



Falmouth Historical Society Falmouth Museums on the Green Collection Management Policy

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Revision 3

**FALMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY
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I. INTRODUCTION

The Board of Directors of the Falmouth Historical Society are the representative of the Falmouth Museums on the Green and the people of Falmouth, Massachusetts. In this capacity, the Board acts as the legal custodian of all artifacts, including works of art, historical items, and records entrusted to its care. Policy changes are made in the following order:

1. Staff recommendation
2. Museum Committees
3. Executive Director
4. Board of Directors

Every staff member and volunteer who handle the collection shall read this document. Every Curatorial Committee member and Board of Directors member shall have a copy and should be familiar with the policies. Review of the Collection Management Policy will occur every two years (or as needed) to ensure it continues to meet the Museum's needs. Copies shall be made available to any donor or prospective donor upon request.

II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE COLLECTION

A. Vision, Mission, Mandate, Values and Statement of Purpose

VISION: Falmouth's Museums on the Green—the Centre of our dynamic cultural heritage

MISSION: The Falmouth Historical Society is a leader in preserving the value of our evolving written and material history.

MANDATE: The Falmouth Historical Society delivers its mission through the Museums on the Green and its Research Centre by collecting, conserving, exhibiting and interpreting.

CORE VALUES: to be welcoming, to act with integrity, to be inclusive, to be engaging, to be collaborative and to be accountable.

Falmouth Museums on the Green is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret historically, culturally, and aesthetically significant artifacts of all types that relate to and accentuate the life and accomplishments of Falmouth and its citizens, as now or hereafter constituted, for the benefit of local residents and visitors. Emphasis is on items illustrative of, and informative about, significant periods in the social and economic history of the area, beginning with the Native American era and continuing thereafter.

B. Public Access

The Museum will be open regular hours approved by the Board of Directors. A staff member must be on duty during all open hours, which shall be posted at each entrance, in publications, and on the website. Access to the Museum outside of regular hours is possible by advance arrangement with the Executive Director. The Executive Director will maintain records on all instances of stored collections access.

C. Restricted items

Manuscripts and other fragile materials may be handled only by special permission from the Executive Director, under the supervision of a designated staff member. Every attempt will be made to provide a duplicate access copy of fragile material.

D. Scope of the Collection

In keeping with its primary responsibility as the guardian and custodian of artifacts, art works, photographs, and documentary materials relating to the history of the Falmouth, Mass area, it is the policy of the Falmouth Historical Society to accept for its permanent collection objects which meet the following criteria:

1. Material of local manufacture or origin, including furniture and clothing of significant historical value.
2. Material produced by artists, inventors, artisans, writers, or musicians of the Falmouth, Mass area.
3. Objects relating to the economic, social, religious, political, or Cultural development of the Falmouth, Mass area. While such objects need not have been manufactured or used in the area, they should have a specific demonstrable relevance to the history or growth of the area.

E. Ethics

1. All action of Falmouth Historical Society members, volunteers, and Museum staff shall be such that they avoid apparent and actual conflict of interest with all aspects of Museum operation and collections. The Museum staff and Society members are required to:
2. Act ethically and legally in collecting, acquiring, reproducing, lending, and disposing of artifacts.
3. Discourage and eliminate unethical, illegal, and destructive practices with respect to collecting acquiring,

storing, reproducing, displaying, transporting, and trafficking of artifacts.

4. The Society and Museum shall follow the ethical guidelines set forth in the AAM's *Code of Ethics for Museums* (Washington, DC, 2000) and *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections* by Marie C. Malaro.

III. ACQUISITION POLICY

A. Museum Objects and Archival Materials

The Falmouth Historical Society may acquire museum objects and archival materials by gifts, bequest, or purchase under the approval of the Board of Directors.

B. Appraisals and Donor Tax Deductions

The Museum shall not pay for an appraisal of the proposed gift for a donor, nor shall any member of the Falmouth Historical Society Board of Directors, Museum Curatorial Committee, or staff appraise a potential gift for a donor. However, a letter of acknowledge will follow all donations identifying the object(s) being given. Monetary donations will be receipted for the exact amount given.

