Waverly Historical Society

COLLECTIONS POLICY

The Mission of the Waverly Historical Society is to enrich the quality of life for all residents of Waverly, NY and Tioga County, NY by preserving its unique historical heritage and providing educational programs and assistance to the general public on the history of Waverly, NY and surrounding areas.

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of the Waverly Historical Society (hereafter “WHS”) collections is to preserve and hold in public trust a record of Waverly’s heritage through the acquisition of material items having a historical significance to Waverly and/or the surrounding vicinities. (For the purposes of this policy, the word “items” will include museum objects, library and archival materials and oral histories.) Items may be added to the collections by means of gifts, bequests, purchases, or by any other transactions by which title passes to WHS. Information regarding the collections shall be disseminated to the public by means of exhibition, web site postings, publications, and public programs.

2. Items are accepted on the basis of being representative of life in Waverly or for having a demonstrated significance to the history and culture of Tioga County, NY. Upon receipt, accepted items are placed in the general Museum Collection under the stewardship of WHS.

3. The acquisition, stewardship and use of items that represent Waverly’s cultural wealth entail the highest public trust. WHS has an ethical obligation to acquire items that support its purpose. Acquisition carries with it the presumption of rightful ownership, documented provenance, and the obligation of permanence, perpetual care, study and access by the public.

4. WHS has a due diligence obligation to investigate clear title to items it accepts into its collections. WHS does not knowingly accept or acquire any item that was illegally imported into the United States. No item is acquired contrary to any law, regulation, treaty, or convention.

5. WHS staff may not give appraisal of items presented for donation or provide tax advice to potential donors. Staff may assist potential donors in locating qualified appraisers. It is the responsibility of the donor to have an independent appraisal prepared for tax purposes. It is understood that acceptance of an item at its appraised value does not imply endorsement of or agreement with an appraisal. For items being considered for purchase by WHS, WHS reserves the right to require written appraisals at the discretion of the curator or as directed by the Trustee of WHS.

6. WHS lends and borrows collections/items for exhibition, research, education and conservation purposes. Borrowing organizations must comply with environmental requirements, safety and security standards, as established by WHS, during transport, study and display. Borrowing organizations shall not use items for private or monetary gain. Loans shall be accepted for a period no greater than one year with renewal options.

7. WHS accepts items for the purposes of accessioning into the permanent collections. WHS does not accept items with the intent to resell unless that is the expressed purpose of the donation and so stated in writing by the donor. The proceeds may be used only to enhance WHS collections.

**COMMITTEE**

The Collections Committee is responsible for the review and approval of all acquisitions to, or deaccessions from, WHS Collections. The Committee is composed of five members of the Board of Trustees of WHS.

1. A meeting of the Committee shall be held two times a year, or additionally as necessary. A pre-meeting of the Committee may be held by phone or by e-mail survey if consultation is necessary.

2. A quorum consists of three persons.

3. Candidates for appointment to the Committee shall provide a resume documenting knowledge and experience in the acquisition and deaccession of collections pertinent to the mission of WHS museums.

**ACQUISITION**

An item is acquired for the collections only if it meets the following criteria:

1. The item shall relate to the cultures and history of the people of Waverly, NY or surrounding areas. The item should enhance WHS collections and be consistent with the Collections Policy.

2. The item shall have historical and physical integrity, and be in appropriate condition for display, exhibit or study. If the item meets all criteria except condition, then its stabilization must be determined feasible; taking into consideration cost, time, available funding, and available expertise.

3. The item shall have free and clear title. Restrictions such as permanent display, designated location, or specific use, may make the item unacceptable to WHS.

4. Items shall be acquired that are not restricted or encumbered by less than full intellectual rights, such as property rights, copyrights, patents, trademarks or trade names. Items which, by their nature, may be considered an invasion of privacy or physically hazardous shall be declined.

5. The item shall not pose an excessive administrative or financial burden to WHS.

6. The item shall not present a danger to the rest of the collections or WHS staff.

**DEACCESSION**

WHS will strengthen/focus its collections in support of its purpose and enhance its public service through responsible disposal of unrelated items. The manner of disposition must be in compliance with State law, and in the best interest of WHS, the public it serves, the public trust it represents in owning the collections, and the scholarly and cultural community it represents. The following criteria may be considered when a request for the deaccession of an item is presented:

1. The item does not meet the mission of WHS and/or the Collection Policy.

2. The item lacks physical integrity or is beyond practical conservation efforts.

3. The item has failed to retain its historical authenticity.

4. The item, despite thorough attempts to locate it, has been missing for longer than five years, or stolen from the collections.

