



Solebury Township Historical Society

**COLLECTIONS
AND
ARCHIVE
POLICY**



Solebury Township Historical Society

COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVE POLICY

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I. Preamble

From its creation in 1981 through 2014, the Solebury Township Historical Society (STHS) had no formal collections policy. For the most part, the collecting objectives, acquisitions procedures, deaccessioning practices, and access and photography policies were subject to the personal judgments and de facto practices of the Society's officers. In 2014, new purpose statements and collections policies were formulated for the Society. A collections policy is a vital document that brings intellectual order to the collection and provides practical, standardized guidelines for managing and safeguarding it. Such a policy is the fundamental framework upon which good collections' stewardship begins. The collections policy of the Society performs the following general functions:

1. It provides a yardstick by which potential additions to the collection are measured, filtering out extraneous artifacts and materials that do not add to the collection's historical or interpretive value.
2. It provides a yardstick by which present collections are measured, permitting the culling of artifacts or materials that are outside of the institution's educational scope.
3. It regulates the collecting process, protecting donors, artifacts, and the institution, while at the same time safe guarding the public trust.
4. It describes the basic and essential stewardship responsibilities to which the Society is committed for the care, conservation, and security of its collections.
5. It regulates the deaccessioning process, protecting the Society and conforming to its public trust responsibilities, while maintaining the integrity of the collection.
6. It helps ensure the safety, security, and appropriate use of loaned collections.
7. It regulates access and photography, helping to maintain security for the collection and protecting the rights of the Society.
8. It serves to delegate authority for decision-making on issues related to the collection.
9. It defines the legal and ethical obligations that staff, the board, and volunteers have to the collection.
10. It references and demonstrates adherence to all applicable local, state, and federal laws regulating the management and stewardship of objects of art and antiquity.

II. Historical Background and Rationale

As outlined in our Vision and Mission statements, the Society is committed to preserving information, documents, and miscellaneous archives pertaining to Solebury Township and close boroughs and townships. Our Township is rich in long term family continuity, for which the



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Society seeks to be a place where people can preserve and share their family history by donating collections of books, documents, photograph, and oral histories.

III. General Collecting Objectives

- To preserve Solebury Township history and culture
- To collect documentary materials and oral traditions related to the social, political, ecological, ethnic, cultural, family, economic, and technological history of Solebury Township, as well as materials related to topics important to Solebury, New Hope Borough, and near-by municipalities
- To emphasizing published and other printed works, manuscript materials, public records, photographs, and oral and visual media
- To preserve old photographs, original works, and antique postcards or electronic scans of originals for use of our web site
- To manage current and older society event photographs in membership scrapbooks and the web site.
- To minimize the collecting of physical objects for display; exceptions will be made by the board for specific objects and art work

IV. Acquisitions Policy

A. Acquisitions Criteria

To be acquired by the Society materials must meet many of the following tests:

1. They must conform to the area in which the Society collects, as specified under General Collecting Objectives.
2. The present owner must have clear legal title.
3. Wherever possible, the objects or materials must be accompanied by adequate historical information to document provenance and use (certain library materials such as new or published works may be exempted from this requirement).
4. Objects and materials should either fill a gap in a particular area of the collection or exhibit significant variation from materials already collected.
5. The Society must be able to adequately care for materials proposed for acquisition. Objects in poor or unstable condition, or which will require significant conservation treatment for which funding is not available, should generally not be acquired.
6. Acquisitions must, in general, be free from donor-imposed restrictions.
7. Perceived moral, legal, and ethical implications of the acquisition must have been considered.



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8. All reasonable steps must have been taken to insure that materials proposed for acquisition possess historical integrity and authenticity (except where the intent is to acquire facsimiles, reproductions, or photocopies) and are capable of being exhibited or used for study purposes.
9. Objects or materials must not have been illegally imported into the United States or obtained contrary to existing local, state, federal, or international law, regulation, treaty, or convention. The Society subscribes to the provisions of the ICOM convention of 1970.

