

Walworth Historical Society and Museum
Collections Policy

1. **Charter Purpose:**

“.....to purchase, collect, preserve, display and generally deal with those items and artifacts of historical interest and importance to the history of the Town of Walworth and environs, and to generally promote interest in the study of life, growth and history of said area.”

2. **Collecting Objectives:**

To acquire any and all artifacts available that are directly related to the purposes of the Walworth Historical Society.

3. **Acquisition Policy:**

A. **Definition:** For the purpose of this policy, acquisition is defined as the discovery, preliminary evaluation, negotiation for, taking custody of, documenting title to, and acknowledging receipt of materials and objects; or negotiation for and recording information about borrowed objects.

B. **Acquisitions must meet the following criteria:**

1. The present owner must have a clear title.
2. If for sale, the Curator must arrange funding before purchase.
3. A fair market value must be determined between parties.
4. The Society must be in a position to care properly for the proposed acquisition.
5. The significance of the material or objects must be determined.
6. The materials or objects must, if possible, be documented as to provenance.
7. All moral, legal, and ethical implications of the acquisition must have been considered.
8. If possible, no acquisitions will be encumbered by less than full literary rights, property rights, copyrights, patents or trademarks, or by obscene or physically hazardous attributes.
9. Acquisition must, in general, be free from donor imposed restrictions.
10. Whether acquisitions are offered for accessioning or for developmental purposes of the Society must be determined in advance.
11. The acquisition must conform to the Society’s collecting objectives.

C. **Means of Acquisition:**

Materials and objects may be acquired by purchase, commission, bequest, gift, specified purpose or loan or deposit, exchange, field collection, excavation, levy by creditors, abandonment, reversionary clause, and adverse possession. No materials or objects shall be knowingly or willfully accepted or acquired which are known to have been illegally imported into, or illegally collected in, the United States contrary to state law, and federal law, regulation, treaty, and convention.

D. **Acquisition Procedure:**

1. Authority to acquire, by purchase, museum objects and collections, each item or collection having an estimated value of less than \$100.00 is delegated to the Curator. Museum acquisitions shall be made within annual budgets approved by the Board of Trustees.
2. The acquisition by purchase of objects or collections having a value of more than \$100.00 shall be approved formally or informally by the Board of Trustees, prior to purchase.
3. No Walworth Historical Society member may obligate the Society to the acceptance of any material or object not consonant with the intent or spirit of the acquisitions policy without approval of the Curator or the Board of Trustees. No staff member shall offer appraisals of the monetary value of materials or objects to donors, or reveal the Society’s insurance value, for the purpose of establishing a fair market value of gifts offered to the Society.

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Donors desiring to take an income tax deduction must obtain an independent appraisal. Staff members may assist a donor in locating a qualified appraiser.

4. The Curator shall maintain permanent acquisition (transfer documentation) files which shall contain all legal instruments and conveyances pertaining to each acquisition or source.
5. Accessioning: All objects shall be processed under procedures and policies adopted by the Board of Trustees. The Curator shall maintain a permanent record of all accessions.

E. Deaccession Policy:

1. Definition: Deaccession is the process of removing permanently from the collections accessioned library materials and museum objects. The deaccession process shall be cautious, deliberate, and scrupulous.
2. Deaccession Criteria:
Objects to be considered for deaccession must meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - a. The material or object is outside the scope of the charter purpose of the Society and its acquisition policy.
 - b. The material or object is irrelevant to the purposes of the Society.
 - c. The material or object lacks physical integrity.
 - d. The material or object has failed to retain its identity or authenticity, or has been lost or stolen and remains lost for longer than two years.
 - e. The material or object is a duplication.
 - f. The Society is unable to preserve it properly.
 - g. The material or object is deteriorated beyond usefulness.
 - h. The material or object has doubtful potential utilization in the foreseeable future, or has accidentally been accessioned twice.

F. Application of Criteria:

1. The Curator is authorized to deaccession any object with a value of less than \$100.00 if it meets one of the above criteria.
2. Objects with a value greater than \$100.00 and which meet one of the above criteria, shall require approval of the Board of Trustees prior to deaccessioning.

G. Restrictions:

1. Before any material or object is recommended for deaccessioning, or is deaccessioned, reasonable efforts shall be made to ascertain that the Society is legally free to do so. Where restrictions to the disposition of the material or object are found, the following procedure shall be utilized:
 - a. Mandatory conditions of acquisition will be strictly observed unless deviation from their terms is authorized by a court of competent jurisdiction.
 - b. In the event of a question concerning intent or force of restrictions, the Curator and/or Board of Trustees shall seek the advice of legal counsel.

H. Ethics of Sale:

Materials and objects shall not be given, sold, or otherwise transferred, publicly or privately, to officers, trustees, or their immediate families or representatives of the Walworth Historical Society and Museum.

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I. Proceeds:

All proceeds resulting from the deaccession of objects from the permanent collections of the Society shall be deposited to the Acquisition Account.

J. Public Disclosure:

All materials or objects subject to restrictions shall not be deaccessioned until the staff has made an effort to:

- a. Comply with the restrictions.
- b. Notify the donor, if alive, or his or her heirs or assigns, if the material or object were accessioned within five years.

A copy of this policy shall be made available to the public upon request.

Further, a list of all materials and collections which have been deaccessioned from the permanent collections within the past five years shall be kept current by the Curator and may be distributed in response to any responsible inquiry.

Adopted by Board of Trustees
August 12, 1993

Reviewed by Board of Trustees
February 15, 2010