

Van Buren District Library

Local History Collection

Quick Facts

COLLECTION OVERVIEW

The Van Buren District Library (VBDL) Local History Collection consists of books, microfilm, family/locality vertical files, photographs, manuscript materials, periodicals, CD-ROMs, audio/visual items and special collections. The Van Buren Regional Genealogical Society (VBRGS) maintains a portion of the collection and also provides volunteer staff support.

The Local History Collection is regional and focuses on materials representing the Michigan counties of Allegan, Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph & Van Buren. The collection is also rich in general Michigan, New England, and general genealogy resources.

The VBDL maintains an online catalog where searches of the library collection may be made by title, subject, and author from its website at www.vbdl.org. VBRGS maintains a catalogue of its holdings at www.rootsweb.com/~mivanbur/Mivanbur.html.

Most books in the Local History Collection do not circulate, but photocopying is permitted (15 cents per page). Copyright laws do apply. There are three microfilm readers including a digital scanner (25 cents per copy). Scanners and digital cameras are prohibited.

Researchers must register at the circulation desk on each day's visit. Access to the collection is granted anytime during the library's regular business hours. Please do not reshelve or refile materials. Items should be placed on the shelving cart at the Local History desk or may be left on the research tables. This is done for statistical purposes as well as accuracy in shelving.

The Local History Librarian is responsible for the maintenance and development of the collection and is also available to answer reference questions. Donation of materials to the collection that meet collection criteria are encouraged and should be received and approved by the Local History Librarian.

FIRST SEARCH TIPS

The Local History Collection includes many helpful indexes and guides to assist in the location of materials, and should be consulted first:

- Local History Master Index - a large database that indexes hundreds of resources from the collection including family files and photographs
- Southwest Michigan Obituary Index & Digitized Images
- Bess Britton Michigan One-Room Schoolhouse Collection
- Southwest Michigan Yearbooks and Annuals
- Southwest Michigan City, County & Telephone Directories
- Southwest Michigan Military Registry
- Southwest Michigan Pioneer Certificate Collection
- Manuscript Collections

NOTE – The first three indexes may be searched on the Local History computers. Others indexes are available in notebooks in the research area and are also available at www.rootsweb.com/~mivanbur/Mivanbur.html

NEWSPAPERS

The following newspapers are included in the microfilm collection:

- ❖ Allegan Journal & Gazette (Allegan) 1856-1898
- ❖ Bangor Advance (Bangor) 1875-1883
- ❖ Berrien County Record (Buchanan) 1869-1935
- ❖ Berrien Springs Journal Era (Berrien Springs) - various years
- ❖ Bloomingdale Leader (Bloomingdale) 1881-1943
- ❖ Cass County Republican (Cassopolis) 1860-1864
- ❖ Cassopolis Vigilant (Cassopolis) 1872-1919
- ❖ Coloma Courier (Coloma) 1889-1934
- ❖ Covert Times (Covert) 1952-1953

- ❖ Decatur Republican (Decatur) 1861-2000
- ❖ Dowagiac Daily News (Dowagiac) 1897-1929
- ❖ Gobles News (Gobles) 1905-1979
- ❖ Hartford Day Spring (Hartford) 1871-1972
- ❖ Lawrence Times (Lawrence) 1875-1961
- ❖ Lawton Leader (Lawton) 1887-1968
- ❖ Marcellus News (Marcellus) 1887-1979
- ❖ Niles Daily Star (Niles) 1891-1980
(incomplete)
- ❖ Otsego Union (Otsego) 1867-1934
- ❖ Paw Paw Courier-Leader & other titles (Paw Paw)
1853-present
- ❖ South Haven Daily Tribune (South Haven) 1907-1980
- ❖ Watervliet Record (Watervliet) 1890-1934

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

- Picture File - Photos of individuals, scenes, structures, etc.
- Obituaries - Clipped obituaries as old as 1850's years to present day; also included are birth & marriage announcements, anniversaries and miscellaneous - indexed and digitized
- Vertical File - Family Files; Michigan Files - arranged by location & subject
- Manuscript Collection - housed in storage. Inquire at Local History reference desk.
- Yearbooks and Annuals - High School, College, Trade, Middle School and Elementary School; numbering about 1,200 volumes
- Directories - Telephone books, city and county directories; about 350 volumes

