



# OXFORD COUNTY LIBRARY OPERATIONAL POLICY MANUAL

SECTION:		APPROVED BY:	Library Board
NUMBER:		SIGNATURE:	
PAGE:		DATE:	November 15, 2021
REFERENCE POLICY:	Collections Development	NEXT REVIEW DATE:	2026

## Local History

### PURPOSE

Oxford County Library maintains a special collection in order to conserve local history and to provide access to unique materials that help researchers and the public better understand Oxford's past. The collection complements the collections of the Oxford County Archives, and will not duplicate those collections. The Library's preferred format for local history materials is digital, in order to ensure greatest access and to facilitate 24/7 self-service research.

### DEFINITIONS

Comprehensive local history collection:

- a) would include items in a variety of formats of local interest, both primary and secondary. Items to be acquired include but are not limited to:
  - i) Local research
  - ii) Oral histories
  - iii) Cemetery record publications
  - iv) Original and/or reproductions of photographs and negatives
  - v) Monographs
  - vi) School yearbooks
  - vii) Historical atlases and maps
  - viii) Records of local organizations
  - ix) Church Histories
  - x) voter's lists and directories/gazetteers
  - xi) local newspapers if not available on microfilm or digitally.

### PROCEDURES

#### Section 1: Collections

1. Staff under the supervision of the CEO or designate will be responsible for collecting and organizing materials for the local history collection.
2. Due to the greater availability of space and open hours, and because of the expertise required to assist the public in the use of local history materials, comprehensive local history resources will be offered in the Ingersoll and Tillsonburg branches. Selected



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other branches may offer secondary source local history materials.

- Oxford County Library will collect materials pertaining to the history of Oxford County and its surrounding areas. Emphasis is given to the acquisition of those items which will contribute to the knowledge of the social, civic, religious, economic, and cultural life of the county, both past and present. Wherever possible, the library will purchase multiple copies of materials – one copy will be designated as Local History Reference, and the rest will be available for loan in the circulating collection. The Library will consult with the Archives and/or local museums to determine the most appropriate repository for original materials of a fragile nature and primary source materials. Museum objects and/or artifacts are generally not acquired, except in limited number for display or interpretation purposes.
- Writings by local authors that are not about Oxford County or the surrounding area, are subject to the Library’s Collection Development Policy. Works by local authors will be catalogued as such for easy identification and retrieval.
- The Library will subscribe to databases relevant to local history and genealogy research, as budget resources allow.
- Unpublished primary source materials of a fragile nature should be transferred to an archives facility for preservation and storage. Selected materials could be copied (print, photographic, microform, digital) and made available for general use in the libraries. Wherever possible, primary source materials of potentially significant research interest will be digitized and made available on the library website and a print facsimile added to the library collection.
- The Library will work alone or in partnership with others to undertake the digitization of local history materials in order to provide the public with greater access to local history information.
- The Library will strive to collect and maintain materials pertaining to local Indigenous and minority cultures, historic and current, and will work with Indigenous and minority communities to ensure these materials are stored, used, interpreted, and made accessible in a manner that is acceptable to them, showing respect and understanding for the origins and cultural significance of the materials.

## Section 2: Users

- Researchers, local historians, genealogists including patrons referred from other



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branches.

2. Teachers and students at all levels.
3. Individuals and organizations submitting inquiries in person, by mail, telephone, fax, and e-mail.

### Section 3: Use

1. Local history materials may be used in the library only and will not circulate. Duplicate copies of materials likely to be useful for circulation are acquired as funds and availability allow. Local History material may be loaned for inter-library use, solely at the discretion of the CEO or designate.
2. In special situations, a short-term loan may be arranged with the approval of the CEO.
3. Some primary and secondary material must be indexed individually by library staff or volunteers. Self-service research is facilitated where indices exist (print and/or on-line). Requests for information requiring staff time for retrieval will be done as time and staff resources allow. Genealogical requests may be referred to the Oxford Branch of Ontario Ancestors (formerly the Oxford Genealogical Society). Research requests requiring access to archival records may be referred to the Oxford County Archives. An individual may request one free e-mail look-up per week. The library reserves the right to charge research fees or to refuse to fill the request if the request would require significant staff time.

### Section 4: Donations

1. The Library will solicit donations of local history materials from the community and from other sources and welcomes gifts, in accordance with the Library's Collections Development Policy.
2. Donated materials are assessed by designated staff prior to acceptance in order to establish their suitability for the collection. As the library's preference is to digitize local history materials as appropriate, a loan arrangement will be encouraged, with the original materials to be returned to the donor or redirected.
3. Some materials may be deemed to be too fragile or bulky to accept. Any problematic items will be discussed with the donor and then returned or redirected.



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4. A record of provenance will be kept on file for those items donated to the library; this clearly indicates that ownership resides with the library.
5. The Library will have full discretion as to use, display, or disposition of the donated material. Items removed from the collection will be returned to the donor where possible.

## Section 5: Relationship to sources outside the Library

1. Cooperation and consultation with local architectural, genealogical, and historical groups and institutions.
  - a) Oxford County Archives
  - b) Museums throughout the County of Oxford
  - c) Oxford Branch of the Ontario Ancestors
  - d) Historical and Heritage Societies throughout the County of Oxford.

## Section 6: Research Fees

1. Individuals or organizations will be provided with up to 30 minutes of staff time free of charge for local history research and/or retrieval. The Library reserves the right to limit the frequency and number of research/retrieval requests per individual. Beyond the initial 30 minutes, research fees as outlined in Section 6 (7) may apply.
2. The requester will be notified of research fees and the estimated time required to conduct the research.
3. The research will not be undertaken until payment is received.
4. If the research cannot be completed within the estimated research time, the researcher will be notified of any additional fees. If they choose not to pay for additional research, the research completed up until that point will be provided to them.
5. If the estimated research time quoted falls short by 30 minutes or less, the researcher will not be billed for the additional time.
6. Research Fees: \$30 per hour, with additional 15 minute intervals billed at a rate of \$10. Fees will include copying/printing of up to 15 pages single-sided, postage and handling. Additional copying and printing will be billed at the established rate.