
Collection Development Policy

Adopted May 2025

I. Mission Statement

The mission of the Montgomery County Department of Preservation of Records, also known as the Montgomery County Archives, is to preserve the permanent, historical records of the county, store the inactive records, and collect and preserve other valuable or historically significant Montgomery County materials to ensure that the information contained in these varied documents is readily accessible to county governmental agencies, the people of Montgomery County, and the public at large.

II. Collecting Rationale

The Montgomery County Archives (MCA) acquires materials that document Montgomery County history and support research about the community. This includes materials that record unique and relevant information related to Montgomery County or connect Montgomery County to broader historical trends. In addition, we seek to acquire new collections that enhance the research value of our holdings by accepting materials that document topics of great interest to the community or that have otherwise received very little coverage.

III. Acquisition Policy

Collections are acquired by the following methods:

1. Records transferred to the Archives from other county offices for permanent or temporary care and maintenance.
2. Donations by individuals and organizations, including bequests and anonymous donations.
3. Subject to the approval of the Archivist, loans for duplication, in which the duplications become Montgomery County Archives property along with rights to their use.
4. Creation or collection materials in the development and/or continuation of education programs, exhibits, publications, and other Montgomery County Archives activities.

All acquisitions must be accompanied by a completed transfer form for government records transferred from other departments, or a completed donor agreement for materials donated from individuals outside of Montgomery County Government.

IV. Collecting Categories

Montgomery County Government Records

The MCA is tasked with preserving and making available the historic records of Montgomery County Government. In this context, this refers to the inactive official records of Montgomery County designated as having permanent reference value according to retention schedules established by the County Technical Assistance Service (CTAS) or under the direction of the Montgomery County Public Records Commission. These consist of documents and other materials generated or received by the various departments and agencies of the County while conducting their business.

Montgomery County Government Records comprise the majority of the MCA collections and are the primary focus of the MCA collecting activities.

Manuscripts (Special Collections)

The term *manuscripts* is used here to describe unpublished materials that are created and/or collected throughout the life of an individual or organization. *Manuscripts* may be used to refer to *archives* and *archival materials*. The term *papers* refers to the archival materials of an individual; *records* refers to those materials created by an organization.

Because of the transitory nature of privately-owned manuscript collections, their unique ability to serve as documentary evidence of a distinct historical moment, and the extreme risk of loss of the information contained within them, the MCA prioritizes the acquisition of manuscripts above published or printed materials. The MCA actively seeks donations of original materials related to one of our established collecting areas (described below).

The MCA accepts a wide variety of formats for personal/family papers and organizational records. Personal/family papers might include correspondence, diaries, travel journals, daybooks, photographs, scrapbooks, financial records, research files, notes, biographical/genealogical data, and other unique items. Organization records, in addition to those items described in the preceding sentence, might include meeting minutes, by-laws, foundational documents (constitutions, charters), member records, subject files, and annual reports. While not totally unique, the MCA acknowledges the importance and accepts donations of ephemeral items such as flyers, programs, posters, news clippings, pamphlets, and brochures. The MCA also accepts donations of sound and video records (including film, magnetic media, vinyl records, instantaneous discs, and CDs/DVDs) as well as born-digital materials (computer files, computer discs, hard drives, flash drives, and legacy media). We do not usually accept three-dimensional objects or artifacts.

Acquired manuscript collections are a part of the MCA *Special Collections* and are not considered part of the MCA government records collections.

Publications

Publications is used in this document to refer to items that have been printed and reproduced for either wide or limited distribution. These include books (monographs and serials), magazines, journals, pamphlets, and video and sound records.

In addition to serving as an archival repository, the MCA also houses a limited research library of published materials. Because published items are generally widely available, the MCA does not place priority on acquiring published materials. However, we do accept donations of relevant publications deemed to be of significant research value, provided that the acquisition of such items directly supports our mission. Publications must adhere to one of the defined collecting areas below to be accepted for addition into the MCA's holdings.

V. Subject Areas Collected

Local Communities and Organizations

One of the primary collecting areas of the MCA relates to the people, organizations and communities active within the limits of Montgomery County. The MCA seeks out donations of materials relating to the lived experience of Montgomery County residents, family groups, and organizations including, but not limited to, clubs, benevolent groups and societies, nonprofits, religious organizations, and associations living in the region of Montgomery County.

Family History and Genealogy

The MCA is frequently accessed by researchers in support of genealogy and family history research. Therefore, we encourage the donation of family papers or ephemera that focus primarily on families that reside in Montgomery County or have strong connections to the community. The MCA also occasionally accepts donations of published family history resources provided they support our mission and adhere to the scope of collections.

Cartography and Geography

Maps and other cartographical documents are exceptionally valuable pieces of evidence when examining a region's history. Aligning with this, the MCA accepts donations of materials documenting the geography of Montgomery County, including maps, charts, atlases and other materials related to land conservation and use.

Commerce and Industry

Local business and commerce played a major role in the history of Montgomery County and its surrounding communities. The Archives seeks to document this extensive history by acquiring materials related to the businesses, industries, and business leaders from the

area. This may include but is not limited to items related to stores, factories, warehouses, and agriculture.

Location and Architectural History

The MCA recognizes the historical significance of historic homes, buildings, landmarks and historical locations throughout Montgomery County. Therefore, the Montgomery County Archives welcomes materials that document historically relevant public and private buildings, houses, geographic locations, and landmarks from all areas of Montgomery County.

VI. Selection Restrictions

The Archives reserves the right to refuse a donation at the discretion of the Archivist. Donations may be declined for the following reasons:

- Falling outside the scope of collections.
- Lack of accurate and/or significant documentation.
- Duplication of materials already held in collections.
- Need for extensive conservation and/or care.
- Content or donor-imposed restrictions that limit the potential use of the materials.
- Physical size or format that falls outside the housing capabilities of the Archives.

VII. Deaccession Policy

All accessioned items shall be retained permanently in the Archives as long as they retain their physical integrity, authenticity, and as long as they remain relevant and useful to the goals and collection policies of the Archives. Deaccessioning of items may be considered when these conditions no longer prevail or if the Archives should receive similar items in better condition at the discretion of the Archivist.