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| **C:\Users\Jeanne\Desktop\Logo.jpg** | **Livingston County Historical Society**  **30 Center Street**  **Geneseo, New York 14454**  **585-243-9147**  [**www.livingstoncountyhistoricalsociety.com**](http://www.livingstoncountyhistoricalsociety.com) |

**Collections Management Policy**

Adopted by Board of Council 13 September 2010

Livingston County Historical Society. **Collections Management Policy.**

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Acquisitions Committee: Jeanne Galbraith and Liz Porter

Museum Administrator: Anna Kowalchuk

Board of Council:

Scott Canaan, President

William Brummett, Vice President

Shirley Baum, Secretary

Jon Perkins, Treasurer

Jeanne Galbraith, Research Secretary

Amie Alden, Livingston County Historian

Warren “Jess” Baum

Ford Best

Josef Lentner

James McNally

Liz Porter

Kenneth Richardson

Jennifer Vogel

Ellen Wyckoff

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**Livingston County Historical Society**

**Collection Management Policy**

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**Livingston County Historical Society Collection Management Policy**

1.1 Introduction

The Livingston County Historical Society [LCHS] shall seek to enhance its museum collection by judiciously acquiring artifacts appropriate to its purpose as stated in Article II of the **Constitution**, *i.e.,* *“*The general objectives of this Society shall be to discover, procure, preserve and display in a museum, artifacts which relate to the history of Livingston County.*“*

* 1. Mission Statement

The Livingston County Historical Society is an educational institution whose purpose is to present, promote, preserve, and value the rich history of Livingston County, New York via its collections, programming, and partnerships.

1.3 Vision Statement

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| The Livingston County Historical Society will collaborate with Livingston County communities to engage and connect the public with the county's historical past. The Livingston County Historical Society’s Museum strives to be Livingston County’s leading institution for history education and heritage tourism. By having a deeper understanding of the past, everyone gains a broader appreciation of the present. |

* 1. History

Founded in 1876, the Livingston County Historical Society is one of the oldest organizations of its kind in western New York and serves to present, promote, preserve, and value the rich history of Livingston County. The Livingston County Historical Society’s Museum houses over 200 years of stories and collections from seventeen towns in Livingston County (Avon, Caledonia, Conesus, Geneseo, Groveland, Leicester, Lima, Livonia, Mt. Morris, North Dansville, Nunda, Ossian, Portage, Sparta, Springwater, York, and West Sparta) and also maintains an archival and manuscript collection that provides the foundation for research and inquiry. The Livingston County Historical Society collaborates with many Livingston County communities and provides tours and programming for the public.

As the former Geneseo’s District #5 schoolhouse, the Livingston County Historical Society’s Museum began as an educational center and remains so today. James Wadsworth gifted the land on which the Museum stands to remain forever for educational purposes. When the society moved to a new facility in 1932, the building retained its role as an educational institution by becoming the headquarters of the Livingston County Historical Society and its Museum. Dating from 1838, the cobblestone schoolhouse building is a contributing structure within the Geneseo National Historic Landmark District. The first museum, a log cabin built in 1895, still stands in its original location in the Village Park in Geneseo. The Livingston County Historical Society considers the former schoolhouse building to be its largest artifact that itself tells a story of a unique period in history.

The Livingston County Museum was originally built in the shape of a Greek Cross in 1838 for a Union School. It is unknown who constructed the cobblestone masonry since there were three stone masons listed living in Geneseo in the 1830’s. It is believed that Hugh McBride, a local carpenter who lived nearby, constructed the building. The building has seen three major additions: 1871, 1916, and 1968. Additionally, two separate shelters exist on our grounds. One houses a preserved section of trunk from the “Big Tree” and the second is the Willard Hose (1890) building, an old fire hose house.

1.5 The Permanent Collection

The Livingston County Museum is located in Geneseo, New York on a one-acre corner lot at 30 Center Street to the north where it meets Elm Street to the east.

