

The Dunkirk Historical Society and Museum

Collections Committee

Policies and Procedures

Statement of Purpose

The Dunkirk Historical Society and Museum collects resources that contain content of evidential or informational value, including, but not limited to, published items, government records, business and association records, individual and family papers, photographs, moving images, sound recordings, digital images, objects, artifacts, artwork and other items which have been created or used in Dunkirk and which document the history of Dunkirk and its relationship to the surrounding area. In particular, the Museum seeks documentation of Dunkirks' economic and cultural development, government, educational systems, transportation and its' relationship with neighboring villages, townships, counties and the nation. Selectively acquiring new materials through donation or purchase is essential to build and strengthen the collections. Items accepted by the Museum must be appropriate for research, exhibition and education.

Collections Committee

The Board of Trustees of the Dunkirk Historical Society shall establish the Collections Committee. The Committee shall consider items for acquisition, for accession and for deaccession from the collections of the Society, as those terms are defined in this policy.

Membership

Under the Society's By-laws, the President shall appoint the members of the committee which shall include the Director, the Curator, the Archivist, the Photo Archivist and the Administrative Assistant/Historian. Membership terms to this committee will be renewed every year. A member may be replaced as needed by recommendation of the Director and approved by the President.

Meetings

The Committee will meet once a month or more frequently, to review potential accessions and acquisitions for acceptance into the Museum's collections. Meetings will be held in person. In the event a decision needs to be made immediately, members may be contacted by phone or email. A majority of the Committee members available shall make a determination and recorded by the Curator. The Committee may include in its deliberations, whenever deemed appropriate, the advice of professionals such as antique and fine arts dealers, appraisers or collectors, with the goal of making well-considered and timely decisions.

All decisions will be made by a majority of the Committee members present.

Collections Policies

Acquisitions – Any item that the Museum acquires by purchase for the enhancement of the collection.

Accessions – Any item that is donated to the Museum by gift, bequest, abandonment or other means, subject to certain restrictions as set forth below.

Accessions

Temporary Custody

An accession shall be accepted as a temporary loan to be considered for permanent donation by the Committee. A Temporary Custody Receipt will be completed in duplicate. One copy shall be signed by the donor and Museum staff and given to the donor and a copy shall be retained by the Museum. The information should then be entered into PastPerfect under Temporary Custody. All items received into temporary custody will be examined by the Committee at its next scheduled meeting to determine if they should be accepted as additions to the permanent collection, for use in the education collection or for use to enhance a display.

Acceptance Determination

Criteria to be considered by the Committee when determining whether to accept a proposed accession are:

1. The owner/donor must have clear title and once accepted must sign a gift agreement transferring title to the Museum. In the case of a bequest, the donor must also have clear title.
2. The Museum must be capable of housing and caring for the proposed accession in accordance with best practices of museums and manuscript/archives repositories.
3. Donations/gifts may be refused for any of the following reasons;
 - a. Duplication of currently owned material
 - b. Lack of space
 - c. Lack of technical equipment or financial resources to properly care for or process the item being offered.
 - d. The item has deteriorated beyond usefulness.
 - e. Inappropriateness to the collection.
 - f. There is a more appropriate repository for the material.

- g. The item does not adhere to the Mission Statement or the statement of purpose stated in this policy.
- 4. Most donations/gifts should occur without donor restrictions. Restrictions or conditions may be considered when in the best interest of the Museum's fulfillment of its mission and shall be noted on the Gift Acceptance Agreement.
- 5. The Dunkirk Historical Museum does not provide appraisals of donations. The donor is responsible for getting an appraisal if they desire a form for tax purposes.

Accessions approved by the Committee shall be promptly accessioned upon receipt of a completed Gift Acceptance Agreement as recorded in PastPerfect. Two copies of the Gift Acceptance Agreement shall be mailed to the donor to be signed and one signed copy to be returned to the Museum for our files. Accessions that are not approved by the Committee will be disposed of as the donor indicated or returned to the donor. The decision of the Committee will be noted on the Temporary Loan Receipt which will be maintained in the Museum files.

Deaccession Policy

Any accessioned object, archive, photograph in the Museum Collection shall not be removed from the Dunkirk Historical Museum's holdings except in conformity with the following provisions:

- 1. Deaccession recommendations will be prepared in writing by the Collections Committee. Recommendations for deaccessioning will include the following information:
 - a. Title of object(s), archive or photograph recommendation
 - b. Donor's name and date acquired
 - c. Reason for the recommendation for deaccession
 - d. Proposed disposition of the item
- 2. The decision to deaccession should be with careful consideration and follow accepted museum or archival standards. One of the following criteria must be met:
 - a. The item is not, or is no longer, relevant to the mission of DHM;
 - b. The item has failed to retain its identity, or has been lost or stolen and is not recovered;
 - c. The item duplicates other items in the collection and is not necessary for research or education purposes;
 - d. The Museum is unable to conserve the item in a responsible manner;
 - e. There is a more appropriate repository for the item.

3. No donated item will be deaccessioned for two (2) years after the date of its accessioning.
4. A complete record of deaccessions will be kept and retained permanently.
5. Disposal may be by exchange, donation or public sale with scholarly or cultural organizations as the preferred recipients.
6. Items deaccessioned will not be privately sold, given or otherwise transferred to the Museum's staff, Executive Board or Trustees.
7. Proceeds derived from the deaccessioning of any property from the Museum's collections will be placed in a restricted fund to be used only for the acquisition, preservation, protection or care of the collections. In no event will proceeds be used for Museum operating expenses or for any purpose other than acquisition, preservation, protection or care of the collections.
8. The DHM reserves the right to dispose of items in deteriorating condition or under changed Museum circumstances in compliance with accepted practices and professional responsibility.

Acquisitions

From time to time an opportunity may arise to purchase an item that the Committee deems an appropriate addition to the Museum's collection. The item may be from an auction house, on-line or from a person or organization. The Committee may authorize the purchase of an item not to exceed \$100.00. For items that cost over \$100.00, the Committee must present its recommendations to the Board of Trustees at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting or by telephone or email for approval prior to completing a purchase. The seller must present proof of clear title and the provenance of the item(s).

Custodian Services

The DHM may be approached to accept permanent custody of certain records, such as records of governmental bodies or organizations that must maintain their own records but do not have the facilities or security to do so. In such cases, the Committee will determine whether it has sufficient space and supplies to maintain such records in appropriate archival storage. The Committee will provide receipts to the organization depositing the records that clearly state that the records are not accessioned into the permanent collection of DHM and that DHM is serving as custodian for such records. With the concurrence of the depositing organization, the Museum will make its best efforts to conserve and organize such records and may request a monetary donation to purchase appropriate archival storage for the records. The records will be accessible to the donating organization and if appropriate, the public.

This Policy was formally approved and adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Dunkirk Historical Museum at a meeting held at 513 Washington Ave., Dunkirk, NY on October 2, 2018.

JEB/2018