

WESTPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION POLICY -

2015

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Westport Historical Society is to engage the public in the exploration of the town's rich history and culture, to inspire a spirit of discovery through educational programs and encourage active participation in the preservation and interpretation of our past. The Society collects and shares this history. Its goal is to foster the imaginative process of connecting to the pa

SCOPE OF THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

The collection includes account books, scrapbooks, newspapers and newspaper clippings, deeds, wills, maps, oral histories, photographs and postcards, paintings, furniture, . artifacts, clothing, books and journals, personal documents such as correspondence or diaries, many kinds of ephemera, subject and people files, and Society publications. It details biographical, genealogical information and documentation of daily life of Westporters throughout the centuries. In addition, the Bell School House and the Handy House are maintained as artifacts of the collection.

COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

The Committee is formed and the members appointed at the discretion of the President. The Collections Committee advises the Board and staff on policies, procedures and actions relating to the Society's collection and shall perform the following functions:

- * Monitor administration of this policy to ensure that the Society conforms to legal, professional, and ethical standards in the acquisition, management, and care of its collection.
- * Periodically review and recommend revisions to the Collection Policy.
- * Recommend to the Board any exceptions to the Collection Policy.
- * Oversee the creation and updating of a Collections Acquisitions Plan.
- * Act upon recommendations for the acquisition and disposition of the collection in accord with the Collection Policy.

- * Provide technical expertise and consultation on activities and issues involving the collection.
- * Annually review and present to the membership a report on collection activities and conditions.

ACQUISITION POLICY

The Society is grateful to prospective donors who have generously decided to entrust their artifacts to the care of the Society. Careful thought and several considerations are given when accepting a donation to be confident the item contributes to our local history, is not duplicative, and can be given appropriate care. The specific decision considerations for acceptance of a donation follow:

- * Does the donor have clear title to the item?
- * Does it have a place in the history of Westport?
- * Does it add breadth or depth to one of the identified priority areas of the current collection?
- * Is it adequately documented?
- * Is the condition without need of restoration?
- * Does the condition or nature of the item suggest it could be well maintained by the Society?
- * Does the Society have the space in which to exhibit or store it?
- * Does the donation offer new opportunities for display, research, education, or programs?

ACCESSIONING

An accession is an artifact or group of artifacts acquired from a single source at one time. To Accession is to legally record an addition to the collection. Accessioning is defined as the process of accepting items into permanent collections of the Society. All items shall be processed under procedures and policies adopted by the Board of Directors. After the artifact is accepted, an accession number shall be assigned and the artifact shall be catalogued in the Society's collections database. A back-up copy of all collections data shall be kept on-site and one off-site.

Donors shall be provided with a deed of gift which they must sign and return to the Society.

Income Tax Deduction:

Donors desiring to take an income tax gift deduction must obtain an independent appraisal from an authorized appraiser. Because of its standing with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as an interested party, the Society cannot appraise or assign a monetary value to items. The Society (Board of Directors and volunteers) or persons professionally associated with the Society will not make appraisals of prospective donations for tax purposes, or place a monetary value on materials or on objects donated to the Society.

DEACCESSION POLICY

Artifacts in the Society's collection are retained permanently, if they continue to be relevant and useful to the Mission of the Society, and if they can be properly stored, preserved, and utilized. Deaccessioning of artifacts may be conducted when these conditions no longer exist.

Criteria:

Artifacts may be deaccessioned if:

- * The artifact(s) are deemed no longer relevant or appropriate for the purposes, goals, and activities of the Society.
- * The artifact(s) cannot be stored, preserved, or displayed in a fashion consistent with professional museum standards.
- * The artifact(s) duplicate existing artifacts in better physical and intellectual condition.
- * The artifact(s) are deteriorated or damaged to a degree where all potential benefits of any kind are lost.
- * Deaccessioning provides a means through trade, barter, or exchange to improve the existing collection without loss to the integrity of the remaining collection.
- * The artifact(s) pose a danger to the health and safety of staff, volunteers, or visitors.
- * The Society has free and clear ownership of the artifact(s).
- * A Recommendation for Deaccessioning has been accurately completed, signed, and approved by the Board of Directors.

Deaccessioning Procedure:

The Director will recommend deaccessioning an item to the Collections Committee. If the Director and the Collections Committee concur, the recommendations will go to the Board of Directors for approval.

Means of Disposal:

- * Deaccessioned artifact(s) may be disposed of by transfer to another nonprofit association, trade, barter, or sale. As a last resort, artifacts must be destroyed or sold at scrap value.
- * Sale of Accessioned Objects: Museum objects in the collections shall be disposed of through public auction in accordance with ethical standards of the American Alliance of Museums.
- * Artifact(s) shall not be given or sold to Society members, staff, volunteers or members of their immediate families or their representative unless by public auction.
- * Deaccessioning of hazardous artifacts or firearms shall commence in complete compliance with Federal, State, and local laws and regulations.
- * Deaccessioning date will also be stored digitally using PastPerfect.

