

The Bar Harbor Historical Society

La Rochelle Mansion & Museum

Bar Harbor, ME

Collections Policies, Standards, and Procedures

Introduction

The Bar Harbor Historical Society (hereafter BHHS) at the La Rochelle Mansion & Museum is an institution with collections of documents, clothing, maps, blueprints, posters, photographs, and other artifacts mainly related to the history of Bar Harbor. This document sets policy for the collecting, maintenance, preservation, acquisition, and acceptance of all such items. The present home of the BHHS is the mansion known as La Rochelle, a 13,000 square foot waterfront estate on the National Register of Historic Places, which is itself deemed part of the collection as long as it remains under the ownership of the BHHS.

I. Mission and Vision

It is the mission of the BHHS to tell and interpret the history of the town of Bar Harbor. It effectively display the BHHS's collections to interpret Bar Harbor's and La Rochelle's story, to create an interesting and educational environment for visitors, to develop relevant programs, and engage in other activities consistent with these goals and mission.

II. Authority

1. The Executive Director (ED) and the Collections Committee Chair (CCC) shall advise the Collections Committee in interpreting and enacting the policies articulated in this document.

2. There will be a Collections Committee composed of such members as the Board shall determine. It shall meet at least three times a year, either in person or by other communications such as conference calls. The Chair or designated alternate may call meetings. All Committee decisions are by simple majority vote.

The Committee will ensure the proper computer inventorying and record keeping of the items in the permanent collection, and everything hereafter acquired therefor. It shall utilize software that is state of the art, and each entry shall provide at the minimum the name of the object, its category, the donor, the estimated age, and any other information sufficient to allow identification and access to the item in question. Digital images shall also be made of at minimum the most significant objects. The Committee has the authority to recommend objects to be acquired, either by donation or purchase, to suggest to the ED and CCC budgets for acquisitions of those artifacts that it deems appropriate to be purchased outright, or be acquired at public auction.

Any expenditure in excess of \$1,000 on any specific item would require approval of the ED and CCC, the Collections Committee, and the Board. The Committee also has authority to recommend to the ED and the CCC objects for de-accession and their means of disposal.

III. Categories of Collections

There are four categories of collections owned by the BHHS.

The first is the permanent collection, and all references not specify stating to the contrary in this policy statement refer to this permanent collection.

The second category is the research collection, consisting of reference materials such as books and articles, and policies for these are outside the bounds of this policy statement. The ED and the CCC may designate which items are in each category, or may designate a staff member or the Collections Committee to handle this task.

The third category is Study collections. Objects or specimens used as study collections also fall within the scope of our collections but may not be given the same level of care, management and protection as permanent collections. These objects or specimens may be considered expendable collections. These collections can also be used for loans or in educational settings inside the BHHS or at other locations for educational programming. Objects and specimens used as study collections remain in the care of the collection division and can be owned or deposited collections. The level of care for research quality casts and reproductions will be decided by the appropriate curator and collection manager.

The fourth category consists of items donated in the past and slated to be deaccessioned or disposed of. The rules for this process are below.

IV. Collection Stewardship

Collection standards include:

- a. The museum owns, exhibits or uses collections that are appropriate to its mission.
- b. The museum legally, ethically and effectively manages, documents, cares for and uses the collections.
- c. The museum conducts any collections-related research according to appropriate scholarly standards.

- d. The museum appropriately plans for the use and development of its collections.
- e. Guided by its mission, the museum provides public access to its collections while ensuring their preservation.

V. Acquisitions and Accessions through Donation or Deed of Gift

Any and all accessions must be recommended by the ED and CCC and approved by the Collections Committee. No commitment to accept a donation may be given by any other person. The BHHS does not accept responsibility for objects in custody, including such as may be left for potential donation or purchase.

Furthermore:

- a. The present owner must have clear, undisputed, and lawful title to the object, and sign a Deed of Gift or other writing certifying so.
- b. The object must be in keeping with the collections of the BHHS and mission stated above.
- c. No officer, staff member or member of the Board shall offer an appraisal or an estimate of monetary value for any item to donors or prospective donors, or otherwise state or suggest a fair market value of any potential gift to the BHHS. It is the responsibility of the donor to seek and pay for any appraisal for any donation being considered for a tax deduction, or any accounting advice related thereto. Nothing contained herein shall preclude the BHHS from informing such person where such information may be found, such as in public auction catalogs.
- d. Donors shall provide as much information as possible about the object and its provenance. A receipt for an object being taken in shall be entered in the receipt book, and a copy given to the donor with the explanation that the Collections Committee will decide whether or not to accept the object into the collection.

- e. Upon acceptance into the collection, donors will receive a Deed of Gift to be signed by the donor and a BHHS authorized party. This document legally transfers ownership of the object(s) to the BHHS. It is preferable to accept donations without any restrictions as to reproduction, copyright, or other associated limits.