IV. TEMPORARY CUSTODY OF OBJECTS

A. Incoming Loan or Gift Agreement

In order to achieve complete accountability for objects in the Museum's custody, all objects temporarily left for any purpose, including identification, photography, study, or as a potential donation, will be temporarily registered. This provision applies only to objects not covered by the Museum's Temporary Custody Receipt or Deed of Gift.

B. Temporary Custody

If not already covered by an Incoming Loan Agreement or a gift agreement, any object coming into the custody of the Museum shall be immediately registered on a Temporary Custody Receipt that limits temporary custody to sixty (90) days. The lender shall sign the form before the object may be left.

C. Insurance

Objects in temporary custody will not be insured.

V. LOANS

A. Criteria

a. Incoming loans may be accepted from individuals, institutions, or businesses for exhibition or research. The Museum cannot store or maintain objects belonging to others that are not required for exhibition or ongoing research.

B. Limits

If the Museum has determined that it cannot afford the estimated cost of exhibition, storage, security, transportation, collection maintenance and/or all-risk, wall-to-wall fine arts insurance (insuring the personal property of others) on the objects loaned to the Museum at the appraised value of the amount established by the lender it will be the responsibility of the lender to have coverage in place for the term of the loan.

C. General Guidelines

1. Objects may temporarily leave the collection for the purposes of study, exhibition, or conservation treatment.
2. Loans shall be formalized by written agreement between the Museum and the borrower or lender and renewed by the Board President once a year.
3. Loans shall not be authorized for a period exceeding one year (12 months), but may be renewed after review and recommendation by the Executive Director.
4. Reports detailing security arrangements and other collection care concerns shall be obtained by the Executive Director or designee from borrowing institutions and shall be provided by the Museum to lending institutions. The Executive Director or designee shall take these reports into consideration when reviewing either type of loan request.
5. The loan may be terminated by either party thirty days after written notification to the other party.
6. Outgoing loans are permitted only by approval of the Board of Directors.

7. Loans shall only be made to a historical society, library, museum, or other organization after careful consideration of the physical stability of the object and the ability of the borrower to provide proper care, environment, and security.
8. The preservation of the object shall take priority at all times.
9. Loans shall not be made to private individuals.
10. Loans shall not be made for commercial purposes.
11. The borrower shall provide insurance for an all-risk, wall-to-wall fine arts policy covering the objects at the appraised value by the Museum. The approved coverage shall be in effect for the duration of the loan, including transit to and from the borrowing institution and while on the institution's premises.
12. The object is suitable for exhibit and can withstand the stresses of travel, handling, study or exhibition.
13. Photos will be taken of all surfaces of the object before being loaned out. Date of the photo will be noted on the copy.

D. Conditions of loan for borrower

1. Bear the cost of transporting the object.
2. Report immediately any damage, breakage, or loss of an object.
3. Do not to clean, repair, re-mat, remount, or in any way alter any borrowed object without the express written permission of the Museum.
4. The organization's full name, "Falmouth Museums on the Green," shall be used to credit borrowed objects, on all appropriate labels, in exhibition catalogues, press releases, and related materials.
5. Packing for return shipping shall be in the same manner as the original shipping, unless prior approval is granted by the Executive Director.
6. The Museum has the right to inspect the loaned objects on the borrower's premises during regular visitation hours.

E. Loan and Copy

1. The Falmouth Historical Society may temporarily borrow archival objects and photographs with the intention to make replicas of them. This may be done by photographing, photocopying, or scanning the archival material.
2. The Museum shall return the object to be copied to the lender in a timely manner and in the same condition as when it was received.

VI. IDENTIFICATION, RECORDS, AND STORAGE

The Executive Director or designee shall initiate and maintain all records pertaining to museum objects and archival materials coming into or leaving the Museum's permanent or temporary custody. The Museum shall use PastPerfect software (Past Tome Software, Inc.) as the database platform to organize, track, and retrieve all collections and associated data.

