

## Collections Policy

The Windsor Historical Society, INC. (WHS) DBA Windsor Vermont Historical Association (WVHA), for purposes which are exclusively charitable and educational, will acquire, preserve, and exhibit property, objects, and other materials and topics related to the town of Windsor, VT in support of the WHS mission statement; as well as collaborate with the Vermont State Historic Sites Program, in particular the Old Constitution House, the Vermont Historical Society, and other agencies involved the preservation of local landmarks, to make the same available to the public, and particularly to educational and study groups of all kinds, at all practicable times, for special study and general educational use and; thus, promote the public knowledge of and interest in the development and evolution of the town and those individuals, associations and organizations composing it at any period including relations with and influence on state, nation and world.

To promote these ends WVHA will collect, but not be limited to, newspapers, gazetteers, directories, genealogical material (published and unpublished), histories, biographies, pamphlets, catalogs, circulars, handbills, programs, posters, letters, diaries, journals, business records, account books, memoranda, reminiscences, rosters, service records, charts, surveys, field books, insurance and other inventory records, pictures, photographs, paintings, portraits, scenes, aboriginal and other relics and any other material objects illustrative of life, conditions, events and activities of the past with due attention to current history as it occurs.

### Statement of Purpose

1. The purpose of the Windsor Historical Society, INC. (hereafter "WHS") collections is to preserve and hold in public trust a record of Windsor's heritage through the acquisition of material culture items made in Windsor, VT or used by Windsor residents throughout history. (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 Windsor, VT or for having a demonstrated significance to the history and culture of the town of Windsor. 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 Windsor'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 titles to items it accepts into its collections. WHS does not knowingly accept or acquire any item that was illegally imported into the United States. WHS does not knowingly accept or acquire any item that was collected under circumstances that would encourage or support looting or destruction of any prehistoric or historic archeological site. No item is acquired contrary to any law, regulation, treaty, or convention.
5. WHS Collection Committee members may not give appraisal of items presented for donation or provide tax advice to potential donors. Board members 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 Collection Committee or as directed by the Officers 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.

## Collections Committee

The Collections Committee is responsible for the review and approval of all acquisitions to, or deaccessions from, the WHS Collection. The Committee is composed of WHS board members: Pamela Bagley, Bridget Fariel, Michael Welker, and Vi Welker.

1. A meeting of the Committee shall be held the first Thursday of the month, 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.

## 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 Windsor, VT. The item should enhance WHS collections and be consistent with the Collections Policy.
2. The item shall be the best available example of a representative type, or, must contribute to the understanding of the historic, aesthetic or cultural heritage of Windsor.
3. 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.
4. The item shall have a free and clear title. Restrictions such as permanent display, designated location, or specific use, may make the item unacceptable to WHS.
5. 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.
6. The item shall not pose an excessive administrative or financial burden to WHS.
7. The item shall not present a danger to the rest of the collections or WHS board members, Collection Committee members, or volunteers.

## 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 for approval to the board by the Collections Committee Director:

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.

Please note that the Collections Committee will put forth its best effort to contact the donor or their family for first refusal upon the deaccession of an item.

## Loans

Loans may only 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 Windsor. WHS complies with applicable local, state and federal laws as well as with the specific legal standards governing its trust responsibilities. In subscribing to the American Association of Museums Code of Ethics

(<https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/code-of-ethics-for-museums/>), WHS strengthens its chartered purpose, more prudently applies its resources, improves its effectiveness, and maintains public confidence.

WHS board members and Collections Committee members are required to adhere to the following ethical standards:

1. Acquisitions – In acquisitions, no 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 board members, 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 statements.
3. Disposal – No board member, 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 board members, committee members, volunteers or their immediate families is prohibited.
5. Personal Gain – No item shall be purchased from a board member or committee member where the individual realizes a profit.
6. Use of Information – Current and former board and committee members 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 board members, 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 committee responsibility. High standards of integrity, competence, experience, and dedication to assigned duties are expected of WHS board members, collections committee members, and volunteers. 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 Collections Committee members monitor compliance with the Collections Policy. All WHS volunteers 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 Board.

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