

The Wayland Historical Society Collections Management Policy

Adopted October 2018

The Wayland Historical Society (WHS) was formed and received its official charter in 1954. For the early years its Board met in members' homes. While members began collecting in the 1950s, the major efforts to build the collection and furnish the Grout-Heard House began after the house was moved back to its original location in 1962. The bylaws were adopted in 1955 (amended most recently in 2011) and have helped to guide the Board in preserving its collection.

I. Mission Statement and Purpose of Policy

The Wayland Historical Society is dedicated to preserving, interpreting and sharing the history of the Town of Wayland. The Society:

- collects, preserves and interprets objects and records relating to the rich history of Wayland and its people.
- owns, preserves and opens to the public the Grout-Heard House Museum and such historical buildings as it may acquire.
- makes the resources accessible to researchers, genealogists, and the general public.
- holds meetings, creates exhibits, sponsors programs and runs special events for the education and enjoyment of its members, the Wayland community, and the general public.
- acts in cooperation with public and private entities to promote awareness of and interest in Wayland's history and heritage.

II. Scope of Collections

The Wayland Historical Society collects objects and records that relate to local history as well as regional history that apply to Wayland. The collections reflect the history of Wayland's diverse residents over time, or have a direct and important connection to a person or event in Wayland history.

III. Acquisition Policy

Acquisition is the means by which the WHS collects objects that relate to the museum's mission. Objects are acquired through gift, bequest, exchange or purchase.

a) Criteria. The following criteria will guide the acquisition of objects to add to the WHS collection.

- **Relevance** The WHS only collects objects that relate to the museum's mission and key collecting areas.

- **Significance** Objects will be selected for their significant historic, aesthetic, scientific/research or social/spiritual value.
- **Provenance and Documentation** Care will be taken to accept objects with known provenance.
- **Condition, intactness, integrity** The condition of the object must be taken into consideration when acquiring material. Badly damaged material will not normally be accepted into the collection. Anything with mold or pest damage will not be accepted.
- **Interpretive Potential** Objects that add to the interpretation of WHS themes will be considered.
- **Duplications** Objects that duplicate objects already in the collection will not be accepted unless they are of superior condition or have historical value.
- **Legal Requirements** The WHS only accepts objects for which the donor/vendor has legal title and for which there are no restrictions. The Society will not collect objects that violate state or federal laws.
- **Preservation** The Society will take into consideration its ability to properly store and preserve objects prior to acquisition.
- **Local Newspapers** The WHS will collect one full issue per year of the Wayland Town Crier or local newspaper and will maintain an active clipping file of relevant articles.

b) Orphaned Collections and Conversion of Unclaimed or Old Loans. Acceptable means of acquisition also include adoption of orphaned collections or conversion of unclaimed or old loans.

- **Orphaned collections** are those collections without adequate documentation and for which there is no evidence of ownership. Orphaned objects may derive from undocumented door stop donations, undocumented pending gifts, exhibit, special event, or education props, or staff or volunteer personal collections.
- **Unclaimed and/or old loans** are those objects that are accompanied by some evidence or documentation that a loan to the WHS was intended by the owner. Loans of any kind produce a bailment relationship; the owner (bailor), places property in the care of the bailee for a particular purpose and period of time.

Orphaned and old loan collection items may be accessioned into the permanent collection if they meet the acquisition criteria. Orphaned objects must be recorded as “found in the collection” to indicate that the transfer of ownership is undocumented. Old loans must be recorded as “conversion” and must adhere to the guidelines set forth in Massachusetts’s abandoned property statute Massachusetts General Law Chapter 200A, *Disposition of Unclaimed Property*. An unclaimed or old loan may be converted if the bailment relationship is broken. “Conversion is a legal term meaning unauthorized assumption of ownership of property belonging to another.”

Appropriate measures will be taken to contact owners of objects left at the Society and determine their wishes for disposition of an object. The Society will keep careful records of this process. Removal of undocumented objects from the museum’s collection will follow the same procedure as those for accessioned objects.

IV. Accession Policy

Accession is the act of making an object or collection of objects part of the permanent collection. The curator determines whether or not an object will be accessioned.

Objects that do not need to be accessioned include town reports, newspaper articles, periodicals and magazines, supplemental information, research collection material, telephone books and educational materials for hands-on use.

V. Deaccession Policy

Deaccessioning is the act of permanently removing an object(s) from the collection. Recommendation to deaccession will be made by the Curator following consultation with appropriate professionals when needed. The decision to deaccession will be made by the Board.

One or more of the following reasons must be met in order to recommend deaccessioning an item.

