



RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Title: Special Collection Policy & Scope Statement Policy

Policy Number: 12.05

Revised Date: 07/23/2025

Background:

Richmond Public Library is fortunate to have varied materials that have been given to the library by generous donors over the years. Included in gifts have been photographs, works on paper, and similar non-print items as well as books. From the founding of Richmond Public Library in the early 20th Century, we are also fortunate to have copies of titles originally purchased for public use that are now out of print.

The Richmond Public Library Board of Trustees has adopted a strategic plan directing the work of the library. An assessment of the Library's special collections has been conducted in light of the strategic plan. Representatives of the area's major special and academic libraries were invited to review the special collections and offer recommendations for actions that would preserve these materials and provide access to them within the most appropriate collections. The specialists participating were asked to assess the conditions under which materials are being kept, identify items that might fit appropriately within Richmond Public Library's collections or within other special library collections within Richmond, and to discuss their findings with the Library Board.

The following policies are adopted to guide the management of special collections within Richmond Public Library.

Current Materials Selection Policy:

The current materials selection policy of the library is structured to reflect the general interests of residents:

The goal of materials selection at Richmond Public Library is to provide a range of materials in a variety of print and non-print formats to meet the informational, cultural, educational, and recreational needs and interests of the entire Richmond community. The Library strives to create an attractive, up-to-date, balanced collection representing all fields of knowledge and all sides of issues in a neutral, unbiased manner, as budgets, availability of materials and space permit.

Criteria for Selection:

- Relevance to community needs and interests
- Current and projected demand
- Relevance to existing subject coverage in the collections
- Clarity, readability and ease of use
- Timeliness or permanence of material
- Accuracy and authenticity
- Literary merit and inclusion in standard bibliographies and indices
- Current and historical significance
- Authority and reputation of the author, publisher, and/or producer
- Local authorship or production
- Cost
- Technical aspects of audiovisual materials
- Regional availability and accessibility
- Space and maintenance requirements
- Online, network and remote access capabilities

Special Collections Policies and Procedures:

- We reaffirm the general nature of the Richmond Public Library's collection and service priorities, which is reflected in the Library's strategic plan and current Collection Development policy.
- In general, items that require special storage conditions or oversight are not appropriate for inclusion in Richmond Public Library's collection and will not be accepted as gifts. The Richmond Public Library Board of Trustees is charged with reviewing and approving or accepting any gifts.
- Special Collections that will be maintained at Richmond Public Library will require staff trained to provide appropriate access to materials, and appropriate space for safe and secure use of materials that have significant monetary value or are in fragile condition.
- Richmond Public Library will collect and hold special collections within the following parameters.
 - A. Printed materials that reflect the history and development of Richmond, defined as the City of Richmond and its related governmental entities (Port of Richmond, Richmond Behavioral Health Authority, and similar), Richmond Public Schools, and churches within the city's boundaries. Examples of what will be included are:
 - City records
 - City of Richmond documents [plans, reports, voter records, budgets]
 - Materials related to the development of Richmond as a governmental entity [examples are the port, transportation, biographies of key leaders or persons who have influenced Richmond's development as a governmental entity]
 - Materials related to the history and development of Richmond that reflect the significant impact of Richmond's social, cultural, and economic development, and Richmond's religious and educational institutions
 - Yearbooks of high schools within the Richmond Public Schools
 - Printed histories of churches within the city of Richmond
 - City Directories

- Richmond telephone books
 - Special consideration for inclusion will be books about Richmond printed by Richmond presses
- B. Newspapers and other publications printed within the City of Richmond. These will be retained on microfilm where possible (hard copy will not be permanently retained). Newspapers retained are defined specifically as the four newspapers of legal record:
- Richmond News Leader and Richmond Times Dispatch (microfilm)
 - Richmond Free Press (microfilm)
 - Richmond Voice (microfilm)
 - Style Weekly (microfilm)
 - Richmond Magazine
- C. Records of the Richmond Public Library:
- Richmond Public Library records [minutes, photographs, plans]
 - Richmond Public Library ephemera [examples of bookmarks, programs and similar items]
 - Records of the Library's support organizations:
 - Richmond Public Library Foundation
 - Friends of the Richmond Public Library
- D. Richmond Authors Collection

The Richmond Authors' Collection is housed in the Davenport Special Collections Rooms. The collection is defined as follows:

The Richmond Authors' Collection represents the work of Richmond's writers reflecting the breadth and range of their accomplishments. The Collection includes the works of authors who have lived in Richmond and provides an important link to Richmond's development, growth, heritage and culture as a community and a people.

Richmond is defined as the city of Richmond and the adjacent counties of Henrico, Chesterfield, Goochland, and Hanover. Authors who have lived in Richmond at least one year (including those living in Richmond as students, or years served as Governor), or authors born in Richmond may be considered "Richmond Authors."

Books to be included should have been reviewed in at least two standard library review sources. Richmond authors who have been speakers at Richmond Public Library programs will be considered for inclusion. Books may be either hardback or paperback format. Books published in electronic or alternate formats will be considered individually. Space limits the ability to purchase all titles by Richmond authors. Runs of all published work by an author will not necessarily be included. First titles by an author will be sought for the collection to represent the writer's work.

Materials owned in Special Collections are not available for circulation, and must be signed for and used in the Main Library only.

Special Collections is not open to the public on a regular schedule. Access to the collection is by appointment, or specific titles can be requested from the General Collections Desk, first floor of the library, for in-house use.

E. Rare Children's Books

This collection of international and American children's books of historical interest consists of the Rare Children's Books (RCB), Rare Children's Series (RCS), Rare Tucker Collection (RTC) and Foreign Children's Books. These individual collections are drawn from the Library's earlier holdings or were provided through gifts. Significant gifts from Martha Orr Davenport have provided the core of this collection.

A report completed in October 2007 by an outside consultant provides guidance for collection scope statements for each of these areas of the collection. The report recommends that the Library take responsibility for these collections, with grateful acknowledgement of the significant leadership and assistance provided by volunteers, and recognition that the Library must provide staffing and organization for the collections in order to make them truly available and useful to researchers.

F. Digital Collections

Digital Collection will be collected and created in accordance with the previous parameters, focusing on materials that reflect the history and development of Richmond. Digital Collections may include but are not limited to digitized versions of existing library holdings, relevant products created in the Memory Laboratory and donated born digital materials. Richmond Public Library will provide public access to these materials via a digital collections platform unless otherwise stipulated indeed of gift agreements.

G. Materials Not Collected

Due to preservation and storage costs, the following types of materials will not generally be held by Richmond Public Library unless specifically included in the scope statements above:

- Rare books
- Art or sculpture
- Artifacts, realia or memorabilia
- Similar items requiring special storage conditions

Approved: December 19, 2007
Reviewed: January 2012
Revised: July 23, 2025