

THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center Collection Development Guidelines For Archival Collections

Introduction

The Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center at the Newark Public Library is a research-level repository comprised of books, maps, clippings files, government documents, archives, manuscripts, images and artifacts. We serve the mission of the Newark Public Library to “transform lives and strengthen communities through innovative services, stimulating programs, and inspiring collections” by collecting, preserving and promoting access to our materials. The library’s larger mission is also met through exhibits and programming that feature these materials.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the scope and rationale behind collecting in the Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center, in order to:

- Uphold professional archival standards
- Further Newark Public Library's mission
- Inform the public of our selecting rationale and priorities in an effort to encourage donations

In preparation for the creation of this document, professional literature on collection development and other institutions' practices were consulted. This document was formally approved on October 13, 2023 and will be reviewed every five years.

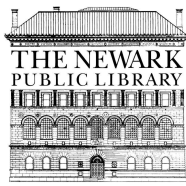
Audience

Materials in the Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center are made available to all researchers on equal terms. We welcome historians, scholars and educators of all levels, and all interested in the history of Newark and New Jersey, to do research in our collections. Library staff are also encouraged to explore our collections and resources for the purposes of library exhibition and program development.

History of Collection

The Newark Public Library has been an anchor institution of Newark since 1888 and currently serves over 450,000 people a year as the largest library system of New Jersey.

The Newark Public Library first organized New Jersey material into a distinct collection in the 1920s. The New Jersey Collection was managed by a reference librarian until 1951, when it became a separate department with its own reference and archival staff. The department became a state government repository in the 1960s, around the same time it began collecting manuscript material. From 1966 to 2005, it was run by Charles F. Cummings, who also served as City Historian. After Cummings’ death in 2005, the department was named for him.



THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Collecting Rationale

Our collecting focuses on research and exhibition value and is driven by the needs of our users. We aim to better serve our users through our archival acquisitions as well as attract new users to access and research our holdings.

Scope of Collecting

We collect historical materials that document the rich history of the city of Newark, New Jersey. More broadly, we collect historical materials that document the histories of municipalities and counties throughout New Jersey.

Format & Types of Materials

The archive collects a wide variety of materials including personal and organizational records, manuscripts, published and unpublished materials, prints, broadsides, maps, atlases, blueprints, photographs and negatives, assorted moving image formats and audio materials, ephemera and artifacts. We do not collect fine art prints.

We are highly selective about acquiring textiles, artifacts, and objects such as plaques, due to the high cost of conserving and storing these items. We are highly selective about acquiring moving image formats and audio materials that are not within the scope of collecting, as these present technological barriers to access.

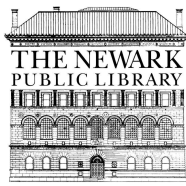
The digital archivist will be consulted when considering the acquisition of these formats only when they are within the scope of collecting. When at all possible, the digital archivist will make these formats accessible to researchers through digitization.

Geography

The main geographic scope of collecting is Newark, New Jersey and Essex County. Surrounding northern New Jersey Counties such as Hudson, Bergen, Passaic, Union, Morris and Sussex are also included given the related and intertwined histories of these areas. Our collecting will primarily focus on strengthening our Essex County and Newark collections.

Time Period

Our collections span the period from the late 18th century to the present day. Currently the bulk of materials are from the 20th century. We will continue collecting within these time periods, as well as adding newer materials to strengthen our current holdings.



THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Language

Our collections are primarily in English. We will continue to collect primarily in English.

Subject Areas

The following subjects are a broad guideline for our collecting priorities as they relate to Newark and Essex County. They represent the variety of our current holdings and include subjects we seek to strengthen with future acquisitions.

Architecture & Civil Engineering

We will continue to collect materials that document Newark's architecture, which include residential and commercial buildings, bridges, roadways and riverfront. Particularly we seek to continue to strengthen our holdings in relation to public housing and urban development, including the movements of architects and city planners.

Business & Industry

We will continue to acquire materials that document the rich industrial and business history of Newark and Essex County. This subject is one of the strongest in our collection and we wish to continue to strengthen it through future acquisitions. This includes both small local businesses and national businesses that bolster the city of Newark as one of the great American cities of commerce.

Education

A large part of our collection is focused on public and private schools and colleges in Newark. We will continue to strengthen this subject area by acquiring materials that document the educational history of the city.

