



Whaling Museum Society, Inc.
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Collections Management Policy

Objectives

The Museum is dedicated to the preservation of artifacts exemplifying local maritime trades and commerce and materials dealing specifically with the conservation of marine mammals. The basic question involved in the acceptance or rejection of a donation is *how relevant is this item to the Museum's mission*, as stated below.

“The purposes and objectives of the Museum are to collect, exhibit and preserve relics of the whaling industry, including: the collection, preservation and exchange of objects, artifacts, articles, writings, documents and books relating to whaling and whales; general maritime history, both at sea and on shore, and local history, principally at Cold Spring Harbor, New York and adjacent parts of Long Island, and to own and operate for public benefit a museum building and library for charitable, educational, scientific, literary and cultural purposes which shall be open to the public, the Museum having been formed and being operated exclusively not for pecuniary profit or financial gain and no part of the Museum's assets or receipts is distributable to or may accrue to the benefit of its Members, its Directors, its Officers or to any one of them.”

Our collection serves the following purposes:

- A.) To preserve objects which give people a better understanding and deeper appreciation of whales and whaling history.
- B.) To preserve material directly related to the founding of the museum and the lives of its founders.
- C.) To preserve materials relating to Cold Spring Harbor and the whaling history of Long Island.
- D.) To strengthen and enrich the exhibits of the museum.
- E.) To provide resources for studies of whaling and related industries.

Archeological Standards

As a Council of American Maritime Museum (CAMM) institution, the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum shall adhere to archeological standards consistent with those set forth in the by-laws resolution of CAAM, adopted May 1988, and with those of AAM/ICOM and ICMM, and shall not knowingly acquire or exhibit artifacts which have been stolen, illegally exported from their country of origin, illegally salvaged or removed from commercially exploited archeological or historical sites.

SAA Museum Archives Section Working Group Example

Acquisitions Policy

Scope

In developing and refining the collection, the basic guideline is as follows: objects acquired for the museum shall relate directly to whaling, its ancillary industries, or the history and conservation of whales. Preference should be given to those artifacts which deal specifically with Cold Spring Harbor and Long Island. The primary concern of the collection shall be the whaling industry during the period 1836 – 1862, the dates of Cold Spring Harbor's involvement in the industry; materials which best illustrate the biology of whales; items dealing with conserving the remaining populations of whales and objects and materials specifically relevant to the history and development of Cold Spring Harbor.

Acquisition Procedures

- Any object accepted for the collection must be accompanied by a valid legal title without restrictions as to use or further disposition. Appraisals are the responsibility of the donor.
- No employee of the museum shall give a certified written appraisal of objects. Staff members may help owners research the value of objects, but they should assume no responsibility for a declaration of worth.
- A Deed of Gift or other instrument of conveyance must include a complete description of the item(s) and should be signed by both the seller or donor and either the museum's Director or Curator.
- Objects shall not be accepted or otherwise acquired for the museum unless the museum can provide storage, protection and preservation of the objects under conditions that insure their availability for the museum's purposes and in keeping with professionally accepted standards.
- The museum will not acquire objects which it has reason to believe were obtained in violation of state or federal laws, or the collection of which involved the unnecessary destruction of habitats or archeological sites or the killing of plants or animals belonging to threatened or endangered species. No specimen of any animal or plant protected by the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act will be collected unless all legal requirements for such a collection are met. At all times the museum and its staff must act as responsible conservationists whose purpose is to protect and preserve the cultural and natural heritage and to serve as an example to the public.

- Accession records, including object card, accession sheet and accession file of supporting information must be made and retained for all objects acquired for the collection.

These basic guidelines shall be applied to specific parts of the collection as follows:

Personal Possessions

- Collect objects satisfactorily authenticated as having belonged to or used by American whaling figures in the whaling industry or in industries ancillary to whaling during the 19th century.
- Collect materials and documents which capture the history of the families of this maritime community.
- Collect materials dealing with whaling and whale conservation. Where applicable secondary sources will be considered.

Architecture and Furnishings

- Collect furnishings, equipment, fixtures and significant fragments of architectural detail (example: figurehead, billet heads, other examples of ship carver's craft) authenticated as used in the 19th century American whaling industry, or its ancillary industries.

Whaling Iconography

Paintings:

- Collect paintings dealing with 19th century American whaling, especially those painted between 1836 – 1862, depicting facets of the whaling history.
- Collect paintings which reflect the ambiance, history and growth of Cold Spring Harbor.
- Collect portraits of individuals associated with Cold Spring Harbor as a whaling port.
- Collect portraits of individuals important to the founding of the museum.
- Collect paintings dealing with cetaceans.

