

The John Sherman Room Collection Development Policy

The John Sherman Room at the Mansfield/Richland County Public Library is a unique “library within a library,” housing materials of local interest for the Richland County community’s use. The collection began in 1904 with a donation of books and materials belonging to the late Senator John Sherman. The Sherman Room, formally opened in December 1908, also houses a dedicated collection of books by or about noted local author Louis Bromfield. In late 1981, the Sherman Room moved to its current location on the second floor of the Main library.

The Sherman Room serves as a research repository for primary and secondary source material that documents the history of Richland County, including resources for genealogical research. Because Mansfield is the largest city in a fifty-mile radius, users of the Sherman Room are not limited to Richland County residents, which means the collection includes some resources pertinent to the five surrounding counties. The physical space is not equipped to function as a climate-controlled permanent archive for three-dimensional artifacts or extremely fragile paper materials. However, the Sherman Room does exist to:

- Collect and preserve documentary and photographic materials related to the growth and development of Richland County, Ohio, or which pertain in whole or in part to activities within the geographic boundaries of Richland County.
- Make materials accessible to the general public unless access is restricted by legal requirements, written agreement with the donor, or physical condition of the material.
- Provide adequate and appropriate conditions for the storage, protection, and preservation of the materials, as reasonably practicable, based on best practices and recommendations for public library special collections.
- Provide regular reference services to individuals, organizations, or other groups interested in the materials housed in the Sherman Room.
- Provide educational and outreach programming whenever possible to increase awareness of Richland County’s history and the materials housed in the Sherman Room.

The Sherman Room’s collection includes the Library’s rare volumes from the original Sherman donation, as well as other special collections held by the Main Library. The collection is comprised of non-circulating materials, which can only be accessed at the Library, including but not limited to:

- School Yearbooks
- Microfilmed Newspaper, Census, and Other Records
- City Directories and Phone Books
- Genealogical and Local History Reference Books

- Out of print or otherwise unobtainable Local Interest Books and Materials with fewer than two copies in the library's collection
- Bound Periodical and Serial Volumes
- Special format materials: photographs, postcards, maps, microforms, etc.

The collection also includes a selection of books and documents written by local authors (former or current residents of Richland County or the surrounding counties). All books in this collection must meet the Mansfield/Richland County Public Library's Collection Development Policy. Additionally, materials selected for inclusion in the Local Author collection must have been published by a reputable publisher a minimum of seventy-five years prior to the current date, been positively reviewed in a professional publication, or be of particular value to the Sherman Room collection.

CORE REFERENCE COLLECTION

The John Sherman Room collects materials, published and unpublished, in a variety of textual and visual formats (photographic, cartographic, digital media, etc.) that pertain to the local history of Richland County and the needs of basic genealogy inquiries in the area, from the earliest days of the county to the present day. The Sherman Room does not serve as a legal repository for any material, including city, county, or school materials, and is not responsible for retaining or providing access to materials required by law to be kept as official records (other than those created by the Library in the operation of the Sherman Room).

ACCESSIBILITY

The Sherman Room is accessible to library customers during set hours of library operation. Every effort will be made to keep the collection as accessible to the public as possible but, due to the nature of the collection, materials are non-circulating and can only be used inside the Sherman Room. Customers must consult a librarian before taking materials out of the Sherman Room for any reason. Irreplaceable, fragile, or valuable materials may be housed in locked storage cabinets to ensure their long-term usability, but these materials can be accessed through the help of a librarian. No person shall be prevented from using materials housed in the Sherman Room unless it is determined that the materials will be physically abused or used in a libelous or illegal manner.

LIMITATIONS OR EXCLUSIONS

The Sherman Room generally does not collect three-dimensional artifacts, newspapers that have already been microfilmed, or materials that do not directly pertain to Richland County history. Materials acquired by the Library must be in good condition and free from mold, pests, or other significant damage. We reserve the right to refuse any donation and inclusion of an item in the Sherman Room collection does not constitute endorsement of its content by the Library Board.

