DEPARTMENT: HISTORY **2027 PROGRAM BUDGET**

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

County Historian

Research Library & Archives Records Management

DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION

The Genesee County History Department includes two divisions: that of the County Historian responsible for maintaining the Research Library and the County Archives, and the Records Management Officer, who also serves as the aforementioned historian, who is responsible for supervising the Records Center and Microfilm Service. The overall purpose of the History Department is the

promotion of local history through the preparation of resource guides pertaining to the Department's collection. The Department also produces brochures, books, and programs in the community addressing the richness of our County's history. The Department preserves records through the maintenance of the County Archives, which houses an extensive collection of historically significant documents. The Research Library provides the general public, along with students, teachers, and visiting historians with access to the County's collection of local history sources, archival documents, and genealogical records. The Records Management program ensures the legal disposition of obsolete records, along with the identification, preservation, and use of these records. Efficient records storage makes records available when needed. The Microfilming Service allows for improved storage and back-up copies for records with extended retentions while simultaneously reducing the need to house paper records.

DEPARTMENT MISSION

The mission of the History Department is to provide an administrative service that effectively facilitates the collection, preservation, interpretation, and promotion of archival materials pertaining to the history of Genesee County; along with a systematic control for the records created by our local government in order to ensure that those records are available to local government officials, the general public, and researchers.

BUDGET SUMMARY

Appropriation by Object	**Adopted 2023**	**Adopted 2024**	**Adopted 2025**	**Adopted 2026**	**Projected 2027**
Salary/Fringe	179,407	182,818	203,283	228,346	198,806
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
Contractual	4,086	3,961	3,706	3,381	3,695
Total Appropriation	183,493	186,770	206,989	231,727	202,501
Revenue	1,350	1,140	3,496	1,857	275
Net County Support	182,943	185,630	203,493	229,870	202,226

FTE's	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Department Background

The position of County Historian and the Records Management Program are mandated services. *Arts & Cultural Affairs Law* (Section 57.13.17) includes the appointment of government historians and a description of their duties. The law states that "each local government historian shall promote the establishment and improvement of programs for the management and preservation of local government records with enduring value for historical or other research. . ." The promotion of local history is a service provided by the preparation of resource guides of the Department's collection, along with the production of brochures, books, articles, and a steady presentation of programs demanded by the public.

Since 1941 Genesee County has appointed an Historian and in 1977 the History Department Research Library was opened. The Department assists area residents and visiting tourists with historical research. Area students are taught how to utilize local records, and are assisted with their assignments. The community in general is enriched by the increase in tourism and our history is preserved for future generations.

In compliance with the *Local Government Records Law* (Ch. 737, Laws of 1987, Section 1), Genesee County has created a firm administrative basis for its Records Management Program. Our County's program includes a Local Law, adopted in 1988, and a designated Records Management Officer, along with an appointed Advisory Board. Annual reports have been submitted to the County Legislators since 1988. The County complies with this law and has continued to develop its program with financial assistance from State grants. Between 1990 and 2014 the County was awarded twenty-five Local Government Records Management Improvement Funds (LGRMIF) grants totaling $943,862. These grants have provided staff, equipment, and supplies designed to develop our Records Management Program. By controlling all phases of Records Management from creation to final disposition, Genesee County has reduced paperwork

proliferation, improved access to requested information, provided documentation of compliance to State and Federal Courts and Agencies, and maintained an historical organizational record.

Forthcoming Program of Services

The major changes in the 2027 budget include a notable decrease in Department salaries and fringe benefits totaling $198,806. This is a decrease of $29,540 from the previous year, due to the retirement of Judy Stiles and her replacement by Katie Bonk.

With the staff provided in the 2027 budget, the History Department operates the Research Library, the Archives, and the Records Center five days a week with a full-time staff of two and a part-time staff of one. The Microfilm Service will operate on a part-time basis.

The Department includes the aforementioned positions: those of the County Historian (who also doubles as the Records Management Officer), the History Research Assistant, and the Records Management Clerk. The latter works in the Microfilm Lab and in the Records Center at large. This position is responsible for the daily task of providing access to the thirty-five County Departments who currently store 6,342 cubic feet of county records in our facility. The position of Microfilm Clerk was upgraded to the position of Records Management Clerk in 2014. This position was reduced from full-time to part-time in order to comply with the requested reductions in the 2013 budget, and has had a negative impact on the Microfilm Service. Through the end of 2014 there was a back-log of 232 cubic foot boxes that needed to be filmed – and by 2016 that back-log was *eliminated*. As of this writing there is again an ongoing back-log of cubic foot boxes that need to be filmed, as progress that has been made has been offset by the arrival of new records in need of filming. By continuing to only have part-time hours for the generation of microfilm in the budgets prior to 2020, the County is going to need to prepare for the eventual need to increase the size of the Records Center, though this is not imminent. This eventual increase includes the renovation of space and the purchase of steel shelving. The avoidance of the prohibitive costs attached to a building renovation – not to mention digitization

costs that could easily reach six figures – necessitate the realization that a full-time Records Management Clerk position is, at least for the immediate future, both more efficient in terms of accomplishing the mission of Records Management *and* more cost effective from the perspective of Genesee County taxpayers.

