

JERVIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

Rome, New York, is a small upstate city of 40,979 residents. The city is situated in the heart of Oneida County, which is located in the central part of the state. A major employer in the area is the U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory located at the east edge of the city. Other major employers are Rome Strip Steel, Varflex, Revere, the New York State Department of Corrections, and various medical services. At the present time the community is predominantly middle class and with traditional values. To a lesser degree there are other population patterns. Jervis Library, the public library of Rome, is one of the most popular institutions in the community. It is the busiest library in Oneida County, attracting not only residents of Rome but also residents of outlying communities. Average daily patron traffic is over 700.

MISSION AND GOALS

Access to information and ideas is essential for citizens living in today's world. The general public requires an institution which will meet its informational needs on an equal and impartial basis. Jervis Public Library performs this function for the people of Rome and surrounding communities. The library develops its collection in ways which will meet the informational needs of the population it serves.

The library's goals are as follows:

1. Meet the informational needs of all components of the community to the best of the library's ability and educate patrons into new needs and interests.
2. Recognize the importance of recreation in a full life by providing entertainment materials of both popular interest and lasting value to supply quality, meaningful recreation and to promote intellectual growth.
3. Supplement formal education and assist in individually-motivated self-education.
4. Help people become informed, responsible citizens of their community and country by providing materials on current issues.
5. Help people in matters relating to their employment, such as employment seeking skills and sharpening their skills relating to current employment.
6. Actively pursue automation/computer and electronic resources as outlined in the library's Long Range Plan.

In order to meet these goals, the library collects materials with the following objectives in mind:

1. Identifying needs and interests of the public, including anticipated needs.
2. Purchasing materials to meet these needs in a timely manner.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of the policy is to make clear to both the public and the library staff the manner in which the library develops its collection. This includes specifying criteria for choosing materials and designating responsibility in making purchasing decisions. These principles are presented in the light of the library's function in its particular community and the library's Mission Statement.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

In order to meet its goals, the library must set forth criteria for selecting materials. These basic criteria are: interest, demand, value, need in the collection, format, cost, and availability. Different guidelines are used for selecting non-fiction and fiction. The main principles used here are as follows:

NON-FICTION:

- 1) Interest demonstrated or anticipated
- 2) Importance to the community
- 3) Recentness
- 4) Accuracy, objectivity, clarity, and general quality, including authority of author
- 5) Level of access
- 6) Need with respect to books on the same subject already owned
- 7) Cost with respect to the library's budget and particular importance of the item
- 8) Format

FICTION:

- 1) Likely demand; demonstrated or anticipated interest in works by a certain author or in a certain type of fiction
- 2) Appeal and creativity
- 3) Quality; including style, characterization, literary merit
- 4) Cost with respect to the library's budget and particular need for the item

These factors are usually brought to librarians' attention through reviews, but can come from other sources, such as word of mouth or citation in the media.

Slightly different criteria govern the purchase of reference non-fiction than those governing the purchase of circulating non-fiction. In reference, recentness and comprehensiveness are especially important factors; for circulating non-fiction, demand and appeal can be important. Much circulating non-fiction, however, is purchased with a view toward using it for reference and information rather than recreational reading purposes alone. Similarly, popular appeal can be important in choosing some of the non-circulating reference books, especially in areas like sports or popular music.

The library exists to minister to all the different populations and viewpoints of the city. The preponderance of materials tends to reflect majority trends in the community, because those trends represent the majority of those who use the library. Budgetary restraints do not allow for emphasizing all possible tastes equally. Suitable coverage of non-majority tastes and viewpoints is earnestly maintained.

Materials which are too specialized and technical for the layman are rarely chosen. These materials are normally left to academic or special libraries. However, exceptions to this may occur, especially in fields that are by definition technical, such as computers or electronics, which are increasingly popular with patrons. Also, some areas deemed too technical by some public libraries may be of interest to Jervis's patrons due to the number of citizens employed at the Air Force Research Laboratory, Rome site, who are engaged in various scientific and technological pursuits.

