

Historic



Huguenot Street

Huguenot Historical Society
New Paltz, N.Y.

Collections Management Policy

**Approved by the Board of Trustees:
June 1996**

**Revised with Board of Trustees approval:
October 2001, February 2008, October 2012**

Collections Management Policy

Historic Huguenot Street

Statement of Purpose

A Collections Management Policy is the governing tool used by museum administrators and staff to regulate the development, use and disposition of museum collections. A Collections Management Policy defines the stewardship of the existing collections and ensures the continued excellence and relevance of future collecting activities, in compliance with the stated charter purpose of the institution for which it is written.

This document contains the Mission Statement of Historic Huguenot Street and outlines the scope of the current collection holdings. This document establishes policy regarding the acquisition of objects and archival materials into the collections. It also addresses policy and procedure for deaccessioning objects from the collections and delegates authority to carry out the policy through procedures approved by the Board of Trustees.

The Collections Management Policy should be considered a working document, accessible to and utilized by all staff of the Historic Huguenot Street who are responsible for the maintenance and interpretation of the collections.

The Collections Management Policy should be reviewed by the Board of Trustees and staff on a regular basis for revisions, if deemed necessary. However, revisions should be made only after careful deliberation and with final approval by the Board of Trustees.

This document is available for public examination and to other historic agencies and institutions upon request. This document should also be made available to all donors or potential donors upon request.

The Collections Management Policy was approved in its entirety by the Board of Trustees of the Huguenot Historical Society on June 11, 1996 and revised with Board approval on October 23rd, 2001. The Huguenot Historical Society adopted the operating name of Historic Huguenot Street in 2005.

I. Mission Statement of the Huguenot Historical Society (a.k.a. Historic Huguenot Street)

“Preserve a unique Hudson Valley Huguenot settlement and engage diverse audiences in the exploration of America’s multicultural past in order to understand the historical forces that have shaped America.” (updated March 14, 2019)

II. Collecting Objectives

The Huguenot Historical Society (a.k.a. Historic Huguenot Street) - hereafter known as HHS - actively collects and maintains objects and source materials that help it achieve its mission to preserve and interpret the history of the Huguenot, Dutch and allied families who settled New Paltz and the surrounding area or related communities, for the purposes of public display and scholarly research.

III. Scope of the Collections

The four major areas within the HHS’s collection scope are: Houses and Properties, the Permanent Collection (consisting of the Art and Artifact Collection, the Archives and Manuscripts Collection and the Study Collection), the Library Reference Collection and the Education Collection. Additionally, the HHS will knowingly acquire reproduction objects.

A. *Houses and Properties.* Houses and Properties include seven historic house museums and accompanying outbuildings with construction dates ranging from the early 18th century to 1894; a reproduction 18th century stone church; an early 19th century Quaker meeting house; and eight 19th century non-museum houses with accompanying outbuildings.

B. *The Permanent Collection.* The Permanent Collection consists of the following:

1. *Art and Artifacts Collection.* The Art and Artifacts Collection includes objects from the 17th – 20th centuries primarily from America, but also from England, Europe, and Asia. Concentration of collections is on 17th – 19th century materials. Collecting areas include the decorative and fine arts, personal and domestic textiles, household equipment, agricultural and construction equipment and tools, architectural fragments, toys, transportation and weaponry. Also included are archaeological collections related to Native American (non-sacred artifacts - see statement below regarding the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) and European settlement on Huguenot Street.
2. *Archives and Manuscripts Collection.* The Archives and Manuscripts Collection includes print materials from New Paltz and surrounding areas and related communities dating from the 17th – 20th centuries. Concentration of collections is on 17th – 19th century materials. Major collecting areas include personal and family papers and memorabilia, photographs, rare books and historic Bibles, miscellaneous institutional records (churches, schools, municipalities, clubs, businesses, etc.), genealogical research materials; maps and architectural drawings, colonial and early 19th century newspapers; and other miscellaneous materials. Additionally, the archives house the HHS’s own organizational records and memorabilia.

3. *Study Collection.* The Study Collection consists of objects and/or materials too rare, fragile, compromised or environmentally sensitive to be loaned except with Board approval. Objects and materials from the Study Collection are typically used for study purposes by staff and when requested, by researchers and scholars. The Study Collection is managed and given the same care as other objects and materials in the Permanent Collection.

C. *The Library Reference Collection.* The Library Reference Collection is separate and distinct from the Permanent Collection and consists of secondary source materials used to support the research and interpretation of the historical development of Huguenot Street and related subject matter. The library holds approximately 5,000 volumes, including scholarly and non-scholarly monographs, academic dissertations and essays, journals, and reports; compilations of demographic and genealogical source materials, published and unpublished genealogies and charts; historical and genealogical subject files, and microfilms. Reference Library materials will not be accessioned into the Permanent Collection and are regarded as expendable; no commitment is made for their permanent use or preservation. There are no restrictions placed on the use of the proceeds resulting from the sale of Reference Library materials.

