

JONES LIBRARY

Collection Development Policy

I. THE LIBRARY'S MISSION

The Jones Library strives to stimulate and support the civic and cultural life of all people of our region by providing access to materials; assisting them in their quest for information; preserving the history of our region; and serving as a meeting place for the community's educational and cultural pursuits. Our goal is to provide the greatest possible public access to information and educational resources at the libraries, via interlibrary delivery and electronically. Special emphasis is given to collecting current books and audiovisual materials that are in heavy demand, diverse contemporary opinions, creative works, and recreational literature. Library collections are designed to encourage young children to develop a love of reading and the literacy skills that are necessary for a lifetime of learning. Computer technology expands public access to electronic information resources from around the world. In addition, the library sponsors learning opportunities, including performances, lectures on current issues, art exhibits, and poetry readings.

II. THE LIBRARY'S CLIENTELE

The Jones Library system, also known as the Town Library of Amherst, serves all people who live, work, or study in Amherst and the surrounding area. The library selects materials to represent many points of view on current controversial issues so that people may form their own judgments. Therefore, the library may contain items whose manner of expression may be offensive to some people. The library itself does not promote or endorse particular beliefs or views.

All patrons have equal access to all library holdings. The Library affirms the right and responsibility of parents to determine and monitor their child's use of library materials, including use of the Internet. Parents are responsible for enforcing any individual restrictions that they may place on their child's use of library resources. The staff of the Library does not act in place of or in the absence of the parent.

The Jones Library seeks to cooperate with academic, school, and special libraries located in town and not to duplicate their special functions. Purchase of specialized or expensive materials already held by university or college libraries is avoided unless justified by recurring demand. No attempt is made to furnish textbooks, curriculum, or academic study materials if those materials lack general interest. The Jones Library has a limited research mission, outside of its commitment to local history. The overall size of on-shelf collections will be similar to the average number of volumes per capita for towns of comparable size in Massachusetts.

Amherst is the largest and most racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse town in Eastern Hampshire County. Twenty percent of its residents do not speak English at home, according to the 2000 census. Library collections will respond to community demand for materials in world languages spoken by the largest cultural groups, including Spanish and Asian languages, and for materials on learning to read, speak, and write in English. Additionally, more than 60% of adult residents 25+ years have academic degrees at the bachelor's level or higher, and local employment is concentrated in education, health, social services, and professional positions. Collections will reflect the fact that a majority of Amherst adults read at the college level.

III. RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The Board of Trustees formulates and sets library policy, including the policy on collection development. The Trustees endorse the [Library Bill of Rights](#), a fundamental philosophy statement formulated by the American Library Association. The Director administers policy set by the Trustees and is responsible for all day-to-day operations of the library. Individual decisions regarding selection and acquisition of materials, weeding, and discarding may be delegated to the several staff members who are responsible for specific subject areas or library departments guided by the approved policy.

IV. SELECTION PROCESS

In general, selection of materials is based on the following factors:

- community interest and demand,
- the individual merit of each title and expertise of the author,
- representation of diverse points of view and global awareness,
- the library's program goals, and
- financial resources.

Selectors must be aware of the importance of selecting materials reflecting as many points of view as possible. The collection should reflect interests, attitudes, political movements, and beliefs as they become apparent in the Amherst community.

Selectors consult professional and publishing review media, examine other materials first hand, and receive suggestions directly from the public and other staff. All requests from patrons for subjects or specific titles will be considered. An item will be purchased if there is heavy demand, even though reviews may be unfavorable or other items on the same subject are in the collection.

Each type of material must be considered in terms of its own merit and the intended audience. All selections, both purchases and gifts, are based on the following criteria:

- Author's authority--the reputation and/or significance of the author.
- Author's competence--the skill of the author, clarity, accuracy and logic of factual presentation; vitality and originality of thought; artistic excellence in presentation and experimentation.
- Permanent value--source material or a record of the times. Representation of an important movement, genre, trend or culture.
- Public interest-significant interest of critics and the public.
- Relation to existing resources-the need to maintain a balanced collection, including representation of minority views.
- Quality of content-accuracy of data and indexing, depth and breadth of coverage, timeliness, and frequency of updates.
- Quality of physical format--bindings, durability, the technical quality of audiovisual formats.
- Technical merit and search power of software--the availability of keyword and Boolean searching, response time, ease of installation and maintenance, compatibility with LAN software and/or security software.
- Ease of use of software--ability of most users to complete a search or use the software independently without extensive assistance.
- Value for cost--software must have vendor service and support, fair network and remote access pricing policies.

