

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

In a Democratic community it is a function of the public library to provide the means through which all people may have free access to the thinking on all sides of all ideas. The public library is a practical demonstration of the belief in universal education as a life-long process. It is the responsibility of the library to provide books and other media of communication for people of all ages and to give guidance in their use.

The Oshkosh Public Library, following the policy of the American Library Association as laid down in the Library Bill of Rights, rejects the censorship of books, urged or practiced by volunteer arbiters of morals or political opinion or by organizations that would establish a coercive concept of Americanism.

Basic to the total picture of materials selection at the Oshkosh Public Library was the endorsement of the American Library Association "Freedom to Read Statement" by the Library Board in November, 1962 and adoption of the detailed Materials Selection Policy in April, 1963.

The Library will not indicate, through the use of labels or other devices, particular philosophies outlined in a book. To do so is to establish in the reader's mind a judgment before the reader has had the opportunity to examine the book personally.

Leonard B. Archer
Director

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PART I

AIMS, SERVICES AND GUIDE TO THE SELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS FOR THE OSHKOSH PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Public Library is basically an educational institution recognizing the need of all people for continuing self-education regardless of age or formal schooling. The Library services are designed and carried out primarily to fulfill its educational function.

- I. ROLE OF THE OSHKOSH PUBLIC LIBRARY IN THE COMMUNITY
 - A. The Oshkosh Public Library assembles, preserves, makes available, and offers guidance in the use of printed and audio-visual materials that enable Oshkosh and Winnebago County residents to:
 1. Educate themselves continuously.
 2. Keep pace with progress in all fields of knowledge.
 3. Become more familiar with their cultural heritage and the history and literary heritage of Oshkosh and Winnebago County.
 4. Become more responsible members of the home, community, the country and the world.
 5. Become more capable in their occupations.
 6. Discover and develop their creative capacities for an appreciation of the Arts, Literature and Sciences.
 7. Use their leisure time in the enjoyment of reading and in other ways that promote personal and social well-being.
 - B. The Library provides materials and offers services that are of special use to organizations, business and industry and government agencies in Oshkosh and Winnebago County.
 - C. The Oshkosh Public Library extends aid to other organizations in order to more fully realize its aims:

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1. By cooperating with schools in order to:
 - a. Encourage good reading habits among young people.
 - b. Help meet the supplementary reading needs of students in elementary, secondary, college and adult education classes.
2. By entering into cooperative ventures with other libraries to provide better library service for Oshkosh and Winnebago County residents.

II. SERVICES

The main library provides the most complete range of services and the most extensive collection of circulating and reference materials for the use of the entire community. Branch libraries are extensions of the main library providing basic services and collections selected to meet the needs of the areas they service.

- A. REFERENCE SERVICE is supplied to patrons seeking information in person or by telephone. A large collection of reference books, periodicals, business services, telephone directories, etc. is available at the main library. Each branch library provides the most important general reference books and materials.
- B. SERVICE TO CHILDREN is provided at each library. A collection of books for boys and girls is maintained, reading guidance is supplied, and instruction in the use of the library, story hours and other programs for children are planned.
- C. INTERLIBRARY LOAN SERVICE make available the entire library's collection to users of any one agency. Books not included in the library's collection may be obtained upon request from other Wisconsin libraries.

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III. GUIDE TO THE SELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

- A. The Public Library does not promote particular beliefs or views, but provides resources with which the individual can examine issues freely and arrive at his own decisions. In order to provide these tools for intelligent and informed decision-making, the library will attempt to acquire factually accurate materials containing all points of view on controversial topics of interest to the people. Library materials will not be proscribed or removed from the library shelves solely because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval. It is not in the general public interest for a library to confine one individual to reading only what another individual thinks proper.
- B. In general, materials of lasting value are added to the collection, but ephemeral books for which there is a widespread demand may be added.
- C. A special attempt is made to collect books that are listed in standard library indices, such as ESSAY AND GENERAL LITERATURE INDES, GRANGER'S INDEX TO POETRY, etc.
- D. The selection of materials may be limited by the following factors:
 - 1. The need for additional material in the existing collection.
 - 2. The physical limitations of the building.
 - 3. The suitability of the format of the material for library purposes.
 - 4. Budgetary consideration.
 - 5. Availability of special materials in more comprehensive library collections in this area.
- E. An up-to-date, attractive and currently useful collection is maintained through a continual discarding and replacing process.
- F. Library materials received as gifts that meet the standards of selection may be added. If they are not deemed suitable or useful, they may be disposed of to the best interest of the library.

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- G. The library solicits suggestions from individuals and groups in the community, but selection goes beyond the requests of regular library users and reaches out to segments in the population which do not as readily turn to the library's resources for needed materials. The advice of experts may be sought for selecting materials in specific subject areas.