D. *The Education Collection.* The Education Collection is separate and distinct from the Permanent Collection and consists of objects and/or materials used to support or enhance the interpretation of museum objects in the Permanent Collection. Objects and materials from the Education Collection are typically used for “hands-on” educational programming, collections management training and research activities. Education Collection objects and materials shall not be accessioned into the Permanent Collection and are regarded as expendable; no commitment is made for their permanent use or preservation.

Additionally, HHS will knowingly acquire reproduction objects to enhance its collecting and interpretive mission and for educational purposes. Reproductions shall not be accessioned into the Permanent Collection and are regarded as expendable; no commitment is made for their permanent use or preservation.

IV. Collection Committee

The Collection Committee is comprised of a mixed group of HHS Board members and staff, as well as other individuals with expertise in museum or related work, who together are charged with the responsibility of consulting with the Director, Curator and Archivist on major decisions affecting the HHS Permanent Collections. The Collections Committee also reports to the HHS Board of Trustees for final approval on important matters such as deaccessioning.

V. Acquisition

HHS shall acquire objects and archival materials by gift, bequest, exchange and purchase. Only materials meeting adequate criteria will be accepted into the HHS collections. Additionally, HHS will accept equipment, supplies and monetary contributions to support and further its institutional goals.

A. Acquisition Criteria

1. The acquisition must conform to the HHS collecting objectives. Objects not suitable for the Permanent Collections may be accepted for the Library Reference or Education Collection.
2. The present owner must declare in writing that he/she has clear title to the object. No acquisition will be accepted unless accompanied by full literary rights, property rights, copyrights, patents or trademarks. Any exception to this must be approved by the Director in consultation with the Collections Committee.
3. HHS shall not pay for an appraisal for the donor, nor shall any HHS employee appraise a potential gift from or for a donor.
4. HHS must be in the position to properly care for any object accepted into the collections according to current preservation standards.
5. All moral and ethical implications of the acquisition must be considered. No object will be knowingly or willingly accepted where there is evidence that its acquisition involved the illegal destruction of historic sites, buildings, or collections.
Note: Under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), no Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects and/or objects of cultural patrimony may be knowingly accepted into the collections of museums who receive federal funding for any purpose. It is the policy of HHS to adhere to NAGPRA collecting restrictions for moral and ethical reasons.
6. From this point forward, acquisitions must be free of donor-imposed restrictions.
7. Permanent Loans shall not be accepted under any circumstances by HHS.
8. Any deviations from the acquisition criteria must be approved by the Director in consultation with the Collections Committee. Written justification for such deviation must be placed in the permanent records of the HHS.

VI. Loans

Incoming and outgoing loans are a means of supplementing and enhancing objects from the HHS collections for exhibition and research purposes and furthering the reputation of the HHS.

A. Incoming Loans. Incoming loans shall be accepted from individuals or institutions for purposes of exhibition or current, relevant research only. No loans for an indefinite period (permanent loans) will be accepted. The Society cannot store, maintain or insure objects belonging to others that are not required for exhibition or research. Loans that are planned to exceed one year must be negotiated on a yearly basis. The Curator or Archivist shall institute and enforce appropriate incoming loan guidelines.

1. *Incoming Loan Criteria.* The following criteria must be met:
 - a. The person or organization offering the object for loan must be willing to declare in writing that they are the legal owners.
 - b. The duration of the loan shall be for a specified period of time stated on the loan form, but not to exceed one year. The loan may be renewed at the end of the loan period if it is agreeable with both parties.

- c. The loan may be terminated by either party after thirty days notification by certified mail.
- d. All loans shall receive the same care as collections belonging to HHS, except for cleaning, repair or alteration, including re-matting or remounting, unless authorized to do so in writing by the lender. No conservation work shall be done on the borrowed object unless there is an emergency and the object requires immediate treatment to prevent further damage or complete destruction. In that event, the Director, Curator or Archivist shall make every effort to obtain verbal permission before treatment is begun and shall request a written confirmation.
- e. HHS shall provide insurance coverage for the object based on appraisal figures supplied by the lender, unless insurance is waived in writing by the lender and a waiver of subrogation is obtained.
- f. Packing and transportation to and from HHS shall be negotiated by HHS and the lender.

