

Jack Russell Memorial Library
Hartford History Room Policy

Purpose and Scope of the Hartford History Room Collection

The Hartford History Room (HHR) is located on the second floor of the Jack Russell Memorial Library (JRML). The purpose of the HHR is to collect, preserve and make accessible special collections of materials with enduring historical value. These materials document the civic, social, educational, economic, religious, or political development of the City of Hartford and surrounding communities. The JRML Board is the governing body for setting policy. The day-to-day operations of the HHR are the responsibility of the Director of the Library. Funding for the HHR is provided by the City of Hartford through its annual tax levy appropriation to the JRML.

The major emphasis of the collection is historical and current information about the City of Hartford and the surrounding communities. Subject areas include early settlers, ethnic groups, families, businesses, work, and prominent individuals and events. Select materials about the county, state, nation, and world may be included.

The primary audience is researchers who are served by accessing records in person and by staff and/or volunteers assisting with limited research.

Contents of the Collection

The HHR collection is non-circulating and intended to be used onsite by researchers, genealogists, historians, the public, and volunteers. It is distinguished from the JRML's general holdings and circulation policy by the materials' uniqueness, rarity, physical format, content, depth of subject, or intrinsic or monetary value warranting special treatment regarding housing, cataloging, preservation, or use.

The collection houses materials in a variety of formats including but not limited to artifacts, books, pamphlets, posters, maps, photographs, postcards, letters, yearbooks, audio recordings, newspaper articles, and scrapbooks. The JRML collects everything that is written in historical records derived from or concerns the community at a bare minimum.

This collection's primary concern is preserving historical information and facts.

HHR Funding

Monetary donations are always accepted for the HHR. Donations can be made to JRML for the HHR and should clearly note the donation be used for the HHR specifically. Donors can donate in person at JRML or via USPS. All HHR donations are kept in a separate account with the City of Hartford until needed for preservation supplies, equipment upgrades, a special purchase to increase access to the collection, or items requested by the HHR volunteer team. Any wishes for the use of the funds given at the time of donation will be considered. Most annual operating costs for the HHR are covered by the JRML with the City of Hartford providing an annual appropriation to the JRML on behalf of the HHR (\$6,500). The JRML Board of Trustees approves all expenditures from this account. The Director of the Library is responsible for providing monthly updates regarding donations to the HHR Committee and the Library Board.

JRML automatically mails a letter to donors acknowledging their donation to the HHR. A copy of the letter is placed on permanent file in three (3) places:

1. JRML's Library Board records. Donations are listed on the monthly library board agenda under correspondence.
2. The City of Hartford has permanent copies of library finances related to deposits and withdrawals.
3. JRML keeps copies of donation letters and related financial records together in a file for each fiscal year.
- 4.

JRML also sends a to the family or specific family members when donations are made as memorials if the donor(s) requests. Donors who specifically request an acknowledgment letter are asked to provide names and current mailing addresses with their donations.

Upon request, JRML will work with individuals or families who ask for a list of donors so they may send their own thank you letters while others want a record of donations for estate files.

On their own, the HHR Committee and Volunteers may wish to send a thank you letter to donors who donate specifically to the HHR. Nothing outside of this policy prevents this from taking place.

HHR Committee

A committee formed of HHR Volunteers and JRML History Room Liaison will meet monthly. The makeup of the committee shall be no more than five to seven individuals who express interest in serving.

Guests are welcome to attend HHR Committee meetings. For meeting dates and times, please reach out to the HHR Liaison at historyroom@hartfordlibrary.org or via phone at 262-673-8249.

The HHR Committee shall be charged with the following tasks:

1. **Review all gifts and donations.** This includes physical items and monetary donations.
 - a. Determining records and items that may or may not fit into the collection. JRML is duty-bound to help find an appropriate repository for items that will not fit into the collection. Furthermore, as items are archived staff or volunteers find a record that does not fit into the collection, the HHR Committee in conjunction with JRML will work to find an appropriate repository with accompanying paperwork. This process will make the item easily traceable if someone asks for the item, knowing it was donated to the HHR collection.
 - b. **Reviewing copies of items known to be in the collection.** When someone offers to donate a copy of an item known to be in the collection, the item that is in better condition and more complete should be kept. The HHR Committee in conjunction with JRML will try

to find another collection to give the original item to or it may be officially removed from the collection. In cases where the item is refused because of duplication, a recommendation will be made to the donor of local entities that may be interested.

