



LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORIAN'S OFFICE
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Collection Development and Management Policy

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I. Introduction

The Livingston County Historian's Office is a department of local government of Livingston County, New York, and serves as a public archive and research center. The mission of the County Historian's Office is to collect, preserve, and interpret Livingston County's documentary heritage and manage historical records for the public. The populations served by the County Historian's Office include Livingston County officials, county departments, and the general public, both within and outside Livingston County.

The County Historian's Office is located at 5 Murray Hill Drive, Mt. Morris, New York, 14510. The historian and office staff can be contacted by phone at (585) 243-7955 or email at historian@livingstoncountyny.gov.

II. Collection Objectives and Scope

The County Historian's Office aims to collect, preserve, and make accessible a wide range of documentary heritage pertaining to Livingston County, including that which relates to each of the seventeen towns within the county and their communities. Selection criteria include materials deemed to have enduring historical value and that chronicle local people, places, and events from roughly the late 1700s to the present day. The office's intention is to collect information on subjects, populations, eras, and geographic locations as accurately and representatively as possible.

a. Format and Types of Materials

The County Historian's Office collects a wide variety of documentary materials, including but not limited to published and printed books, pamphlets, and newspapers; correspondence and personal papers; organizational, institutional, municipal,* and business records; maps and blueprints; photographic images; audio-video materials; genealogical materials, including family histories and oral histories; other relevant ephemera; and non-archival reference materials.

Physical and digital formats of all documentary types are accepted. The office does not collect artifacts such as objects, tools, or textiles (see section IV. Exclusions)

* The County Historian's Office does not typically collect the official records of Livingston County or town and village governments. In general, these are held by the respective departments. Over time, scattered historical official records have come to reside at the County Historian's Office. In addition, certain permanent records are managed by the historian with the understanding that they remain the property of the creating entity. In

instances where certain county or municipal records have met retention, the county historian may appraise the items for intrinsic historical value. The creating entity may then choose to donate the records to the County Historian's Office.

b. Geography and Time Period

Scope and Strengths

The Livingston County Historian's Office collects relevant materials that relate to the geographic area known today as Livingston County. This includes materials dated to or referring to the period prior to 1821, when Livingston County was created, or prior to the annexation of several towns or portions of towns, which occurred between 1822 and 1857. The office's collections span from the late 18th century to the present day. Currently, the bulk of the collections best represent the mid- to late 19th century and early 20th century.

Opportunities

The office intends to collect archival materials from all time periods, building on the 19th-century strengths and seeking to expand representation from the late 18th century, 20th, and 21st-century.

c. Language

Scope and Strengths

Currently, collections are almost entirely in English, with a few records in Latin.

Opportunities

The office welcomes collections in additional languages, such as Spanish, Italian, and German, to better represent populations and communities in historical and present-day Livingston County.

d. Subjects

Scope and Strengths

The County Historian's Office's collections currently encompass numerous broad subjects, including Livingston County government and local municipal governments; architecture; business, industry, and agriculture; education; religion; people and genealogy; military; organizations; cultural events; parks and recreation; transportation; and social and political movements.

Opportunities

The office plans to continue expanding the above subjects to deepen understanding, and strives to build on under-documented topics such as businesses, organizations, ethnically and culturally diverse populations, and social movements, especially in the 20th and 21st centuries.

III. Collection Methods

Donation and institutional transfer of materials is the preferred method of collection of the County Historian's Office. Both physical and digital donations from local governments, institutions, organizations, and individuals are welcomed and are assessed on a case-by-case basis. The appraisal process considers such factors as intrinsic historical value, condition, age, rarity, and storage requirements. Materials will only be accepted if the donor has legal ownership. Per the County Historian's Office's Donation Form, donations are absolute transfers with no access or use restrictions (See [Donation Form](#)).

In cases where a donor wishes to retain physical items but wishes to donate the information they contain, the County Historian offers scanning services and retains a digital copy of the scanned item(s). Digital copies of the item(s) will be provided to the donor free of charge. The same donation terms apply (see [Scanning Services and Donation Form](#)).

Purchases of archival materials occur in rare circumstances based on historical value and other factors.

The County Historian's Office will provide a copy of a signed donation form for a donor's personal reference, but does not provide monetary appraisals.

IV. Exclusions

The following may not or will not be accepted as donations due to collection scope and/or archives best practice:

- Artifacts, including textiles, housewares, tools, and other objects
- Materials with uncertain legal ownership or restrictions on access or use
- Items that are excessively damaged, moldy and/or dirty
- Items that have a loose connection to Livingston County but do not have intrinsic research value (ex. books used in a local school)

Should this office be unable to accept a donation, we will make a referral to another appropriate repository when possible. Please contact us with any questions about donations.

V. Retention and Deaccessioning

Items of historical significance are generally considered permanent when accepted by the Livingston County Historian's Office. However, because collection assessment is a continuing process and the scope of collecting may change over time, the acceptance of material does not guarantee the Livingston County Historian's Office will keep materials in perpetuity. The office will assess collection scope and methods on a periodic and as-needed basis.

Generally, a maximum of three copies of any relevant item will be retained, with some exceptions based upon popularity, rarity, age, and condition. Duplicate or out-of-scope items donated with collections will not be retained.

Occasionally, items that were formally accepted into the County Historian's Office holdings ("accessioned") may be formally removed from the collection ("deaccessioned") due to collection scope or item condition. A record of deaccessioned items is maintained.

The county historian will abide by any applicable state laws or guidance and exercise best professional judgment as to appropriate disposition. Whenever possible, items identified for disposal are offered to other institutions or repositories. Deaccessioned items are never sold.

VI. Revisions to Policy

The County Historian's Office recognizes that its collecting focus and procedures may change over time in response to a variety of factors. To address this, we will review this policy at least every two years, with the next scheduled review on or before January 2027.

Please contact the Livingston County Historian's Office with any questions.