

114 Columbus Drive  
Tenafly, N.J. 07670  
August 16, 1978

To the Board of Trustees of the Tenafly Public Library:

What is the value to the people of Tenafly of a local history collection in the Public Library? Such a collection helps develop an awareness of why our Borough is as it is. It is a form of public relations in making others aware of our community. It encourages pride in and a sense of identification with Tenafly. Studying local history can prevent a repetition of mistakes. The schools look to the Public Library to supplement their information on the Borough. With a local history collection in the library, it is available to all ages, all students.

So have we  
While many libraries specialize in collecting local, county or state history, there does not seem to be any written policy which defines what will be collected. After the Trustees of the Library asked that I research this question, I spoke to various librarians, locally and about the nation. The ones to whom I spoke seemed amazed at the need for a policy. They have been collecting such material as an obligation, a part of the responsibility of their job.

A recent publication, "Local History Collections, A Manual for Librarians", by Ed T. Thompson, an American Association for State and Local History publication, could be considered a statement of policy. The author discusses the Englewood, Colorado, Public Library and its collection. In Chapter 3, 'The materials of Local History' are identified as: books, pamphlets, newspapers, periodicals, photographs and prints, tape recordings, ephemera, clippings, manuscript materials, memorabilia, collections, maps and measured drawings. The remaining chapters deal with the legal aspects, conservation, processing, services, etc..

Material from Charles F. Cummings, Supervising Librarian, New Jersey Reference Division, Newark Public Library, indicates the same concern. I am enclosing a copy of his letter and "The Guide to the New Jersey Reference Division." He indicates five areas: books, information files, documents, pictures, and manuscripts and archives.

In relation to a Local History Collection for the Tenafly Public Library based on the references you have, plus what I have, and using guidelines from the above and elsewhere, I would like to suggest the following categories as being worthy of consideration: archives, books, clippings, ephemera, microfilm, newspapers, pictures, slides and miscellaneous.

When I was appointed Borough Historian, it was without pay. The same situation prevails today, but in recent years I have been given a budget of \$200 annually. This is spent at my discretion with the approval of other Borough officials. I have paid part of my expenses to attend the national meetings of the American Association for State and Local History, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and for state meetings. I am recognized as a professional in the field of local history, and am consulted by others.

Some money from these funds has been expended for an occasional book. The majority of the books in my collection I have purchased myself. The Borough has approved these funds being used to build up the slide collection and the picture collection, which the Library had not wanted to be responsible for. In both collections there are several hundred items, and they are borrowed. There are museum items stored over the Police Station, and maps and atlases stored at the Borough Hall. In my vertical file, I have developed the following items as a result of questions asked. See enclosed seven pages.

If the local public library does not care about their own community, others will reflect this same attitude. When authors research for books and use local material, readers enjoy identification, and read the credit lines. What will happen to Tenafly material in the future will be dependent in part upon the attitude of the Tenafly Library and its personnel.

I appreciated your resolution that you were willing to accept my materials. Considering the financial investment I have in books, I want them ultimately to go where they will be of use to students. The material the Borough has paid for naturally belongs to the Borough. If you have further questions, please ask. I realize you are limited by space but there is no library that is not. The County and State Libraries will take some Tenafly material, but they do as Mr. Cummings indicates-"we still find it necessary to call upon local libraries and consider them the ultimate source in answering the most detailed questions about their communities."

Sincerely,

*Virginia T. Mosley*  
Virginia T. Mosley  
Borough Historian

cc: Mayor Manos  
Charles Cummings  
George Brown  
American Association for State and Local History