

Local Studies Collection Policy (approved 1/15/19)

1. Purpose (Mission): The Meyersdale Public Library Local Studies Collection (Pennsylvania Room) will serve as a central research resource for information collected in regard to the diverse functions and for historical records of the community. The mission of the Meyersdale Public Library Local Studies Collection is to collect and preserve these materials in order to make them readily available in person and in digital format to researchers and the public. This collection exists as a key part of our broader mission statement: *“Libraries are not just about books, but about **problem-solving through information**. Our focus is to provide information resources, local history and genealogy services, and a creative and welcoming environment for children.”* It also supports our growing role as the genealogy hub of the Somerset County Federated Library System.

2. Subject Areas: We will collect items related to the general history, and to the history of business and industry, buildings and infrastructure, organizations (including schools and churches), and families (especially for genealogical purposes) in the specified geographic areas.

3. Geographic Areas and Chronological Periods: Our collection will focus on the following geographic areas, in this order of emphasis:

- Meyersdale
- Our complete service area of Southern Somerset County
- Somerset County as a whole
- Adjacent counties within and outside of the state boundary, as well as other areas related to our county by strong migration patterns, if useful for Somerset County genealogical or historical research.

The collection will focus primarily on the period of time when towns were founded in our area, and subsequent years, through the present. However, resources related to the first days of settlement by Europeans, and our earliest history from the days of the Monongahela culture, will also be considered for acceptance.

4. Types of historically significant materials accepted:

- publications such as family histories, directories, county and regional histories, church histories, and books pertaining to major historical events of the area.
- newspapers, mainly on microfilm. Hard-copy of historic area newspapers not held in any format by our library or other known sources may be accepted with a goal toward microfilming and digitizing as soon as possible. Current hard-copy issues of the local weekly *The New Republic* newspaper will be accumulated until a viable amount exists for microfilming and/or digital processing with permission of the newspaper publisher/copyright holder.
 - photographs, which will be digitized as time and resources permit.
 - clippings, which will be copied for insertion into family and subject files.
 - notes, documents, postcards, diaries, journals.
 - audio or visual recordings, especially oral histories.
 - digital files: on computer discs, drives, and in cloud-based systems.
 - cemetery records and funeral home records.
 - newsletters of area historical societies and genealogical groups.
 - information about Somerset County residents’ service in the military.
 - bibliographies, indexes, guides.
 - transcriptions of items of significant historical interest.

- obituaries.
- maps and charts.
- subscriptions /memberships with historical and genealogical magazines and websites, including maintaining subscription to Ancestry.com and status as Family Search center.
- other items as determined by the Archivist and Library Director. Librarian will seek input from area genealogists and historical researchers.

5. Types of materials not accepted:

- Moldy, musty, or vermin-infested items
- Three-dimensional items such as pottery, arrowheads, commemorative plates, quilts, or any other item better suited to preservation in a museum, rather than in/on the files, shelves, and boxes of a library archive.
- Duplicates of items already held in some form (unless, in the opinion of the Archivist, there is a practical reason to hold a duplicate copy).
- Items which do not relate in some way to Somerset County research.

6. Acquisitions/Collection Building: Due to the limited budget of the library, much of the collection has been and will continue to be the result of donations. Monetary donations designated for genealogy, PA Room, or archives will be used for the collection or for supplies to properly preserve archived items. In addition, diligent efforts will be made by the archivist and Library Director to seek out grants for archival purposes, including digitization.

Where the budget will allow, items will be purchased for the collection. The emphasis will be on useful reference materials, both old and new. Major current works about the area, both recent and historical, will be purchased whenever possible. Popular items will be purchased in duplicate when possible so that a copy may also be included in the library's circulating collection.

The library will make use of projects such as Scan PA, when available, to increase its digital archives through digitization of community history items, which must be accompanied by a proper permission form. The ultimate goal of digitization will be to make items available through open-source platforms such as the Pennsylvania Newspaper Archive and PA Photos and Documents (and, through PA Photos and Documents, eventual inclusion in the Digital Public Library of America (DLPA)).

6. Donations: The library is grateful for donations, as its collection has largely been the result of donations. However, limits must be placed on items received due to space and storage limitations. Items must fit within our collection policy as stated above and be gifted unconditionally with a Deed of Gift signed by the donor, except under highly unusual circumstances as approved by the Archivist in consultation with the Library Director. In the event of the offer of an indefinite loan of an exceptional item, rather than an outright donation, the Board of Trustees will be consulted.
7. Copyright: Copyright law will be observed, as outlined in our library's Copyright Policy.
8. Weeding: From time to time, items may be found to no longer fit the needs and collection policy of our PA Room. With consultation of the Archivist and Director, such items may be withdrawn from the collection. They may go to the general circulating collection, be transferred to other institutions, sold, returned to donors, or discarded.
9. Housing of and Access to the Collection: The collection will be housed in the Pennsylvania Room of the Library. The most valuable and fragile items will be locked in the fireproof cabinet, with slightly less valuable items locked in the archival closet.

The PA Room is typically staffed Monday through Friday between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Research help will normally be available during those hours. Ordinary reference materials and family and subject files will be available at other times during regular library hours. Patrons entering the PA Room when staff is not present must leave all carry-in items at the desk, provide ID, and sign in. Food will not be permitted. Fragile and valuable items will not be accessible when PA Room staff is not present. Fragile items will be handled only by trained PA Room staff and volunteers.

PA Room materials generally do not circulate. Occasional exceptions may be made when duplicate copies are owned.

10. Policy updates: The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Library Director and Archivist, with changes to be approved by the Board of Trustees.