The library tries to make materials available in a variety of formats, such as computer software, audiocassettes, videocassettes, CDs, and periodicals as well as books. However, print materials, especially books, are the most commonly purchased format and remain the most popular materials sought by users. This is likely to remain for the foreseeable future, though numbers of materials purchased in other formats are steadily growing.

Books for adults and children are essentially chosen according to similar criteria with respect to quality and value. The main difference is that adults' books are chosen mostly for readers who have reached mature viewpoints, whereas children's and young adult books are chosen for readers whose viewpoints are in the process of developing.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

Input for collection development decisions comes from professional librarians on the staff. Most materials are selected upon the reading of reviews in selection sources commonly used by librarians. Some of these are American Library Association's Booklist, the Kirkus Reviews, Library Journal, and The New York Times Book Review. Orders are also prompted by advertisements and catalogs, and by noting inadequacies in a given subject area. Once the deficiency is noticed, suitable titles are ordered as listed in reputable publishers' catalogs

kept on file or in [Subject Guide to Books in Print](#). Additionally, books are ordered at the prompting of patrons. Patron input is always welcome in building the library's collections, assuming suitable reviews or patron expertise recommend the material.

In choosing new materials to develop the collection, librarians rely on their knowledge of the community, what is already in the library, literature of the fields under consideration, and, importantly, the library's budgetary constraints. Expensive items of limited interest to the general public are rarely affordable. Then decisions must be made on the basis of such factors as quality, likely popularity, and recency.

Ultimately only the Director has full authority to approve collection development decisions. Librarians working under her supervision submit ordering suggestions to her. She reviews the suggestions based on anticipated or demonstrated need, collection philosophy, and budgetary constraints.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT BY SUBJECT AREA

The library uses the Dewey Decimal system, with classification numbers 000 through 900, to classify its nonfiction. Each range of numbers indicates a subject area to which a certain amount of collection development attention is given. Different emphases are placed on different aspects within a given subject area.

000's

In the Dewey 000's, the area of general works, the strongest need for collection development is for computer books. This field both changes rapidly and is of great public interest, triggering a constant demand for new materials. Other areas of the 000's include encyclopedias, books on the book trade, general bibliography, and library science. Collection development here is, and probably will continue to be, modest. Encyclopedias must be kept up-to-date, but many of the other non-computer books in the Dewey 000's do not become dated rapidly and are not in heavy demand. The library has a sound core collection.

100's

The Dewey 100's cover such fields as philosophy, psychology, and the occult. The most active collection development here is and probably will continue to be psychology. Demand is substantial for both the most important basic psychology books and for popular self-help books. Parapsychology and occultism are also popular topics. In philosophy there is a sound core collection of basic thought by the most acknowledged thinkers. Little collection development is needed in philosophy, however, because the books do not become rapidly dated; significant new materials do not appear often; and public demand for philosophy books is low. In the area of the occult, some materials are provided to offer alternative viewpoints on religious and philosophical questions, but collection development is minimal, as the major cultural emphasis in Rome is currently Judeo-Christian.

200's

The Dewey 200's cover religion and mythology. Most of the books are from the Judeo-Christian tradition, as the majority of the community adheres to this tradition. However, there is a significant amount of information about other major world religions. The religion collection will probably not become a high collection development priority for the foreseeable future because a basic collection is owned, materials do not become dated quickly, and the influx of new ideas is relatively small. Mythology books will always be monitored for adequate supply, as these are frequently requested for school assignments.

300's

The Dewey 300's cover the social sciences: political science, economics, law, education, and social welfare. This is one of the most active collection development priorities. Public demand is high here because this subject area covers both basic practical needs and frequent topics for school assignments. Materials become dated quickly, necessitating constant updating and revision. Specifically, a wide variety of information on such topical issues as global warming, capital punishment, and abortion must be maintained. These topics are constantly requested for school assignments. Though technical legal questions are referred to the county Law Library in Utica, there is high popular demand for legal books for the layman. Books on government programs such as Social Security are always in demand. The library is especially proud of its comprehensive, in-depth college and vocational guidance collections which it intends to maintain at the current level of quality.

