



COLLECTION POLICY STATEMENT

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The general purpose of the Genesee County History Department is to promote local history by preparing resource guides of the collection, brochures, books, and presenting programs to historical organizations, various community agencies and schools. The Research Library provides the Municipal Historians, general public, teachers and students with access to the County's collection of local history, archival documents and genealogical records. Records Management ensures the legal disposition of obsolete records, identifies, preserves, and encourages the use of archival records, provides efficient records storage, and makes records available when needed.

SCOPE AND RATIONALE OF THE COLLECTION

1. Collecting Criteria

a. Records that document the cultural, economic, social, political and technical development of Genesee County and that reflect the significance and the influence of its population, institutions and industries shall be collected.

b. The collection shall consist of documents containing information of any kind and in any form created or received by individuals, businesses, educational and religious institutions, cultural, ethnic, civic and governmental organizations and municipalities that pertain to the development and history of Genesee County.

c. These items include: books, manuscripts, pamphlets, brochures, maps, charts, photographs, diaries, ledgers, business and personal papers and correspondence, posters, prints, postcards, deeds, wills, mortgages, scrapbooks, military documents, films, tapes, genealogical reference materials, works of local authors and artists, or other information regardless of physical form or characteristics.

d. Records not directly associated with Genesee County history may be acquired and preserved if it is important for research, educational programs, comparative purposes or technical reference.

2. Excluded From the Collection

Excluded from the collection are the following:

1. Three dimensional artifacts which will be recommended for donation to the most appropriate local museum; unless the artifact is part of donation of two dimensional items that meet the collection criteria. [NOTE: These exceptions are few in number and rare.]
2. Documents pertaining to other counties which if donated will be forwarded to the appropriate Municipal or County Historian.
3. Family Bibles which if donated, the genealogical information will be removed and the bibles given to a local religious institution.
4. Curiosities or unique items which do not meet the criteria of historical and/or artistic significance of the local area.
5. Duplicate copies of records which the department cannot properly store.

3. Geographical Area and Timeframe

Records will be collected from the present day geographical boundaries of Genesee County. As Genesee County once encompassed all of Western New York, the records relating to its early development will be included. However, these records will be general in nature.

ACQUISITION POLICY

1. Definition

For the purpose of this policy acquisition is defined as the discovery, preliminary evaluation, negotiation for, taking physical and legal custody of, documenting title to, and acknowledging receipt of items.

2. Acquisition Criteria

All items must meet the following standards before being acquired by the Genesee County History Department:

1. The present owner must have a clear title.
2. If for sale, the staff must arrange funding before purchase.
3. The department must be in a position to care properly for the proposed acquisition.
4. All donations of items are considered outright and unconditional gifts to be used at the discretion of the County Historian. Title to all items acquired shall be free and clear, without restrictions to use or with future disposition.
5. Acquisitions must be free from donor imposed restrictions.
6. The items must be relevant to and consistent with the purposes and activities of the Genesee County History Department.
7. No acquisition will be encumbered by less than full literary rights, property rights, and copyrights; or by obscene or by physically hazardous attributes.
8. All moral, legal and ethical implications of the acquisition must be considered.

9. The items shall be documented as to provenance (the origin of the record or other sources of creation) as far as it is possible to do so.
10. Items will have permanency in the collection as long as they retain their physical integrity, authenticity, comply with the collection policy and/or as long as they remain useful for the purpose of the department.

3. Means of Acquisition

a. Items may be acquired by purchase, bequest, gift, exchange and/or abandonment. No items shall be knowingly or willfully accepted or acquired which are known to have been illegally collected and/or imported into the United States contrary to state law, federal law, regulations and/or treaty.

b. The department shall refuse to acquire items where there is cause to believe that the circumstances of their collection involved needless destruction of historical sites, buildings, structures, habitats, districts and objects. All titles, rights and interest shall be obtained by the department for all potential acquisitions, without restrictions or limiting conditions if possible, or shall have the potential of being converted to free and clear title under appropriate law.

c. Donated items are not returned as once they have been donated they become the property of Genesee County. The donor must sign a Donation Form which will include the following statement:

The objects described above have been received by the Genesee County History Department as a gift, and the owner or his agent with full authority, desiring to absolutely transfer full title by signing below, hereby gives, assigns and conveys, finally and completely, without any limitation, condition or reservation, the property described above to the Genesee County History Department and assign, permanently and forever, together with (when applicable) any copyrights therein and the right to hereafter copyright the same.

