

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTIONS POLICY STATEMENTS

Local History

(Classes F1-F975, DU620-DU629, parts of Class D, and F1000 and above)

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I. Scope

For the purposes of this Collections Policy Statement, local history materials are defined as those relating to the history of a country below the national level, such as the history of states, provinces, outlying territories, regions, counties, cities, towns or institutions located in such jurisdictions. Local history is, however, an integral part of history at the national level and serves to augment the collections on a national level by focusing on the specific rather than the general. So too, are local history publications closely related to, and, at times, difficult to separate from genealogical publications.

This Collections Policy Statement provides guidance for both United States and international collecting. For the local history of non-U.S. countries, the subclasses covering local history are found under the general classes assigned to the history of each particular nation or region, that is, spread throughout Class D and Class F above F1000. For U.S. local history, the assigned call numbers from F1 through F975 and DU620 through DU629 (Hawaii), including the histories of outlying territories of the U.S. as found in call numbers in Class F (Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands) and Class DU (American Samoa, Guam, and Northern Mariana Islands).

Although frequently associated with local history, and in many instances drawing upon local history materials in their basic research, works in the field of genealogy are treated in detail in the [Genealogy Collections Policy Statement](#). See also the [Supplementary Guidelines for Microforms](#) and [Electronic Resources](#), the Collections Policy Statements for [Manuscripts](#); [Geography and Cartography](#); [Newspapers –Non-U.S.](#); [Newspapers -- United States](#); [Photography](#); [United States History](#); [Telephone and City Directories](#); and [Countries and Regions with Acquisitions Challenges](#).

II. Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement

As the nation's de facto national library, the Library of Congress strives to build an expansive, yet selective, collection that records the creativity of the United States and is reflective of the nation's diversity and complexity. The Library's mandate is to have collections that are inclusive and

representative of a diversity of creators and ideas. A priority includes acquiring material of underrepresented perspectives and voices in the Library's collections to ensure diverse authorship, points of view, cultural identities, and other historical or cultural factors. The Library also seeks to build a research collection that comprises a globally representative sample of international materials that are diverse in voice and perspective, relative to their places of origin, further supporting the Library's mission to sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and creativity for Congress and future generations.

Diverse collecting is mentioned within many of the Library's Collections Policy Statements. In addition, the Library has adopted several specific collection policies in an effort to ensure it is building an inclusive and representative collection. For more information, see the Library's Collections Policy Statements on [Ethnic Materials](#), [LGBTQIA+ Studies](#), [Women's and Gender Studies](#), [Independently Published and Self-Published Textual Materials](#), and [Countries and Regions with Acquisitions Challenges](#).

III. Research Strengths

The Library of Congress has one of the world's major collections of local history publications. The strength of the collection is in its size and depth, with the greatest strength lying in United States local history. Of particular note are the county, city and town histories and the serial publications of historical societies, the large retrospective collection of U.S. travel guides, the city directories, and the extensive collection of local newspapers, including the [Chronicling America website](#) of the National Digital Newspaper Program.

The following are examples of four of the many resources of significance to U.S. local historians in the special collections at the Library:

- County and Regional Histories and Atlases, housed in the Microform and Electronic Resources Center, comprising nearly 700 reels of microfilm. States include California, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.
- The Lyman Copeland Draper Collection, housed in the Manuscript Division, comprising 134 reels of microfilm. A collection of original documents and notebooks dealing with the history of the Trans-Allegheny West.
- The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Collection, housed in the Geography and Map Division, comprising 1,840 bound volumes. Insurance maps of U.S. cities from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Also found in the Geography and Map Division is a large collection of U.S. county and state maps and atlases published in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Atlases published during the past 50 years and covering regional, state, and provincial resources form another noteworthy reference group.
- *Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)*; *Historic American Engineering Record (HAER)*, housed in the Prints and Photographs Division, include photographs, measured drawings, and written documentation of early American architecture. HAER provides information on over

30,000 sites, structures, and artifacts.

The Library of Congress offers electronic resources including online subscription databases of newspapers, journals, books, magazines, manuals, and other materials relevant to local history research. Databases, including the library editions of *Ancestry*, *HeritageQuest Online*, *Accessible Archives*, *American Ancestors*, *FindMyPast*, *MyHeritage*, and *ProQuest Historical Newspapers*, provide enhanced accessibility to the Library's collections and to those of other institutions. These electronic resources supplement the Library's extensive print holdings while adding unique collections, such as unpublished census, vital records, and military records, that the Library would not otherwise have available. The History and Genealogy Section of the Researcher and Reference Services Division also houses an uncataloged collection of pedigree charts and unpublished genealogical material relating to families and geographic areas.

Digitized materials on local history from the Library of Congress collections include first-person accounts of *"California as I Saw It: First-Person Narratives of California's Early Years, 1849-1900*, *Pioneering the Upper Midwest: Books from Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, ca. 1820-1910*, and *The Capital and the Bay: Narratives of Washington and the Chesapeake Bay Region, ca. 1600-1925*, and other resources for local history research.

IV. Collecting Policy

The Library acquires local history materials containing substantial information of significant research value (i.e., materials which present new information, research, or analysis), avoiding repetitive and derivative publications.

United States

The Library of Congress has a special interest in collecting histories of U.S. territories, regions, states, counties, and cities. Often these include important biographical information and details pertaining to extended family histories and the lives of earlier inhabitants.

The Library acquires:

General histories of counties, cities, and towns, including those which deal only with a specific period such as early settlements, the Civil War, etc.; travel guides at the state and local levels; biographies and compiled biographies.

Materials of research value which contribute to the study of national movements and events in local settings; make substantial contributions to historical, genealogical, or iconographic research (including indexes, abstracts, and transcriptions of local records and the federal census); and provide information on special aspects of the locale, including architecture, historical sites, ethnic groups, etc.

