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## Preparing a History of your Library

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# Preparing a History of Your Library

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## *What is the scope of your library's history?*

Decide on the topics you want to address such as early development and funding of the library, the relationship of the library to local city or county government and perhaps the public schools, early library buildings and facilities, library employees and volunteers, local fundraising efforts, and any special events or programs offered by the library.

## *What is the final product?*

Will it be published in paper form as a brochure, booklet, or full-length chapter book or published online as a PDF or website? Do you want to include oral histories or handwritten accounts? Choosing topics to research and record will help determine the length and the needed formats required to create either a complete account or a condensed version of your library's history.

## *What is the deadline for completion or publication?*

Is there a special celebration or event for which you need to have the history completed? This is important for researchers, writers, and event planners. It will also aid in determining the length and format of your final product.

## *What primary sources should be researched?*

Minutes from your library board, city council or county commissioner meetings, and your library fundraising organizations will provide a wealth of historical information. Annual reports and long-range planning documents often provide detailed information about programs, finances, and staffing. Don't forget local newspapers and magazines.

## *Where are the primary sources that document your library's history and are they easily accessible?*

They may be housed within your library, the local historical society, and in city and county government offices. The Oregon State Library, the Oregon State Archives, and regional or state-wide historical societies (such as the Oregon Historical Society) may also have materials pertaining to your library.

## *Are there individuals in your community who have first-hand knowledge of the development of your library?*

These might be library staff and volunteers, library board members, civic leaders, or local government officials. You may want to record oral history interviews with them.

## *What photographs and other visual materials are available?*

Some of these may be on the walls of your library or hidden away in files. Your local or regional historical society is an excellent resource as well as the Oregon State Archives, the Oregon State Library, or special collections of a local university or college. Many library volunteers and staff have personal pictures of libraries that may also be of use.

## *Last, but not least, verify your sources!*

