

Melinda Cox Library records

12

**Finding aid prepared by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen and Faith
Charlton through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden
Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories.**

Last updated on November 19, 2013.

Doylestown Historical Society

Table of Contents

Summary Information.....	3
Biography/History.....	4
Scope and Contents.....	4
Administrative Information.....	6
Related Materials.....	6
Controlled Access Headings.....	7

Summary Information

Repository	Doylestown Historical Society
Creator	Melinda Cox Library (Doylestown, Pa.)
Title	Melinda Cox Library records
Call number	12
Date [bulk]	1915-1993
Date [inclusive]	1819-1993
Extent	4 linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Currently serving as the Doylestown branch of the Bucks County (Pa.) Free Library, the Melinda Cox Library was Doylestown's first free library. It opened in 1917 through a bequest of Doylestown resident Charles Cox (1832-1914) who left his entire estate to create a community library named after his mother, Melinda Hines Cox (1803-1890). The library merged with the county library in 1981. The Melinda Cox Library records, 1819-1993 (bulk 1915-1993), consist primarily of various library records, including circulation and registration ledgers, financial records, statistics, correspondence, and clippings, as well as some correspondence and other records of the Friends of the Library (established in 1944). There are also papers, photographs, and research materials relating to the library's buildings, its librarians, and its history as well as genealogy research and papers from the Cox and Hines families.</p>

Biography/History

Currently serving as the Doylestown branch of the Bucks County (Pa.) Free Library, the Melinda Cox Library was Doylestown's first free library. It opened in 1917 through a bequest of Doylestown resident Charles Cox (1832-1914). Cox left his entire estate, valued at \$40,000, to create a community library named after his mother, Melinda Hines Cox (1803-1890). Located in the former Cox home on East State Street, the library acquired its collection from the recently-disbanded, subscription-based Doylestown Library Company.

The library remained on E. State Street until 1933, when the building was sold to Bell Telephone Company. The library board purchased the former Bucks County Trust Company building, an 1886 one-story brick bank across from the Doylestown Public School at East Court and Broad streets.

Along with the Friends of the Library, which formed in 1944, the library benefitted from other local organizations such as the Village Improvement Association, as well as bequests from Doylestown residents. "In 1963, the Cox library used a bequest from Julia W. Littleton to remodel the library and create a children's room named after her. Since the nearby county library lacked a children's room of its own, an agreement was reached under which the county system provided a children's librarian and staff for the Julia W. Littleton Children's Room, and paid for books and materials."

The Bucks County Library began to manage the Cox Library in 1975. Before this, the library had been managed by three Doylestown residents: Lucie R. Price (1917-1953), Martha Edgar (1946-1975), and her sister Alice Edgar (1953-1975). Due to dwindling revenue sources and increasing operating expenses, the library merged with the county library in 1981. Its name was changed to the Melinda Cox Branch of the Bucks County Free Library. In 1988, the library joined the county library administration offices at the new library center built on the grounds of what used to be the Bucks County Prison on Pine Street.

Bibliography:

Levenson, Edward. "What's the Story of the Melinda Cox Free Library?" November 23, 2011. *Doylestown-Buckingham-New Britain Patch*. Accessed July 25, 2013. <http://doylestown.patch.com/groups/around-town/p/what-s-the-story-of-the-melinda-cox-free-library>

Scope and Contents

This collection consists primarily of library records, including circulation and registration ledgers, financial records, statistics, correspondence, and clippings, as well as some correspondence and other records of the Friends of the Library. There are also papers, photographs, and research materials relating

to the library's buildings, its librarians, and its history as well as genealogy research and papers (including photographs) from the Cox and Hines families.

The following is a complete inventory:

- Folder on Melinda Cox, 1803-1890
- 2 folders on Charles Cox including 2 photographs of his 31 E. State residence and a sketchbook, 1832-1914
- Papers and a brief history (2011) of the library's incorporation/beginnings and its board of directors, including a photograph of Harmon Yerkes, its first president
- Exterior and interior views of the library
- Correspondence, 1922-1987
- Miscellaneous items including library rules, bookmarks, facts about the library, fliers, National Library Weeks
- Signed letters from library presidents and prominent Doylestown residents, including Margaret Mead
- Friends of the Library bylaws and treasurer's account book, 1946-1959; meeting minutes; and correspondence, 1946-1991
- Press clippings
- Library anniversaries, 1967, 1982
- Mary Ann Bievenour(?), Children's librarian
- Martha and Alice Edgar photographs and miscellaneous items
- Lucie Price, librarian, miscellaneous
- Julia W. Littleton, library benefactor
- Proposed library alterations, 1961
- Annual report, 1976
- District library status report, 1963
- Activities, 1975-1982
- Press clippings, 1916-1993
- Hines family, including 2 bibles (one is a 1819 bible owned by John Hines with clippings and genealogical information relating to Hines and Cox family members)
- Chain of title
- 2 articles: "A Lady Named Melinda" and "What's the Story of the Melinda Cox Library?"
- Librarian's cash account book, 1954-1957
- Treasurer's report, 1976
- Branch library statistical reports, 1975-1988
- Blank stationary
- Bequests
- Various bookplates
- Correspondence regarding furniture and shelving
- Proposed plaque and names on plaque
- Circulation ledgers, 1947-1987 (incomplete)
- Registration ledgers, 1931-1975
- Book #1-#5, 1915-1959
- 3 boxes of slides and slide presentation pertaining to the library

Administrative Information

Doylestown Historical Society

Finding aid prepared by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen and Faith Charlton through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories.

Sponsor

This preliminary finding aid was created as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories. The HCI-PSAR project was made possible by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Access Restrictions

Contact Doylestown Historical Society for information about accessing this collection.

Immediate Source of Acquisition Note

Unknown.

Processing Information Note

Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2012-2014 as part of a project conducted by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden collections of small, primarily volunteer run repositories in the Philadelphia area. The Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was accomplished during the HCI-PSAR project.

In some cases, more detailed inventories or finding aids may be available on-site at the repository where this collection is held; please contact Doylestown Historical Society directly for more information.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials Note

Bucks County Historical Society: Harmon Yerkes papers, 1715-1928, MSC 158.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Melinda Cox Library (Doylestown, Pa.)

Family Name(s)

- Cox family
- Hines family

Geographic Name(s)

- Bucks County (Pa.)
- Doylestown (Pa.)

Personal Name(s)

- Cox, Charles C.
- Cox, Melinda

Subject(s)

- Branch libraries
- Genealogy
- Library administration
- Public librarians
- Public libraries