Annually, the Records Center accepts boxes from departments through a transfer process. The annual disposition of obsolete records occurs pursuant to retention and disposition schedules established by the New York State Archives. The difference in the number of boxes transferred as compared to the number of boxes disposed of fluctuates with the retention schedules. The number of boxes transferred is greater than the number of boxes disposed of, and the majority of the retention periods range from twenty-five years through permanent. The current volume of records stored within the Records Center is 6,342. The total volume of records the Records Center can accommodate is 7,077, which translates into 735 remaining spaces to store boxes. With the steady but smaller volume of records being microfilmed because of only having a part-time staff, those boxes will need to be added to the Records Center. It is estimated that the Records Center will be full within five to seven years unless microfilming and disposition efforts can be increased. The County can only avoid this development by increasing the volume of records microfilmed. Given the prohibitive costs of transitioning to another technological form, e.g. Laser fiche which could cost as much as $400,000 per 9,000 cubic foot boxes, the only reasonable course for the County remains an increase in the number of microfilmed records.

INNOVATIVE SERVICES IMPLEMENTED OR PLANNED AS COST SAVINGS MEASURES

County Microfilm Lab = $3,780 in savings

The County is capable of producing archival quality film and save money by creating and inspecting its own microfilm. The Genesee County Microfilm Service provides the departments with a frame-by-frame inspection serving to ensure that each document is filmed and rendered readable. If the vendor provides this inspection the fee is $18.00 per hour. *Estimation in savings*: each roll requires

seven hours to inspect multiplied by $18.00 per hour, which equals $126 multiplied by thirty rolls, which totals $3,780. In addition, if the County had not filmed these records, it would have cost $208 for one shelving unit to properly store thirty-five cubic foot boxes. In other words, 7 hours x $18/hour = 126 x 30 = $3,780.

Through the end of 2026, the County Historian will have written one grant proposal and administered another. This grant proposal will be submitted to the Pomeroy Foundation. The cost to hire an outside grant writer is upwards of $1,500 per grant, which is saved for the county as the writing of these grant proposals is undertaken by the County Historian. This grant application, if successful, will provide the County with funds providing for an Historic Marker for the site of the Old Schoolhouse in Elba. The administration of a $15,000 grant from the New York State 250th Commemoration Commission has allowed for ten activities designed for the public's participation in the commemoration of the American Revolution and its legacy in our county. Other, yet unnamed grants, are being pursued through the offices of Municipal Consulting and Grant Writing in Spencerport, New York. These grants will save Genesee County taxpayers money because of the infusion of outside grant money. The County Historian plans to apply next year for LGRMIF (Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund) monies to digitize some of our records in the Records Center, when the Local Government Records Advisory Council funds have been restored. Hopefully, the state will have sufficient funds to award applicants.

SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2027 AND KEY 2026 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Continuation of Collection Development Designed to Improve Public Access and Meet Public Demands:

1. Continuation of the Genesee Conference index.

2. New books were catalogued, among them nineteenth century volumes on New York State legal history, donated by the Byron Historical Society to the county.

3. The continued indexing of *Daily News* articles on a variety of topics, despite the loss of volunteers who normally assist with this activity.

4. Continuation of research regarding the impact in Genesee County of isolationist foreign policy in the 1920 and 1930s, and the long-term impact of this on perspectives in the county during the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

5. Continuation of research regarding media depictions of the Vietnam War and Ho Chi Minh throughout Genesee County in the 1960s and early 1970s.

The Continuation of Local History Promotion by:

1. The continued creation of subject notebooks designed to facilitate public access pertaining to local history topics, such as the realities discernible in Genesee County during the presidential election cycles between 1860 and 1964, and how those trends are reflective – or not – of national trends during those periods. Such notebooks are continuously being added to, as new materials are located.

2. Appearances on the radio (WBTA) regarding Genesee County History Department activities.

3. Talks at The Holland Land Office Museum and the Richmond Memorial Library. The latter is the result of the work of the new History Research Assistant, Katie Bonk, regarding the County Poor House.

4. Regular interaction with local historians' offices, especially those in Alabama, Oakfield, the Town of Batavia, and the City of Batavia.

The Continuing Effort to Develop the Records Management Program by:

1. Maintenance of the Records Center, which includes an annual disposition of obsolete records and an annual transfer of records.

2. The provision of a microfilming service to County departments.

3. Continual updating of the Policies and Procedures Manual for Records Management.

4. Continual development and implementation of the Disaster Management Plan for the County, which during the week of February 15th, 2016 avoided loss due to the flooding that took place in County Building Two. Because of sound planning, no records were lost in the Records Center or in the historical archives.

SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2027:

The Continuation of Collection Development Designed to Improve Public Access by:

1. The Completion of the Files Improvement Project for Municipal Files and Map Cases.

2. The continuation of church record indexing.

3. The continuation of increasing access to the Department's collection through the County's website.

The Continuation of the Promotion of Local History by:

1. The creation of subject notebooks for public access on local topics, such as the impact of developments in Genesee County pertaining to President Truman's Fair Deal and the Cold War.

2. The provision of programs on local history:

a. The impact of the imagery and legacy of Presidents George Washington and Herbert Hoover in Genesee County.

b. The impact of immigration into Genesee County at different historical moments, and the development of radical responses such as the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s.

c. The impact of the Cold war in Genesee County and the isolationist movement in the county.

The Continuation of Records Management development by:

1. The maintenance of the Records Center, which includes the annual disposition of obsolete records along with the annual transfer of records.
2. The provision of microfilming services to County departments.
3. Updating the Policies and Procedures Manual for Records Management.
4. Writing a grant proposal for the creation of a more efficient Records Management Program.

Services that the History Department Provides which Facilitate the Priority Goals of the Comprehensive Plan:

From the County's Comprehensive Plan for Parks, Recreation and Culture (PR01) the History Department is involved in the support of tourism, and encourages people to visit our County: and within the Government Administration (GA16), the County Historian continues to interact with public and private schools. To accomplish both goals the Department established a Research Library and maintains a County Archives, which works to assist those engaged in the researching of local history. The Department's volunteers create indexes designed to improve public access to our records, increase tourism, and promote historical programs for local schools.

Along these lines, the County Historian has worked towards improving communications with the Tonawanda Indian Reservation (GA07) by including representation and simultaneously encouraging participation with both the Genesee County Historians Association and the Genesee County Federation of Historical Agencies. The Genesee County Historians Association includes the municipal historians who represent every town, village, and the City of Batavia. The Genesee County Federation of Historical Agencies includes representatives from the various historical societies, museums, and history organizations found in Genesee County. The County Historian provides support and also organizes the meetings of both organizations in an effort to coordinate cultural events with

historical themes (PR02). In an effort to provide support to municipal clerks, the County Historian, as the Records Management Officer, offers assistance with the writing of State Archives grants (GA11). To continually meet with representatives of adjacent counties to discuss areas of common concern (GA09), the County Historian participates in the activities of the New York Association of Local Government Records Officers and the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York State.

Performance Indicators

Research Library & Archives	**Actual 2023**	**Actual 2024**	**Actual 2025**	**Projected 2026**
Inquiries for Genealogy & Local History via mail/e-mail	308	314	96	144
Researchers visiting the Research Library	133	160	140	210
Revenue Collected from Genealogies & Research	$297	$235	$71	$107
Items Donated to the Collection	65	158	105	158

The History Department continuously receives requests for information and routinely welcomes visitors from around the United States. In addition to the revenue generated from these visitors, such guests are also spending money within the community on lodging, food, and gas. There is a consistent and passionate group of people interested in local history and the undertaking of genealogical research. The increase of indexes placed on the Department's website also affects the number of requests this Department receives and the number of visitors to the History Department. Donations made to this Department aid in the deepening and enrichment of the County's collection. Such donations include books, photographs, maps, diaries, correspondence, etc.

Promotion of Local History	**Actual 2023**	**Actual 2024**	**Actual 2025**	**Projected 2026**
Presentations, Tours, & Displays Provided to the Public & Schools	24	22	7	11
Attendance at Presentations	180	137	91	137
Volunteer Hours Donated	924	411	274	411

Presentations, tours, and displays provide the public with access to local history. The volunteer projects create indexes designed to increase access to the records within the Research Library and the County Archives. The annual totals for presentations and attendance fluctuate with demand.

Records Management	**Actual 2022**	**Actual 2023**	**Actual 2024**	**Actual 2025**	**Est.2026**
Records Center Transfer	476	120	549	366	549
Disposition of Obsolete Records	786	1,500	698	465	699
Request for Records in Storage	96	250	260	173	260
Total Cubic Feet (Microfilm)	265	400	227	151	227
Disposition within Departments	60	40	54	36	54

Note: figures are in cubic foot totals and fluctuate with New York State retention schedules. A conversion of records into thirty microfilm rolls is predicated on a part-time schedule. The same amount of records with a full-time clerk would equal approximately one hundred to one hundred-twenty rolls.

By providing a Records Center for inactive records and undertaking an annual disposition of obsolete records, the County enjoys a savings on the amount of

space used for storage. The Microfilm Service provides an archival back-up collection of records with extended retentions – hence, the need to store paper records is dramatically reduced. The reduction in hours of support staff since 2013 affected the number of cubic foot boxes converted into microfilm. The long-term consequence of this reduction in staff will, over time, have a negative consequence in terms of the County's capacity to offer storage for obsolete records. At the present rate shelve space will be affected within the next five to seven years absent a change from a part-time Records Management Clerk position to that of a full-time position. This means that there is not an imminent danger of running out of shelf space, as there are, after our last disposition, 735 available shelf spaces.

ME/August 2026