4. Acquisition Procedure

a. The authority to acquire library and archival items rest with the County Historian, who must adhere to the collection policy and within the annual budget approved by the County Legislature. No staff member may obligate the department to the acceptance of any items not agreeable with the intent of the acquisition policy without approval of the County Historian.

b. No staff member shall offer appraisals of the monetary value of items to donors for the purpose of establishing a fair market value of gift offered to the department. Donors desiring to take an income tax deduction must obtain an independent appraisal prior to donation. Staff members will not appraise or otherwise place a monetary value on objects casually brought to the department. As a public service, staff may attempt to identify or authenticate items brought to the department by the public.

c. Items left at the department, if not claimed within sixty days of deposit are considered abandoned property. Abandoned property of negligible value may be disposed of by the County Historian. Property of greater than negligible value may be disposed of under the laws set by the Genesee County Legislature.

d. The County Historian shall maintain permanent acquisition records which shall contain all legal conveyances pertaining to each acquisition or source. The Genesee County History Department will comply with the New York State Archives Records Retention and Disposition Schedule used by the County.

ACCESSIONING

1. Definition

Accessioning is defined as the process of accepting items into the permanent collection of the Genesee County History Department.

2. Process

All items shall be processed under procedures and policies developed by the County Historian.

1. Items shall be stored in a manner to provide optimum security, accessibility and preservation.
2. Items in need of restoration shall be restored as soon as possible.
3. Restoration shall be performed by trained staff members when appropriate. For items in need of professional handling, a qualified archivist using approved techniques and substances will be employed when appropriate. Determination of the level of restoration shall be made by the County Historian.
4. Items whether in use or in storage shall be protected from life shortening forces such as excessive heat, cold, humidity, dryness, dust, ultra-violet light, insects, vermin or improper handling.
5. Items donated to the department will be accessioned using a donation form which will be filed alphabetically into donation notebooks. A thank you letter will serve as the official receipt for the donor's purposes. A copy of the donation form will be given to the donor.
6. Items purchased will have a copy of the purchase order and/or receipt filed chronologically.
7. All items will be inventoried and added to appropriate collection categories.

DEACCESSIONING POLICY

1. Definition

Deaccessioning is the process of removing permanently from the collection accessioned items. This process shall be cautious, intentional and scrupulous.

2. Criteria for Removal

a. Items in the collection shall be retained permanently if they continue to be relevant to the department's mission statement, useful to the purpose and activities of the department and if they can be properly stored, preserved and used. Deaccessioning of items may be considered when these conditions no longer prevail or in the interest of improving the collection for the department purposes and activities.

b. Before deaccessioning items from the collection, reasonable efforts shall be made to ascertain that the department is legally free to do so. If there are any questions as to the restrictions on an item, the department will seek legal council.

c. Adequate records of the condition and circumstances under which items are deaccessioned and disposed of shall be made and retained as part of the department's collection of records.

3. Considerations of Deaccessioning

1. Removal of items from the collection must satisfy ethical, legal and financial considerations before being removed.
2. Items outside the scope of the collection.
3. Items irrelevant to the scope of the collection.
4. Items failing to maintain their identity or authenticity or have been lost or stolen and remain lost for more than two years.
5. Duplicate items.
6. Items deteriorated beyond usefulness.
7. Items with doubtful potential utilization in the foreseeable future or accidentally accessioned twice.
8. Removal of an item will make way for other items that will strengthen the collection.
9. Items considered hazardous.

4. Considerations for the Disposition Method

1. The manner of disposition shall be in the best interest of the County, the public it serves and the public trust it represents.
 - a. Items selected for deaccessioning will be reviewed by the County Attorney,
 - b. Once approved by the County Attorney, the County Historian will request permission for the Human Services Committee,
 - c. Once permission has been obtained from the Human Services Committee, Legislature approval will be obtained.
2. Whenever possible to place an item, through gift, exchange or sale, in another tax-exempt public institution where it may serve the purpose for which it was originally acquired by the department. If items are otherwise offered for sale, they must be sold in a manner that will best protect the interest, objectives and legal status of the department.
3. Items are not to be given or sold to department employees or volunteers.
4. Income derived from the sale of deaccessioned items will be turned over to the Genesee County Treasurer and placed as revenue for the History Department.
5. Properly destroy (dispose of by recycling or shredding).

