and surrounding areas.
- Suitability of the subject to the Local History Collection.
- Available space in the Library to house materials.
- Non-duplication of material within the collection.
- Authenticity and completeness of record.
- Quality of the physical form of material.
- Ease of use for patrons.

- Ability to store, display, or otherwise care for the item properly.
- Cost to preserve, store, and process.
- Security requirements to store and/or display.
- Lack of restrictions by donor.

Donations

The Library welcomes donations to its Local History Collection. All donors must complete a Deed of Gift Agreement in order to establish the transfer of ownership of donated materials (and copyright, if appropriate) to the Library. The transfer to the Library of the copyright owned by donors of individual items makes it easier for the Library and its users to use the items in unique and creative ways. Once the Deed of Gift Agreement is signed by the donor, the donated material becomes the unrestricted property of the Library.

The Library reserves the right to refuse an offered donation. The Library will not accept material that shows damage from mold, mildew, water, insects, smoke, or dirt, as such material can harm other items in the collection. The Library may also refuse a donation based on the Selection Criteria.

The Library reserves the right to decide how the donated material will be displayed or stored, how the material may be used by the public, and how long the material will be retained. Donated materials may be scanned and placed on the Internet for viewing or otherwise reformatted. They may also be moved from the Local History Collection to other sections of the library, sold, transferred to another library or historical society, or discarded. The Library will not, and cannot, conduct any monetary appraisals for donors nor give tax advice. If donors plan to take a tax deduction for their donations, they should consult a tax accountant or attorney. Any monetary appraisals are the responsibility of the donor and should be conducted before transferring materials to the Library.

Access

The Local History Collection is primarily housed in the Local History Room, as much of it is fragile or irreplaceable. Some duplicate copies of frequently used items are housed in the reference and/or circulating areas of the library. A portion of the collection has also been digitized and is available through the Library website.

Research materials in the Local History Room may only be used on site under supervision of a Somerset Public Library Reference Librarian. Researchers should consider making an appointment with the Reference Librarian in advance to ensure that adequate assistance and supervision are available. Photocopies or photos of research materials may either be made with permission by the Reference Librarian/Library Director or refused, depending upon the condition of the item.

Anyone who copies or reproduces materials from the collection should be aware of Title 17 and especially the provisions of Section 108 of the U.S. Code (Copyright Law) and takes full responsibility for complying with it. A Reference Librarian can help point users to resources that can aid in determining a

work's copyright status. Exceptions to the above procedures, such as loans to other organizations for educational or publication purposes, may be made at the discretion of the Library Director.

Review and Deaccession

From time to time, the Local History Collection will be reviewed, and the deaccession of some materials may take place. An object may be deaccessioned if it meets one of the following criteria:

- It does not fall within the scope of the Library's mission or its Collections Management Policy
- It lacks provenance
- It cannot be salvaged, even with conservation, because of advanced deterioration
- It is not authentic
- A better example exists in the collection
- The Library is unable to maintain it
- It poses a threat to the safety of the public or other collections
- It is subject to a legislative mandate, e.g., repatriation

Disposal of materials will be by one of the following methods:

- Gift, sale or exchange to other local historical or educational institutions
- Donate to the book sale of the Friends of the Somerset Public Library
- Destruction and disposal in a sensitive manner (of deteriorated material). Two members of the Library staff must be present at the disposal.

All ID numbers and other references to the Library will be removed before the material leaves the Library's premises. All proceeds from the deaccessioned material are to be donated to the Friends of the Somerset Public Library.

DEED OF GIFT
Somerset Public Library

Donor's Name: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____ Date Donated _____

ITEMS DONATED:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

I (we), being the sole legal owner(s) of the property described above, hereby give the Somerset Public Library, for its use and benefit without restriction as to use or disposition, the property described above. In addition, I (we) give all copyright and associated rights I (we) have. To the best of my (our) knowledge I (we) have good and complete right, title, and interest (including all transferred copyright, trademark, and related interests) to give. I (we) have no objections to my (our) name(s) appearing as donor(s) in connection with this gift in Library records, publications, and other descriptions. No goods or services were received in exchange for this donation.

_____ Date _____
Donor's Signature

_____ Date _____
Authorized Somerset Public Library Staff Signature

This gift is given in memory of: _____

Donor's Copy _____ Library's Copy _____