THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO FIND GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

WEEDING GENEALOGY AND LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS

Mary Plazo, Manager, Special Collections Division
Akron-Summit County Public Library
mplazo@akronlibrary.org
Akron Main Library’s Special Collections Division did not exist until 2004.

A small collection of genealogy, local history books, and historic maps was created by one (obsessive) librarian who had an avid interest in genealogy back in the 1950s and 1960s.
And the Library had a collection of local and “rare” items in the basement. These were cataloged with location codes, “Vault,” “ARC,” for Archives and “Stacks.” We continue to use “RStack” today to indicate they are Reference in Special Collections and also GLH for Genealogy and Local History.
Genealogy became more popular, resources expanded over time – microfilm, how-to books, databases adding hundreds and thousands of records: vital records, church and court records, cemetery transcriptions, city directories, photographs, and on and on.
Main Library was remodeled from 2001-2004, and Special Collections was created. We combined our “Special Collections” into one area, and did some “weeding.”

Our space during the transition years on Tallmadge Avenue in Akron.
Now Special Collections has outgrown the space we moved into when the Library was remodeled in 2004 and needs “Spring Cleaning” -!
So many considerations before discarding materials when working with GLH collections:

- Lack of space.
- Accessibility through online resources.
- Public use and demand.
- Other criteria... condition, circulation statistics, current relevance to the collection, multiple editions, duplicates, what other libraries hold it, etc.
GLH COLLECTIONS: CONSIDERATIONS

Condition
Special Collections has a small collection of circulating books.

Many of them are genealogy “How-to” books that are more popular, in addition to a small collection of local history books.
GLH COLLECTIONS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR CIRCULATING MATERIALS

- **Circulation statistics:**
  - Those that haven’t circulated for over 5 years we consider weeding if it’s not the only work on the topic or is recognized as a standard work in the field.

- **Current relevance:**
  - Genealogy how-to books over 5 years old with no newer editions we discard, especially when they concern software.

2005 edition. Popular general book, but not necessary to keep older editions. Between Special Collections at Main Library and our branches we have several of the 2012 edition.
Genealogy Starter Kit, 2nd edition.

Published 1998.

Last circulated in 2011.

How-to information is very basic and can be found in other works. Not comprehensive and most of this information is probably online.
Tracing Your Polish Roots

Published 1991.
Last circulated in 2007.
At least two books on this subject have been published within last few years.
GLH COLLECTIONS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR CIRCULATING MATERIALS

- Standard works or classics such as, *Unpuzzling Your Past*, we keep, as well as most how-to books on specific topics (courthouse research, military ancestors for example, when the research methods are still basically the same process).
Unpuzzling Your Past:
popular genealogy standard for beginning genealogists
GLH COLLECTIONS:
CONSIDERATIONS FOR CIRCULATING MATERIALS

- Duplicates:
  - This also depends on how many copies and if they’ve circulated. If multiple copies have recently circulated, we keep them. If circulation has fallen off, we discard.
Multiple editions:

We usually weed older editions, but with genealogy and especially local history books we have to consider the content in older editions because it could still be useful.

In Special Collections, we probably keep older editions longer than other subject divisions.
GLH COLLECTIONS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR ALL MATERIALS

- Who Else Has It?
  - If other libraries have the title, it makes it an easy decision to discard. If few libraries have it, we feel we should retain it.
GLH COLLECTIONS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR REFERENCE MATERIALS

- The majority of books in Special Collections are still reference.
- Books of transcribed records, narrative histories, anything with useful genealogical data we rarely or never weed unless it’s a matter of condition or duplicate copies.
- Exceptions may be lineage society publications like DAR or Mayflower Society if they deem them no longer useful.
**GLH COLLECTIONS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR REFERENCE MATERIALS**

- **Directories:** The information may be online or outdated, but there may be listings that are not online and still useful to know. We lean toward keeping more comprehensive directories for many years.
GLH COLLECTIONS:

CONSIDERATIONS FOR REFERENCE MATERIALS

- **How-to Books:**
- We weed very old manuals over 20 years old, depending on the content.
A Graveyard Preservation Primer

Published 1995. We have circulating and reference copies of the 2013 edition and other more recent books on this topic, so the outdated info in this book might be a problem.
Maps Can Help You Trace Your Family Tree.
Published 1991.
Maps shown are just examples, not especially detailed or useful. This is a very basic how-to with a small directory. This information is likely found elsewhere. Since it is a federal government document, we would transfer our copy to our Business and Government Division, who administers our federal document repository collection.
And now can find a map on one of the Library’s databases like *Historic Map Works*
We purchased numerous microfilm reels of the U.S Census when the Division was created!
Now the entire U.S. Census is available in many databases that genealogists can use for free.
Ancestor Search
Search for Revolutionary Era Ancestors

You must enter a value in at least one of the marked fields.

Ancestor Last Name
Ancestor First Name
State of Service
Ancestor Number
State of Birth
State of Death
Spouse Last/Maiden Name
Spouse First Name

SEARCH  Clear Form

Search Options
Overview & Help
New Search
Advanced Search
Child Search
Refine Search

Become a Member!
New images added to the Periodical Source Index (PERSI)
Many reference sources are now available through databases, but we still keep the original print copies, just in case.

We still have enough active local genealogists that request we keep print copies of some of our collections, and we do value their needs and expertise.
Thank you!