B. Outgoing Loans. Outgoing loans shall be made to an historical society, museum, library or other historical institution only. No loans shall be made to a private individual. Loans are for exhibit or current, relevant research only. Loans will be made only after careful consideration regarding the stability of the object and the ability of the borrowing institution to provide proper care, environment and security for the object. At all times, the preservation of the object shall take priority. Loans that are planned to exceed one year must be negotiated on a yearly basis. The Curator or Archivist shall institute and enforce appropriate outgoing loan guidelines.

1. Outgoing Loan Criteria. The following criteria shall be met:

- a. The borrower must provide a certificate of insurance for the borrowed object. The coverage must be in effect for the duration of the loan including transit to and from the borrower and while on the borrower's premises.
- b. The duration of the loan shall be for a specified period of time stated on the loan form, not to exceed one year. The loan may be renewed at the end of the loan period if it is agreeable to HHS.
- c. The borrower must be in a position to properly care for the object, including suitable climate control, security and fire protection. HHS reserves the right to inspect the loaned object on the premises of the borrower during regular business hours. Any damage, breakage or loss shall be reported immediately to the HHS Director, Curator or Archivist.
- d. No borrowed object shall be lent to a third party.
- e. No cleaning or repair work shall be done on any borrowed object without the express written permission of HHS, in which case a written treatment proposal from a qualified conservation or restoration specialist must first be submitted for approval with a complete treatment report to follow. The only exception is if, in an emergency, an object requires immediate conservation treatment to prevent further damage or complete destruction. In that event, the borrower shall make every effort to obtain verbal permission from the HHS Director, Curator or Archivist prior to treatment. Written confirmation shall be provided.

- f. Any borrowed object for exhibition shall have a credit line reading “Courtesy of Historic Huguenot Street, New Paltz, N.Y.” placed on all appropriate labels and in all publications and press releases.
- g. No borrowed object may be photographed or reproduced in any form without the express written permission of HHS. No borrowed object shall be used for any commercial purposes whatsoever.
- h. Approved transportation shall be by the borrower unless otherwise arranged. Packing and transportation costs shall be defrayed by the borrower. Packing for return shipping must be in the same manner and means as the original shipping. Only persons approved by HHS shall be permitted to handle, move or pack borrowed objects.
- i. Even if the above conditions are met, loan requests may be denied if in the opinion of the Director, Curator or Archivist, the requested object is of such rarity, value, significance, fragility or is so related to the ongoing needs of HHS, that the loan would not be in the best interest of HHS. HHS reserves the right to terminate a loan thirty days after notifying the borrower by certified mail.

VII. Deaccession

Deaccession is the process of removing an accessioned museum object from the Permanent Collections or formally transferring an object from the Permanent Collections to the Education Collections. The Deaccession process shall be cautious, deliberate and scrupulous. The process shall not be looked to as a means to provide extra income to HHS or to any individual associated with HHS, that it ensure that collections shall not be capitalized and that collections or any individual part thereof and the proceeds derived therefrom shall not be used as collateral for a loan.

A. *Deaccession Criteria.* Objects from the Permanent Collections to be considered for deaccession must be free of donor imposed restrictions and must meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. The item is inconsistent with the mission of the institution as set forth in its mission statement;
2. The item has failed to retain its identity;
3. The item is redundant and/o better examples exist in the collection;
4. The item is deaccessioned to accomplish refinement of collections;
5. The item’s preservation and conservation needs are beyond the capacity of HHS to provide;
6. It has been established that the item is inauthentic;
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 the donor’s heirs or assigns, to fulfill donor restrictions relating to the item which the institution is no longer able to meet;

9. The item presents a hazard to people or other collection items and/ or
10. The item has been lost or stolen and has not been recovered.

B. Deaccession Procedure. Before an object from the Permanent Collections is recommended for deaccessioning, it shall be determined that HHS fully and legally owns the object. No objects may be deaccessioned for two years after being accessioned into the HHS collections.

1. Following the criteria for deaccessioning, the Director and Curator or Archivist will evaluate the object to determine whether deaccessioning should be recommended.

2. All recommendations for deaccessioning shall be submitted to the Director by the Curator or Archivist. The Director must review the recommendation form and give approval to proceed with any deaccession candidate(s). The Director, Curator or Archivist will then present approved deaccession(s) to the Collections Committee by way of the *Justification to Deaccession form* that shall include:

- Fullest possible documentation of the object.
- Reason for deaccessioning.
- Copy of the recent appraisal, if available.
- Recommended means of disposal.

3. The Collections Committee shall approve or withhold their approval of *any or all* recommendations for Deaccession and investigate the means of disposal. *Deaccessions must be authorized by a minimum two-thirds vote of the Collections Committee.*

4. The recommendation for Deaccession shall be brought by the Director to the HHS Board of Trustees for final approval and authorization of the means of disposal which shall be carried out by the Director, Curator or Archivist.