400's

The Dewey 400's cover languages, both English and foreign. Collection development is moderate here, but steady. New editions and types of dictionaries and thesauri are purchased steadily to keep up with developments in the ever-changing English language. A basic level of collection development occurs to maintain foreign language dictionaries for the most popular foreign languages and basic language instruction books for these foreign languages. Language instruction on audio cassettes is also acquired. In the foreign languages, the most

active selection occurs in Spanish, due to heightened demand. The core collection in languages is strong and the materials do not become dated quickly. Popular demand is not as high as it is in an area such as the social sciences. The Dewey 400's, then, will continue to be one of moderate collection development activity.

500's

The Dewey 500's concern the pure sciences, such as mathematics, biology, physics, and chemistry. Collection development here is moderate and steady. Comprehensive coverage of such fields as physics, biology, and chemistry would entail purchasing highly technical works best left to academic libraries. Still, the library feels it important to feature some technical works and certainly feels an obligation to provide current works for the layperson. Again, the core collection is sound, and change in the pure sciences (as opposed to technology) is not extremely rapid, so unusually active collection development is not needed. The most actively developed areas are probably books on weather, plants, wildlife, chemistry (at the middle and secondary school level), and astronomy (for school assignments and the amateur astronomer). These are of popular interest and frequently requested for school assignments.

600's

The Dewey 600 area deals with applied technology, and covers such diverse fields as pets, gardening, medicine, business, automotive repair, home improvement, and cookery. In general, this is and will continue to be a highly developed area. The applied technology books minister to very practical needs and are in constant high demand. Though books in such fields as gardening and cookery do not become dated quickly, books on medicine, vehicle repair, and business often do. The library prides itself on its collection of do-it-yourself and home improvement books, which is extensive. There is a constant demand for medical books for the layman and books on resume writing and job-seeking. There are frequent questions on such diverse 600's fields as weightlifting, raising farm animals, and nutrition. In short, demand in the 600's is extremely high and this area is constantly watched and expanded.

700's

The Dewey 700's cover the arts, crafts, antiques, collectibles, and sports. Collection development is and will probably continue to be minimal in fine arts and classical music because the core collection is strong and the materials do not become dated quickly. The main need is to maintain present coverage and make sure the library has materials on artists about whom school term papers are frequently written and new artists in the public spotlight. There is active collection development in the areas of popular music, sports, and antiques and collectibles. Many biographies of musicians and athletes are cataloged in the 700's. Here the demand is high and the information changes rapidly, requiring constant updating.

800's

The Dewey 800's include literary criticism, poetry, essays, and drama, as well as books on public speaking and the art and technique of writing. The main need in literary criticism, poetry, and drama is to collect materials most likely to be requested for school assignments. A watch is kept for particularly significant new poetry and drama, but in general these are not high demand areas in this particular library and the core collection of classic writers is sound. Essays are not a high priority, as there is little demand for these. The library has a sound core collection of books on writing technique, so there is little need for extensive collection development here.

900's

The Dewey 900's cover history and geography. There is high demand in this area, but the library's collection, especially in history, is so extensive that collection development need be no more than steady and moderate here. As is the case with religion and philosophy, the history books do not usually become dated quickly. The library keeps a watch for significant new materials that offer fresh interpretations of historical events and cover new developing events. As world events unfold and geographic and governmental boundaries change, new materials reflecting these changes are purchased. Travel books, atlases, and geographic and cultural books on the United States and foreign countries are actively collected. The atlases and general books on foreign countries are constantly requested by students. Travel books become dated quickly and are in high demand from the public.

BIOGRAPHIES

Biographies, denoted by the "B" symbol and filed alphabetically by the person about whom the book is written, are collected fairly actively. These are both frequently requested for school assignments and form a type of popular reading second in appeal only to fiction. The library purchases both biographies of people not currently covered by the collection and biographies which offer new interpretations of the lives of individuals already covered in the collection.