SPECIAL CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The general policies of Mansfield/Richland County Public Library's Collection Development Policy apply. Materials may be selected for the Sherman Room based on their pertinence to local history, physical condition, and/or the availability of adequate space to house them. Materials pertaining to local industries, prominent local groups and individuals (especially historically under-represented and marginalized groups), and those relating to the history of the library are strongly considered, whether published or unpublished.

Acquisitions from any time period may be considered while the geographic scope of the collection focuses specifically on Richland County. Materials from adjacent counties or other geographic areas may be considered if their inclusion could be of value to customers conducting genealogical research. Materials related to the history of Ohio will be accepted if representative of the entire state or include special focus on Richland County. To be considered an item of local interest, the content must have a distinct concentration on Richland County or north central Ohio. The Materials acquired by the Library, through gift or purchase, must either fit within the scope of another pre-existing collection or contain enough material to constitute a new collection.

Materials will be acquired by gift or purchase. Before accepting any gift materials, the Library must be satisfied that the donor has proper authority or ownership to transfer ownership and copyright (where applicable) to the library. All donors must complete a Deed of Gift Form in order to establish the transfer of ownership to the Library. Once the Deed of Gift is signed by the donor, the donated material will become the unrestricted property of the Library to be kept until such time as the Sherman Room librarian deems it no longer relevant to the Sherman Room collection, in which case the material may be deaccessioned.

The production of faithful, high-quality, archival facsimiles or digital surrogates of significant items is an acceptable method of acquiring items that represent important additions to the collection and would otherwise be unobtainable.

GENRE OR MEDIA

The Sherman Room collects the following:

- Photographs (prints, slides, negatives)
- Published Materials (books, maps/atlasses, periodicals/journals, etc.)
- Unpublished Documents (letters, business records, reports, etc.)
- Digital/Digitized Files (newspapers, oral history interviews, photos, etc.)

Records in other formats will not be actively sought.

RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

The materials within the library's rare book and manuscript collections are of heightened historical and research value due to their date of publication, prior ownership, or simply the

inability to replace them should they be damaged. Additions to the rare book and manuscript collections are based on the historical significance of the materials to the history of Richland County or to the library itself. Such materials are primarily local interest books that are no longer in print with fewer than two copies owned by the library.

The rare book and manuscript collections are comprised of these principal sources:

1. The John Sherman Collection, which consists of materials pertaining to the life and family of, or once owned by, Hon. John Sherman, a longtime Mansfield resident. The core of the Sherman collection are volumes from Sherman's personal library, donated in 1904 by Sherman's daughter, Mary Sherman McCallum.
2. The Louis Bromfield Collection, which consists of a substantial collection of Louis Bromfield novels, many of which are first editions or author-signed volumes.

DISCRETE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

In addition to the core research collections, the Sherman Room has acquired and/or developed numerous smaller special collections throughout its history, many received as gifts. The acquisition (through gift or purchase) of special collections is subject to careful consideration of space allocation, cost of preservation and conservation, and the ability of the Library to effectively manage the acquisition over time.

The Sherman Room's special collections include City of Mansfield Clerk annual reports, World War II envelopes, Mansfield Senior High School commencement programs, and other bound and unbound records and ephemera related to Richland County history and institutions.

The Sherman Room also holds a photo file, which mostly contains indexed copies of photos related to Richland County history, a collection of historic postcards, and bound and unbound maps connected to Richland County from 1856 to 2007.

Finally, the Sherman Room serves as the archive of the Mansfield/Richland County Public Library and retains significant print materials (books, documents, reports, etc.) and photographs from the library system's history.

De-Accessioning

Materials in the Sherman Room will not be de-accessioned based upon circulation or use. However, the Library reserves the right to deaccession materials if there are significant changes in space availability, material condition, or if the materials are determined to no longer fit within the collection's scope as outlined in this policy. Materials selected for removal from the collection will be withdrawn and discarded according to established best practices which may include transferring a withdrawn item to another institution or returning it to its donor.