

## CEDAR LAKE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Collection Management Policy states the procedures set forth by the Cedar Lake Historical Association, Inc. (CLHA) to govern use and management of its collections. The policy outlines approved procedures to ensure the public's trust that donated artifacts will be preserved and made accessible in educational activities in harmony with professional museum practices. This policy is a "living," dynamic document subject to change – as policies that best benefit CLHA and its Lake of the Red Cedars Museum change.

- A. Vision** The Cedar Lake Historical Association is an indispensable educational entity which operates the Lake of the Red Cedars Museum to grant visitors physical and intellectual access to museum exhibitions and research materials. The extraordinarily restored museum is a vital and energetic gathering place where residents and tourists of all generations create memories through participation in its unique programs and special events.
- B. Mission** The mission of the Cedar Lake Historical Association is to bring together those interested in the history of Cedar Lake and those seeking to understand our traditions and heritage.
- C. Statement of Purpose** The purpose of the Lake of the Red Cedars Museum, managed by the Cedar Lake Historical Association, Inc., is to collect, preserve, research, exhibit and interpret a collection of artifacts and specimens relating to the history of Cedar Lake and its environs as well as history outside the area when it is necessary to understand or more fully explain Cedar Lake history or when it complements Cedar Lake's history.
- D. Purpose of the Policy** This policy defines the scope of the museum and establishes guidelines for acquisitions, disposition, care and use of collections. This policy supersedes any previous policies formal and informal.
- E. Policy review and revision** The collections policy shall be reviewed and revised every five years.

### II. DEFINITIONS

**Accessioning:** The formal process used to accept and record an object into a collection.

**Acquisition:** An object that is legal property of the museum.

**Cataloging:** The ongoing recordings of all known information relating to an object: material culture.

**Collections Management:** The body of museum practices and procedures which allow the prudent acquisition, documentation, care, preservation, security, loan, disposal of and accountability for objects.

**Deaccessioning:** The formal process of removing an object from a collection permanently.

**Inventory:** The process of creating and maintaining a contemporaneous reconciled record of all objects for which the museum is responsible.

**Loans:** The temporary transfer of objects from the museum, or a unit thereof, or temporary transfer of objects to a museum, or unit thereof, for stated museum purposes. Those transfers do not involve a change in ownership.

**Non-accessioned acquisition:** An object that is the property of the museum, that is not accessioned, but is used to support museum functions. Such an object may be one accepted specifically for exchange, for use as an exhibit prop, as restoration material, etc.

**Records:** Documentation which physically identifies, describes the legal status of, and historically traces the use, care and activities of objects in a museum's control.

**Registration:** Overall procedures for officially recording and monitoring object transactions, including their acquisition, accession, loan, movement, care, shipment, de-accession, and so forth.

### **III. ACQUISITION CRITERIA**

CLHA will accept artifacts and specimens which improve and expand the existing Collections and which help develop new areas of interest appropriate to CLHA's objectives. The criteria for acceptance of any object are the condition, function and relevance of the artifact or specimen to the Statement of Purpose and the resources of CLHA. CLHA will not knowingly and/or willingly accept or acquire any object that was collected or recovered under circumstances that would support or encourage irresponsible damage to or destruction of biota (plant and animal communities), cultural monuments or human burial places or would be in contravention of local law or custom. Furthermore CLHA must comply with all federal and state antiquity, archaeological, museum and historic preservation laws. Reproductions shall be accepted on the above conditions if they are stylistically and technologically appropriate and if the workmanship is of good quality. Whenever possible, reproductions shall be marked clearly and indelibly as reproductions.

Special care and consideration will be given to hazardous materials, i.e.: medicines, ammunition, nitrate-based film (cellulose, celluloid), flammable liquids, etc. If the composition of an artifact or object is unknown, then it should be determined before it is accepted.

- A. Acquisitions** Artifacts will be acquired by gift, purchase or exchange. No artifact may be accepted for the collections with the understanding that it will be permanently exhibited. Authorization of acceptance will be given through a 3 member Collections Committee consisting of three board members to be appointed by the president of CLHA. Acknowledgement of donations is the responsibility of the Collections Committee.

**Artifacts will be accepted under the following conditions:**

1. A representative (or person on duty) designated by the Collections Committee must be present to accept artifacts.
2. All artifacts are subject to formal approval by the Collections Committee.
3. Donor must complete a Receipt of Property on Conditional Acceptance form.
4. The museum will not conditionally accept any object inherently dangerous or of a hazardous nature. These artifacts must follow formal acceptance procedures before entering the premises.

**B. Collecting Objectives** The Collections Committee will determine which of the two categories an acquisition pertains to for acceptance into the permanent collection.