FICTION

In the area of fiction the library recognizes a strong commitment to both popularity and quality. Fiction is a very actively developed area, as fiction in book form is the primary entertainment material demanded of and provided by the library. Patrons are especially interested in new fiction, the latest developments in the publishing world. The library is committed to supplying an ample and ever-changing quantity of new fiction. High circulation potential and literary quality are both important factors in selecting new fiction. The situation is optimum when high circulation potential and literary quality appear in the same book, but there must, of necessity, be books that incline toward one of these factors more than the other. The library attempts to maintain an up-to date, ever-changing, balanced collection of fiction with stories of many different types to satisfy different public tastes. Mysteries are an emphasized collection development area as they are especially popular at this library. A significant amount of science fiction and fantasy is purchased when in hardcover. Mysteries, however, remain the form of genre fiction most in demand. Novels are a priority over short story collections in fiction, as novels are both more numerous and more popular. A sound collection of classics, including those likely to be requested for school assignments, is maintained.

GRAPHIC NOVELS

Graphic novels are book length stories whose narrative is conveyed through a combination of text and art. The graphic novel format has a long and rich history that stretches all the way back to the first cave paintings, however, it is only in recent years that graphic novels have earned the level of literary respect that they were earlier denied. Today, like their counterparts in prose, graphic novels are the subject of book reviews and academic study, as well as the recipients of prestigious literary awards. Art Spiegelman's acclaimed graphic novel, *Maus*, paved the way for other graphic novels when it was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1992.

Like all books, graphic novels encompass many genres, including, but not limited to, realistic fiction, classic adaptations, nonfiction, romance, science fiction, fantasy, horror, biography, memoir, and comic-based superhero stories. The visual component of the graphic novel appeals to many age groups and has been proven to be especially effective in encouraging young, reluctant readers. Additionally, the strong character development and complex story lines featured in some graphic novels appeals to more mature readers.

When considering titles for addition to the adult, young adult, or juvenile graphic novel collections, standard review sources, such as Booklist and Library Journal, are consulted. Other professional recommendations, such as those from the American Library Association are also considered. Patron suggestions are also given serious consideration. Individual titles and series graphic novels are collected based on appeal, anticipated demand, durability, and artistic and literary quality.

CHILDREN'S NON-FICTION AND FICTION

Children's non-fiction is purchased to fulfill both the needs of school assignments and to provide materials through which children of various ages and reading abilities can learn about the world. Though school libraries have primary responsibility to support school curricula, Jervis Library, with its extensive open hours and large collection, is heavily used by students as a homework center. Thus, the library does provide materials which support completion of homework assignments. As children are both avid learners and have a wide variety of interests, children's non-fiction is collected to represent a broad spectrum of topics.

When choosing children's fiction, quality is carefully balanced against immediacy of appeal, particularly in selecting picture books for younger children, who often have short attention spans. Literary quality figures at least as importantly as interest level in selecting the intermediate children's fiction, which is classified by the "J" and "JH" symbols and alphabetized by author. Materials chosen for children are selected to stimulate appreciation for reading and learning. Materials shelved in the Children's Room include books for young children through readers in 7th grade.

YOUNG ADULT (YA) NON-FICTION AND FICTION

Young adult books are those written for readers grade 8 on up and are classified with the "YA" symbol. Both YA fiction and YA non-fiction are shelved with the adult collection. There is a special area where new "YA" books are showcased. When librarians choose fiction for young adults, immediate appeal can be especially important because some who read these books are reluctant readers. The non-reluctant young adult reader is frequently already reading books for adults. Young adult books, however, are often much more than interim books between childhood and adulthood. YA books often have solid artistic merit of their own and appeal to teen and adult readers. Thus, lasting value is an important consideration in choosing "YA" fiction.

"YA" non-fiction is not always distinguishable from adult non-fiction. The two are shelved together in the adult section by Dewey subject number. [Though most "YA" non-fiction is classified with the "YA" symbol, some are classified by three dashes (---) on the spine.] The library chooses "YA" non-fiction which deals with adult-level

material, but which is not too difficult for readers grades 8 and up. As with adult non-fiction, clarity, accuracy, and authoritativeness are important selection criteria. Because many "YA" non-fiction books are used for school reports, information in these books should be presented in clearly accessible formats suited to easy extraction. In the areas of both fiction and non-fiction, "YA" books are chosen to both minister to young adult readers' existing interests and perspectives and to stimulate them to seek increasing challenges in reading material.