5. The item has multiple duplicates within the collections that are superior examples.

6. The item presents a clear danger to people or property.

7. The institution is repatriating the item or returning the item to its rightful owner.

8. The institution is returning the item to the donor, or their donor’s heirs or assigns, to fulfill donor restrictions relating to the item which the WHS is no longer able to meet.

No donated material shall be deaccessioned for two years after the date of its acquisition.

A complete record of deaccessions shall be kept. A copy of this record shall be retained permanently.

Proceeds derived from the deaccessioning of any property from the collections of the Society shall be placed either in a temporarily restricted fund to be used only for the acquisition, preservation, protection or care of the collections, or in a permanently restricted fund, the earnings of which shall be used only for the acquisition, preservation, protection or care of the collections.

Collections or any individual part thereof and the proceeds derived therefrom shall not be used as collateral for a loan.

Collections shall not be capitalized.

In no event shall proceeds be used for operating expenses or for any purpose other than

acquisition, preservation, protection or care of the collections.

WHS Annual Report shall include a list of all items or item lots deaccessioned in the

past year and all items or item lots disposed of in the past year.

**LOANS**

Loans shall be made to qualified public and/or private educational or cultural institutions. The institution must arrange and assure satisfactory precautions for transport, storage, study, and public display. Loaned items shall not be used for private or monetary gain. The following criteria shall be reviewed for requested loans:

1. Rarity, nature and condition of the item

2. Impact on WHS exhibits and programs

3. Impact on scholars by not being available for study

4. Potential impact of transport on the item

5. Adherence to proper environmental and security conditions as stated with the loan agreement

**ETHICS**

WHS is mandated to provide governance that serves the best interests of the people of Waverly, NY. WHS complies with applicable local, state and federal laws as well as with the specific legal standards governing its trust responsibilities.

WHS staff (comprised of Permanent full and part-time employees, Casual/Seasonal employees, interns and volunteers) and Collections Committee members are required to adhere to the following ethical standards:

1. Acquisitions – In acquisitions, no employee, committee member, volunteer or their immediate families may compete with WHS in the acceptance or purchase of an item. However, they may own items of the same or similar nature as those collected by WHS. It is imperative that WHS staff is unequivocally loyal to the mission of WHS and the public. This loyalty supersedes self-interest.

2. Disclosure – All employees, committee members and volunteers shall disclose their interests and activities in collecting items. They may not deal, sell or trade as a for profit business in the types of objects WHS collects. Status is updated through an annual conflict of interest and collecting disclosure statement.

3. Disposal – No employee, committee member, volunteer or their immediate families may benefit from disposals from WHS collections.

4. Personal Use – Use of collection items for private financial gain is prohibited. The temporary personal use of items by employees, committee members, volunteers or their immediate families is prohibited.

5. Personal Gain – No item shall be purchased from a staff member where the individual realizes a profit.

6. Use of Information – Current and former employees who created non-exclusive documentation have the right to use the information for personal reasons, but WHS retains ownership. Permission for use for publication or educational purposes must be granted by WHS with proper credit given. Access to collections shall be provided in a nondiscriminatory and fair manner in light of the range of requests received and balanced in light of resources, conservation and security concerns. WHS is obligated to protect privileged information including security information.

7. Ethical Obligations – The employees, committee members and volunteers should continually seek to improve WHS collections and documentation.

**COMPLIANCE**

1. Compliance with the Collections Policy is a professional obligation and staff responsibility. High standards of integrity, competence, experience, and dedication to assigned duties are expected of WHS staff. The Collections Policy, implemented by its procedures, is the primary vehicle for internal control over collections activities including acquisition, deaccession, conservation, research, exhibition, and interpretation.

2. The Board of Trustees monitors compliance with the Collections Policy. All WHS staff and Collections Committee members must annually sign a release stating they have read and will adhere to the Collections Policy and relevant ethics and disclosure documents. Policy improvements and revisions are recommended to the WHS Trustee.

3. The Collections Committee shall review the Collections Policy at least once every three (3) years and shall recommend changes to the Policy.

This Policy was formally approved and adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Waverly

Historical Society at a meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_2014.

Signed\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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