B. Acquisitions Methods

The following guidelines govern the acquisitions process:

1. Collections may be acquired by gift, bequest, purchase, exchange, field collection, abandonment, or any other transaction by which legal title passes to the Society.
2. Only the archivists or the executive board are authorized to negotiate for, arrange, or accept gifts, bequests, purchases, exchanges, etc. to the collections. The archivist's area of responsibility for acquisitions shall be defined as encompassing all textual and graphic materials where paper is the primary or original medium including, but not necessarily limited to, books, pamphlets, broadsides, prints, and printed materials, original works of art on paper, advertising ephemera, manuscript materials, and photographs in any form or medium.
3. In the event of a purchase for the Society's collections, authority to acquire each title, object, or collection is only done with executive board decision.
4. Prior to purchase, the fair market value must be determined by both parties.
5. No staff member shall offer appraisals of the monetary value of materials or objects to donors, or reveal insurance values for the purpose of establishing a fair market value of gifts offered to the Society, or place a monetary value on objects casually brought to the Society.
6. Materials temporarily deposited with the Society for the purposes of identification, study, authentication, or consideration of gift must have a completed object receipt form, signed both by the depositor and an authorized institutional representative. Objects for which a receipt form has been signed, and which are left longer than 90 days without action by the depositor, are considered abandoned property and may be disposed of under the provisions outlined in the Society's deaccession policy.
7. Where objects or materials offered to the Society do not meet established acquisition criteria, an effort shall be made to direct the donor to another suitable repository, or to suggest another alternative means of disposal. The Society may accept such items for public sale as long as this intent is clearly understood and agreed to by the donor.



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8. All objects and materials acquired under the provisions of this policy shall be processed according to procedures adopted by the archivist. The archivist will make a permanent record of all accessioned acquisitions.
9. An accounting of all gifts or bequests to the collection shall be logged on the web site. The archivist is responsible for writing up the web site entry noting the person who gave the gift, date, and a general description of the gift, which will be given to the web master for posting in the Collections portion of the web site.

V. Deaccession Policy

To be considered for deaccession objects or materials must meet one or more of the following tests:

1. The object or material is outside of the scope of the Society's Statement of Purpose and Acquisitions Policy, meaning that it is not illustrative of the history and culture of Solebury Township and its surrounds and neighboring municipalities.
2. The object or material lacks physical integrity or has been irreparably damaged to the point that its value for exhibition, programming, or study has been effectively compromised.
3. The object or material is deemed irrelevant or no longer useful to the educational purposes of the Society.
4. The object or material has failed to retain its authenticity.
5. The Society is unable to exhibit or preserve the object or material properly, and it will only deteriorate if left in the Society's possession.
6. The object or material duplicates or varies insignificantly from other items in the collection, and the overall integrity of the collection is not threatened by the item's removal. In the case of library collections, duplicates may be retained where they contain useful annotations, have significant associative value, or where frequent use necessitates the availability of multiple copies.
7. It is determined that the object or material must be returned or repatriated according to the provisions of a prevailing local, state, or federal law, or international treaty. According to the terms and spirit of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), the Society shall cooperate with the efforts of Native peoples to recover, wherever applicable, their cultural heritage and patrimony.

B. Deaccession Methods and Procedures

The following guidelines govern the deaccessioning process:

1. Collection items may be deaccessioned by public sale, sale to or exchange with another museum or cultural institution, disposal, or destruction.



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2. The sale, exchange, or transfer of objects or materials directly to private individuals or businesses is allowed. The Library shall be permitted to sell deaccessioned duplicate or irrelevant books and printed materials of minimal value directly to patrons.
3. Prior to selling an item at public auction, wherever reasonable, an effort shall be considered to place a deaccessioned item with another museum or cultural institution (either by sale or exchange), where it can continue to serve a purpose for which it was originally placed in the Society.
4. The archivist has responsibility within his or her respective areas for recommending items for deaccession if, in his or her best judgment, one or more of the deaccession criteria have been met. This recommendation must be made in writing to the executive board and will specify the source and/or provenance (if known) of the object or material, the reason for deaccessioning, the estimated market value (if known), and the recommended method of disposal.
5. Before a final decision to deaccession can be made, all reasonable steps shall be taken to ascertain that the Society is legally free to do so.
6. If an object or material was acquired originally by gift or bequest, the donor or his/her heirs and assigns must be notified if the item is deaccessioned within two years of the date of acquisition.

