

## How to Donate Your Materials

**Due to limitations, the HSP Archives Department is reducing the types of collection donations we will accept, until further notice. Please see the [Archives Department Collecting Guidelines](#) <sup>[1]</sup> page for details.**

---

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania welcomes inquiries about potential donations. Please contact us first before shipping any material. We will then work with you to determine the most appropriate disposition of the material and to conclude a donation agreement.

## What to Donate

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania collects a wide variety of archival material related to the history of Pennsylvania and the greater Philadelphia region. HSP staff members will work with you to identify which materials are appropriate to donate. In some cases, HSP staff members may wish to see the material before it is physically transferred.

HSP collects both personal papers created by individuals and families, and records created by organizations and businesses. Types of materials that we collect may include: letters, diaries, account books, deeds, meeting minutes, scrapbooks, photographs, drawings, pamphlets, invitations, articles of incorporation, professional files, financial and membership records, legal documents, and others. For more information, see our official [Collections Scope document](#) <sup>[2]</sup> and the more detailed [Archives Department Collecting Guidelines](#) <sup>[3]</sup>.

HSP is especially interested to add to its manuscript collections' strengths in the 18th and 19th centuries and to extend more recent documentation of the Philadelphia region's changing diversity as reflected in:

- cultural and religious life and activity
- industrial and environmental change
- immigration
- civic, political, and legal reform and activism.

## Transferring Materials to HSP

Please contact us before shipping any material, so that we can discuss the donation process with you and help you identify which materials to donate. You can then ship the records or papers to us or make an appointment to deliver them in person. In exceptional cases, HSP staff members may be able to pick up the materials.

To transfer ownership of the archival materials to HSP, we will ask you to sign a deed of gift. The deed of gift includes a brief description of the material donated and can be customized to address the individual donor's needs. The donation becomes official once it is reviewed and approved by the Library Committee of HSP's Board of Councilors. HSP generally does not accept materials on deposit or on loan.

## Care of the Collections

HSP's archival collections are kept in environmentally controlled, secure, closed storage areas. Staff members retrieve them for research use in a supervised reading room. When the building is closed, it is protected by an electronic security system.

As resources and time permit, Archives Department staff members improve research access by arranging collections and describing them in written finding aids and online catalog records. To preserve them physically, collection materials are transferred to acid-free folders and boxes and sometimes receive more specialized treatment from professionally trained preservation technicians.

Arranging, describing, and preserving collections is expensive, and often depends on grants or private contributions. We would be happy to discuss with you the cost of processing your papers or records, and we encourage you to consider a monetary gift so that we can complete this work in a timely manner.

## Access to Collections

As a general rule, HSP aims to provide full public access to our collections, within the framework of our library policies and procedures. In some cases, such as medical records or client case files, HSP will restrict access to specific parts of a collection for a limited period, for legal reasons and to protect privacy. In addition, a collection may sometimes be unavailable to researchers until processing is completed.

## Monetary Appraisals for Tax Deductions

You may be able to take a tax deduction for the donation of personal papers to HSP. HSP staff members cannot provide monetary appraisals of your gifts. We can supply you with a list of professional appraisers in the Philadelphia area, and we encourage you to discuss possible tax implications with your accountant and attorney.

To discuss the possible gift of archival material, contact Cary Hutto, Director of Archives, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19107. (215) 732-6200 ext. 307.

To discuss the possible gift of books, pamphlets, or serials, contact Lee Arnold, Director of the Library and Collections, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19107. (215) 732-6200 ext. 237.

---

### Links

[1] <https://hsp.org/collections/about-our-collections/collection-scope/archives-department-collecting-guidelines>

[2] <http://hsp.org/collections/about-our-collections/collection-scope>

[3] <https://hsp.org/node/2244>