VITAL RECORDS

- Van Buren County
 - Death Records 1867-1998 (microfilm & book)
 - Marriage Records 1836-1954, Indexes 1836-1997 (microfilm & book)

- Birth Records, 1867-1916, Indexes 1867-1934 (book)
- Allegan County
 - Death Records 1867-1996, Index 1867-1998 (microfilm)
 - Marriage Records 1835-1951, Indexes 1835-1998 (microfilm)
 - Birth Records 1867-1913, Indexes 1867-1933 (microfilm)
- Berrien County
 - Death Records 1867-1967, Indexes 1867-1994 (microfilm)
 - Marriage Records 1831-1950, Indexes 1831-1994 (microfilm)
 - Birth Records 1867-1913, Indexes 1867-1948 (microfilm)
- Cass County
 - Death Records 1867-July 2005, Indexes 1867-July 2005 (microfilm)
 - Marriage Records 1830-1911, Indexes 1830-1994 (microfilm)
 - Birth Records 1867-1910, Indexes 1867-1977 (microfilm)
- Kalamazoo County
 - Death Records 1867-1951, Indexes 1867-1997 (microfilm)
 - Marriage Records 1831-1951, Indexes 1831-1975 (microfilm)
 - Birth Records 1867-1903, Indexes 1867-1977 (microfilm & book)
- St. Joseph County
 - Death Records 1867-1929, Indexes 1867-1981 (microfilm)
 - Marriage Records Index, 1832-1970

CENSUS

- ✓ United States Federal Census 1790, 1820-1930
 - Michigan counties, Allegan, Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph & Van Buren

- Birth Records, 1867-1916, Indexes 1867-1934 (book)
- Allegan County
 - Death Records 1867-1996, Index 1867-1998 (microfilm)
 - Marriage Records 1835-1951, Indexes 1835-1998 (microfilm)
 - Birth Records 1867-1913, Indexes 1867-1933 (microfilm)
- Berrien County
 - Death Records 1867-1967, Indexes 1867-1994 (microfilm)
 - Marriage Records 1831-1950, Indexes 1831-1994 (microfilm)
 - Birth Records 1867-1913, Indexes 1867-1948 (microfilm)
- Cass County
 - Death Records 1867-July 2005, Indexes 1867-July 2005 (microfilm)
 - Marriage Records 1830-1911, Indexes 1830-1994 (microfilm)
 - Birth Records 1867-1910, Indexes 1867-1977 (microfilm)
- Kalamazoo County
 - Death Records 1867-1951, Indexes 1867-1997 (microfilm)
 - Marriage Records 1831-1951, Indexes 1831-1975 (microfilm)
 - Birth Records 1867-1903, Indexes 1867-1977 (microfilm & book)
- St. Joseph County
 - Death Records 1867-1929, Indexes 1867-1981 (microfilm)
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- 1850, 1860 & 1870 – entire State of Michigan
- 1790 – portions of New England
- Michigan 1850-1880 Mortality Schedules
- 1890 Veterans Schedule – portions of Michigan
- Miscellaneous
- Michigan State & Special Census
- Van Buren County 1845
- Allegan County 1894
- Kalamazoo County 1884 & 1894
- St. Joseph County 1845

NOTE – available print census indexes are in book form and are shelved together. Federal census may also be searched and viewed using Ancestry Library Edition on any library computer.

OTHER MICROFILM

- ✓ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
- ✓ Land Records, Deeds & Indexes
- ✓ Tax & Assessment Records
- ✓ Military Discharge Papers & Burials
- ✓ Divorce Cases
- ✓ Court Records
- ✓ Probate & Wills
- ✓ Naturalizations
- ✓ WWI Draft Registration Cards
- ✓ Plat Books & Atlases

FAMILY HISTORY CENTER MICROFILM LOAN PROGRAM

In addition to the library's regular interlibrary loan service, the VBDL is also a licensed microfilm loan center for the Family History Library (FHL) of Salt Lake City, Utah. Patrons may order microfilm for a 30-day period to be viewed in the library. The FHL has over three million reels of film in their collection and are adding about 4,000 more every month. The microfilm loan program enables researchers to access records from around the world.