1. **Archival Library:** Established to develop and maintain the existing collection and further collect manuscripts, iconographic and published items relevant to Cedar Lake's history and culture, thereby advancing the mission of CLHA to promote the study and original research of local history. **Archive materials collected will not be constrained by a defined time period** and may include, but are not limited to:
  - i. Manuscripts pertaining to all aspects of Cedar Lake's history and culture with emphasis upon the social, educational, business and economic activities of people as expressed in personal and institutional documents.
  - ii. Iconographic items illustrating the history and culture of Cedar Lake people, places and events.
  - iii. Published works that reveal the history and culture of Cedar Lake, particularly publications by local authors.
  - iv. Periodicals published either nationally or in Cedar Lake that featured local organizations or industries including newspapers, newsletters and bulletins.
  - v. Examples of other media including video or cassette recordings, DVD or other technological devices.
2. **Museum Artifact Collection:** Established to build upon the strengths of the present collection of objects for exhibition, study, and original research of local history. The scope of museum artifacts is defined as:
  - i. **Time Period of Museum Artifacts:** Prehistory to 25 years prior to current times, which reflect significant Cedar Lake history.
  - ii. **Geographic Area of Museum Artifacts:** Cedar Lake, its environs and other areas as they affect Cedar Lake.
  - iii. **Examples of Museum Artifacts:**
    - a) Objects depicting rural life in Cedar Lake including social organizations, agriculture and farm tools, domestic activity, education and related businesses.
    - b) Folk art that reflects the lives and perspectives of traditional artists and crafts people in a variety of media.
    - c) Military objects comprising weapons, clothing, and accoutrements with particular emphasis given to regional involvement both at home and abroad.
    - d) Products designed or manufactured by Cedar Lake industries and businesses, including objects used in commerce, sales and operation.

Particular attention will be given to working class people and labor organizations.

- e) American Indian objects from prehistoric period to removal (1795-1840), excluding human remains and sacred objects, unless they are acquired to prevent further desecration.
  - f) Fine art comprised of landscapes, portraits and genre paintings that depict Cedar Lake history, particularly works of local artists.
  - g) Decorative arts made in Cedar Lake with particular emphasis upon clothing, furniture, textiles, furnishings, glass, ceramics and base metals.
  - h) Government objects that have been used in the operation of units of local government or have been produced under the auspices of government.
  - i) Cultural objects (ethnography) representative of Cedar Lake's ethnic groups, including materials related to immigration, migration and objects brought here from the Old World.
2. **Educational Collection:** An educational collection will be developed to allow visitors to handle reproduction or original artifacts purchased or donated for this function. This would also allow for the development of interactive exhibits. Items that match objectives 1 and 2, but are replicas can be used. Also, artifacts in the permanent collection that are redundancies and are in lesser condition can be used for this collection.
3. **Reproductions:** Reproductions will be acquired when originals are unavailable, when the use of an original in the collections would jeopardize the original artifact or for hands-on use. Reproductions will be marked, stored, repaired and recorded according to the collections manual.

#### IV. COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

- A. **Accession** Donor forms serve as a form of acceptance of an object. Every donation entering the CLHA collection is recorded on a notecard and then the *Registration Ledger*. Each object is given a registration number, which consists of the accession number, donor number and any other figures which identify an object. The book *Nomenclature* is used in the process. The nature of the object will determine how each object is marked. For example, the accession number of a glass bottle will be done by first applying a layer of white India ink, then writing the number on the surface and finally covering it with a coat of clear acrylic.
- B. **Numbering Systems** The numbering process used consists of the process described above. Eventually all objects will be entered electronically using the Past Perfect cataloging system.
1. **Archival Library:** All items will be marked with their accession and object identification numbers if they have them. Using **only** a number 2 graphite pencil the object identification number will be marked on the backside or last page of a document, book or photograph. The lower right corner will be marked first. If this corner is damaged, proceed in a clockwise direction until the next undamaged corner is found and place the number there. Film held in reels (ex: microfilm or VHS) will be marked on the reel using the same method as marking an object. **All object markings must be able to be made reversible.** Once the Archival Library is

developed, an inventory of all materials will be completed, so that those who use our facilities can determine what they wish to examine. This inventory will include a subject listing of general material contained in the vertical files (filing cabinets).