All funds derived from public sale and or disposition of deaccessioned materials shall be used only for the acquisition, preservation and maintenance of the Societys collection. Proceeds may not be used for general operating expenses.

ACCESS TO THE COLLECTIONS

Exhibitions:

Public access to the Society' s collection is provided through interpretive exhibitions developed by the Society.

Website and Online Database:

The Society makes all catalogued archives and photographs accessible through an online database which can be accessed through its website. This online database is regularly updated.

Collection Research:

The Society' s collection is maintained as a primary resource on Westport history. The Society is committed to studying, researching, and documenting the collection, and disseminating information for both the scholarly and the general public. The Society

supports the research efforts of others. The Society shall make every effort to make the collection available to scholars, researchers, members of the public, commercial researchers, and individuals with a demonstrated interest in the artifacts. Access will be made in a manner consistent with the preservation and security of the artifacts. The appropriate levels of access -- through exhibition, documentation files, photographs, or physical examination, shall be determined by the Director on a case-by-case basis. The Director may restrict access to certain collections. A Collection Use Policy is maintained by the Director.

Educational Use:

The Society also acquires artifacts for use in educational programs. These artifacts are handled by students and are not part of the permanent collection.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Society recognizes that its employees, Board members and committee members may collect works of art and historic materials for their personal enjoyment. These people associated with the Society, and in particular, those closely associated with the collection, occupy a position of trust in this regard, however, and must exercise care to assure that no conflict of interest can arise between themselves and the Society.

An employee, Board member or Committee member who learns of an object available for purchase that is reasonably likely to be of interest to the Society for its collection is expected to place the interests of the Society ahead of his or her own in acquiring the object. Accordingly, in all such cases, the employee, Board Member or Committee member shall bring the availability of the object to the attention of the Chair of the Collections Committee. This is intended to give the Society the first opportunity to acquire the object. If this is impossible, as for example when the person learns of an object under circumstances in which it must be purchased immediately or not at all, the person is expected, if successful in acquiring the object, to give the Society the opportunity to acquire the object within a reasonable time (not to exceed two months) from the person at cost.

Similarly, if an employee, Board member or Committee member desires to sell from his or her personal collections an object that is reasonably likely to be of interest to the Society for its collection, the person is expected to give the Society the first opportunity to purchase the object within a reasonable time (not to exceed two months) at whatever price the person believes to be its then fair market value. The Society will take whatever steps it deems appropriate to determine the fairness of the price proposed.

Each employee, volunteer, Board member, or Committee member is expected to exercise reasonable judgment in determining whether the scope of his or her personal collections and/or collecting activities is such that the matter should be discussed with the staff or,

where appropriate, the President. Unless personal collecting activities are minimal, they should be discussed as indicated.

LENDING POLICY

* With the consent of the Collections Committee and Board of Directors, objects may temporarily leave the collection for the purposes of study, exhibition, or conservation treatment. Loans may not be made to private individuals or for commercial purposes. Suitability of purpose shall be considered in determining permission. No cleaning, repair, re-matting, remounting or any alteration of the object can be made without written permission of the Director of the Society.

* Loans shall be formalized by written agreement between the Society and borrower or lender, but for no more than one year unless renewed by the Collections Committee. The loan may be terminated by either party thirty (30) days after written notification to the other party.

* Written details of security and care concerns during transportation and usage shall be exchanged between the Director of the Society and lender or designee.

* The borrower will bear costs of transportation and insurance.

* Borrowed objects will be credited to the Westport Historical Society in all labels, exhibition catalogs, or publicity.

INSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Insurance of the Society's collection is maintained to cover cost of replacement, repair, or restoration of lost, stolen, or damaged artifacts whenever possible. It is understood that many items in the collection are irreplaceable. Funds secured through an insurance claim involving collection items shall be reserved exclusively for the purpose of direct care of purchase of collections.

Society employees, volunteers, Board Members of Committee members are prohibited from bringing objects from their personal collections into the museum for storage or other non-exhibition purposes. The Society does not accept responsibility or liability for objects not covered by our collection insurance policy.

Proof of insurance coverage is required for all incoming loans under the following options and within the parameters of Society coverage: The Society will insure incoming loans under its own insurance policy, providing that the lender submits values for each item loaned with the signed Loan Agreement, and that the value amount given is the sole

recovery available in the event of loss or damage.

Lenders may elect to maintain their own insurance policy provided that the Society is listed as an additional insured on that policy or is provided with a certificate confirming waiver of subrogation. The Society does not additionally insure incoming loans when lenders maintain their own insurance.