IV. COLLECTIONS AND CRITERIA FOR THEIR SELECTION

A. FICTION WORKS are selected on the following basis:

1. The work should represent an honest portrayal of some problem, aspect of life, or point of view that broadens a person's understanding of human nature and society.
2. Characterization and language must be evaluated in relation to the work as a whole and cannot be considered out of context.
3. Characterization and plot should be well developed.
4. The writing should be of acceptable literary quality.
5. Experimental writing of high literary quality is given consideration because the public library assumes responsibility for collecting and encouraging writing that may influence the development of literature.
6. In addition to meeting the above criteria, fiction selected for children is evaluated with the following desirable characteristics in mind:
 - a. The presentation of realistic adventures in life-like situations.
 - b. The achievement of a mood or style which administers to the childhood needs for beauty, truth, fantasy, imagination or realism.
 - c. The achievement of goals by heroes and heroines which appeal to the high ideals of young readers.
 - d. The existence of good literary quality and the suitability of language and style for young readers.

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- e. The attempt of the author to depict human development: material, moral and mental.
- f. The quality and suitability to the text of the type paper, binding and illustrations. When possible, children's books are purchased prebound or in publishers library bindings.

B. NONFICTION WORKS are selected on the following basis:

1. Nonfiction of lasting value is given first priority, but some materials may be selected solely to meet a current or temporary need.
2. The information should be accurate and presented in a clear and readable style.
3. The author should be qualified on the basis of his knowledge and/or experience.
4. Subjects which are technically difficult and complex should be treated in a manner which makes the book most useful to a reasonable proportion of Oshkosh readers who have an interest in the subject.
5. Books in the fields of medicine, psychology and law which are intended for use exclusively by professional practitioners or books which suggest procedures deemed harmful by recognized authorities will not be selected.
6. In addition to meeting the above criteria, nonfiction selected for children is evaluated with the following desirable characteristics in mind.
 - a. The style of writing should be clear and simple, and the content should be appropriate to the intended audience, but not condescending or over-simplified.
 - b. Necessary technical and scientific terms should be defined in the text or in the glossary.
 - c. When possible, material in textbook form will be avoided.

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- d. Maps, illustrations, charts, etc., should be clear and should aid in visualizing and understanding the text.
- C. PAMPHLETS currently useful and up to date and other ephemeral material from reliable sources are acquired to supplement the book collection using the criteria for nonfiction and recognizing that these materials are, by their nature, impermanent and expendable. Material of lasting value or subject to frequent or continuing use in pamphlet form is preserved by binding or other reinforcing and is treated as a book.
- D. PERIODICALS are selected for their value for those seeking information and engaged in research. A special attempt is made to collect those magazines that are indexed in the various library indices recognizing the broad general usefulness of those periodicals indexed by the READER'S GUIDE TO PERIODICAL LITERATURE.
- E. PICTURES of illustrative and pictorial source materials, arranged by subject, are acquired to supplement the book collection.
- F. FILM STRIPS are acquired which will enrich the curriculum of elementary and secondary schools of Oshkosh and Winnebago County and which meet the educational needs of such community groups as 4-H, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, religious groups, etc.
- G. PHONOGRAPH RECORDS of the long-playing, nonbreakable type are selected with emphasis on recognized musical classics in the standard repertoire', folk music, musical comedy, jazz, children's records and non-musical recordings of plays, poetry, etc., which supplement the book collection. When desirable, recordings will be heard before purchase and evaluated for content, performance, sound fidelity and technical excellence. The same criteria will apply to the selection of tape recordings.

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- H. THE WINNEBAGO COUNTY HISTORICAL COLLECTION of the Oshkosh Public Library preserves books and source materials that document the history of Oshkosh and Winnebago County and provides a record of current happenings in the area. As a part of this collection, the library maintains a local author's collection consisting of books and manuscripts by: persons who were born in Oshkosh or Winnebago County, those who were graduated from a local elementary or high school, or persons who have lived here for a reasonable length of time, or who have gained local prominence.
- I. MOTION PICTURE FILMS are selected – both as a medium of communication and as an art form – that supplement, enrich and dramatize material in book form. Films are evaluated for content, significance, manner of presentation, and technical excellence (quality of narration, etc.). [As approved by the Library Board, January 19, 1966]

V. SELECTION PROCEDURE

- A. Within the book selection policy adopted by the Library Board, ultimate responsibility of selection rests with the Library Director.
- B. Since no one person can know enough about all subjects or the reading interest of all people in the community, it is desirable to have all professional staff members participate in the selection process.
- C. The library invites suggestions from patrons for purchase. The specific advice of experts may be sought for book selection purposes.
- D. The Book Selection Committee consists of Director, Assistant Director, Chief Cataloger, Reference Librarian, Branch Librarian, Head of Extension Department, Children's Librarian, and Subject Specialists. The Committee meets semimonthly and devotes at least one other meeting per month to Children's material.
- E. Because it is impossible for the Library Staff to personally review the large number of books which are published, reviews found in professional, literary, or general periodicals are used as a basis for evaluation.

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- F. In the event there is considerable disagreement among the published reviews, and as a result the Committee is unable to reach a decision concerning the selection of a book, one or more Staff Members will read and review the work and report back to the Committee.

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