

OYSTERPONDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2017

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS

The By-Laws of the Oysterponds Historical Society state that “The Oysterponds Historical Society preserves and interprets the heritage of Orient and East Marion (formerly Oysterponds) by maintaining a museum that collects, preserves, and exhibits artifacts pertaining to Oysterponds history and life: by maintaining a research library of material relevant to Oysterponds history; by providing cultural opportunities through educational and public programs and activities; and by promoting an interest in the history of Oysterponds.”

The collections of the Society must, therefore, include artifacts and archival materials that pertain to the history and culture of this area, from its earliest settlement to the present time. Objects and materials outside the geographic parameters of the Society’s collections may be included for purposes of research, comparison, or as representative example of styles, types, and forms.

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Collections Management Committee (CMC) is responsible to the Board for accepting or rejecting proffered acquisitions to the collections and for recommending policies, actions, and budgets related to the care and management of the collections.

No member of the Board, staff or member of the CMC may obligate the Society to acquire, lend, or borrow an item without the approval of the CMC.

The CMC is chaired by a member of the Board or by a member of the Society appointed by the President. The Committee is composed of at least 6 members of the Society, including the Collections Manager, Curator, and Director. A simple majority of the membership of the committee shall comprise a quorum.

Meetings will be held on a regular basis. A record of each meeting will be kept by a member of the CMC appointed by the Chairperson. A copy of this record will be retained by the Collections Manager. All actions of the Committee will be decided by a majority vote. A report will be made to the Board each month by the Chairperson of the CMC.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES IS ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STEWARDHIP OF THE COLLECTIONS AND FOR THE POLICY THAT GOVERNS THEIR CARE.

ACQUISITIONS POLICY

The Society acquires items for its collections by gift, bequest, or other legal means. The collections are not static but will continue to receive items appropriate and important for their enrichment. The CMC reviews proffered additions at its meetings. These items can be accepted into the collection by a majority vote of the quorum using the following criteria.

- a. The item is relevant to and consistent with the Society's purpose.
- b. The Society can adequately care for the item, assuring its availability for educational purposes in accordance with professionally accepted standards.
- c. The item is offered with clear title and without restrictions. If a specific restriction is requested by the donor, and it is considered to be reasonable by the CMC, approval must be sought from the Board before the item can be accepted into the collection.

All accepted items will be acknowledged to their donor(s) and a signed Deed of Gift obtained. Thus the title and rights to the object will be legally transferred. When a proffered gift is not accepted, the donor must be notified and arrangements made for the item's return.

When objects are given to the Society for fund-raising purposes, a designated member of the CMC must review these objects to determine if any meet OHS acquisition criteria. With the consent and approval of the donor, such items will be considered gifts to the Society's collection and processed in the same manner as the other acquisitions.

The Director or the Collections Manager, at his or her discretion and subject to the availability of funds as approved by the Board of Trustees, has the authority to purchase objects or groups of objects having an aggregate market value of less than \$500. The purchase of objects or groups of objects having an aggregate market value of more than \$500 but less than \$1,000 must be approved by the CMC. Purchase of objects or groups of objects with a value of more than \$1,000 requires the approval of the Board of Trustees.

All items accepted into the collections of the Society become the exclusive and absolute property of the Society and if unrestricted, may be displayed, loaned, retained or disposed of in the best interests of the Society and the public it serves.

If title to accessioned material is later disputed, the Society will make every reasonable effort to resolve the problem ethically and in accordance with the law.

Neither the Director nor any member of the staff, the Board, or the CMC shall appraise a potential gift for a donor, nor shall the Society pay for such an appraisal.

DEACCESSIONING POLICY

Deaccessioning is the process of permanently removing accessioned objects or archival materials from the Society's collection. Deaccessioning an object will be considered only if one or more of the following criteria are met and approved by a majority of the quorum of the CMC and by the Board:

- a. The object is free from donor-mandated restrictions.
- b. The object is legally owned or controlled by the Society.
- c. The object has been part of the collection for more than 3 years.
- d. The object no longer meets the acquisition criteria, has deteriorated beyond usefulness, or has lost its physical integrity.
- e. The object has been lost or stolen and has been missing for more than two years.
- f. The object is needlessly duplicated.
- g. The object is determined to be a fake or forgery or has been misattributed.