C. Deaccessioning

The same criteria, methods and procedures that govern the deaccessioning of collections also apply to educational properties with the following differences:

1. Where appropriate, an educational property may be transferred to the main collection if it meets all of the criteria for general acquisitions.
2. Any proceeds from the deaccessioning of educational properties shall be placed in a special fund or funds for the acquisition of reproduction or other items for the properties collection.

VI. Loan Policy

A. Incoming Loans: Short or Long term

1. We do not accept loans except as scans, photocopies, or reproductions for prompt display or web site posting. We prefer the donor provide a reproduction or scan of appropriate quality of any documents, photographs, or oral and visual histories. To be accepted by the Society, loaned objects must:
 - a. be utilized for a specific purpose, either exhibition, research, education, or photography.
 - b. be utilized in a manner consistent with the Society's Statement of Purpose.



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2. Incoming Loan Procedures

- a. Only the archivist or executive board may negotiate loans to the Society.
- b. Proof of insurance during the period an object is in the Society's custody shall be obtained by the lender. Objects and materials will be not insured by the Society.
- c. All incoming loans shall be inspected for condition both upon entering the Society's custody and immediately prior to return.
- d. The archivist or other staff member as designated by the archivist shall have primary responsibility for monitoring the status of all incoming and returned loans.

B. Incoming Loans: Long-term and Deposits

Long-term loans or deposits of materials to the Society's collections are generally not accepted.

C. Outgoing Loans

Outgoing loans are not encouraged. Photocopies and electronic scans are the Society's preferred way to share data.

VII. Stewardship of Collections Policy

A. Philosophy

The Society is committed to the long-term care, preservation, documentation and security of our collections within our means and capabilities.

B. Conservation Planning

Collections care and conservation activities are guided by need as determined by the archivists and historians. All planning for the care of collections must take into account professionally accepted conservation standards.

C. Emergency and Disaster Planning

Emergency and disaster planning is a goal that the Society will tackle within its means and abilities.

D. Security

To protect the collection from the threat of theft, vandalism, and inadvertent or opportunistic touching, the Society will secure vulnerable objects and consider installing an up-to-date security system. Should thefts, accidental damage, or intentional vandalism occur, such events must be reported immediately to the president and, in the case of thefts or vandalism, to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.



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E. Ongoing Facilities Maintenance

The Society recognizes the essential importance of adequately maintaining our building, both because of its historical character and because the physical integrity and preservation helps to ensure the safety and security of the collections housed within. To the best of its financial capabilities, it is the policy of the Society to maintain and repair its facility according to professionally accepted standards of architectural preservation. Further, the Society shall work to develop and maintain cyclical maintenance plans for its facility.

VIII. Collections Access Policy

A. Philosophy

The collections and collections records of the Solebury Township Historical Society are an important and valuable resource for the study of local and family history. With this in mind, it shall be the policy of the Society to facilitate, wherever possible, individual access to collections artifacts, records, manuscripts, and archives in storage.

B. Conditions of Access

1. Access to collections or records may be granted for any of the following purposes:
 - a. Scholarly or personal research
 - b. Artifact identification
 - c. Approved artifact reproduction requests
 - d. Photography (See Photography Policy, section IX of the Collections Policy.)
 - e. Professional consultations, including visiting groups
 - f. Other projects with specific educational or conservation goals
2. Individuals or groups granted access to collections must agree to abide by Society guidelines for collections care and handling.
3. Individuals or groups granted access to collections must do so on the premises. No removal of artifacts is permitted.
4. In the case of objects or documents considered especially fragile, or where collections are not fully processed, the Society reserves the right to limit or restrict access in any way.
5. The Society also reserves the right to refuse access to the collections to any individual or group.
6. Qualified and approved (president, vice president, archivist or secretary may approve) individuals may remove items for reproduction and or conservation treatment.



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C. Access Procedures

1. Anyone wishing to examine collections objects or documents in storage or other secured areas must make an application to the archivist or volunteer in the schoolhouse during normal operating hours. A verbal request and signing into the guest book is necessary.
2. If the intent of access includes photography, reproduction, or the publication of images from the collection, the individual or group must also pay necessary costs and fees as determined by the work.
3. For access requests requiring the handling of museum artifacts, the visitor(s) must be instructed in the Society's object handling procedures before access is granted.
4. During the servicing of access requests, those visitors must be accompanied and supervised by the archivist or authorized volunteer.