Geography

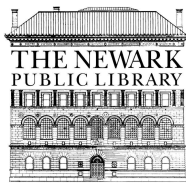
Maps and atlases are one of the strongest areas of our collection. They include maps across the state of New Jersey ranging from the late 19th century through the 21st century. We will continue to strengthen this collection by acquiring and prioritizing maps and atlases that focus on Newark and Essex County.

Immigration

We will continue to strengthen this subject area by acquiring materials that document the immigration experience to Newark by both individual immigrants and immigrant communities.

Journalism

Our newspapers and periodicals are a strength of our collection. We will continue to acquire Newark and Essex County focused newspapers.



THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Land Use & Development

The land use of Newark is one of our strongest subject areas and includes materials on urban planning and development of the city and the preservation of land and buildings. We will continue to collect materials related to these subjects as well as seek out materials related to the more modern revitalization attempts of the city.

Minority Populations

We will continue to strengthen this subject by placing a high priority on materials that relate to the experiences of racial, ethnic, and gender minorities of Newark and Essex County.

Performing Arts

We currently have a strong collection of late 19th and 20th century materials that document Newark's bustling theater and vaudeville district. We will continue to acquire materials that depict Newark as a city of theater and entertainment.

Politics & Public Affairs

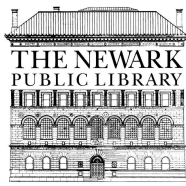
We will continue to acquire governmental publications, and reports, as well as items relating to those holding public office and their efforts. We will continue to collect materials on a statewide level with a high priority on Essex County.

Social Activism

We will continue to collect materials that document the social activism of Newarkers, with a prioritization on topics relating to civil rights and land use.

Collecting Methods

Gifts and donations are accepted from both individuals and organizations and is the preferred method of acquisition of materials. Items to be accessioned into the collection require approval of the Supervising Librarian in charge of the department, in consultation with the archivist. We do not accept materials on deposit or loan. We will not perform monetary appraisals on gifts and donations.



Criteria for Acquisition

Several criteria are used when evaluating materials. Items do not need to meet all criteria for inclusion in the collection.

Evaluation criteria for all acquisitions includes:

- significance, relevance and permanence of subject areas
- relevance to the interest and needs of our users
- public demand or anticipated demand
- relationship to existing collections
- condition of the material
- processing, conservation and storage requirements
- ease of use and access to materials without restriction

Retention

Gifts and donations may be added to existing collections when applicable. A maximum of three copies of any item are generally kept, with some exceptions made relating to rarity and condition. Duplicates and other unwanted items will be disposed of in accordance with the Deed of Gift Agreement. In the absence of the Deed of Gift Agreement, the archivist will exercise their best professional judgment as to the appropriate disposition methods. The acceptance of material does not commit the archive to keep materials in perpetuity.

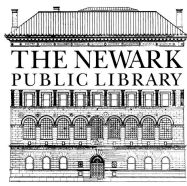
Reappraisal & Deaccession

The archivist will often identify materials that no longer merit inclusion in the collection through a process known as reappraisal. Items that are selected in the process of reappraisal are candidates for deaccessioning. Reappraisal does not always lead to deaccessioning. Candidates for deaccession will be reviewed and decided upon with the Supervising Librarian, the archivist, and in some cases the digital archivist when digitization efforts are relevant or necessary.

Deaccession entails an attempt to return the materials to the original donor or a transfer of the materials to another, more suitable institution. If there are no heirs to the collection, if the donor does not wish to take back the materials, or if there is no appropriate institution found, the Supervising Librarian and the archivist will exercise their best professional judgment as to the appropriate disposition method. This method can include either a sale or disposal, done so in accordance with SAA's Code of Ethics.

Exclusions

We are dedicated to making our collections openly available to all users to the fullest extent possible. Materials with major restrictions to access will not be accepted. In certain situations, materials of high research value may include minor restrictions, which will be considered and clearly outlined in the Deed of Gift Agreement.



THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Related Collections

The Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center works with other repositories with similar collecting missions. The archivist will make referrals to these repositories when materials offered do not fit the collecting scope, or when these materials are a more appropriate fit for these repositories.

Review

As collecting foci may shift over time, we will review and amend this document every five years. The next scheduled review will be in October 2028.