

History Room Policy

PURPOSE

The History Room is the area within the Somerset Public Library for collecting, preserving, and making accessible special collection materials of enduring historical value that document the social, economic, or political development of the Village of Somerset and surrounding towns of Somerset, St. Joseph and Star Prairie.

COLLECTION RATIONALE

The items in the special archival collections are distinguished from the Somerset Public Library's general holdings by virtue of the material's uniqueness, rarity, physical format, content or depth of subject warranting special treatment regarding housing, cataloging, preservation, or use. In general, due to space and staffing limitations, museum objects are not collected.

ACCESS

The History Room is available for supervised use during the room's open hours or by prior appointment during normal library hours. Users do not need a Library Card to access the room. The reading room is wheelchair accessible.

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

The Somerset Public Library accepts donations that fall within the scope of the Collection Development Policy. Due to limited staffing, budget, and space, all donations or gifts are subject to review by the Library staff and may be declined. The Library reserves the right to decline any acquisition, including but not limited to, the following reasons:

- Inability of the Library to provide suitable space, staffing, supplies and equipment.
- Inability to provide sufficient support to preserve and provide access to the archival records.
- Materials do not fit within the scope of the Collection Development Policy.
- Materials can be readily found in other area archives or libraries.
- Donor's ownership of the materials is in question or disputed.
- Items are in poor condition; ie. Mildew, dirt, water damage, brittle, missing pieces.

Once a donation is accepted by an authorized staff member, they will prepare a *Deed of Gift* for the materials to be donated, which must be signed by the donor. This Deed of Gift transfers any rights the donor may have concerning ownership or copyright to the Somerset Public Library. Special conditions may be specified by the donor, but the Library may refuse any donation in which it deems the conditions of use are overly restrictive.

The Library will not appraise gifts. Under IRS regulations no library, archive, or museum can perform an appraisal. If a donor would like their collection appraised for tax purposes, this should be done before collection is donated.

DE-SELECTION OF MATERIALS

In order to maintain a viable and useful collection and to assure adequate space for its housing, the Library, in rare occasions, may remove items from the archival collections. On a highly selective basis, materials that have become obsolete, fall outside the collection rationale outlined in this policy, are no longer relevant, or are in poor physical condition may be withdrawn from the collection, be disposed of, offered to a more appropriate repository, or transferred to the general library collection.

Guidelines for Use

ACCESSING THE COLLECTION

The collection is accessible between the hours of 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Monday-Thursday. To access archives outside of our regular hours, contact us at (715) 247-5228 or email us at somersetpl@somersetlibrary.org.

In-depth research assistance completed by a librarian is available for a nominal fee. Please use our online [Research Request Form here](#) for more information. Collected fees and donations are reinvested into the preservation and maintenance of the History Room collection.

The many of the collection resources can be accessed online at somersetlibrary.org, under the "Services" tab.

IN-PERSON USE OF THE COLLECTION

- Materials in the History Room Collection are considered part of the reference collection and cannot be checked out, nor can they leave the History Room.
- In order to protect the collection, food, beverages and ink pens, backpacks and large coats are not permitted in the History Room.
- A printer/scanner is available for use in the History Room. Please see the front desk staff for pricing of photocopies.
- It is the patron's responsibility to determine if the intended use violates copyright laws.
- Please sign the register at the front desk. The History Room is locked to secure the collection and record usage.

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Our local history collection focuses on the history of the Village of Somerset, and surrounding communities, from its settlement to the present.

- [Somerset Pioneers](#)
- Somerset Star Newspaper 1974-1990
- [Somerset Public Library photo gallery](#)
- [Triple Centennial Jubilee Souvenir Book](#)
- Somerset business and organization files
- Census records, 1900
- Family genealogy
- [Oral Histories](#)
- Somerset High School yearbooks
- Atlases and plat books
- Somerset telephone directory