



Tacoma Historical Society

Policy on Collections

Adopted by THS board 12 07 04

Amended by THS board 07 10 12

Amended by THS board 09 01 15

A. Statement of Purpose

1. Goals of the Society.

The goals of the Tacoma Historical Society are to preserve and present the heritage of the City of Tacoma, Washington. Toward that end, the Society will maintain a museum for display and interpretation of artifacts and documents related to the history of the original, subsequent and present sites of the city and its inhabitants.

2. Collection Criteria.

All items in the collection date primarily from 1841 to the present and must relate to an event, place, industry, or person significant to the historical development of Tacoma. Of particular interest are items relating to manufacturing, early schools, and prominent persons of Tacoma. Collected articles may represent the Native American culture or otherwise date from earlier periods if they represent historic development of a Tacoma-related entity. Exceptions may be made for artifacts and documents acquired for specific exhibits or of enduring value for research, evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

3. Types of Collections.

a. Permanent.

The permanent collection is that related exclusively to the history of Tacoma, Washington. The permanent collection is intended to be those artifacts held in trust in perpetuity for museum display or research purposes.

b. Non-permanent.

This consists of items not appropriate for the permanent collection but utilized for research, education or other museum purposes.

Section 3 a and 3 b amended by board 07 10 12

B. Acquisition of items.

1. Definition(s)

a. Gift(s)

The Society may accept gifts of collection and non-collection related items so long as they are used/disposed of per the giver's intentions, and per the needs of the Society. The Society will acknowledge such gifts with appropriate documentation; however, appraisal of value will be the responsibility of the giver.

b. Loans.

Artifacts may be loaned the Society if the loan conditions are acceptable to the Board of Directors, and if the loan is compatible with the goals of the Society.

c. Purchases.

The Society may purchase artifacts for inclusion into the permanent or special collections if in accordance with the goals of the Society.

d. Exchanges/Trades.

The Society may exchange/trade artifacts with outside entities if such exchange/trade is in the interest of the Society and consistent with the criteria for collecting.

2. Criteria for collection/acquisition.

a. Consistent with Society Policies.

The artifact/property must be collectible per Society policies, or

disposable per Society policies.

b. Connection to the Society's mission.

The item must relate specifically to the history of Tacoma, and may be used for research or display purposes.

c. Uniqueness.

The item must have a unique value for research, demonstration, or collecting purposes. (If the Society or another museum or library has multiple examples of the item, the Society may decline the donation.)

d. Condition.

The donation item must be in museum quality condition, meaning the material is not deteriorating past usability or in such a way that would constitute a hardship for the Society to conduct appropriate levels of conservation.

e. Resources available.

Adequate resources must be available to acquire, store, and to preserve the artifact/property as part of the long-term maintenance of the Collection

f. Hazardous material.

The item must be of a non-hazardous material. The Society cannot accept items which may pose a health hazard or environmental hazard without a specific plan for care and maintenance.

g. Legal/Ethical requirements.

The acquisition must be legally consummated and legal in origin, with appropriate written documentation. The method of acquisition and source thereof must be without question.

h. Restrictions acceptable.

The restrictions placed on the acquisition must be acceptable to the Board of Directors of the Society.

3. Authorizations

a. Board of Directors

Every transaction covered by this policy requires approval quarterly by the Board of Directors, except as delegated to the Collections Committee and Collections Manager or other duly constituted officers/staff.

b. Officers/Staff.

The president/vice president is empowered to make decisions on acquisitions/dispositions on behalf of the board when time constraints make it unfeasible to poll the board by telephone or mail.

Subject to the goals of the Society and Collection Criteria, small acquisitions may be made and donations may be accepted by the members of the Collections Committee and the Collections Manager.

C. Deaccessions

1. Definition(s).

a. Sales:

The intentional sale of an artifact(s) when same no longer meets criteria for collection as stated in this policy.

b. Loss:

The unintentional loss of an artifact(s) through theft, fire, flood, natural or manmade disaster, or when said artifact(s) reach a state of deterioration such that they no longer meet the needs of the Society.

c. Exchange:

The duly authorized (see 3-a,b) exchange for desired property with another entity.

2. Criteria.

a. Sales:

Sales may be made if the item(s) no longer meet the display/interpretation needs of the Society, if the item(s) are

duplicative, if the item(s) are found to be fraudulent or not authentic, or if the item(s) are requested to be sold by the terms of donation.

b. Loss:

Item(s) may be deaccessioned if deemed a loss as defined herein only after professional appraisal.

c. Exchange:

Item(s) may be deaccessioned by permanent exchange with an approved entity, under proper authority.

d. Use of funds to dispose:

Funds may only be authorized as is consistent with authority for original collection of artifact(s).

e. Use of funds from disposal:

Funds collected from any disposal of artifact(s) shall be used for acquisition for or care of the collection.

f. Authority/Forms:

Authority for deaccessioning of artifacts shall be the same as for collections under this policy, (see B-3).

D. Loans.

1. Definition:

Loans are the time-limited, monitored transfer of artifact(s) to an authorized entity per a written agreement.

2. Criteria:

a. Incoming:

Loans made to the Society must have the same approval as collections (see B-2,3), and meet the tests of suitability, preservability, affordability, and other as the approvers may determine. Loans shall not be accepted for more than one (1) year. In special circumstances, however, the board may deem it in the best interests of historic preservation and of the society to accept a long-term loan from a nonprofit or governmental agency.

(Section 2 a amended by board 07 10 12)

b. Outgoing:

Loans made to other approved entities must have the same approval as collections (see B-3). and meet the legitimate needs of loaned entity as well as assuring the artifact(s) are maintained and preserved and transported in accordance with accepted industry standards.

c. Monitoring:

All loans shall be monitored to insure compliance with the terms of the loan.