Rooms in the Museum are named and house the following portions of the collection:

1. Entrance Hall: Display cases of county souvenirs and small memorabilia accompany an extensive poster collection.
2. Auditorium: Exhibits of area Native American artifacts, a schoolroom of the 1800’s, and education artifacts surround the public meeting space.
3. Underground Railroad Room: A tribute to slaves and local supporters of the anti-slavery movement is depicted through photographs, drawings, and artifacts.
4. Center Room: Shaker community history, general housewares (silver and china), farm and area business equipment, and a military collection are displayed.
5. Pioneer Room: Early nineteenth century artifacts illustrate county life through cookware and household artifacts, a fireplace exhibit, and tools of early nineteenth century cloth and clothing production.
6. Memorial Room: Varied aspects of local living are depicted through furniture and lighting, medical and local salt mine memorabilia, toys, women’s fashion, and fine arts.
7. Annex: The Wadsworth family coach, a sleigh, a fire pumper, farm equipment and tools, and printing equipment represent early transportation and working life.
8. Office: The research collection, Society records, acquisition and business files, portraits of past Society presidents, and Board of Council meeting space comprise the Society’s working area.
9. Willard Hose: Sheltering firefighting equipment and providing museum storage are the functions of this separate structure on the grounds.
10. “Big Tree” Building: A small shed with two glass sides showcases a section of the original “Big Tree” oak under which the Treaty of 1797 was signed.

Two additional small structures on the property house the following:

1. The Willard Hose building contains early firefighting equipment.
2. The ”Big Tree” structure contains the remains of the gigantic oak tree, known as “Big Tree,” under which the Treaty of Big Tree (1797) was signed, transferring ownership of local Seneca tribal lands to the Holland Land Company.

1.5 Code of Ethics

LCHS and its staff and volunteers recognize that to maintain public confidence in and support for purposes of this institution it is necessary to adhere to a high standard of professional and personal conduct. The institution will follow the AAM’s *Museum Ethics* (1978) as guidelines for ethical behavior.

Staff members and volunteers are guided by the following principles:

1. Loyalty to the LCHS, and full and conscientious fulfillment of responsibilities;
2. Avoidance of conflict of interest between personal and LCHS interests; and, discussion of any potential conflicts in advance with the Board of Council;
3. Using one’s position within the LCHS only for the Society’s purposes, not for personal gain; and,
4. Maintaining the good name of the LCHS throughout the community and appropriate use of its name, reputation, property, or services.

2.1 Acquisition of Artifacts

Subject to approval by the Acquisitions Committee and Board, objects will be acquired by LCHS. Artifacts to be acquired by donation, bequest,purchaseor exchange, shall be related to the Society’s Mission Statement and therefore to the people, communities, and events that have shaped and continue to shape the history and development of Livingston County, New York. In building the collection, the Livingston County Historical Society will work collaboratively with the Livingston County Historian as well as other local historians. The overall direction and goals of collecting activities are governed by the mission of the Livingston County Historical Society. Perspective donors are encouraged to present artifacts as outright gifts so that materials can be integrated into the collection.

2.2 Acquisition of Research Materials

The Museum maintains a library of research materials in a variety of formats including books, periodicals, newspapers, printed music, and audiovisual materials. The primary subject focus is the history and ongoing development of Livingston County and its towns and villages. The collection also includes materials relating to the greater Genesee Valley, western Finger Lakes, and western New York regions, and books and music by Livingston County authors, composers, and publishers. Although past acquisitions have included materials on more general topics of U.S. and world history, the museum now concentrates on acquiring Livingston County resources and may refer prospective donors of more general materials to other libraries or museums. Selected books may be placed on display as artifacts, but ongoing acquisition of this type of material is highly selective due to space limitations.