5. The Curator or Archivist shall maintain all records documenting all deaccessions.

C. Means of Disposal.

1. Exchange. An object from the Permanent Collections may be exchanged with another historical society, museum or library. The institution selected must collect the type of object offered and must offer in exchange to HHS an object that will enhance the HHS collections and where possible, be of equal monetary value or close to it. The institution selected must be able to properly care for the object offered in exchange.

2. Donation. An object from the Permanent Collections may be donated to another historical society, museum or library when the object would benefit the collection of that institution. The institution selected must collect the type of object offered and must be able to properly care for the object donated.

3. Sale. An object from the Permanent Collections may be sold. The sale may be by public auction, or in special circumstances, by direct sale to a public institution.

4. Destruction. When an object from the Permanent Collections has deteriorated beyond repair or is infested beyond the control of an exterminator, or is composed of lethal materials or poses a threat to the well-being of the rest of the collection, the object shall be destroyed in an appropriate manner.

5. Change of Collections Status. Following the appropriate review, an object from the Permanent Collection will be reassigned a number denoting its transference and inclusion into the Education Collection. See "Education Collection" above.

D. Ethical Considerations and Use of Proceeds. A deaccessioned object from the Permanent Collections cannot be given to, sold or transferred publicly or privately to employees of HHS, Trustees or their families. All proceeds derived from the deaccessioning of any property from the institution's collections be restricted in a separate fund to be used only for the acquisition of collections, or the preservation, [protection] conservation or direct care of collections. In no event shall proceeds derived from the deaccessioning of any property from the collections be used for operating expenses or for any purpose other than the acquisition, preservation, [protection] conservation or direct care of collections. In cases where donated items realize more than \$1000, the purchased item(s) will be publicly credited to the original donor(s) as follows: Gift of [donor's original credit], by exchange. Items realizing less than \$1000 will be credited as coming from the *Collections Development Fund*. Public credit of the *Fund* shall include all donors of objects deaccessioned that realized less than \$1000 in value as well as direct gifts to the *Fund*.

VIII. Insurance

HHS shall carry suitable insurance coverage on its Permanent Collection and loan objects to cover theft, fire and damage. Objects left in the custody of the HHS for acquisition review shall be considered the personal property of the potential donor until such time as a Deed of Gift form is executed. Insurance on objects left in the custody of HHS for acquisition review will be the responsibility of the owner (potential donor) unless it is agreed to in writing by both parties that the object being considered for donation shall be insured by HHS for a valuation agreed upon by both parties. The owner of a very valuable object proposed as a donation should be advised to keep insurance on that object until it is legally turned over to HHS.

IX. Public Access To Collections

Objects from the Permanent Collections shall be made available for scholarly research on request. Requests to conduct research must be received in advance, specific in nature and addressed to the Director, Curator or Archivist. The Director, Curator or Archivist may deny such requests if in his/her opinion the object or materials are too fragile for public study or if such visits interfere with the normal operations of HHS. Certain records in the Archival Collection may be deemed private and not open to the public.

X. Records

The Director, Curator, or Archivist shall initiate and the Curator or Archivist shall maintain all records pertaining to objects from the Permanent Collections coming into or leaving HHS collections. Records maintained shall include the following:

- Temporary Receipts for donations to be considered
- Negotiations regarding bequests
- Deed of Gift forms
- Sale receipts
- Accession records
- Recommendations for exchanges and loans
- Exchange agreements and loan agreements
- Recommendations for deaccessions

- Deaccession transactions and disposition
- Appraisal documents
- Photographs
- Conservation reports
- Research pertaining to object(s) and materials
- Correspondence pertaining to collections
- Required IRS forms for Charitable Contributions (donations)

XI. Preservation and Conservation

Preservation is the practice of routine measures necessary to maintain objects in a stable condition. *Conservation* is the physical treatment of an object to return it to a stable condition. HHS will apply professionally accepted methods of storage, treatment care, preservation, conservation and use. Every effort consistent with professional standards and ethics and within the financial resources of HHS will be made to ensure the preservation of the material. Treatment on artifacts will be carried out only as necessary and must respect the historic and artistic integrity of the object. Professional conservators may be contracted to perform treatments that cannot be performed in-house. Such treatments will be in accordance with the ethical standards established by the American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC). Objects and archival materials in need of conservation attention will not be considered suitable for exhibition purposes until appropriate treatment is carried out. All conservation treatments will be fully documented and the records of such work will be maintained as part of the Permanent Collections files.

XII. Annual Reports

HHS shall file with the commissioner an annual report, in a form prescribed by the commission, which records the educational and cultural activities of the institution and present an accurate statement of all financial operations. HHS shall include in its annual report 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.