Materials which have been a target for repeated vandalism or theft may not be appropriate for circulating collections. Such materials may be replaced at the discretion of the selector or may be reassigned as reference material for in-library use only.

The selection, retention and deaccession of historical materials for research purposes are governed by the "Collection Development Policy: Special Collections", adopted by the Board of Trustees on January 30, 1996.

V. STAFF GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC COLLECTIONS

- Adult Collections. Adult collections serve the general public, rather than the professional or scholar. Patron requests are considered for purchase and must meet selection criteria. The Jones Library and its branches are part of the C/W MARS network of public and academic libraries. Acquisition decisions are informed by availability of popular and requested titles, network member library strengths, and periodic assessment of the library's collection of core titles. The library may acquire multiple copies of titles to respond to local community demand. To ensure basic access by disabled persons to library materials and services the library purchases large print, closed captioned and described videos, ASL and signed English dictionaries, and multimedia formats. Titles may be duplicated in many formats. The library provides adaptive devices to enable the home use of library materials and in-house access to information.

Foreign language titles are acquired to reflect some of the diverse languages spoken by Amherst residents and acquisition is subject to availability and access to full cataloging records.

- Fiction. Current fiction is in great demand and is purchased extensively. The collection includes classics in the field, titles representing styles of various periods and countries, and recreational reading. Controversial books of recognized literary merit are acquired, as are experimental writings of high quality. A variety of formats, including regular print, large print, mass-market paperbacks, and recorded books are selected.
- Non-Fiction. Accuracy, currency, and representation of various points of view are the goal. The Library collects recognized, standard works as well as timely materials for current demand. Many formats, including recordings, paperbacks, large print, art prints, puzzles and games, multimedia, and computer software are acquired.
- Religion. The library collects works on many major religions and their sacred scriptures. Authoritative material on the basic concepts and practices of religion are collected but not materials of a strictly proselytizing nature. Works on the occult, parapsychology, witchcraft and other spiritual interests are acquired based on community interest.
- Health and medicine. Standard and popular materials dealing with health, nutrition, diseases, medicine, and mental health, as well as materials on alternative theories of health and medicine are acquired for the layperson. Authoritative scientific and popular materials about sex are provided for the general reader at various age and reading levels.
- Law. The library collects standard and popular materials for the lay reader including dictionaries, encyclopedias, guidebooks, and works on the philosophy of law or on particular types of law, such as real estate, taxation, copyright, marriage, and divorce. Currency has priority over breadth of coverage.
- Politics. The collection goal is a balanced selection on modern American as well as international politics and governments, including mainstream and minority points of view. Basic documents of major political systems are collected. Representative samples of propaganda and extreme points of view will be included, especially classic political works and representative political writers.
- Genealogy and local history. Copies of local history books on Amherst and other local towns are acquired for the circulating collection while in print. The circulating collection also contains historical interpretations and narratives of local history that do not fall within the domain of quick reference. Basic genealogical handbooks and directories, including heraldry, are acquired for the circulating collections. Local history and genealogy are covered at the research level in the Special Collections department.

- English as a Second Language. This collection serves adult students learning English, new readers, tutors, citizenship applicants, and people studying the ESL field. It includes but is not limited to basic skills materials, workbooks, realia, electronic software, and cassettes. A computer with specialized software is available for ESL students for in-library use only.
- Employment Resource (Careers) Center. This collection serves the needs of people seeking guidance in choosing careers, selecting colleges and vocational schools, starting and managing small businesses, and finding employment. Test preparation materials are acquired for standardized scholastic and occupational exams. The collection is designed for the general public with an emphasis on currency of information.
- Audiovisual Collections. The audio collection attempts to represent significant performers, composers, and styles of popular and classical music. Several formats are collected, including compact discs, cassettes, and a limited number of vinyl LP records. Recorded books include both fiction and non-fiction. These recordings are collected in both abridged and unabridged formats. Video and DVD recordings are acquired for home use only, not for viewing in the library. Circulating videotape and DVD collections are developed for adults. Selectors consider the quality of production, the subject's lasting value, its local appeal and its relationship to existing resources and collections. Contemporary and classic feature films are purchased, as are performances in music, dance and theater. The library collects informational video including, but not limited to, "how-to" subjects, local concerns, health, documentaries, travel, history, military, environment, and self-paced instruction. Described and captioned videos are also collected to meet patrons' viewing needs.
- Electronic Formats. The library maintains a limited collection of CD-ROM software that is primarily informational or educational in nature in Mac/PC, Mac, and PC CD-ROM formats. Floppy disk formats are not circulated. Primary considerations are currency of the information, ease of use, and features that are unavailable in printed editions. The library is not responsible for damage to equipment or software from borrowed materials. The library may participate in cooperative purchasing of electronic texts and may acquire electronic audio formats, as this technology becomes more popular with the public.
- Periodicals. The library subscribes to popular interest periodicals, plus a limited number of scholarly or professional journals. Selection of adult periodicals is based on community interest, budget, and space considerations, periodical holdings of other libraries in the area, and coverage in the library's online and print indexing services. Requests from patrons and gift subscriptions are considered using the same criteria.