The Society will dispose of deaccessioned items through transfer to the educational program, through a well-advertised third-party auction, or by exchange or gift to another museum or historical society. No deaccessioned items will be sold through the Society's gift shop. Items that have deteriorated beyond usefulness will be disposed of in an appropriate manner.

Any monies generated by the sale of deaccessioned items will be used for the purchase of additional acquisitions or to supplement the costs associated with the conservation of objects in the collection.

LOAN POLICY

Loan agreements must be in writing, specifying in detail item(s) being borrowed or loaned, the period of the loan, and any restrictions on use. Such agreements must be approved by a majority of a quorum of the CMC and signed by both the borrower and the lender. Any modification or extension of a loan must be approved as for the original loan. Loan agreements are filed in the Collections Manager's office.

OUTGOING LOANS

The Society will lend items from its collections only to other museums after approval by the Collections Manager, the CMC, and the Director. Primary considerations for such approval are the care and security to be provided by the borrowing institution and the condition and importance of the objects to be borrowed, both to OHS collections and to the educational purposes of the exhibition in which the items are to be used.

The Society requires that the borrowing institution insure the items loaned and assume all costs associated with packing, handling, and transportation. A Condition Report will be prepared by OHS staff prior to the loan and the object will be checked against this report when it is returned. No borrower may clean, repair, or otherwise alter or treat an item on loan without the express written permission of the Collections Manager and Director. The length of the loan should not exceed one year. Extended loan time may be granted by the Collections Manager and Director.

INCOMING LOANS

The OHS policy is not to accept long-term loans. The Society may borrow items for exhibition and/or study and will provide responsible, professional care for those items when in the Society's custody. Items will not be borrowed to enhance their market value. Items may be borrowed for educational and exhibition purposes only. If such an exhibition item is borrowed from a member of the Board or the staff, it will be credited as an anonymous loan unless other authorization is secured from the CMC.

The Society will provide insurance for all items it may borrow at a value determined by the lender. However, if either the value of the item or the insurance premium exceeds the Society's limit of liability or financial resources, the Society will inform the lender and may negotiate additional coverage to be proved at the expense of the lender or, with the approval of the lender, provide coverage for less than full market value of the loaned object.

COLLECTIONS CARE AND CONSERVATION

The Society considers the care and conservation of its collections to be one of its primary missions. Therefore, within its means, the Society will endeavor to maintain appropriate climatic and environmental conditions and adequate security systems and procedures for all storage and exhibition areas to ensure the safety and preservation of the artifacts entrusted to its care. Additionally, artifacts in need of conservation will only be treated under current professional standards, using

established techniques and materials and under conditions and adequate security systems and procedures to ensure their safety and preservation.

ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

In keeping with both its educational purpose and its responsibility to safeguard the collections, the Society will make items in the collection available for bona fide research, study, and examination in a manner that assures the safety and protection of the material. The Society will grant access to researchers, collectors, and interested members of the public who demonstrate a serious and legitimate purpose for access, provided the conditions and safety of the materials allow such use. The Director, Collections Manager or Curator must approve the request for access.

Individuals given access to the collections must comply with the Society's conditions regarding examination, handling, photography, and the use and/or dissemination of collections information (Appendix A). The Director, Collections Manager, or Curator will limit access to the collections if the safety of any object warrants such limitation. If the authority here given to OHS staff is questioned, the CMC has the authority to give or deny access.

USE OF COLLECTIONS

The Director, Collections Manager, or Curator will authorize the staff to use items from the collections in planned educational programs, taking into consideration the security, value, rarity, and condition of the items and their importance to the purposes of the program.

Items in the collections are not available to individuals, Board members, or museum staff for private use.

Any commercial use of items in the collections must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

RECORDS

The Director, Collections Manager, or other staff will initiate and maintain all records pertaining to objects and archival material in the collection.

Copies of registration records will be kept in a place other than the registration area where the original records are kept. Computerized records will be backed up frequently. The back-ups will be stored in an area different from the computer location.

The Collections Manager will assure that all objects and archival materials are marked with their unique accession numbers.

The Society will make reasonable efforts to continue compiling an inventory of its collections. Lost or missing items will be reported to the CMC and the Board.

ETHICS

The Oysterponds Historical Society subscribes to the AAM's Code of Ethics.
(<http://aam-us.org/resources/ethics-standards-and-best-practices/code-of-ethics>)

This Collections Management Policy was reviewed and revised for the period beginning in April 2017.