

## Contra Costa County Library

### Pleasant Hill Library Collection Assessment and Recommendations Spring 2019

In November 2016, the residents of Pleasant Hill approved Measure K which provides for a new library for the City of Pleasant Hill. The new Pleasant Hill Library is scheduled to open in 2021. The current building will be demolished and a temporary facility will be established at an offsite location. This move requires Contra Costa County Library to distribute the collection of approximately 135,000 items to the other 25 county libraries or into other community resource centers.

The Pleasant Hill Library was opened in 1961. The physical size of the library and its adjacency to the then Library Administration for the then library organization which was a large central library with satellite branches. The intent of the central library was to support patrons with in-depth reference or collection needs while also serving as a repository of special collections. In 2006, Contra Costa County Library made the strategic decision to transition from a central library organization to a peer library system where a full range of library services are intended to be delivered at the first point of contact rather than referring the patron to a central library location. This meant that the Pleasant Hill Library was no longer considered the main central library but a peer library that focused on the needs of the local community rather than the broader county needs.

The peer library model has continued to develop since 2006. Local collections are designed to meet local community needs. Patrons are able to place holds on library items in any branch library and it will be shipped to the patron's preferred location. Contra Costa County Library also participates in Link+ which allows patrons to request items from libraries throughout California and Nevada for temporary loan at the library of choice. Since the advent of the Internet, the Library has sought to make a variety of resources available throughout the community including from home or work.

With the peer library organization well established and the Pleasant Hill Library to be transitioned to a new building, this creates an opportunity for Contra Costa County Library to reevaluate those collections still stored at the current location. Collections of local history, genealogy, newspaper microfilm, and a depository for Federal, State, and local government documents. As a result of the move of the Pleasant Hill Library to a new location, the library will be determining how and where to house these special collections. Listed here are the various collections held in Pleasant Hill Library and information on their depth as well as recommendations for possible dispensation.

#### Local History

Collection Size: 3,050

Description and Discussion:

Items in this collection pertain to the history of the county and its cities and localities. This collection is an invaluable and unique research resource. Many of the items are rare and irreplaceable. Although there is controlled access to the material, most of the materials, due to age and fragile condition, need preservation. Preservation requires maintaining the items either in their original form or having their content transformed into a more permanent and usable format, such as a digitized file or format. Ongoing maintenance and development of this resource is highly desirable to retain its historical and research value.

The collection consists two areas, the Vault Collection, which contains items of relating to Contra Costa County history, including towns and cities, people, and events, with an emphasis on uniqueness and the Baldwin Collection, a smaller, secondary collection consisting of Californiana and a limited selection of materials focusing on Northern California. The material includes books, pamphlets, newspapers in hard copy and microform formats, vertical files of clippings from newspapers and other print sources, maps, photographs, city directories, telephone directories, high school yearbooks, census microfilm, and other archival historical material.

The Vault collection is located in a small temperature controlled room with a humidity monitor. The Baldwin collection is located in an enclosed locked cabinet in the public area. Patrons are able to retrieve the materials with the assistance of staff. Patrons are not allowed to check out the materials and research must be done onsite during open hours. Accessibility and preservation of the collection are of the utmost importance. It is essential that any future location is able to accommodate these needs. The library does not have a comparable space in size or environmental controls in any other locations. To keep the collection as a library resource, the collection would have to be dismantled and distributed among several libraries.

The Library recommends working with the Contra Costa County Historical Society's History Center in Martinez, CA as a possible location for the collection. The mission of the Contra Costa County Historical Society is to preserve, protect, and provide public access to the records and heritage of Contra Costa County. The Center is an archive specifically open to the public for the purpose of research. It is currently open 21 hours a week and one Saturday a month. The History Center is partially funded by County funds and has a large volunteer base. It is centrally located in in the County seat. The History Center offers a climate controlled space that is equipped with a monitored fire detection system and burglary alarm. Perhaps the most valuable advantage is that the materials would remain a single cohesive collection rather than parceled out to individual libraries that may lack preservation standards.

#### Recommendations:

1. Investigate, and if feasible, relocate the collection to the Contra Costa County Historical Society.
2. Investigate, and if feasible, change of ownership from Contra Costa County Library to the Historical Society.

### Genealogy – Heritage Collection

Collection Items: 3,300

#### Description and Discussion:

The Heritage Collection is a collection of genealogical materials that includes books, pamphlets, newsletters, magazines, microfiche files, and internet resources. The original collection was established in the Pleasant Hill

Library by members of the Contra Costa County Genealogy Society. The organization's Heritage Collection Committee continues to contribute material to the collection. Library staff perform cataloging and processing of donated materials for the collection. This symbiotic arrangement has worked well and is expected to continue to enhance the collection. The current collection consists of 3,300 titles that emphasizes American genealogy and includes genealogies for specific geographical regions, family histories, military members, immigration/passenger records, and church records.