DISPOSITION OF NON-ACCESSIONED ITEMS

1. Definition

Non-accessioned items are those items donated:

1. Which do not fall within the collection policy guidelines,

2. Have no value either historically or monetarily,
3. Not worthy either by their physical condition or contents to be accessioned as part of the permanent collection, or
4. Having been placed in the custody of the County Historian temporarily for other than loan purposes, such as identification or examination for possible gift or purchase.

2. Explanation

Items brought in for identification are not to be left for longer than three (3) months. The County Historian accepts no responsibility for notification of individuals to retrieve such items. Once declared abandoned, such items may be accession into the collection or dispose of it according to the Deaccessioning Policy. The History Department waives all responsibility for loss or damage to such items while housed in the department.

3. Disposition

Consideration for the disposition method will be the same as for other deaccessioned items.

LOAN POLICY

1. Loans from the Department

a. The collection contents of originals items may not be taken from the premises for any reason, except with the approval of the County Historian. The County Historian shall approve temporary loans, of the department's property for exhibits for a period not to exceed sixty days (60). At the end of sixty days (60) a renewal privilege shall be considered.

b. The collection of photographs may be used for reproduction purposes. Original photographs are not to leave the department but may be used for digital reproduction on site.

c. The County Historian shall maintain a record and systematic follow-up of all department property on loan. A "Genesee County History Department Loan Agreement Form" must be signed by the borrower and the County Historian.

d. No loaned items may be altered, embellished, modified or dismantled in anyway. No pens, nails or other support devices may be used that leaves any marks or evidence on the items.

e. The Genesee County History Department shall receive public acknowledgement of loaned items for whatever purpose that may be used (publications, lectures, displays, demonstrations, exhibits, etc.).

2. Loans to the Department

a. The Genesee County History Department will accept loaned items usually for a period of no more than six (6) months. Special arrangements may be made for longer

term loans with written consent of the owner, who shall be responsible for sufficient insurance on the items. Items on loan to the department shall be insured to their full extent as stated by the lender. A certificate of insurance will be provided upon request. Such loans will be renewed in writing annually. If an item is left over three (3) years without contact or written renewal from the owner or heirs for the return of the item, the department will consider the item abandoned and will accession the item into the collection or dispose of it according to the Deaccessioning Policy.

b. Items on loan to the department shall receive the same care and attention as items in its own collection. No conservation of loaned items will be undertaken without the consent of the owner. The County Historian will notify the lender immediately of any deterioration, damage or conservation needs of an item on loan to the department.

REPRODUCTION OF THE COLLECTION POLICY

The County Historian may authorize photocopying, photographic reproduction, scanning and other reproductive methods of the collection contents and archival items subject to certain restrictions.

1. Reproduction of any collection item must not in any way endanger the item.
2. No collection item may be reproduced or adapted in any form or by any means, without the approval of the County Historian.
3. Appropriate fees for reproductions shall be set by the Genesee County Legislature and all fees collected will be given to the Genesee County Treasurer and placed within the History Department's revenue.
4. Genesee County History Department items used in copyrighted materials are not restricted for use by the department.
5. Department volunteers who have created indexes or other finding aids to the collection are not to sell or give away copies.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE POLICY

A copy of the Collection Policy Statement will be posted on the County's website under the History Department's section. A written statement of the policies and procedures adopted and followed by the Genesee County History Department, with respect to the acquisition and disposition of collection items and policies regarding the collection are available to donors and other responsible persons upon request. Copies of the policies and procedures will be free to a donor and subject to set copier cost by all others.

In reply to responsible inquiries, the County Historian, will make available the description and identity of items acquired or deaccessioned. Information and appraised value will be made available only with written consent of the donor.

PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY

1. Hours Open

The Genesee County History Department's Research Library and Archives will be open to the public with hours set by the Genesee County Legislature. The hours will be posted. The department will be closed on weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) and all legal holidays, except for special events.

2. Access to the Collection

- Library Rules are posted and reviewed with first time users of the collection.
- Patron's Registration Form - As items contained within the collection are generally fragile and rare, researchers are requested to sign the department's Patron's Registration Form. This form is to be filed in chronological order and maintained for six (6) years.
- Daily Sign-In Form – All visitors to the Research Library, including regular patrons, are expected to sign the Daily Sign-In Form which is located at the registration desk and changed weekly. The Daily Sign-In Form is filed chronologically and maintained for six (6) years with the Patron's Registration Form.
- A Patron Statistic Daily Form is filled out each day by the staff and is used to track attendance, library usage, telephone calls and the volunteers.
- Records that are stored within the Archives are accessed by using a Request for Archival Records Form. As these records are located in storage and staff is required to retrieve these records for public access.
- Check List for Researchers Form is provided to assist with selection of records and are available to researchers to use as a reference. Form is updated as necessary.
- History Department staff reserves the right to limit the number of copies from sources that are copyrighted or in fragile condition.