Photographs

- Collect original photographs depicting the original operation of the 19th century American whaling industry. This includes photographs of vessels and ancillary industries. Priority should be given to the operation of the local Cold Spring Harbor industries.
- Collect photographs of individuals involved in the Cold Spring Harbor whaling industry.
- Collect photographs which best depict cetaceans and which can be used for educational purposes.
- Collect photographs which best depict the growth and development of Cold Spring Harbor.

Prints

- Collect etchings, engravings, lithographs, woodcuts and similar graphic art works, 1836-1862, portraying the whaling industry and its ancillary industries.
- Collect prints depicting whales and other cetaceans.
- Consider iconographic items removed from books, magazines and newspapers as reference material in the library collection, not as museum specimens.

Documents

- Collect logbooks, journals and correspondence relating to the Long Island whaling industry and associated maritime trades.
- Collect primary source material relating to maritime industries and ancillary maritime industries of Cold Spring Harbor and other Long Island whaling ports.
- Collect secondary sources material relating to whaling and marine mammals.

Related Artifacts

- Collect whaling gear to complement the existing museum's collections.
- Collect scrimshaw and other sailor's folk arts that are representative of the skills and talents of 19th century whalers and seamen.
- Collect navigational instruments used by 19th century seamen.
- Collect shipboard equipment and tools utilized in the whaling trade.

- Collect only those models which are appropriate for exhibit and typical of Cold Spring Harbor's maritime trade and of the whaling enterprises.
- Collect costumes, textiles and other personal effects that depict life on shore and at sea in the 19th century, giving preference to those objects with a Long Island or Cold Spring Harbor provenance.
- Collect zoological specimens of marine mammals, specifically whales, in accordance with the federal and state guidelines for the protection of endangered species and marine mammals. This includes objects such as baleen, whale vertebra and other skeletal bones.

Related Acquisitions

- Preserve those artifacts directly related to the functioning of Cold Spring Harbor as a Custom District, 1790-1911.
- Preserve artifacts relating to the coasting industry and other trades covered by the Cold Spring Harbor Custom records.

SAA Museum Archives Section Working Group Example

Conservation Policy

The Museum clearly understands its responsibility as a repository of objects and artifacts relating to Cold Spring Harbor's illustrious history. Conservation shall remain an on-going priority in order to preserve the collection for future generations.

1. The professional staff is responsible for maintaining and overseeing use, security, handling, storage and exhibition of the collection both in the museum and in storage.
2. The Curator and Director will periodically monitor the complete security systems in both buildings to ensure their proper operation.
3. At all times all staff members shall be aware of their responsibilities to preserve and protect collection objects. Training in the proper handling of historic material shall be provided to all staff and to designated volunteers.
4. Collection storage areas will be securely locked with access restricted to designated staff members. Only designated staff may retrieve or replace objects in collections storage.
5. Cleaning of exhibits and collection storage will be the responsibility of the professional staff and will be performed only by designated personnel.
6. Periodic regular and spot inventories of the collections shall be made to supplement and verify the ongoing record system. Such inventories also provide a mechanism for monitoring conservation needs.
7. To insure proper protection of collection objects, minimal in-house conservation may be performed by professional staff or under its direction. Professional conservators will be utilized for major conservation work as required. Treatment will be carried out only as necessary and must respect the historic and artistic integrity of the object. All treatment shall be fully documented, and any significant original material removed will be preserved as part of the object record.
8. In-house condition reports and surveys completed by outside consultants will be used as the basis for developing short-term and long-range conservation plans.
9. Environmental conditions in storage and exhibition areas will be monitored and recorded regularly. They will be controlled to the greatest degree possible to minimize the damaging effects of temperature and humidity, and to protect the collections from air pollution, industrial combustion products, pest infestation, mold and mildew. Protection from damage by light will be provided and natural light will be blocked from all collection storage areas and from exhibition areas where possible and appropriate.

10. A disaster plan shall be maintained to provide a course of action in case of fire, flood, natural disaster, bomb threat or public disturbance. Procedures for reporting theft and vandalism shall be carried out as required by the Emergency Handbook.
11. Objects loaned from the museum collections will be properly packed and shipped to protect the objects. Collection objects in a delicate or unstable condition will not be available for loan. The Whaling Museum will require a Facilities Report and, if deemed necessary, an on-site reviewer will determine if the borrowing institution meets the loan standards set forth by the Whaling Museum.

SAA Museum Archives Section Working Group Example

Accessions

Registration Procedures

- Accessions are to be entered into the Accessions Book.
- Deed of Gift is to be signed and dated by donor.
- Object is marked with accession number.
- An Accession Record is completed with donor information.
- A Condition Report is to be completed on the new object.
- A photograph is taken of the object.
- A Catalog Record is to be completed.