VI. Deaccession and Disposal

Deaccessioning

1. Items to be deaccessioned will generally be duplicates, those items that do not meet collection criteria or fit the BHHS's goals or mission, or lack physical integrity, endanger other objects, have deteriorated beyond usefulness, are likely never to be used, or require storage or conservation the BHHS is unable to provide.
2. Deaccessioning removes items permanently from the collection by sale or gift, and doing either must promote the goals and mission of the BHHS, and be in accord with law. Items suggested to be deaccessioned will be submitted by the ED and the CCC to the Collections Committee which then will make recommendations to the Board, which must give its approval.
3. In accordance with federal laws, proceeds from deaccessioned materials shall be used only to augment or care for the permanent collection, promote research of the collection, or in such manner related to the collections as the Board may specify. The process should be transparent and fully documented in the database. The records should not be deleted as they are part of the permanent record.

Methods of disposal

Methods of disposal shall be in accordance with museum best-practices such as exchange with or given to another institution.

No direct private sale or transfer of any objects deaccessioned by the BHHS may be made to anyone associated with the BHHS, including

members, staff, directors, volunteers, consultants or members of their immediate families.

VII. Prohibitions - Conflicts of Interest

In accordance with national museum ethics and standards:

1. No officer, director, staff, or members of their immediate families, may compete with the BHHS for items it has determined to attempt to acquire, whether at auction, or from any potential seller or donor.

2. No officer, director, staff, or members of their immediate families, nor any other person, may remove any artifacts from the BHHS, nor commingle their own artifacts with those of the BHHS, without the ED's or CCC's written approval. Any such objects must be logged in and out.

3. No officer, director, or staff member can engage in any activity that can reasonably be considered a conflict of interest.

VIII. Loans

1. Incoming

a. The BHHS may borrow objects for exhibition or study in accordance with its mission or goals. Any such borrowing must be approved by the ED and CCC.

b. The same care and security given its own collection shall apply to borrowed objects. They should be exhibited in a safe area and kept free from dust, dirt, and any damage. A condition report should accompany the loan unless the ED determines otherwise.

c. A loan agreement form signed by both a representative of the lending party and a BHHS representative shall be kept on file and signed by both parties when the object is returned.

d. The BHHS will insure borrowed objects under its policy for the amount specified by the lender, and a loss or damage in transit or on the BHHS's premises should be reported immediately to the lender.

e. It is the general policy of the BHHS to encourage loans with a finite duration.

2. Outgoing

a. Objects from the BHHS's collections may be loaned to qualified institutions on a case-by-case basis. Records of such loans shall be entered into the record and return-date entered when that occurs. All loans must be approved by the ED and CCC.

b. Loans are for a specified period of time. A loan agreement form that includes the condition of the lending object and any restrictions or rights to reproduction shall be signed by both parties when the object is taken from the collection.

c. Borrowers shall handle objects with proper care and provide adequate security and insurance to protect them against vandalism, theft, insects, vermin, mold and other pollutants.

d. Borrowers may not loan to third parties without written permission of the BHHS.

IX. Collection Care, Security and Insurance

1. Officer, directors, and staff shall exercise reasonable and consistent precautions to ensure the condition and integrity of its holdings. This includes, but is not limited to using archival materials, maintaining sanitary conditions etc.
2. The BHHS shall obtain and maintain adequate insurance for both fire and liability, and shall also insure the building and the collections themselves for loss, theft, and against other dangers. Coverage for

loss shall require an itemized inventory of holdings, capable of proving any loss.

X. Access and Use

1. Reproduction of Photographs or Documents for Outside Publication, Exhibits, Personal or Commercial Use, Educational Purposes

- a. A credit line referencing the BHHS must appear directly beneath any image published, reproduced, or exhibited; provided that for video, television, or otherwise, such credit must appear in the section devoted to acknowledgments.
- b. Any restrictions on use placed by the donor, the BHHS, or current law must be adhered to, including but not limited to copyright restrictions on reproducing works covered thereby.
- c. The images or parts of an image may not be altered in any way, unless expressly permitted by the BHHS.
- d. A copy of any publication in any form in which BHHS photographs or documents are used must be given free of charge to the BHHS.

2. Access to Collections and Collections Information

The BHHS's policy is to support research using its collections, in person, by telephone or by electronic media, subject to any legal limitations. The ED and CCC may recommend and enact policies and procedures in regard hereto. Photocopies or scans may be made if the objects will not be damaged by the process, and copyright law is honored.

XI. Programs

The ED and CCC may utilize the collections for programs that may be offered or implemented. Any such programs shall support the

BHHS mission or goals, and public trust responsibilities, be founded on scholarship and marked by intellectual integrity, be accessible and encourage participation, promote the public good rather than individual financial gain, and any revenue-producing activities and activities that involve relationships with external entities are compatible with the museum's mission and support its public trust responsibilities.