3. Access via Mail or E-mail

- For those conducting research on-line, indexed resources are posted on the department's website at www.co.genesee.ny.us.
- To request copies of records from the History Department the following information is requested:
 - Identify which index the record was selected
 - Include all of the information provided by the index
- Once the staff has reviewed the request, they contact the researcher as to the number of pages and the fee.
- Researchers are required to send a check made out to: Genesee County Treasurer
 - There is a 25 cent fee per page
 - Researchers are also required to provide a stamp-addressed envelope.

CEMETERY RECORDS POLICY

The Genesee County History Department staff may photocopy pages from the cemetery records that pertain to individual research project. Photocopying of an entire cemetery is not permitted without written permission from the cemetery association or town board in the case of abandoned cemeteries.

NEWSPAPER POLICY

a. The Genesee County History Department annually receives copies of the local newspapers. Each issue is clipped and the information is filed within the appropriate subject file or notebook binder. Articles clipped include: obituaries, businesses, special events and any unique features.

b. The department's Research Library includes bound volumes newspapers. Due to the continued deterioration of the newspaper collection access is restricted. The general public is welcome to use only issues from 1930 through 1974. All newspapers prior to 1930 are available only to the department staff, volunteers and the Genesee County Municipal Historians. A collection of microfilmed copies is available for research and reproduction purposes.

1. Duplicate Copies

Duplicate copies of newspapers which are donated are clipped and the information photocopied before being filed in the appropriate subject file or subject notebook binder.

2. Storage

Newspaper storage boxes are utilized for any bound volume in poor condition and/or for collections of single issues. Process by which the newspapers are inventoried:

Bound Volumes:

- a. Newspaper title, volume number and date issued
- b. Condition (good, fair or poor)
- c. Assigned Newspaper Box Number
- d. Type the box label and affix it to the box
- e. Type an identification label which includes summary of the inventory and affix it to the box
- f. Update the Newspaper Inventory

Single Issues:

- a. Record the newspaper title, volume number and date issued
- b. Note any significant articles regarding local history
- c. Note the condition (good, fair or poor)
- d. Assign a Newspaper Box Number
- e. Type an identification label which includes summary of the inventory and affix it to the box*
- f. Update the Newspaper Inventory

* Before beginning to inventory single issues of newspapers, first review the current

inventory and add where appropriate to the various boxes within the collection. New boxes are created only when the current storage boxes become full.

3. Photocopying of Newspapers

Due to their fragile condition and size, photocopying is not permitted. Copies may be obtained by using the department's microfilm reader/printer. Fees for copies are posted.

4. Donation of Newspapers

Newspapers will be accepted into the collection only if the newspaper complies with the collection policy and the donor understands that duplicate copies will be clipped and filed.

SCRAPBOOK POLICY

The Genesee County History Department has been given scrapbooks created by various local residents and organizations. Over the years these books have begun to deteriorate due to the materials used to create them, such as glue, old newspaper and magazine articles. During the mid 1980's the scrapbooks were sorted, reviewed for content, inventoried and added to the collection or disassembled and the information copied and filed. Scrapbooks are cataloged into the collection under the Archives Category. Donors of scrapbooks will be informed as to the scrapbook policy.

The following procedures are to be adhered to for future donations of scrapbooks:

1. Individual Scrapbooks that pertain to one subject will be kept whole, stored in an archival storage box and cataloged into the Archives under the Scrapbook Minor Code.
2. Individual Scrapbooks that contain information on one subject but are in fragile condition will be disassembled and the articles photocopied, placed into archival sleeves and the sleeves into a notebook as a method of preservation. The notebooks will be cataloged into the Archives under the Scrapbook Minor Code.
3. Individual Scrapbooks containing a variety of information will be treated as a newspaper and the various articles will be clipped, photocopied and filed into the appropriate subject files.
4. Scrapbooks that are part of a donation will be kept with the other items included within the donation and cataloged following the procedures of the Archives.