IX. Photographic Services/Rights and Reproductions Policy

A. Rationale

The collections of the Society are an important visual resource for the study of local and family history. The usefulness of the collection visually also extends to numerous commercial and public relations applications. With this in mind, it shall be the policy of the Society to make available and accessible photographic and electronic images of its building and collections, and to permit interior and exterior photography, and photography of individual artifacts, subject to the following conditions and procedures: (If fees are charged, contact the Society for fee schedule.)

B. Commercial, Non-commercial, Public Relations Uses of Photographic Images: Defined Policies

Procedures and fees for photography vary according to the intended use of the photographs. There are three categories of intended use:

1. Commercial use is defined as any photography performed or used by a for-profit enterprise, or in any profit-making venture, for the purposes of creating, illustrating, advertising, marketing, or commemorating a product.
2. Non-commercial use is defined as any photography performed or used by a non-profit organization; or as part of any not-for-profit scholarly enterprise, especially for educational purposes and/or cultural enhancement, or for personal study or reference.
3. Public Relations use is defined as any photography performed or used by an individual, organization, or business which is deemed to have publicity, advertising, or marketing value for the Society, its building, and/or library.



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C. Photography Orders

1. Procedures

- a. The individual or institution should submit an email (preferred) or written request to the photo archivist.
- b. The intended use of the photographs should be determined and the appropriate fees assessed as follows:
 - i. Commercial use: Fees are charged for duplicating negatives, prints, and slides; for new photography of artifacts, interior or exterior scenes performed or contracted by the Society. A publication fee is also charged for one-time use of an image.
 - ii. Non-commercial use: Same fees charged as above for photographs. A reduced fee will be charged for publication of the image(s).
 - iii. Public relations use: No fees charged.
- c. Payment is required in advance of filling the order.
- d. The photo archivist reserves the right to waive fees under certain circumstances for special projects.

2. Conditions

- a. Regardless of whether a publication fee is assessed, permission must be granted in writing by the Society prior to publication of any image from the Society collections.
- b. Where images are to be published, the Society must be acknowledged as the source. The credit line must read "Collection of the Solebury Township Historical Society."
- c. Where images are ordered for non-publication purposes and then later are to be used in a commercial or non-commercial publication, it is the responsibility of the user at that time to obtain written permission from the Society and to pay any fees required.
- d. One copy of any publication using images from the Society collections is to be provided to the Society library.
- e. Where new photography or scanning must be performed in order to fill a photo order, the Society reserves the right to limit or restrict any such photography which may result in damage to the artifact or material.
- f. Failure to meet these conditions will result in forfeiture of the right to use Society photos for publication purposes unless the conditions are formally waived or altered, in writing, by the Society.

D. Permission to Photograph/Videotape

1. Guidelines and restrictions



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- a. The following photographic activities are regularly permitted at Society property:
 - i. Exterior photographing/videotaping for non-commercial (personal or scholarly) use.
 - ii. Interior photographing/videotaping for non-commercial (personal or scholarly) use at the schoolhouse only using hand-held, small format cameras. The use of a flash is also permitted.
 - b. The following photographic activities are allowed at Society property only with expressed written permission, and the payment of any applicable fees.
 - i. Exterior photographing/videotaping for commercial use, or for a commercial or non-commercial publication.
 - ii. Interior photographing/videotaping for any purpose or with any equipment at the schoolhouse.
 - iii. Interior photographing/videotaping for commercial use or for a commercial or non-commercial publication.
2. Procedures for requesting permission to photograph/videotape.
- a. The individual or institution should submit an email to the Society president.
 - b. The intended use of the photography/videotaping should be determined and the appropriate fees assessed as follows:
 - i. Non-commercial use: No fees are generally charged, however a staffing fee may be assessed at the discretion of the supervising department where the photo project requires more than two hours of society staff involvement and/or supervision.
 - ii. Commercial use: A location fee and a fee to cover staffing costs will be charged. Where the interior or exterior photography is to be used for commercial advertising purposes, a special Commercial Use Agreement Form must be signed. Such use may be accompanied by an additional fee.
 - iii. Public relations use: No fees charged.