2.3 Acquisition Criteria

The LCHS will consider items for acquisition and accessioning if the following collections are met:

1. The artifacts support the mission and are consistent with the mission of the Museum.
2. The Museum is able to store, protect, and preserve the artifacts under the conditions that assure their availability for Museum purposes and are in keeping with professionally accepted standards.
3. Free and clear title to the artifacts can be obtained without restriction as to use or future disposition. Exceptions to this criterion can be made for extraordinary circumstances, and will require the unanimous approval of the Acquisitions Committee and the Board of Council. Restrictions that limit free title shall be clearly stated in the Transmission Record and will become part of the accession records for such acquisitions.
4. The artifact meets collection needs by filling a gap in the collection or replacing an inferior example.
5. The artifact does not represent an unnecessary duplication of artifacts already in the collection.
6. LCHS intends to keep the item in the collection as long as the item retains its physical integrity, authenticity and usefulness for LCHS’s purposes.

A Transmission Record, setting forth an adequate description of the artifact involved and the precise conditions of transfer of ownership, shall accompany all acquisitions. This document is to be prepared in duplicate and signed by both the donor, who shall receive one copy, and an authorized representative of the Livingston County Historical Society. The second copy shall be retained as part of the artifact’s permanent record.

Appraisals, if desired by donors, shall be obtained by the donors from outside sources prior to making a donation. Acquisitions Committee members, Officers, and Board of Council members do not appraise artifacts to be donated.

2.4 Records of Acquisition

There shall be six steps to the acquisition process (see Appendix for form documents). All forms shall be retained as part of the acquisitions record.

1. Lead Form: When initial contact is made regarding a potential gift to the Museum, a Lead Form shall be given to the potential donor to complete a description with provenance information to submit to the Acquisitions Committee for consideration.
2. Temporary Custody Agreement: For objects under consideration for acquisition, the Acquisitions Committee may request the potential donor to deliver the artifacts for examination and further consideration. Unsolicited objects shall be considered in the Society’s Temporary Custody. In the case of unsolicited objects approved for acquisition, the Temporary Custody forms shall be retained in the object’s accession file. Unsolicited objects not accepted for acquisition may be relocated or disposed of by witnessed destruction.
3. Transmission Record: As a legal instrument of conveyance, containing precise conditions of the terms of transmission of ownership, the agreement must be signed by the donor or donor’s authorized representative and a representative of the Society at the time of donation. Objects will not be rehoused, preserved, cataloged, or made available for use by researchers until this deed of gift has been executed.
4. Accession Record /Museum Cataloging Worksheet: Artifacts selected for acquisition shall be tracked with an accession record containing precise and exact description of the objects.
5. The Livingston County Historical Society shall send written communication of appreciation to donors acknowledging their support of the museum’s mission.
6. All objects in the collection are entered in the *PastPerfect Software for Museum Collections©* database.

2.5 Accessioning of Artifacts

All acquisitions shall be assigned accession numbers and their histories recorded, using forms that are consistent with accepted museum standards (*e.g*., American Association of Museums,1995).

Artifacts that are in the collection without records and/or accession numbers will be handled in the same manner as new acquisitions. These artifacts shall be identified as “Found in Collection” denoted as FIC. Efforts will be made to learn the histories of such artifacts and accession numbers will be assigned. LCHS will not knowingly accept materials of illicit origin or doubtful title into the collections. Should accessioned material later prove to be of questionable origin, LCHS will contact the appropriate authorities and make reasonable efforts to resolve the problem ethically and in accordance with the law.

2.6 Accessioning of Research Materials

All research materials are entered into the *PastPerfect Software for Museum Collections©* database. Each item is given appropriate Library of Congress subject headings and a Dewey Decimal call number using the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* and *Dewey Decimal Classification* volumes in the collection. Sheet music is not assigned Dewey decimal numbers, but is arranged alphabetically by composer (or title if no composer is listed). Research materials that are put on display are fully cataloged and assigned Dewey decimal numbers, and the room and case locations are also entered into the *PastPerfect* database.