A. Accession ID Numbers

An accession number will be assigned to each individual or company that donates an item to the Falmouth Historical Society Archives or Museum, regardless of whether the donated item is a photograph, book, piece of furniture, etc. Each accession number begins with the numerical year of donation followed by a dash and a number.

B. Object ID Numbers

This identification must not depend on a single person. Moreover, it is also used to easily identify the owner or donor of the artifact, and to assist in the identification of objects in case of loss during transport or theft, etc. Each Object ID number consists of three parts: accession number, current two-digit month and two-digit day of month, and number of item(s) donated by that particular donor.

C. Loan ID Numbers

Each Loan ID number is unique to a specific person and consists of four parts: L to signify a loan, four digit year, lender number, and number of items loaned by that particular lender.

D. Application of Labels

There are several methods used to physically apply numbers to instruments such as punching, engraving, applying self-adhesive labels, applying paper labels by gluing them to the object, attaching labels with threads, wire or rubber bands, writing the numbers in ink onto the object.

E. Inspection and Storage

New acquisitions shall be reported on the daily log, input into PastPerfect software, and stored in a designated

room for new accessions. It is mandatory to inspect the condition of new acquisitions and loans; conditions must be reported in PastPerfect, i.e., excellent, good, fair, poor. Periodic examinations will be made and conditions re-evaluated and properly recorded. The acquisitions will be closely monitored for any pest or biological infestation until the time of cataloging. Accessions found to contain active or inactive evidence of infestation or hazardous materials may be discarded upon approval of the Board of Directors.

F. Measurements

The default system of measurement is the standard system of inches and feet. The Metric system will only be used with artifacts whose standard conventions are metric. Example: 35mm film, 20mm cannon.

G. Artifact Location

Location information shall be recorded and maintained for each artifact, using a standardized system developed by the Curator or designate containing, where applicable, exhibit name, room number, call number, and unit/shelf number.

H. Photography and Scanning

All artifacts will be digitally photographed or scanned, and those images will be stored in association with the appropriate artifact data in the database. Photographs and documentary artifacts shall be scanned at photo quality to eliminate or minimize additional scanning for exhibit, research, etc. Scanning at 300 dpi is the lowest acceptable dots per inch to scan, if the photograph will ever be printed out. If the photograph will only be viewed on the computer, 72 dpi will be acceptable.

I. Existing Collections

1. The Curator shall take immediate action to properly update existing collections data and accession, catalog and register, as outlined above, for all artifacts existing in the Museum's collections prior to the adoption of this Collections Policy document. Existing artifacts or collections with incomplete or unknown donation and accessioning information (which to the best of Museum and Society knowledge the Museum does have legal right of ownership) shall have a Deed of Gift Form completed, bearing the notes "found in collection" and be assigned accession numbers and object ID numbers. The accession numbers will begin with the numerical year of input followed by a dash and the number 00 to link the artifact to the Museum. The 00 designation will always be reserved for the Museum. Each Object ID number will consist of three parts: accession number, current two-digit month and two-digit day of month, and number of item(s) donated by that particular donor.
2. All efforts shall be made to avoid leaving "unknowns" permanently in the Museum collections.
3. All Native American human remains and funerary objects, if they exist, in the Museum collections shall be immediately repatriated in compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) (1990).

VII. CARE OF THE COLLECTION

The Falmouth Historical Society shall, to the best of its ability utilize recommended techniques and procedures in the housing, handling, preservation, and access to the documents and artifacts in the Museum Collection. Guidelines for care of collections will be followed using (The National Trust *Manual of Housekeeping*, "The care of collections in historic houses open to the public" ISBN 0 7506 5529 1, 2006)

A. Handling Requirements:

White cotton gloves must be worn when handling all sensitive metals (firearms, coins, silver, etc.), photographs, and other sensitive artifacts at the Executive Director's discretion. Books, textiles, and other artifacts require clean hands free of lotions, dirt, oils, etc. Conditions of new acquisitions and loans must be noted and properly recorded in the Museum's PastPerfect software. Periodic examinations will be made to re-evaluate the conditions of the Museum's holdings. The application of chemical pesticides, preservatives, or treatments shall be strongly avoided. No food or drink is allowed in any exhibit space, collections storage area, or collections workspace.