FORMATS

The main format collected is hardcover or trade-paperback books, including large print. Also, the library purchases a growing number of materials in non-print formats in response to popular demand and to provide a variety of ways through which information and entertainment can be accessed by all patrons, including those with physical, visual, or hearing disabilities. Specifically, instructional videos, entertainment videos for both adults and children, and spoken and musical audiocassettes, CDs, and computer software are purchased. The library attempts to provide a sufficient variety of these, though printed books remain the format of primary emphasis.

Via the Mid-York Library System and the Internet, Jervis Library has access to a wide range of electronic resources. A small number of these are products of the Mid-York Library System, usually bibliographies or indexes to materials of local interest. Also, Mid-York provides access to electronic resources over the Internet, magazine indexing and abstracting databases, readers' advisory databases, online encyclopedias, biographical databases, and subject related databases. The library actively pursues automation/computer resources on its own and in conjunction with the Mid-York Library System. This pursuit includes the "Electronic Doorway Library" concept, promulgated by N.Y.S. Department of Education, Board of Regents, and Department of Library Development. See the library's Long Range Plan for objectives of the "Electronic Doorway Library" concept.

The library subscribes to a large number of predominantly popular interest periodicals reflecting a variety of subjects and tastes. Some of these periodicals are acquired mainly for recreational reading, while others, accessed by indexes, primarily serve a reference function. Most periodicals are retained for either two years or five years. Those that are deemed most worthy for research are bound for permanent retention. New periodicals subscriptions are instituted based on quality, likely popularity, and coverage of the subject matter by other periodicals in the collection. Selection is guided by major periodicals reviewing sources such as Magazines for Libraries. Input from patrons can also be important in prompting new subscriptions. The library will frequently subscribe to a periodical in which a number of patrons express interest, if the periodical is affordable and judged likely to have broad appeal.

Microforms are collected mainly to store newspapers. The library maintains an ongoing microfilm collection of The Rome Daily Sentinel and The New York Times. A few other upstate New York newspapers are acquired in paper format only, but are discarded after 1 to 12 months. Other than for storing newspapers, the microforms format is currently used mainly to store census information. The library has no current plans to collect periodicals in microform format. The library currently maintains a selective index to the Rome Daily Sentinel (which indexing will cease when the Sentinel's own index becomes viable), and offers print and electronic indexes to the New York Times.

Mass-market paperbacks are purchased in moderate quantity. These are mostly adults' and children's fiction, often of a more popular, ephemeral nature than hardcover books and trade paperbacks. Mass-market paperbacks are not usually cataloged, unless they are deemed worthwhile to the general collection. The Mid-York Library System will add only certain mass-market paperbacks to the system-wide database which is the union catalog. The library purchases an increasing amount of non-fiction in trade paperback form, as these books are less expensive than hardcover editions of the same title. Usually, fiction is collected in trade paperback rather than hardcover form only when the hardcover format is unavailable; or in some cases where the hardcover format is prohibitively expensive. Oftentimes, the more ephemeral paperbacks are received as gifts.

DUPLICATION, REPLACEMENT, AND REPAIR

Duplication usually occurs only when purchasing highly popular books, especially best-selling fiction. This type of book is sometimes purchased initially in multiple copies in anticipation of demand, or additional copies are added through purchase or gifts as demand peaks. Once demand subsides, some of these duplicates are often weeded. Over the course of time, duplicates, unless shown necessary by demand, are more and more likely to be withdrawn.

Missing or irreparably damaged books are replaced by a new copy of the same title or a newer title on the same subject if need is likely to exist and if the collection will be significantly reduced by the loss of the book in question. Moderately damaged or worn books judged to be of lasting value to the collection are repaired or rebound.

GIFTS

Jervis Library is always appreciative of worthwhile gifts that can be incorporated into the cataloged collection. Donations of books are accepted with the understanding that the library may ask the donor to reclaim titles the library cannot use, or at least that the library is free to sell or donate to other libraries titles for which it has no need. If approached about a possible gift, librarians will usually try to make a preliminary estimate of whether the books might be needed. Donations of books that are of limited interest, in poor physical condition, mildewed, dirty, or out-of-date are rejected.

