Schoharie County Historical Society Collections Policies

**Acquisition Policy**

Acquisition is the process of discovering, evaluating, negotiating for, taking custody of, and documenting title to an object, assembly or lot.

1. All acquisitions (artifacts, works of art, documents, books, buildings, etc.) shall have been created in, used or related to this or adjacent counties and shall be appropriate for research, comparison and exhibit. The quality shall be determined by the Director and Curator. (If estimated value is $2000 (two thousand dollars) or more or special accommodations and arrangements must be made, it shall be approved by the Executive Committee, upon recommendation of the Museum Committee, on a quarterly basis prior to acceptance or purchase).

2. Acquisitions must be free from donor imposed restrictions. The present owner (i.e. the donor) must have clear title.

3. Acquisition by purchase shall be made only after proper financing is arranged.

4. Two files will be kept under the direction of the Director/Curator. One file will be arranged by the donor's name or source. The other file will be arranged by the date which the gift is received. These files shall contain the transfer documentation of each acquisition from each source. The transfer documentation shall be of a form that proves the museum's unqualified, legal ownership of items.

5. Acquisitions shall be promptly accessioned upon receipt and acceptance under system approved by the Museum and Library Committee. Photographs will be taken for identification purposes.

6. No acquisition shall be appraised by trustee, staff member or any person associated with either, but they may render impartial assistance to donors seeking independent and qualified appraisers. (see U.S. tax Revenue Act.)

7. Acquisitions shall be promptly registered.

8. Proper accommodations shall be arranged before formal acceptance.

**Deaccession policy**

Deaccession is the process of permanently removing accessioned objects from the collections. It is a cautious, deliberate process.

Objects considered for deaccessioning must meet two or more of the criteria below:

1. The artifact does not relate to the county and the immediate area, or is not relevant to the purpose of the society and its accessions policy.

2. The object has deteriorated beyond usefulness.

3. The object lacks physical integrity.

4. The object is duplicated in the collection.

5. The object has lost its identity or its authenticity.

6. The Society is unable to preserve the object properly in accordance with the Society's priorities.

Or the object has accidentally been accessioned twice.
Deaccession policy continued

The Curator will make recommendations to the Museum Committee, and the Museum Committee shall on a quarterly bases, review and recommend to the Board of Trustees all deaccessions of objects. The Committee will report their actions at the next Board of Trustees meeting for their approval. These records shall be permanently maintained.

Materials and objects shall not be given, sold or otherwise transferred publicly or privately to employees, officers, trustees or their immediate families or representatives of the Schoharie County Historical Society and the Schoharie County Department of Historical Properties.

All monies resulting from this process shall be deposited in the Collection's Fund, to be used to maintain, conserve and preserve the collection, or purchase acquisition.

Before an object is deaccessioned, the Society will search its available records for proof of ownership. Any conditions found in this search must be adhered to unless the Society is authorized by Court of record to do otherwise.

Items will not be deaccessioned if given within the previous two years and for any items given in the previous five years, an attempt shall be made to notify the donor, or his heirs and assigns, if over fifty dollars in value.

This policy for accessioning and deaccessioning shall be available upon request to the public in printed form. A list of all objects deaccessioned within the past five years shall be kept available, to answer the public's request for this information.

Loans Policy

Loaning is defined as the process of borrowing an object for a specified period of time, where on participant, the lender, has legal title to the object. The borrower agrees to maintain properly and care for the object for the privilege of temporarily adding it to their collection or using the object for study.

The following criteria must be met when objects are loaned:
A: Between the Historical Society and another society, museum, government agency or public institution.

1. The lender must have clear legal title to the object as shown by accession records. The object must have a unique identifying mark on it, which shall be recorded on the loan agreement.
2. The borrower will agree to maintain and be responsible for the objects' well-being and transportation in an agreed upon mode of transportation.
3. The borrower will insure the object at a mutually agreed upon value, determined with an impartial third party if necessary, who will be paid by the borrower.
4. The term of any loan will be one year or less, renewable for one year. Approval by the Museum Committee is necessary for longer term loans.
5. All loans of objects shall be approved by the Museum Committee and reported to the Board of Trustees.

Accurate records of all loans shall be kept, and these records permanently maintained.

No more than 30% of the entire permanent collection shall be loaned at one time. Any conditions found in the accessioning record of an object shall be complied with, as is practicable, unless an order removing or modifying such conditions is obtained from a court of record. The
Loans Policy continued

Director shall, where possible, assure that any loan does not become delinquent. If any loan becomes delinquent and can not be retrieved, then proper legal channels for the recovery of the same shall be followed.

The loan policy will be available in printed form for distribution upon request, and a list of objects currently on loan shall be kept to answer possible inquiries.

B. From a private Individual to the Historical Society.

1. Lender must have clear legal title and provide a thorough description.
2. The society shall agree to maintain, preserve and protect the object. The object will be insured at a mutually agreed upon value set with the aid of an impartial third party if necessary.
3. The term of the loan shall be one year or less and renewable annually.
4. All objects which the facility is not prepared to maintain adequately or insure will not be accepted.
5. All loans of objects [greater than $2000, estimated market value] shall be approved by the Museum Committee and reported to the Board of Trustees.
7. All incoming loans must meet the criteria in the Acquisitions policy in regard to its relationship with the county.

Cataloging

Catalog - The curatorial process of classifying and documenting objects usually in complete descriptive detail resulting in extensive information in the form of cards, files, publications and automated data.

Cataloging Policy

1. All the society's collections shall be cataloged either during the accession process or shortly thereafter.
2. The records produced will be maintained permanently by the Curator or appointed personnel.
3. Any items previously acquired will be cataloged and a search made to ascertain ownership, source and date of acquisition.
[4. Object descriptions will be as complete as time staff permit.]

Conservation

Conservation - The process of reducing or preventing further deterioration of an object. The elements in this process are:
1. Environmental control.
2. Preservation - prevention of further deterioration.
3. Restoration - returning objects to its original condition as nearly as possible.
4. Examination - to determine original structure, form, materials, and deterioration, alteration and loss which has occurred.
5. Review - examination for additional changes or deterioration.

Conservation Policy

1. The Society has clear legal title to the object to be conserved.
2. The object is intended to remain in the permanent collection.
3. Objects which have been conserved will be kept in as much as possible environmentally controlled areas.
4. Exhibits will be routinely rotated.
5. Proper funding will be available before work is undertaken by a conservator.
6. All conservation work shall be performed by qualified persons as determined by the director and curator. The museum committee will receive a report of any work performed from the curator the purpose of which is to monitor work completed and any in progress. Qualification of a conservator will be determined but not limited to education, experience, recommendations and certifications.

approved by the Museum Committee April 3, 1991
adopted B. of T. April 8, 1991