SAA Museum Archives Section Working Group Example

Deaccession Policy

Registration for the Disposal of Objects by the Whaling Museum Society

1. The Consultant and/or Curator will make a list of all items to be deaccessioned and will recommend such list to the Director for approval. The following information must accompany each item listed:

- a.) Brief description of each item
- b.) Name of donor, if ascertainable
- c.) Date of acquisition
- d.) Proposed means of disposition
- e.) Reasons for suggested disposition.
- f.) Approximate value of item.
- g.) Copy of Certificate of Gift/Deed of Gift, signed by donor, if available.

2. Guidelines for deaccessioning items will be as follows:

- a.) Items that do not fall within the defined scope of the collections.
- b.) Items which can be exchanged for better or more pertinent examples of the same class of item.
- c.) Unnecessary duplicates – more than are required for exhibit or study.
- d.) Items that have been deteriorated to the point that they are useless for exhibit or study and would not be cost-effective to restore.
- e.) Items in fragmentary condition, impossible and excessively expensive to restore.
- f.) Forgeries, fakes, and items acquired on the basis of false information.

3. After the Director has approved items for deaccessioning submitted by the Consultant and/or Curator, the list of these items will then be submitted to the museum's Collection Committee. This Committee will either approve or disapprove of each item listed for disposal. The Committee will report on its activities at meetings of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees. Final approval must be made by a resolution of the Board of Directors.

4. Items approved for disposal will be disposed of as follows:
 - a.) Sale, preferably by auction.
 - b.) Trade with other exempt institutions.
 - c.) Destruction, if necessitated by circumstances beyond the Whaling Museum Society's control.
5. Although the museum is under no obligation to do so, it may notify the donor of an item that it is to be removed from the collections and the manner of disposal.
6. All pertinent data on each object sold, exchanged or destroyed must be recorded and information regarding the transaction must be kept and recorded by the Curator. All marks identifying any object with the Whaling Museum must be removed.
7. Monies received from the sale or disposal of items will be put into the Acquisitions Fund.

Approved July 23, 1989
By the Board of Directors

SAA Museum Archives Section Working Group Example

Loan Policy

Philosophy

The Whaling Museum may loan objects from its collections or seek to borrow objects from the collections of other institutions or individuals for exhibition or study.

Outgoing Loans

- The museum shall loan collection objects only to other educational institutions or organizations for primary educational or aesthetic purposes. No loans will be made to staff, trustees or individuals. No loans will be made for social functions.
- The borrowing institution shall send a written request to the Director or Curator of the museum detailing the purpose and duration of the loan.
- The condition and rarity of an object must be considered before an object can be approved for loan.
- A facility report is to be completed before the object/objects leave the museum and again when they are returned.
- Loans to other members of the Council of American Maritime Museums (CAAM) will be given priority.
- Insurance and transportation information must be submitted before the loaned object/objects leave the museum.
- All borrowing institutions must comply with the archeological stands and guidelines consistent with those adopted by AAM/ICOM and the Council of American Maritime Museums.
- The Director and Curator must approve all loans.

Terms of a Loan

The following terms must be agreed to by the borrowing institution:

- The placement of full insurance coverage on an object is the responsibility of the borrowing institution. The insurance coverage shall cover the object while in transit to and from the institution and during its exhibition or use.
- Appropriate security must be provided for the loan while in transit or on exhibit. These measures and procedures must be approved by the Director or the Curator.
- Any damage or loss must be reported to the Director or Curator immediately.

- No cleaning or repair work may be done on any object by the borrowing institution.
- A signed receipt of the loan by an authorized individual from the borrowing institution shall be returned immediately to the Curator.

Incoming Loans

The acceptance of loans serves to supplement the museum's collection and to facilitate the interpretation of an exhibit by the museum.

- An object will be borrowed for a specific time and particular purpose.
- Any long-term loans not being used effectively will be returned to their owners.
- Loans should not be accepted merely to accommodate the owner.
- A condition report must be completed for each object that is accepted as a loan and a copy of this report shall be forwarded to the lender.

Incoming Loan Procedures

- All objects will be inspected for loss or damage upon arrival at the museum.
- Loans will be registered in the loan book.
- Objects will be unpacked in the presence of the Curator or Director.
- All invoices are to be recorded or filed.
- Permission must be obtained from the lender in order to photograph documents.
- Insurance coverage is the responsibility of the Curator and a Certificate of Insurance will be forwarded to the lender as required.