B. Environment

The Executive Director shall be responsible for monitoring and mitigating light/UV, temperature, relative humidity, and pollutants in all exhibit and storage areas. The Executive Director shall also ensure artifacts are exhibited and stored in a manner which minimizes physical stresses. Inspections shall be made weekly.

C. Pest Control

The Executive Director shall be responsible for aggressively monitoring, preventing, and mitigating pest and biological infestation issues. The Executive Director shall also supervise housekeeping duties to ensure the

cleanliness of storage and exhibit space and surrounding areas as a deterrent to pest infestations, and shall develop integrated pest management (IPM) strategies in accordance with current conditions. To preserve the integrity of collections and the health and safety of Museum staff and visitors, no regularly scheduled application of pesticide shall be conducted as a preventative measure.

D. Restoration

Restoration of artifacts shall be conducted at the discretion of the Board of Directors and under the recommendation and advisement of the Executive Director on a case-by-case-basis. All restoration shall follow accepted museum conservation methodology, documentation, and research.

1. Restoration must enhance the historical significance and context of the artifact. Restoration must not alter in any way the historical and technological identity or character of the artifact.
2. Before any work may be conducted on an artifact on loan to the Museum, the lender must first provide written approval, and any conditions set forth by the lender must be adhered to and met.
3. Restoration projects should be initiated by or proposed to the Board and formerly addressed after a period of research concerning the artifact in question. Restoration shall consider the following guidelines (Edward McManus. "Aircraft Restoration and Philosophy." *CRM* Vol. 17, No. 4, 1994):
4. Thorough technical examination and assessment must be made and documented as follows prior to treatment.
 - a. Clearly stated objective of treatment
 - b. Full written and photographic documentation of entire treatment
 - c. Dedicated effort to retain original material, historic modifications, and repairs
 - d. Identifiable differentiation between original construction and restoration
 - e. The use of salvaged parts and modern materials in concert is recommended
 - f. Respect the integrity of the object (it should not look better than it did when it was new).
 - g. Identify and accept limitations, even if it means a project is not undertaken

E. Hazardous Artifacts

The Museum shall ensure all artifacts of a potentially hazardous nature are properly cared for, secured, or disposed of.

F. Arms, Ammunition, and Munitions

All arms, ammunition, and munitions shall be properly secured in both storage and exhibit areas, and shall be demilitarized when appropriate. Lead projectiles shall only be handled under the supervision of the Executive Director. Firearms shall be stored in a locked gun safe firmly attached to the wall or floor. Firearms on exhibit shall always be enclosed in plexiglass/lexan display cases, constructed with Torx or square head fasteners. The Museum shall at no time curate live ammunition, ordnance, or explosives, including signal flares.

G. Medicines and Liquids

Medicines and liquids which are in the collection must be enclosed in plexiglass/lexan display cases. A hazardous assessment is needed to identify specific care and depletion of these items.

H. Image and Document Reproduction Requests

The museum shall accept requests for image and document reproductions. Reproductions may be printed or burned to CD or floppy disk and distributed by mail or e-mail. Charges for each image or document reproduced, regardless of media or delivery method will be based on the current fee schedule. All reproduction charges are payable prior to delivery.

- a. All requests must be recorded and tracked using an Image and Document Reproduction Request. All requests—whether made via e-mail, phone, or in writing—shall be allowed 4-6 weeks for completion. A copy of the Image and Document Reproduction shall be sent with each delivery as a receipt.
- b. All reproductions or photographs from or of the collections are copyrighted to the museum and may not be reproduced or published without the express written consent of the Executive Director and/or the Board of Directors.
- c. All published reproductions or photographs from or of the collections must be credited to the Falmouth Museums on the Green.