3.0 Deaccessioning of Artifacts

Once an object has been accessioned into the Permanent Collection, it can only be removed through completion of the deaccession process. Deaccessioning is exercised by LCHS after careful deliberation and with caution. LCHS considers the needs of the collection, the best interest of the public, the donor’s wishes, the clarity of title, the tax status of the item, and the fiduciary responsibilities of the Board.

Artifacts may be deaccessioned and removed from the collection on the recommendation of the Acquisitions Committee and with the approval of a majority of the Board of Council. Once a decision to deaccession is made, the method of disposal also is considered carefully.

Deaccessioning shall be considered only when one or more of the following conditions prevail:

1. The artifact is not relevant to or consistent with the stated mission of the Livingston County Historical Society.
2. Deaccessioning of the object will improve or strengthen the collection and, in so doing, further the goals of LCHS.
3. The artifact is deemed to be an unnecessary duplicate of others in the collection.
4. The artifact cannot be adequately stored or cared for in a professional manner.
5. The artifact no longer retains its physical integrity, its identity cannot be determined, or its authenticity is in question.

3.1 Disposal of Artifacts

Any artifact that has been deaccessioned and removed from the collection will be assigned to one of two classes for purposes of disposal:

Class I: Artifacts that can be uniquely associated with an individual, family, group and/or donor;

Class II: Artifacts that were in common usage or were available in quantity and for this reason are not uniquely associated with an individual, family, group and/or donor. [6/8/98]

Any deaccessioned artifact in Class I will be disposed of in one of the following ways, in descending order of priority:

1. It may be given, exchanged, or offered for sale by auction, dealer, flea market, or private sale to an historical society, museum, or an office of the Town Historian in Livingston County, that may find it relevant to its collection.
2. It may be given, exchanged, or offered for sale by auction, dealer, flea market, or private sale to an historical society or museum outside of Livingston County in the Western and Finger Lakes regions of New York State.
3. It may be given, exchanged, or offered for sale by auction, dealer, flea market, or private sale to an historical society or museum outside of the Western and Finger Lakes regions of New York State.

On the recommendation of the Board of Council, deaccessioned artifacts in Class II may be offered for sale by auction, dealer, flea market, or private sale within Livingston County and in the Finger Lakes and Western New York regions without regard to the priorities for the disposal of artifacts in Class I.

Any income derived from the sale of de-accessioned artifacts will be placed in the Livingston County Historical Society treasury in a restricted acquisitions fund to be used for future acquisitions and care of the collection.

**4.0 Loan Agreements and Policies**

4.1 Loaning of Artifacts

Artifacts in the collection may be loaned to other museums or entities on a temporary basis, for a period of time not to exceed one year, at the discretion of the Board of Council. Such loans may be renewable annually, at the discretion of the Board of Council. Requests for outgoing loans must be made in writing to the LCHS for Board review at least 30 days prior to the loan date. The borrower must include a Certificate of Insurance with the formal request. At a minimum, loans shall be reviewed annually.

The following terms and conditions must be agreed to by the borrower:

1. A request must be presented to the Board of Council. Upon approval of the Board, a Loan Agreement form shall be prepared and signed by representatives of both the borrower and lender. A description of the artifact(s), including condition and any evidence of damage as of the date of the loan, shall be noted on the Loan Agreement.
2. Packing will be provided by the borrower or lender, to be determined by prior agreement. The artifact(s) will be returned packed in the same or similar manner as they were received, unless otherwise authorized by the lender.
3. The mode of transportation of the artifact(s) and arrangements for delivery and return will be agreed upon by both parties.
4. The borrower will exercise care of the borrowed artifact(s) to assure their safekeeping. Conditions regarding the handling and display of the borrowed artifact(s) shall be stated on the Loan Agreement. Evidence of damage, regardless of who may be responsible for it, shall be reported immediately in writing to both parties. No alteration, restoration or repair may be undertaken without written authorization from the lender.
5. All expenses incurred as a result of the loan shall be assumed by the borrower. The borrower shall be responsible for all risks from the time the artifact leaves the Livingston County Museum until it is returned. The borrower shall guarantee payment of claims for loss, as well as for restoration and related costs should damage occur. This responsibility and guarantee may be met by insurance (through an agent approved by the Board of Council) or by the borrowing organization itself (if it is able to provide proof of its financial ability to meet such a guarantee). Insurance coverage may be waived by mutual agreement of the parties to the loan.
6. The borrower will not photograph, duplicate, or replicate or otherwise reproduce the borrowed artifact(s) or its image for any purpose without the express permission of the Livingston County Historical Society. Permission shall be granted the borrower for non-profit publicity, documentation, and/or educational purposes.
7. The borrower will give credit to the Livingston County Historical Society as owner of the loaned artifact(s).
8. Upon request by the Board of Council of the Livingston County Historical Society, the borrower will implement the return of the loaned artifact(s) in a timely fashion.