Publications which contain substantial genealogical information such as histories of churches and patriotic organizations, and published funeral home records.

Non-U.S. Countries

The Library acquires:

Local history material with emphasis on the following: histories of cities, towns, districts, etc.; local histories which contribute to an understanding of events, movements, etc., of regional, national and international importance, or which serve as unique sources for research on local ethnic groups, cultures, customs, etc.; and publications which contain substantial genealogical information, including church registers; and indexes, abstracts and transcriptions of local records.

Local history publishing varies from country to country. Although the output is uneven internationally, the Library aspires to acquire appropriate, relevant materials from the various regions and countries around the world.

The Library does not acquire the following types of materials unless they conform to one or more of the criteria above: histories of local organizations such as schools, clubs, banks, trade unions, temples, etc.; and local guidebooks for other than major cities, and provincial or other sub-national units, unless they contain substantial information not found in national guides.

The Copyright Best Edition statement provides guidance for selecting materials for the local history collection.

V. Best Editions and Preferred Formats

For guidance regarding best editions for material acquired via the Copyright Office, see: <http://copyright.gov/circs/circ07b.pdf>.

For guidance regarding recommended formats for material acquired via all other means; e.g., purchase, exchange, gift and transfer, see: <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs>.

For information regarding electronic resources, open digital content, web archiving, and data sets, see the following Supplementary Guidelines: <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/electronicresources.pdf>, <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/opencontent.pdf>, <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/webarchive.pdf>, and <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/datasets.pdf>.

VI. Acquisition Sources

Patterns of publication and distribution, for both mainstream and self-published works, are significant factors in attempting to build collections that support local history research. Because of the ephemeral nature of many self-published compilations, special efforts are required to identify and obtain this information. See also the [*Independently Published and Self-Published Textual Materials Supplementary Guidelines*](#).

Whenever possible the Library attempts to acquire materials through non-purchase means, such as copyright, exchange, the Cataloging in Publication program, or gift. A large proportion of the print local history materials are donated. The Library of Congress collections are heavily dependent upon materials

received through the copyright deposit provisions of U.S. copyright law ([17 USC section 407](#) & [17 USC section 408](#)). For copyright demand, the U.S. regulations allow for the Library to receive analog and some digital materials. When items are offered in both formats the Library's default is normally the Best Edition print version, unless the publisher has arranged a special relief agreement with the Copyright Office. For materials not available to the Library through copyright deposit, or other non-purchase means, the Library acquires materials through purchase. Purchase is used predominately for non-U.S. publications that are not widely available within the United States, and for ephemeral or grey literature published by local historical and genealogical societies or genealogies and family histories which are only available for sale. The Library utilizes an array of traditional methods of library acquisition (firm orders, subscriptions, and approval plans) with vendors located in different areas of the world. In addition, the Library uses its six Overseas Operations Offices to broaden its acquisitions opportunities outside the United States. Library of Congress approval plans instruct vendors to select or list works on local history.

A primary source of published U.S. local histories are works deposited with the U.S. Copyright Office that are selected for the Library's collections. Another major source of acquisition is the Cataloging in Publication program.

Not all materials deposited with the U.S. Copyright Office are added to the Library's general collections. Works which the registrant indicates are unpublished must be held by the Copyright Office. The Library may identify unpublished works held by the Copyright Office as appropriate for inclusion in its collections. (See [37 C.F.R. §201.23: Transfer of Unpublished Copyright Deposits to the Library of Congress](#).) The cost of reproducing copies of unpublished local histories selected from Copyright deposits must be borne by the Library of Congress. Overseas publications, electronic resources, and materials not available through donation or copyright deposit are purchased using appropriated funds or gift and trust funds.

Unpublished gift materials are reviewed on a case by case basis; materials of an ephemeral nature, brochures and pamphlets, are generally added to the Local History and Genealogy Vertical File in the Main Reading Room, or the pamphlet collections in other custodial divisions. Local history newsletters are typically filed in the Local History and Genealogy Vertical File until the Recommending Officer decides that they should be sent forward for cataloging; some may be added to the pamphlet collections in other custodial divisions. Family newsletters which are published electronically are collected, printed, and bound for the general collections shelves.

VII. Collecting Levels

Meeting the Library's Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement (see Section II) and the collecting levels outlined below requires continual evaluation of the publishing landscape, sources of expression, current events, and socio-cultural trends to thus maintain effective collecting policies and acquisitions methods. Changes in publishing or in the creation of materials covered by this policy statement may necessitate collecting efforts not explicitly referenced here. Such efforts will be handled on a case-by-case basis while the Library evaluates the need for policy statement updates.

For explanation of the Collecting Levels used by the Library, see

<https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/cpc.html>.

United States

The Library acquires U.S. general histories of states, countries, cities and towns, including all time periods and aspects at Level 5. Histories of U.S. territories are acquired at Level 5.

The following list is arranged according to the sub-classes within the LC classification for local history of the U.S. and its outlying territories:

LC Classification	Subject	Collecting Level
F1-F975	United States	5
DU620-DU629	Hawaii	5
DU643-DU645	Northern Mariana Islands	5
DU647	Guam	5
DU813-DU819	American Samoa	5
F1951-F1983	Puerto Rico	5
F2136	Virgin Islands	5

Non-U.S. Countries

The Library strives to acquire local histories from non-U.S. countries at Level 4, given their importance to scholarship and area studies collections.

The following list is arranged according to the subclasses within the LC classification for local history of non-U.S. countries:

LC Classification	Subject	Collecting Level
D1-DX*	History: general and old world	4
F1000-3799*	History: the Americas outside of the United States	4

*Excluding classification ranges listed in the preceding table

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