- Reference. Within budgetary limits, the Reference Collection provides accurate, up-to-date information on a wide range of subjects of current and recurrent interest for the layperson. Materials include books, periodicals, pamphlets and leaflets, maps, and machine-readable materials. Electronic information, including CD-ROM's and online databases, are available for use in the library and at home. Reference sources may be duplicated in various formats in order to accommodate various research styles. Print reference materials are to be used in the library only.
 - Periodicals. Information published in series or in magazines is collected in hard copy, electronic formats and on microforms. Newspapers, reels of microfilm, bound volumes, and loose periodical issues five years old and older are all reference materials. A determining factor in the length of time any periodical is held by the library will be adequate indexing in library sources, local connections, or other special interests.
 - Law. The General Laws of Massachusetts, the bylaws and regulations of Amherst are collected in the Reference section. For all other extensive compilations of law, readers are referred to the University of Massachusetts and to the Hampshire County Law Library.
 - Local History. The Reference Department collects significant factual sources for local history. The collection serves as a quick reference source for those not involved in lengthy research projects. The emphasis is on books, pamphlets, and municipal publications of the Town of Amherst, and secondarily, the surrounding Hampshire County towns. The most recent edition of municipal publications will be kept in the Reference Department, while the previous years will be kept in Special Collections for preservation purposes. Special Collections houses an extensive genealogical reference collection, in addition to a complete collection of Amherst and other local histories. (See separate Special Collections Department Collections Development Policy.)
 - Electronic Information. Jones Library offers access to the Internet as a global resource which provides information far beyond the confines of the library. Online databases are selected primarily based on cost, ease of use, currency, and appropriateness for our patrons. Other questions considered are:
 - Is it compatible with our current technology?
 - Does it complement the state-provided databases?
 - Is it aimed at the general public rather than at experts in the field?
 - Does it expand our search capabilities?

The Library Internet Policy is available [here](#).

- Children's Collections. The library collects print and audiovisual materials to stimulate creativity and to satisfy children's needs for information. The materials are organized for easy access, given the varied capabilities of children.
 - Children's fiction is subdivided by reading levels: picture books/readers, pre-school to grade 3, grades 3 to 5, grades 5 and up and Young Adult. Fiction theme collections, including Mysteries and Science Fiction, combine all reading levels. Children's non-fiction is a combined collection for all ages with separate sections for Biographies, Poetry, Folk and Fairy Tales, and Foreign Languages.
 - Pre-school materials emphasize attractive illustrations and multiple copies of favorite authors and titles. Toys are a child's first learning tools. Toys which help advance a child's education and social development are purchased for the collection.
 - Materials for older children include current fiction, children's classics, current and accurate information, and recreational reading. Reference books suitable for use by children through age 14 and periodicals of interest to children and teens are acquired for use in the Children's Collections. Electronic formats, such as CD ROM software, which fosters computer literacy and information research is collected through gift and by purchase.
 - Young adult materials are purchased for teens and include fiction, non-fiction, videos, and spoken word tapes.
 - Books of interest to adult students of children's literature, parents, children's book authors, and people working with children are collected. These include historical perspectives, criticism, author and illustrator information, and bibliographies. Examples of books from each decade since 1900 circulate from the collection to illustrate the evolution of trends in children's book publishing in America. Valuable titles may be transferred to Special Collections when they go out of print in order to preserve them for research purposes. Parenting materials for adults with children or caring for children are also acquired.
 - Children's videotapes in VHS format and DVD's are acquired for home use only. Collections emphasize videos that stimulate imagination and intellectual growth with current, popular and lively themes. Audiotapes and CD's are purchased for children featuring recorded books, music, and language learning.

