

**Baldwin County
Department of
Archives and History**

Collecting Policy



Preface

Of all the services that the Baldwin County Department of Archives and History (BCDAH) fulfills, none is more important than that of saving from destruction historical records, photographs, and artifacts that document our county's past. Large institutions such as the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) collect many aspects of Alabama history, but they cannot be charged with collecting all the important documents that tell the story of Baldwin County. Nor are they responsible for the preservation of the official record of Baldwin County's government. As a result, the duty of the BCDAH is two-fold; maintaining the county's government records and preserving the county's history by collecting and maintaining a history of the county's residents.

Most of us are familiar with the saying that those who refuse to learn about the past are condemned to repeat it. Nevertheless, the importance of history reaches beyond this concept. We cannot fully understand who we are as a community or as individuals if we do not understand who we were as a community, and what it once meant to be a member of that community. Historical documents can help us to understand and appreciate not only who we are but also how we interact with each other.

Mission Statement

The Baldwin County Department of Archives and History has been established:

- To collect, organize, describe, preserve, and make available Baldwin County, Alabama government records of permanent administrative, legal, fiscal, and historical value;
- To collect, organize, describe, preserve, and make available records of historical significance in the founding and continuing history of Baldwin County, Alabama including, but not limited to manuscripts, correspondence, photos, books, and personal memorabilia;
- To provide facilities for the retention, preservation, servicing, and research use of such records;

- To serve in a public relations capacity by promoting knowledge and understanding of the origins and continuing history of Baldwin County, Alabama, its government and residents;
- To facilitate the efficient management of the recorded information produced by the Baldwin County government offices.

Purpose and Scope of the Collection

The Baldwin County Department of Archives and History will collect items for the purpose of preserving and interpreting the history of Baldwin County, Alabama. Here the mission is defined in two segments. The BCDAH is charged with the collection and preservation of the official historic record of the county and the various county offices that are devoted to that task. Secondly, the BCDAH has the responsibility to collect items from the private sector that are representative of the history of the county as a whole.

The BCDAH will also make materials available for research, but because the department holds these materials in trust for future generations, researchers are required to examine items in the archive facility's research room only.

The BCDAH will collect historical materials in a variety of formats including, but not limited to: official documents pertaining to the county government, manuscripts, correspondence, diaries, books, and other written and printed materials; photographs, prints, paintings and other visual materials; tapes, recordings, and other oral history materials; equipment, furnishings, clothing and other natural, commercial, institutional, and personal objects of the past. The BCDAH will accept memorabilia only if it represents important themes or episodes in the community's past.

The BCDAH may choose not to accept items which are in poor condition, which duplicate similar items in the collection, which are not contemporary with the time period they depict, or which are beyond the scope of this collecting policy.

Additions to the Collection

All items accepted for the collections must be cataloged. Any purchases must be approved by the Baldwin County Commission. Donations will be accepted only when accompanied by a signed Deed of Gift form that legally transfers ownership of the materials to the Baldwin County Department of Archives and History. Forms must be signed by the donor and an authorized official of the BCDAH. Both the donor and the BCDAH will receive signed copies of the form for their files. Donations are tax deductible under Section 501c(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code of 1954. Donors are responsible for arranging and paying for their own appraisals.

Loans

Although accepting objects or documents on loan is discouraged, especially in the case of long-term loans, each situation will be evaluated on its own merit. Loans may be accepted in the case of items that are of unusual importance to the collection. BCDAH is to be responsible for authorizing any acquisition on a loan basis and maintains the right to refuse any such loan for any reason. A Temporary Custody Receipt is to be completed and put on record for all loan items with the duration of the loan period to be specified on the Temporary Custody Receipt. In addition the depositor is responsible for securing appropriate insurance for any objects or documents on loan to the BCDAH for the duration of the loan period.