- Object does not conform to mission statement and current collections policy.
- Object is one of multiples.
- Object is damaged or deteriorated and repair would damage its authenticity.
- Object cannot be suitably stored and/or cared for.
- Object does not illuminate the history of Wayland.
- There is insufficient data about the object.
- A more authentic or suitable object becomes available.
- A digital surrogate may be considered a suitable replacement in certain instances.

Methods of disposal after a deaccessioning decision has been made include (in order of priority):

- Transferring deaccessioned objects to the WHS Education Collection (non-accessioned items that can be used for hands-on demonstrations and teaching purposes)
- Selling, donating, exchanging, or transferring to another museum or educational institution
- Request for bids from dealers
- Public auction where WHS Board members and staff are not eligible to bid
- Tag sale or other less formal selling procedure open to all
- Destruction or disposal.

Proceeds realized from the sale of deaccessioned objects will be placed in the WHS Collection Fund and may only be used for the purchase of new acquisitions or direct care of collections.

VI. Loan Policy

WHS facilitates outgoing and incoming loans to disseminate knowledge, share information, and broaden public access. WHS makes loans to recognized museums or educational, cultural, or scientific institutions.

a) Long-Term Loans. The WHS does not accept long-term loans. The WHS is currently resolving issues related to existing long-term loans.

b) Short-term Loans. Short-term loans include loaning objects to and from institutions for exhibition. Loan requests are handled by the Curator.

- **Outgoing Loans.** Loan requests must be received in writing and must include the intended purpose, location, and proposed dates. If the loan is for exhibition purposes the WHS shall be credited in all instances. An exhibit prospectus, standard facility report, and certificate of insurance for all venues may be required. If a facsimile can serve the purpose it will be used.
- **Incoming Loans.** The WHS takes on a liability when requesting an incoming loan. Incoming loans shall demonstrate a clear connection between the borrowed object(s) and the WHS mission. Incoming loans from private collectors or for-profit entities can present conflicts of interest and must be carefully assessed.

VII. Care of Collections

The curator, who is responsible for the care of objects and records in the Collection, shall be informed prior to any action requiring handling, shifting, removing and replacing objects in the Grout-Heard House Museum (GHHM). As a general rule, objects and records shall not leave the GHHM nor be relocated within the house without permission from the curator. Permanent changes to the collection shall be made through consultation between the curator and Board members, so designated. The careful recording of locations of objects within the collection is necessary for proper care and management.

a) Recordkeeping. The WHS shall maintain records of all objects and manuscripts, photos, and books.

b) Maintenance. The collections while in storage or display shall be protected as much as possible from injury by heat, cold, humidity (or lack thereof), vermin, and other injurious environmental factors. Storage and display spaces shall be secure from theft and vandalism. The goal shall be accessible storage spaces, appropriate lighting and temperature and humidity control.

c) Insurance. The Society carries an appropriate level of insurance.

VIII. Access and Use of Collections

The WHS owns, curates, and provides access to collections and records related to the history of Wayland and its region. Collections are frequently fragile, irreplaceable, and often require special handling. Therefore access guidelines that ensure the preservation and safety of all WHS collections are spelled out in the Procedures Manual.

The WHS endeavors to provide public access unless there is a federal law, a state statute, a WHS need, or a privacy concern that would restrict access. Access to and use of collections and/or information may be restricted as a result of copyright, donor restrictions, or condition (some items may be too fragile to handle).

a) Interpretation. Exhibitions, publications, programs, guided house museum tours and new media provide the primary means of interpreting the regional history of Wayland as it applies to Wayland.

b) Collections Research. The Society's collections are maintained as a primary resource on Wayland's and its region's history. The Society is committed to studying, researching, and documenting the collections, and disseminating information for both the scholarly and the general public. Research requests are welcome. If a user is unable to visit WHS, historical research assistance is available.

Access will be made in a manner consistent with the preservation and security of the objects and records and is subject to the Access Guidelines found in the Procedures Manual.

c) Publication. The public is allowed access to collections and primary and secondary records. Photography is allowed; however, fees may apply for duplication requests of photographs, documents, or records. All users must adhere to the access guidelines. Commercial use of images from the collection may require additional fees and contractual agreements. All publicity and publications must credit the WHS. When images of objects from the collections are used in publications, the credit line, "From the collections of the Wayland Historical Society" shall be used.

IX. Standards of Conduct and Ethics

The WHS endorses the Code of Ethics established by the American Association of State and Local History. The Board of Directors and volunteers working with the collection are expected to abide by those standards. Members of the Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers have an obligation to put the Wayland Historical Society's interests with regard to the collections above their personal interests.

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