

Local History & Genealogy Collections Policy

Policy Statement

The purpose of Van Buren District Library's Local History and Genealogy Collections is to provide District residents and visitors a variety of print and non-print research materials that pertain to the history, economic, social, and cultural life of Van Buren County. The Library also provides print materials relating to general Michigan history and genealogy, materials of a general genealogy nature including methodology, and specifically selected New England materials. The Library will also collect and maintain select materials pertaining to adjacent communities and/or counties in accordance with the overall collection policy.

Regulations

1. Responsibility

Responsibility for the professional supervision of the selection of local history and genealogy materials rests with the Director of Van Buren District Library. The Director will designate members of the local history staff to select, retain, and weed local history and genealogy research materials within the guidelines of this policy and the general policy of Van Buren District Library.

2. Loan Policy

A. Most materials in the Local History Room do not circulate and are not available through inter-library loan.

B. Materials that do circulate include some Michigan history books and genealogical research guides.

C. Reference materials may be loaned to any branch of Van Buren District Library for in-house use only.

D. Photocopies may be made from any non-circulating print or non-print materials, with due respect to copyright.

3. Access

The Local History Room, located at the District's main facility in Decatur, is open during regular business hours. Researchers are encouraged to register at the circulation desk upon arrival.

4. Assistance

The Local History Room is not staffed adequately to perform lengthy or extensive local history/genealogical requests. Some reference assistance is available from the Local History staff and volunteers. Brief requests for information may be addressed to Local History by phone, e-mail or regular mail. A list of private area researchers is available upon request.

5. Criteria Used in Selection

Print and non-print materials will be evaluated for acquisition following the Library's *Criteria Used in Selection* and this policy's *Collection Areas*. The collection houses materials in a variety of formats including, but not limited to, books, periodicals, pamphlets, audios, videos, scrapbooks, photographs, diaries, oral histories, letters, and maps.

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6. Collection Areas

A. Geographical Areas of Selection

- i. Van Buren County (selected print and non-print materials)
- ii. Allegan, Berrien, Cass, and Kalamazoo counties (selected print materials)
- iii. General Michigan (selected print, microform or digital materials)
- iv. Select portions of New England (print, microform or digital)

B. Books & Periodicals

County histories, gazetteers and directories, plat books, town/village histories, school records/histories, family histories, scrapbooks, vital records, cemetery transcriptions, census indexes, church records/histories, biographies, yearbooks; African American, Native American and other ethnic histories; Michigan history periodicals, general Michigan history, and genealogy guides.

C. Microfilm

Federal and State census, Van Buren County newspapers, court records, vital records, miscellaneous records, and Sanborn Fire Insurance maps.

D. Vertical File

Newspaper clippings and pamphlet materials will be collected in the following areas: surname, general genealogy reference, and general Michigan history.

E. Obituary Clippings File

Obituaries will be collected for the Library's five-county selection area. Other materials that may be collected for this file include anniversary and birth notices, family reunions, and centennial farms.

F. Bess Britton Michigan One-Room Schoolhouse Collection

The Library will continue to collect and add materials concerning one-room schoolhouses throughout Michigan. Materials include but are not limited to photographs, newspaper items, report cards, biographies, school records and histories.

G. Photo Collection

The Library will acquire or accept as a donation/gift photographs that have local historical relevance made evident by the name of photographer, place, date, or individual(s) shown in photo.

H. Materials That Will Not Be Collected

- i. The Library will not collect three-dimensional artifacts.
- ii. The Library will not collect local and state government records in their original form. Such records may be reviewed for their historical relevance to the Library's local history collection areas. Pertinent information may be copied for inclusion in the Local History Room.

7. Gifts & Donations

The Library encourages material and monetary donations for the Toni I. Benson Local History Room. Donations and gifts must comply with the Van Buren District

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Library's *Gifts & Memorials Policy* and the *Collection Areas* as outlined above. Persons who donate materials must complete a *Donation & Gift Form (MGT-OX.1)*.

8. Weeding Criteria

Most items that are selected for inclusion in the Local History Collection, such as materials that include historical data that does not become outdated, are added on a long-term basis. In addition to the Library's general weeding policy, the following guidelines will also be used for weeding the Local History Collection:

A. Periodicals

- i. Issues of a current serial should be evaluated after two years for content.
- ii. Periodicals of a technical nature or that focus on current events can be weeded.
- iii. Issues that contain a significant amount of factual information or research/case studies may be added to the general periodical collection.

B. Research Guides and General Reference

Books listing addresses/contacts and other outdated information should be updated when possible or replaced with a comparable substitute. This includes materials that have antiquated research practices and procedures.

C. Items in the collection that may be outside the written collection policy of the Local History Collection should be evaluated periodically based on content and the allotted space restrictions.

D. Materials that are superseded by updated editions.

E. Items that become available in new formats will be evaluated and, when practical, may be replaced with those new formats.

F. Age and Physical Condition

Materials in the Local History Collection are not generally evaluated for retention based on physical condition or age. Items showing extreme wear should be restored when possible. Those that cannot be restored should be placed in non-public access storage until a suitable replacement in the same or other format can be acquired.

G. Disbursement of Weeded Items

Items that are weeded from the Local History Collection should be dispersed in the following order:

- i. Offered to the local genealogical society.
- ii. Offered to institutions such as other libraries, museums, or historical societies.
- iii. An attempt will be made to market rare and valuable items in a way that will produce funds for the continued development of the Local History Collection.
- iv. Placed in the Van Buren District Library book sale.

9. Cooperative Agreements

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- A. Where practical, the Van Buren District Library develops and maintains cooperative agreements with other local history organizations, such as the Van Buren Regional Genealogical Society. The goals of such agreements are to:
 - i. Enhance the number and variety of materials available to the public and;
 - ii. Avoid unnecessary duplication of collections.
- B. Materials housed at the Library that belong to other organizations are for in-house use only and may not be loaned to other libraries or organizations outside of VBDL. However, photocopying is permitted.

Approved: April 23, 2002
Van Buren District Library Board of Trustees