



STEVENS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Preservation Room Policy

The Stevens Memorial Library has established the Ruth B. Whittemore Preservation Room to preserve and assist in research of the history and heritage of Ashburnham. The purpose of the Preservation Room collection is to:

- Collect, arrange, describe, and preserve the documents, photographs, artifacts, books, and other materials that constitute the historical record of Ashburnham;
- Help Ashburnham residents understand the history and importance of the Town and its citizens, and to contribute to the social enhancement of the Town;
- Provide access to historical materials for educational, research, and scholarly purposes.

General Responsibilities

- The Stevens Memorial Library Board of Trustees 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 Preservation Room collection.
- The Board of Trustees delegates all collection development decisions, including those related to the Preservation Room collection, to the Library Director. Any exceptional situations may be referred to the Board for approval.
- The Collection is preserved, cared for, and administered by the Library Director and Staff in accordance with approved policies and professional guidelines.
- The Board of Trustees may alter or amend this policy. The Board may also make exceptions in particular cases, which shall not permanently modify the policy.

Scope

In general, the Collection includes the following:

- Ashburnham vital records, annual reports, bylaws, street lists, genealogies, town histories, church records, and maps;

- Personal papers of Ashburnham residents (diaries, correspondence, etc.);
- Works of Ashburnham authors;
- Works about or published in Ashburnham, including locally-published or curated newsletters and newspapers;
- Photographs of Ashburnham or its residents if determined to have historical or research value;
- Works and records pertaining to regional history

The collection does not generally contain the following:

- Art;
- Items determined by the Board of Trustees to require an exceptional financial commitment to upkeep, insure, or access;
- Yearbooks;
- Meeting minutes or agendas;
- Most non-print media (at the discretion of the director);
- Current news articles

Acquisition of materials

General Guidelines

The Library generally accepts into the Preservation Room 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 Stevens Memorial Library 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:

- Are the materials consistent with the desired scope of the Preservation Room collection?
- Is the condition, size, and physical nature of the material such that the Library can properly store, care for, and maintain them?
- Do the materials complement other items in the collection?
- Are the materials currently useful or likely to have significant historical value in the future?

- 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.

Conditions for Accepting Materials

The Stevens Memorial Library has established a Gift Acceptance Policy that can be viewed in its entirety on the Library website or at the Library. Relevant portions are summarized or expanded upon here for the sake of convenience. Unless otherwise agreed:

- All donations are considered outright and unconditional gifts to be used at the exclusive discretion of the Stevens Memorial Library.
- All donations include any necessary permissions, including copyright, for the reproduction by the Library of materials for commercial, scholarly, and educational use, provided that proper credit is given.
- There is no guarantee that accepted materials will be permanently exhibited.
- There is no guarantee that Special Collections will be kept physically intact.
- Subject to the rules and regulations of the Library governing access, materials accepted into the Collection may be accessed by all members of the public.
- Donors' contributions will be publicly acknowledged, but personal contact information will not be released. Anonymous gifts are appreciated and can be specially arranged.

Deaccessioning of materials

Materials are considered deaccessioned when they have been formally and permanently removed from the Preservation Room collection. As stated in the Collection Development Policy, "It is rare that material in the archives is weeded or deaccessioned. Items will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Library Director and may include:

- Items previously added to the archives that are not central to the library's mission and collection policy
 - Duplicate items
 - Items that may more appropriately reside at another library or at another organization."
- (Approved by Library Board of Trustees, February 2015)

The Library considers many factors in making a deaccession decision, including, but not limited to, the following questions, which are seriously considered before deaccession takes place:

- Does the material reflect the mission of the Stevens Memorial Library and the purpose of the Preservation Room collection?
- In what ways would deaccessioning of the materials affect public access to information and historical research?
- Would it be more useful to patrons and educators if the materials were located at another organization?
- Is this duplicate material or can the information it contains be found in another format?
- Has the material deteriorated so much that it is no longer useful? Is the cost of restoration/preservation higher than the materials warrant or the budget permits?
- Are the materials accessible? Are the resources available for processing, cataloging, and preserving the materials?
- Are there any restrictions, including Donor agreements or other legal issues, affecting whether/how the materials can be deaccessioned?
- Does the material lack the physical integrity leading to a loss of historical value (e.g., the materials were found to be inauthentic or were heavily and badly restored)?
- Does the condition of the materials pose a danger to the Library, its collections, its staff, and/or visitors (e.g., biological or chemical threats, flammability, size, etc.)?

In the case that items are deaccessioned, their disposition is at the discretion of the Library. This may mean that materials are returned to the donor, transferred to another institution, sold, or destroyed. The Library makes every effort to destroy no materials in this collection, and will only do so when no other options are available or applicable. Records of deaccessioned materials will be retained by the Library.

Access to the Collection

The Preservation Room is a climate-controlled room located on the upper level of the Library. Its collection may be accessed during regular library hours as staff and time allow, and therefore it is strongly recommended that patrons contact the Library and make an appointment before visiting. Access to the Collection is subject to rules and regulations designed to ensure the integrity of the Collection and to assess the continued usefulness of items in the collection.

Violation of these rules may result in restriction or denial of access to the Collection by the Library Director. Appeal from a restriction on or denial of use, should be made in writing to the Board of Trustees, whose decision will be final.

Researchers who cannot come to the Library may contact the staff for research assistance.

Rules and Regulations

1. Individuals who wish to use the Preservation Room collection are required to show a photograph ID. This ID will be held at the Circulation Desk while the collection is being accessed.
2. No material may be removed from the Preservation Room without prior permission of a staff member.
3. Photographs, photocopies, and scans of materials cannot be taken without permission of Library staff.
4. Materials may be used for publication purposes only if written consent has been obtained from the Library. 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.
5. Food and beverages (including water) are not allowed in the Preservation Room for any reason.
6. Patrons may only bring pencils (no pens), paper, notebooks, or computers into the Preservation Room. Patrons must obtain permission to bring cell phones, cameras, and portable scanners. All other belongings will be held at the Circulation Desk.
7. Patrons may not write on any materials or trace them.
8. 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.
9. Patrons must put all materials back in the proper folders and boxes in their original order.
10. The patron assumes all financial responsibility for any damage to the materials caused by her/his use.
11. The Library 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.

Approved by Library Board of Trustees, Feb 2015

Reviewed April 2020