In order to provide continued access to the collection after the eventual construction of the new Pleasant Hill Library, the Library met with local genealogy societies to discuss possible locations for the collection. The Walnut Creek Library was selected because of its central location, access to public transportation, number of open hours and available space. The collection was moved in early 2018 and has experienced an increase in use. Volunteers monitor and shelve the collection, and are available to assist patrons with genealogical research.

Remaining at Pleasant Hill Library is a small genealogy pamphlet and periodical collection. Volunteers have expressed interest in having these items moved to augment the collection already in place.

Recommendations:

1. Keep the collection at the Walnut Creek Library.
2. Move remaining items from Pleasant Hill Library to Walnut Creek Library.

## Microfilm Magazines, Newspapers, and Census

Collection Size: Approximately 20,000 items

Description and Discussion:

The Pleasant Hill Library houses an extensive microfilm collection consisting of magazines, newspapers, and census information. A majority of the information is now duplicated through online resources and the microfilm collection can be narrowed down to focus on historical newspapers specific to Contra Costa County and local census information. The result would be a collection of 5,500 reels. There are also two smaller microfilm collection located in east county, Antioch, and in west county, Pinole. Each collection has unique information pertaining to local communities and duplicate some of the local history found in the collection located in the Pleasant Hill Library.

It is recommended that the collection be distributed between the three regional collections focusing on local history. All information pertaining to East County historical newspapers would move to the Antioch Library and all West County newspapers would move to the Pinole Library. The Walnut Creek Library is able to house the collection pertaining to the central county. It is also recommended that the census information be moved to Walnut Creek Library to support the research in the Genealogy – Heritage Collection.

Recommendation:

1. Keep the regional collections at the Antioch and Pinole Library.
2. Move remaining items pertaining to Central County from Pleasant Hill Library to Walnut Creek Library.

## Federal Depository Library Program Documents

Collection Size: Approximately 4,200

### Description and Discussion:

The Contra Costa County Library was designated as the Federal Depository Library for the Tenth Congressional District in October 1964. As a designated selective federal depository, the Library's mission is to make government publications freely available for the use of the general public and to meet the government information needs of the people who live and work in greater Contra Costa County.

In 2008, the Library began to subscribe to Marcive's Documents without Shelves. The service ensures the library maintains Depository status by providing open access to federal documents through the Library catalog. The online electronic format maximizes both accessibility to government publications and cost effectiveness in Library collection development and replaces the need to collect a physical collection. The Library is now recognized by the Federal Depository Library Program (FDPL) as an electronic depository with a small collection of historical government information in print format.

Items duplicated in the online format may be removed from the collection using procedures defined by the Federal Depository Program. Specifically, a library may remove items once items are offered and claimed by other libraries in the program.

### Recommendation:

1. Transition to a completely Digital Federal Depository.
2. Remove items using Federal Depository Library Program procedures.

## State and Local Government Documents

Collection Size: Approximately 4,700

### Description and Discussion:

Contra Costa County Library is considered a State Depository Library. The collection houses publications in several formats: print, microform, CD-ROM, and online resources for State, Regional, and local county and municipal agencies. The collection emphasizes reference, statistical and popular materials over those for instructional or research purposes. Several items in the collection have been superseded with newer information and should be removed according to State Depository Library Program procedures. The Library creates online access when available. Electronic access is preferred as it ensures patrons are able to access the most current information at any time from any locations.

### Recommendation:

1. Continue to link materials to available online resources.
2. Remove superseded and duplicate items using State Depository Library Program procedures.

## Storage and Magazine Collections

Collection Size: Approximately 7,500

### Description and Discussion:

These two collections were developed through the past practice of sending last copies of titles to the central location for collection archiving. The library moved away from this practice when the peer library organization was adopted. These items should have been de-selected according to the current de-selection guidelines as noted in the Collection Development Plan.

### Recommendation:

1. Review items using established Collection Development Plan standards.
2. Distribute essential titles to Branch Libraries.

## Circulating Collection

Collection Size: 92,533

### Description:

Countywide, Contra Costa County Library has a collection of 1.4 million items. The Contra Costa County Library Collection Development Plan specifies guidelines for selection, retention, and de-selection of all materials both physical and virtual. In keeping with the Collection Development Plan, staff is committed to reviewing all items in Pleasant Hill Library to ensuring all items meeting collection guidelines are kept and, if possible, available to the entire county. At this time it is unknown if the volume of materials can be absorbed by the other branches. The alternative is storing the collection until the new library opens. Past experience with storing collections has not proved favorable since items are not immediately available for patrons. The Library has started and will continue reviewing each item for disposition to another county library or the Pleasant Hill Library temporary facility.

### Recommendations:

1. Continue reviewing circulating collection to meet Collection Development Plan standards.
2. Distribute collection to other branch libraries, where feasible.
3. As a last resort, consider storing remaining collection if items are considered viable for the new library opening in 2021.

Appendices – inventory of special collections