Once gift books are accepted for examination, decision whether to incorporate individual titles is made by the Director and/or Assistant Director after the clerical staff has checked to see which of the books the library already owns. If in good condition and not duplications, gift books are judged according to the same standards as purchased books. If there are any conditions attached by the donor to the acquiring of a gift, the conditions are considered by a librarian, or possibly the Director if the decision is judged by the librarian to be important enough to be referred to her. If the library judges the conditions reasonable, it will sometimes accept the gift materials; and will reject them if the conditions are not judged reasonable. In no case is the library permitted to place a value on donated items for income tax purposes; it will simply acknowledge receipt of the gift.

WEEDING

Books which are in poor condition are repaired, rebound, or if no longer relevant, withdrawn from the collection. Weeding of duplicate copies in the circulating area is often prompted by space limitations. Considered in weeding are: a book's circulation record (how many times it has circulated and how recently); its continuing relevance given publication date; whether it is of lasting value; whether it is still of value to this particular community; and whether it is valuable as a document of its time. Is the book likely to fulfill any need that another, more recent book on the same subject does not fill? Books are sometimes pulled for weeding consideration on the basis of computer printouts indicating zero or low circulation. Professional librarians then weigh other factors which include: quality, datedness, physical condition, and relevance to the community and within the collection. Within the reference collection space is also a concern, but the main concern is recentness, as these books should be on the cutting edge of new information, keeping budgetary constraints in mind.

EVALUATION

Continual evaluation of the collection is performed by librarians, usually when some limitation in coverage, timeliness, or space is indicated. These factors can cause that particular subject area to come under scrutiny. The reference area is continually evaluated according to both comprehensiveness and recency. The library does not generally find it necessary to evaluate the whole circulating collection or large parts of it at one time. Time and staff shortages do not permit this. The library assumes that through its normal collection development procedures, including public input and recommendations, it is meeting the public's needs.

On an on-going basis, collection evaluation occurs anytime librarians are contemplating buying an advertised or reviewed book and are considering whether the collection needs that book or books of its type. Also, consciousness of changing patterns in the community is always maintained. This awareness leads to evaluation of portions of the collection. Parts of the collection are evaluated periodically when checklists of best or most essential books in given fields are published. The library's collection is checked against these lists to see which books are owned and which should be purchased. Such lists are published, for example, in Booklist, Library Journal and so forth. At intervals, patron surveys are taken to gather public input concerning the collection's needs.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY

While readily providing books for interlibrary loan to other libraries, Jervis Library itself aims at a high degree of self-sufficiency. This is gauged by frequently demonstrated needs of the community. A certain self-sufficiency is necessary because a large number of patrons are interested only in information that is in the library at a given time. Frequently patrons are working on school assignments which are due before materials requested on interlibrary loan can arrive. If the library cannot provide information when reference questions are asked, collection development is judged to be needed in the deficient area, especially if the reference question recurs or is judged likely to recur.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

In a democratic society a free flow of ideas is essential. To uphold that freedom Jervis Library develops its collection to reflect a variety of topics, viewpoints, and reading tastes, and feels an obligation to protect the individual's right to choose information without constraint or censorship. The library, then, fully supports the concept of intellectual freedom as specified by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, the "Library Bill of Rights," and the "Freedom to Read Statement." (Texts appended, as endorsed by the Board of Trustees).

Since people's opinions and backgrounds are so diverse, from time to time a patron may object to the library's owning of certain items. Complaints about materials are first sympathetically listened to by the librarian who receives the complaint. If the complaint persists, a material inquiry form is offered to the patron. The patron is asked to express on the form his or her feelings about the book in question. This form is filed with the Director and usually initiates examination of the disputed book. Reviews are sought and read and the matter is discussed further with the person filing the complaint. The Director, possibly in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, reaches a final decision regarding the item.

REVISION

This policy may be revised from time to time when the Director and/or Board of Trustees deem necessary. The library must be open to revision of its collection development philosophy as the community's needs evolve. Jervis Library recognizes as its primary responsibility ongoing responsiveness to the community it serves.

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(1992; 1994; 2000)