4.2 Incoming Loans (Borrowing)

Loans shall not be accepted when they place a burden on LCHS facilities or staff. All items accepted for loan by LCHS shall be covered by an incoming loan agreement form which specifies the terms, use and dates of the loan. In addition, proof of ownership and the manner in which an item was collected or acquired may be required.

All loan requests must be reviewed by the Acquisitions Committee and approved by the Board.

Occasionally the Museum may borrow artifacts from an individual or institution on a temporary, short-term basis, for the purpose of an exhibit or program. The Museum will follow the same procedure used for its own artifacts loaned to outside institutions.

1. A request must be presented to the Board of Council. Upon approval of the Board a Loan Agreement form shall be prepared and signed by representatives of both the borrower and lender. A description of the artifact(s), including condition and any evidence of damage as of the date of the loan, shall be noted on the Loan Agreement.
2. Packing will be provided by the borrower or lender, to be determined by prior agreement. The artifact(s) will be returned packed in the same or similar manner as they were received, unless otherwise authorized by the lender.
3. The mode of transportation of the artifact(s) and arrangements for delivery and return will be agreed upon by both parties.
4. The Museum will exercise care of the borrowed artifact(s) to assure their safekeeping. Conditions regarding the handling and display of the borrowed artifact(s) shall be stated on the Loan Agreement. Evidence of damage, regardless of who may be responsible for it, shall be reported immediately in writing to both parties. No alteration, restoration or repair may be undertaken without written authorization from the lender.
5. All expenses incurred as a result of the loan shall be assumed by the Museum unless mutually agreed arrangements are made with the loaning institution. The Museum shall be responsible for all risks from the time the artifact(s) arrives at the Livingston County Museum until it is returned. The Museum shall guarantee payment of claims for loss, as well as for restoration and related costs should damage occur. This responsibility and guarantee may be met by insurance (through an agent approved by the Board of Council) or by theloaning organization itself (if it is able to provide proof of its financial ability to meet such a guarantee). Insurance coverage may be waived by mutual agreement of the parties to the loan.
6. The Museumwill not photograph, duplicate, or replicate or otherwise reproduce the borrowed artifact(s) or its image for any purpose without the express permission of the loaning organization. Permission shall be requested from the loaning institution or individualfor non-profit publicity, documentation and/or educational purposes.
7. The Museum will give credit to the loaning organization as owner of the loaned artifact(s).
8. The Museum will return the loaned artifact(s) in a timely fashion.
   1. The Collections : Management, Maintenance and Conservation

5.1 Management: Care of Collections

The Acquisitions Committee, volunteer librarians, and the Exhibits Committee are responsible to the Museum Administrator.

Collaborative responsibility for the care of the Museums’ collections shall rest with the Board of Council and the Museum Administrator. All materials shall be tracked as they enter or leave the Museum, with care taken to ensure their safe handling and accurate documentation.