- c. **The HHR Committee reserves the right to decline** any item or record, including but not limited to, for the following reasons:
- Inability to provide suitable space, staffing, supplies, and equipment. While the lack of one or more of these does not constitute a compelling reason for refusing archives and manuscripts, deficiency in one or more may constitute grounds for a temporary delay in acquisition.
 - Inability to provide sufficient support to preserve and provide access to archival records.
 - Materials can be readily found in other area archives or libraries (ex. newspapers, books, published and unpublished records or items not meant to be retained or preserved also known as ephemera)
 - The donor's ownership of the materials is in question or disputed.

2. Donation Acceptance

When a donation is received, JRML staff will prepare a deed of gift form specifying the material(s) to be donated, which then must be signed by the donor. This deed of gift transfers any rights the donor may have concerning ownership or—in most cases—copyright to the JRML. Special conditions may be specified by the donor, but the HHR Committee may refuse any donation in which it deems the conditions of use are overly restrictive. JRML will keep the original copy of the deed of gift for inventory purposes in the HHR and the donor will receive a photocopy via USPS or email for their records.

Donors are welcome to examine the material they have donated during open hours in the HHR or by appointment with the Library Liaison. Donors may request a copy of any inventories, finding aids, or other research materials produced about the donated material.

JRML and the HHR Committee will not appraise gifts. Under IRS regulations no Library, archive, or museum can perform an appraisal. The library will not hire an independent appraiser. If a donor would like their collection appraised for tax purposes, this should be done before the item or record is donated.

Monetary donations made to JRML for the HHR and clearly noted the donation be used for the HHR specifically, will be reviewed by the HHR Committee. The Director of the Library is responsible for providing monthly updates regarding donations to the HHR Committee and the Library Board.

3. Collection Acceptance

Items shall be officially accepted into the collection as soon as acquired. Any accepted items or records must be accompanied by a Deed of Gift form.

Once accepted into the collection removal must go through the removal process (see "Removal of items" below). Archiving and further integration into the collection may take place over time, however, the Deed of Gift paperwork shall be done immediately as some of the questions on the paperwork may be best answered by the people making the donation.

4. Removal of items

To maintain a viable and useful collection and assure adequate housing space, the HHR Committee may occasionally remove items from the HHR Collection. 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 and returned to the original donor, offered to a more appropriate repository, transferred to the general Library holdings, be disposed of, or sold.

Cooperative Collection Development Efforts

The JRML and HHR Committee will work with other organizations involved in similar efforts, but not limited to the City of Hartford Departments, the Hartford Historical Society, and the Tower Heritage Center Home to the Washington County Historical Society.

Volunteers

Anyone who is interested in preserving history is welcome to volunteer. JRML's Volunteer Policy applies to individuals working in the HHR.

Under the direction of the Director of the Library, a JRML staff member will be assigned to act as a History Room Liaison. This is necessary to ensure continuity in operations for the JRML and the City of Hartford.

HHR volunteers are asked to sign in and out when they arrive to track the number of hours donated yearly. To keep the collection in good working order and secure, volunteers who wish to take projects home to work on are asked to check out the materials through the Library Liaison.

Access to the HHR during off hours for volunteers requires signing out the key at the Reference Desk.

Access

The Hartford History Room is open on Mondays from 9 AM – 3 PM and Thursdays from 3 PM – 8 PM. Researchers do not need a library card to access the room. The room is wheelchair accessible. It is requested that users under the age of 14 be

accompanied by a responsible adult who will remain with the child for the entire research process.

Equipment

All equipment in the HHR is the property of the City of Hartford unless marked as a temporary loan from an individual.