



Bedford Public Library Local History Collection Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Local History Collection is to collect, organize, and preserve materials that document the social, cultural, economic, environmental, and governmental history of the Town of Bedford, New Hampshire, including the time before the Town was established, for use by current and future residents of Bedford and researchers interested in our community heritage.

The policy of the Bedford Public Library is to make these materials available to all individuals on equal terms, subject to the appropriate care and handling of the materials.

The library holds these materials in trust for future generations, and therefore they can be viewed and examined in the New Hampshire Room only. At the sole discretion of the reference librarian, materials may be viewed at a table within sight of the Reference Desk.

Scope

1. Geographic
 - a. The emphasis of the Local History Collection is on the Town of Bedford, New Hampshire.
 - b. Historical materials relating to adjacent towns may be collected if they provide context to Bedford's history.
 - c. In order to provide historical context and assist in the use of the primary collection, materials relating to the State of New Hampshire may be collected.
 - d. Materials relating to pre-colonial and colonial New England may be collected when they provide context to Bedford's history.
 - e. Fiction will only be collected when it is relevant to the history of Bedford or is written by a culturally significant Bedford author.
2. Format
 - a. The Bedford Public Library will collect a variety of formats including, but not limited to:
 - i. Audio-visual materials
 - ii. Blueprints/Architectural drawings
 - iii. Books
 - iv. Letters
 - v. Machine readable (i.e., electronic records)
 - vi. Maps
 - vii. Microforms

- viii. Monographs
 - ix. Newspapers
 - x. Pamphlets
 - xi. Photographs
 - xii. Scrapbooks
 - xiii. Sheet music
- b. The Bedford Public Library will not generally accept the following formats:
- i. Three dimensional artifacts
 - ii. Duplicates of existing materials
 - iii. Items in poor condition
 - iv. Items with restrictions on use
 - v. Collections of purely genealogical materials unless the family has resided in Bedford for more than two generations.
 - vi. Materials that reflect the history of an area other than described above
3. Subject
- a. The Bedford Public Library will collect materials that relate specifically to the Town of Bedford including, but not limited to, the following subjects:
- i. town administration and governance
 - ii. individuals and families
 - iii. religious, cultural, and social organizations
 - iv. places of interest (schools, homes, cemeteries, land)
 - v. economy
 - vi. environment and land development
 - vii. significant events
4. Time Period
- a. The Bedford Public Library places no limitations on the chronological periods collected.
5. Language
- a. The Bedford Public Library collects materials primarily in the English language but may accept materials written in other languages provided that a translation is supplied.
6. Priorities and Limitations of the Collection
- a. Present collections strength
- i. Annual Reports of the Town of Bedford from 1848-present.
 - ii. Records of the Town of Bedford (incomplete) from 1887-1972
 - iii. 1789 Library Accession Book detailing the library's original books on accession and the 38 original subscribers to the library
 - iv. Leather bound books from the original library
 - v. Bedford Bulletin and Bedford Journal newspaper on microfilm, online, and print
 - vi. Collections of photographs, including a 1952-1953 photographic survey of the Town
 - vii. Bedford cemetery directories

- b. Present collecting level
 - i. Most additions to the collection are received as gifts
 - ii. The Bedford Public Library actively collects:
 1. Annual Reports of the Town of Bedford
 2. Bedford High School yearbooks
 3. Histories of the Town of Bedford
- c. Desired level of collecting
 - i. The goal of the Bedford Public Library is to actively collect program, brochures, and proceedings from Town celebrations and observances; speeches and addresses; Bedford family histories; and complete cemetery records

Material Selection

Material selection is the responsibility of the Library Director, Reference Department, and Head of Collection Management and Acquisitions.

- a. Selection shall follow the guidelines established by the Bedford Public Library Material Selection Policy.

Gifts and Loans

All gifts will be governed by the Library's Gift Policy. Donations will be accepted provided that:

1. the materials fall within the scope of the collection,
2. there is a signed Deed of Gift that legally transfers ownership of the materials to the Bedford Public Library, and
3. the materials come from a bona fide source and the donor has the legal authority to transfer the material to the Library.
4. The donor provides their own appraisal if needed or required.
5. The Library will not accept conditions relating to the gift.

The Deed of Gift must specify whether the donor is transferring intellectual and copyrights to the collection. Items will not be accepted on deposit except by separate signed agreement that is approved by the full library board. The only exception is the temporary loan of items from another institution for exhibition.

The Library is unable to accept items on loan for the purposes of digitizing the items. Under special circumstances, items from the Bedford Public Library may be loaned to other library institutions for exhibition.

Discarding Materials

The Bedford Public Library reserves the right to dispose of materials for the following reasons:

- The item is beyond the scope of the collection.
- The item is physically deteriorated, deemed inauthentic, or acquired illegally or unethically.

- The Library does not have appropriate facilities or resources to house or maintain the item.
- Prior to disposal the library will make reasonable efforts to notify the prior owner to determine if they would like to take possession of the materials.

De-accessioned items may be sold or offered to other, more appropriate institutions, the donor, or the donor's family. Disposal of materials must be approved by the Library Director. When de-accessioning items, the library will comply with the New Hampshire Museum Property Act and any other applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

Guidelines for Accessing the Collection

1. Users must sign in and out and may be required to show ID.
2. Photocopying/Photo duplication: Most paper items may be photographed by the user. However, restrictions may be placed on some especially fragile items. The library reserves the right to limit copying of materials because of copyright, condition, or other considerations.
3. Food and drink (including gum and hard candy) are not permitted in the New Hampshire Room or when reviewing NH Room materials anywhere in the Library.
4. Researchers must check their bags and coats before viewing New Hampshire Room materials.
5. Researchers may only use pencils, laptop computers or hand-held devices.
6. Researchers shall not reshelve materials.
7. Due to the irreplaceable nature of materials in the room, reference librarians will inspect all items that researchers take into and bring out of the New Hampshire Room.
8. Researchers may not access the New Hampshire Room or materials housed in the New Hampshire Room within 30 minutes of the Library's closing time.
9. Researchers are encouraged to contact the reference librarians in advance of their visit if research assistance is needed.
10. Researchers are responsible for identifying and satisfying any claimants and/or claims of the copy right holder.

Digitization of Materials in the Local History Collection

To increase access to the unique items in the collection, the Library will digitize items, primarily photographs and documents, and publish them in a freely available online repository.

Digitized items should meet broadly accepted archival, cataloging, copyright, and accessibility guidelines and laws.

Revision of Policy

The Bedford Public Library reserves the right to change the preceding policies in order to meet the goals of the Bedford Public Library. The policy will be reevaluated periodically and changed as needed.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees, September 1, 2016; Revised March 14, 2025