- Branch Libraries. The Branch Library Collections for juveniles and adults offer popular reading, a selection of current interest materials, and a variety of audiovisual and electronic materials. Flexibility to respond to changing public demands is a major consideration in the addition of materials to the collection. Participation in system wide network transfer of materials both enhances and shares the collections. The branches acquire a few recognized standard works, but

in general, will not acquire research materials, referring the patron to the Reference and Special Collection departments. A small reference collection contains only heavily consulted items. Online resources that include remote access to statewide databases and Internet stations offers a wide variety of current information for public research. All issues of periodicals may be borrowed.

VI. GIFTS POLICY

The Library accepts gifts of books and other unsolicited materials, depending on space limitations. All donations are accepted on the condition that the Director has the authority to make whatever disposition is deemed advisable.

Gift materials are accepted under the following conditions:

- Books must be in good condition with both covers, not moldy or musty.
- Music and videotapes that have been recorded from the original cannot be accepted.

Titles must meet the criteria for purchase to be added to collections. Gifts that are not added to collections are donated to the Friends of the Jones Library System for sale to benefit the Library. Books and other materials which have been left in the library and unclaimed for 30 days will be considered "gifts." The library provides receipts but does not evaluate donations for tax purposes.

VII. WEEDING AND DISCARDING

Weeding is an essential part of on-going collection development and maintenance. Weeding is a form of selection and requires expert knowledge of the collection, the community, patterns of library use, and selection principles. Weeding is the responsibility of the librarian who makes acquisition decisions in specific subject areas. Specific subject criteria delineating suggested guidelines for weeding should be consulted in the professional literature. Recent selective bibliographies should be consulted prior to discarding specific titles. Individual titles may be weeded or not based upon the librarian's judgment, applying the following criteria:

- Is the subject area as a whole strong, weak, or adequate?
- Is the item worn, musty, moldy, or damaged? Has it been vandalized, i.e. inked in, pictures ripped out, missing pages?
- Does more current material exist on the topic? Is there a newer edition of the title?
- Does the public use it? Usage may be determined by checking last activity date on C/W MARS database.
- Does it fill a current need? Is it accurate, indexed, and unbiased?
- Is the copy a duplicate? Does the demand warrant duplicate copies?

The condition of an item affects its use. Circulating materials that are returned to the library extensively soiled or damaged beyond repair will be regularly withdrawn from the collection. Titles withdrawn due to loss, damage, or wear are not automatically replaced. Replacement is considered in relation to adequate coverage in a specific subject area, the availability of more current or better titles, and demand for the title. Replacement with a new copy of the title is recommended if the book is determined to be important to the collection. The library will attempt to replace out of print titles as demand warrants.

Library staff may dispose of gift and withdrawn materials in good condition as follows:

- Transfer to other library departments
- Distribute appropriate materials in support of library-sponsored outreach and literacy programs
- Offer to Amherst K-12 school and local college libraries
- Offer to C/W MARS member libraries
- Donate to Friends of the Jones Library System book sales, Better World Books, or to other programs that encourage reading

Materials that are too shabby and worn or whose content is not appropriate for the above will be sent for recycling or discarding.

Withdrawn materials of special value will be offered to the public through book dealers and online book auctions, in the manner most advantageous to the Library. The Library will not allow materials of special value to be acquired privately by any employee, officer or volunteer, unless they are sold through public auction.

VIII. RECONSIDERATION OF A BOOK

Library employees are protected by Chapter 322 of the General Laws of Massachusetts, which states that no employee shall be dismissed for the selection of library materials under an approved policy that is in accordance with the standards of the American Library Association. In the case of a user complaint concerning an item in the collection, the library will request the user to fill out a form for reconsideration (available in the Library Office). The Director will review the title, meet with staff, and meet with the user to review the complaint and, then, will make a written ruling on the request, in terms of the Collection Development Policy. If unsatisfied, the user may pursue the complaint with the Board of Trustees by making a written request to the Board. A ruling by the Board of Trustees is final.