

POLICIES OF THE THE MECHANICVILLE DISTRICT PUBLIC LIBRARY  
HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS POLICY

Adopted 3/28/ 2009

Revised: 2013

Need for this Policy:

The Library needs this policy to establish guidelines for accepting historical documents and artifacts.

Policy:

- I. Philosophy
  - A. Philosophy of collecting Historical Documents and Artifacts for the City of Mechanicville. As an Historical Depository, the Mechanicville District Public Library (MDPL) should not be considered a community attic...
  - B. As an IRS 501-c3 non-profit educational entity, the MDPL has a “fiduciary responsibility” (legal responsibility) for its documents and artifacts. This means (among other things) that we must adequately document (with policies, forms, and records) and care for our collections under penalty of law.
  - C. Acceptance of a document and/or an artifact means that the MDPL will accrue both the cost and responsibility of cataloging, storing, exhibiting, conserving, and preserving that object.
  - D. The Depository or MDPL must have a mission statement. This helps spell out what the MDPL wants and does not want and helps to set some limits for its collection by area, time, type, etc. Setting these limits saves the MDPL time, space, money, and other resources.
  - E. There are times when we simply must decline the offer of a document and/or an object and our mission statement and collections policy helps us to determine those times.

**Five most common situations to decline a donation**

**Object is out of the MDPL’s scope** (wrong subject, geographic area, etc.). We may provide the prospective donor with a list of alternative depositories which might be interested.

**Duplicate(s) is/are already in the collections**. We may provide the prospective donor with a list of depositories which might be interested.

**Poor condition**. We must be very wary of accepting items that may tax space and conservation resources. In some cases, we may seek funding for conservation before accepting the gift.

**Large size**. We must be wary of accepting items that may tax our limited storage and display space.

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**“Conditional gift” and “Permanent loans”**. The MDPL shall avoid objects donated with “conditions” (although exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis). We cannot accept an artifact with the condition, “This item must always be on display.” Long-term loans may be accepted after careful consideration and a unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees.

Mechanicville District Public Library’s Collections Policy

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1. Mission (Purpose) Statement

The Mechanicville District Public Library, the learning center of the community, shall provide multi-media access to educational, cultural and recreational materials, programs and services for its chartered population. The Library shall provide a common space for the community where individuals, organizations and groups can connect and interact. The Library shall collect and preserve the community’s historical materials.

It will operate exclusively for charitable and educational purposes (not including the operation of a full secondary educational institution or a vocational school), within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended.

2. Collections Scope

The scope of the MDPL’s collections is ultimately dictated by our above mission statement.

A. Specific Areas of Collections

1. The City of Mechanicville’s history and artifacts.
  - a. Representative objects, which illustrate the history of both subject areas.

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3. Additional Criteria for Acceptance or Rejection

- A. Size of Collection- the MDPL's permanent collections should not exceed a reasonable and practical number of similarly designed, constructed, or used objects, originating from a specific group or user.
- B. Size of Object- Any object requiring a storage or display area larger than 3 cubic feet must be reviewed and accepted by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees.
- C. Condition of Object- All objects entering the MDPL must be in a condition that will not cause injury or damage to other objects in the collections, storage or display facilities, or individuals working at or visiting the library.
- D. Donor's restrictions, conditions or encumbrances- generally all objects entering the library's historical collections shall be without any restrictions, conditions, or encumbrances. The MDPL reserves the right to use all gifts in the manner which best serves the library and the library's mission statement. Restrictions, conditions, or encumbrances may be accepted by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees.

4. Accession Procedures

- A. New objects- accession procedure- The MDPL's Director or any Board Member may temporarily accept objects for "accession consideration", provided they fill out and have signed by a prospective donor a temporary receipt form notifying them of the "Collections Procedure".
- B. Objects temporarily accepted for "accession consideration", shall not be considered part of the "permanent" collections of the library until they meet the requirements set forth in the "Collections Policy" and/or they gain the majority approval of the MDPL Director and/or the Board of Trustee. The owners of the objects which fail to gain acceptance will be notified, and they have the option of removing the item(s) within 30 days of that notification. Failure of the owner to do so provides' the MDPL the right to dispose of those objects in any manner it sees fit.

5. Cataloging Procedure

- A. The Director and/or any other designated, trained, member shall catalog all newly accessed objects in accordance with specific catalog procedures listed in the "Cataloging Procedure" addendum to this policy.

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6. Conservation Care and Handling

- A. Preservation of the “collections” (artifacts, photographs, archive materials, ephemera, and/or general history), is part of the MDPL’s mission statement, and, as such, we will strive to meet professional standards regarding handling, storage, and displaying. Any cleaning, repair, or artifact conservation must be done under the direction and/or with the approval of the Board of Trustees and in keeping with professionally accepted standards.

7. Public Access to the Collections

- A. The MDPL must maintain a secure environment to protect the collections, however, every attempt will be made to allow the public “special access” to the collections not currently on display. The MDPL’s staff must approve and supervise all requests for special access. When requested, the library will allow access to the collections. All other requests will be granted on a case-by-case basis and for bona fide research purposes.

If you wish to potentially donate artifacts according to these guidelines, please contact the

**Mechanicville District Public Library**

**190 North Main Street**

**Mechanicville, NY 12110**

**518-664-4646**