5.2 Maintenance: Standards of Care

Standards of professional care shall apply to all of the Museum’s collections. Collections shall be regularly surveyed for condition and treatment. General guidelines for the care of the collections shall ensure consistency. Informing docents, interns, volunteers, researchers, consultants, and vendors about policies, procedures, and guidelines to ensure they are followed is the shared responsibility of the Museum Administrator and all Board of Council members.

A long-range conservation plan will be developed and reviewed on an annual basis. Major conservation shall only be done by trained, professional conservators and any treatment must respect the integrity of the object.

5.3 Conservation

All objects in the Museum’s permanent collections are subject to the same standards of professional care. To ensure consistency, the Board of Council, with significant input from the staff, will issue general guidelines for the care of the collections. It is the responsibility of all staff to inform interns, volunteers, researchers, consultants and vendors with whom they work about these policies, procedures, and guidelines, and ensure they are followed.

Conservation action may be taken only by trained, professional conservators and any treatment must respect the integrity of the object. Conservation treatment of the fabric of an object must include earlier repairs and modifications which, after examination and research, are found to be historically significant. Any new material added to the object must be minimal and must be compatible with the future welfare of the object. No action may be taken without a thorough technical examination of the object and a written proposal of treatment listing all possible treatment options. Once treatment is undertaken, the conservator must provide a written report of all conservation actions which will be maintained in the object’s Accession File and made available to researchers and scholars upon request. Objects on loan to the Museum will not be repaired, cleaned or otherwise treated without written permission from the owner of the objects.

5.4 Insurance

Insurance shall be carried on the Museum’s buildings.

Incoming loans shall be insured only subsequent to an agreement between the Society and the loaning entity. By mutual agreement the insurance requirement may be waived. The Livingston County Historical Society waives all responsibility for loss or damage to materials held under Temporary Custody agreements.

Loan of collection objects shall be insured by the borrower through an agent approved by the Livingston County Historical Society. Ideally, the insurance shall cover all the risks from the time the object leaves the Museum until it is returned, and shall guarantee payment of claims for loss, as well as for the restoration and related costs. By mutual agreement the insurance requirement may be waived. In such cases, signatories to the loan shall indicate the waiver on the loan form.

5.5 Environment and Storage

The Society endeavors to follow best museum practices. Use of acid free boxes and tissue are used and most collections are described as exhibited in an open storage style. Tight storage conditions exist. In order to address this issue, the Society’s Strategic Plan projects future developments for improved, covered, dry storage particularly for textiles, glass, ceramics, and fragile objects.

6.0 Record Keeping

Transmission Records, worksheets, accessioning forms, photographs, deaccessioning recommendation forms, loan agreements, and any other written materials regarding artifacts in the collection shall be retained as part of their permanent record by the Acquisitions Committee**.** All records are filed and easily retrieved in appropriate storage in the museum office.

A copy of a bill or receipt will be kept on file for artifacts purchased for the collections.

Records of accessions are made by the Acquisitions Committee and are retained for all artifacts acquired for the collection. Accessions are reported to the Board of Council and reviewed at the Annual Meeting.

Artifacts that came to the Museum prior to the adoption of procedures for acceptance and accessioning will be treated in the same manner as accessioned artifacts, making efforts to establish their histories and relevance, assigning accessioning numbers and retaining their records.

Adequate records of the conditions and circumstances under which artifacts are deaccessioned, and disposed of, are made and retained.

6.1 Inventory

As part of its ongoing program of collection management and care, the LCHS will periodically inventory all collection items. The inventory is to be conducted under the direction of the Acquisitions Committee.

7.0 Public Disclosure

A written statement of the policy and procedures adopted and followed by the Livingston County Historical Society regarding the acquisition and disposal of artifacts in the Museum collection shall be available to donors and other responsible persons on request, as provided for in the collection management policy.

In reply to responsible inquiry, information may be made available, by appointment , regarding the identity and description of artifacts in the collection or those deaccessioned, unless such information has been restricted. The decision to release information about specific artifacts shall be made by the President as chief legal officer.