I. Disaster and security plan

The museum Disaster and Security Plan provides instructions for recovering collections from events ranging from a minor emergency to a major disaster. Contact information is updated on an annual basis.

IV. DEACCESSIONING POLICY

Artifacts in the Museum's collections are retained permanently, if they continue to be relevant and useful to the Mission and Purpose of the Society and Museum, and if they can be properly stored, preserved, and utilized. Deaccessioning of artifacts may be conducted when these conditions no longer exist.

A. Criteria

Artifacts may be deaccessioned if:

- a) The artifact(s) are deemed no longer relevant or appropriate for the purposes, goals, and activities of the Society and Museum.
- b) The artifact(s) cannot be stored, preserved, or displayed in a fashion consistent with professional museum standards.
- c) The artifact(s) duplicate existing artifacts in better physical and intellectual condition, and holds no apparent benefit for education or projects requiring unattached museum property.
- d) The artifact(s) are deteriorated or damaged to a degree where all potential benefits of any kind are lost.
- e) Deaccessioning provides a means through trade, barter, or exchange to improve the existing collection without loss to the integrity of the remaining collections.
- f) The artifact(s) pose a danger to the health and safety of Museum staff, volunteers, or visitors.
- g) The Museum has free and clear ownership of the artifact(s).
- h) A Recommendation for Deaccessioning has been accurately completed, signed, and approved by the Board of Directors.

B. Deaccessioning Procedure

Staff will recommend deaccessioning an item to the Executive Director or designee, who will discuss the recommendation with the Curatorial Committee. If the Executive Director and the Curatorial Committee concur, the recommendation will go to the Board of Directors for approval.

C. Means of Disposal

1. Deaccessioned artifact(s) may be disposed of by transfer to another non-profit association, trade, barter, or sale. As a last resort, artifacts must be destroyed or sold at scrap value.
2. Artifact(s) shall not be given or sold to Society members, Museum staff, volunteers or members of their immediate family or their representatives unless by public auction.
3. Deaccessioning of hazardous artifacts or firearms shall commence in complete compliance with Federal, State, and local laws and regulations.
4. Deaccessioning data will also be stored digitally using PastPerfect.

D. Theft

Artifacts that are lost or stolen shall not be deaccessioned, and the museum shall remain accountable until such time as said artifacts are recovered or known destroyed.

E. Loans

Artifacts that are on loan that are not either picked up or donated within the guidelines for loan acceptance will be deaccessioned under the same guidelines as Museum owned objects.

X. INSURANCE

Ideally, objects in the Museum's collection should be appraised at full value at least every six (6) years. However, due to minimal funding, our current coverage includes \$???? for contents and \$?????????? for general liability. Understandably, this coverage is not adequate for the contents and will be increased when funding permits us to do so.

XI. INVENTORIES

To maintain, review, and secure its holdings properly, the Museum will inventory the collection every three (3) years. The inventory will be prepared under the direction of the Executive Director, or designee. Inventories may be carried out on smaller related parts of the permanent collection by category or location in different years, but each collection should be inventoried every three (3) years.

XII. ACCESS TO THE COLLECTION AND COLLECTION RECORDS

1. Collection objects not on exhibit may be made available for research upon request, if the staff determines that the physical stability and security of these materials will not be compromised. Depending on the nature of the object, the Museum may require forty-eight (48) hours advance notice. If access to the originals is considered too great a risk, access may be provided through photographs, photocopies, or scans. The stored collection is not open for general browsing.
2. Requests for research on objects in the collection must be submitted in advance, preferably in writing and addressed to the Executive Director, must be specific in nature, and will be addressed at the Museum's earliest opportunity.
3. Research visitors must be supervised by Museum staff or designated volunteers and follow staff instructions for use and handling of the collection.