- 2. Museum Artifact Collection:** All objects in this collection are marked with their accession numbers respectively. Numbering most objects will be done by applying either a base of black or white India ink. It follows the same process as explained under **Accession**. All objects must be marked in a non-descript location, typically on the bottom or back. Different marking techniques need to be utilized for small items or items made with fragile materials. Textiles shall be marked using black India ink on muslin or twill cotton tape that is sewn to the item with a running stitch. Silk items should be encapsulated and marked. Objects that are too small for markings should be encapsulated or placed into an archival envelope, which will then be marked with the identification number. Large objects can also be marked using acid free tags affixed with loosely tied inert string. Any objects that have been marked inappropriately by previous volunteers or staff persons and whose markings cannot be reversed using archival cleaning solvents will be grandfathered into the system. Every piece of a multi-pieced object will be marked using a lettered system to keep that item intact.
- C. Found in Collection** Items found in the collection that never underwent a transfer of title, accessioning or never received an object identification number will be deemed “found in collection.” In order to segregate these objects and yet begin record keeping, these items will be given a particular numbering system to signify their status. The first accession number for each year will be reserved for objects found in collection (ex: 2013.001) and then marked with a running number (ex: 2013.001.001). To further identify these pieces the initials FIC (ex: FIC2013.055.0001) will be marked in addition of the identification number.
- D. Doorstep Donations and Undocumented Property** Doorstep donations refers to property left at the museum by anonymous donors when the museum is closed. Each item acquired through doorstep donations will go through a process in which the title of ownership is transferred to the museum. Without ownership, the museum will not do anything with the item, including conservation and deaccessioning. This follows Indiana’s Museum Property Law (I.C. 32-34-5). Undocumented property is property housed in the museum, in which an owner cannot be determined by reference to the museum’s records. These items must also go through a process of transferring the title of ownership.
- E. Cataloging** At present, the museum undertakes the cataloging process by entering records on notecards and in ledgers. As previously mentioned, eventually all records will be entered electronically with the use of the Past Perfect software.
- F. Condition Reports** A Condition Report will be developed to ensure accurate preservation of objects. The Condition Report also informs other institutions of object condition if loaned out.
- G. Collections in Storage** After each object has been legally transferred to CLHA and accessioned, it can be put into storage. Dedicated space for object storage is under development. Once each storage room is complete, a manifest of each room will detail accountability of recorded objects. For example, if a wedding dress is taken from

storage, it will be noted as removed, the reason for transfer, and the new location in the museum or other destination.

- 1. Containerized items:** Depending on the size, manufacture and material composition, the Collections Committee shall determine whether an item needs a storage container. Containerization requires making a specialized box, envelope or other barrier to protect an item from dust, pests or light. Items with material compositions of textiles, celluloid, taxidermy, paper and all photographs shall be stored in inert (acid free) containers. Objects with the primary composition of metal, wood, glass, plastic or ceramics shall be housed on open shelving. Items selected for containerization must be housed using safe materials, interior cushions and be well labeled on the container's exterior.
  - i.** Items of similar composition and classification will be ideally housed together in the same container. For example, all items classified as textile-working and made of similar material will share a container. Wood objects should not be stored in containers because of possible off-gassing or pest infestation.
  - ii.** Before an item is placed into a container, its contents should be laid out on a processing table to devise a plan of placement inside the box. Generally, items should not be placed on top of another without a cushion of ethafoam or tissue. Inside each box, items will have a storage mount created using inert materials as needed.
  - iii.** All containers will be labeled identifying the classification, storage room number, shelf number and a listing of their contents by nomenclature and object identification number.
  - iv.** At least two sides of the container will be labeled to identify any instructions to safely open its contents. Instructions should include fragile pieces, wrapping instructions and materials loosely held inside the box.
  - v.** Photographs or paper documents will be housed in archival safe folders, envelopes or polyester sleeves. These items shall be housed with one item per container. Individual documentary sheets can be housed together in the same folder, but shall have a barrier of archival buffered paper between each piece. Archival materials that are in folders or envelopes with the same composition can be stored in the same container.
  - vi.** Textiles over 4 feet long shall be considered for rolled textile storage. These items shall be rolled on inert cardboard tubes and then wrapped in muslin cloth to deter dust and pest infiltration. For identification, an inert paper label can be tied around the wrapped textile. Smaller textiles can be stored in containers as long as they are inspected and folded in different creases annually.
  - vii.** After a container is prepared for storage, the container will be stored on the same shelf as materials of similar composition and classification. The catalog or manifest will be updated with the room and shelf number to easily locate the item.
- 2. Open Shelving** All items with compositions of wood, metals, non-porous ceramics, glass, stone, framed artwork, bound volumes, oversized objects and brass shall be considered for open shelving.

- i. All objects of the same composition will be stored on the same shelf. Depending on the composition of storage shelves, a layer of ethafoam, archival paper or Tyvek should be used. If steel or aluminum shelves with baked-on enamel (powder coat) are used, some items may still need cushioning and/or support, depending upon the nature of the object. Mounts and supports can be stored alongside objects.
  - ii. Small items shall be stored in tray shelving or in inert cardboard tray systems made by museum staff.
  - iii. After an item is housed, its location shall be recorded in the catalog system.
- H. Incoming Accession/Isolation Room** This is the proper space for the isolation and cleaning of items before they are introduced into the collection to control all possible agents that are introduced into the building.
- I. Processing Room** The Processing Room is a designated location where the final accession process is completed, registration numbers are assigned, etc. Items move from here into an exhibit/display space or storage. This room itself shall never be used for storage. Only projects related to the collection are permitted. Any material not related to the processing of collections should be moved to a more appropriate space. Shelving should follow guidelines described in the **Open Shelving** section.
- J. Deaccessioning** Every deaccession will be approached with caution. Decisions to dispose of donated objects will be considered carefully in terms of the implications of the ethical responsibilities of being a public trust. The Deaccession Form must be used for each deaccession.

**Artifacts and specimens may be deaccessioned when:**

1. Accidental loss occurs (e.g. theft, breakage).
2. They lose their physical integrity.
3. They lose their authenticity and usefulness.
4. They cannot be cared for by CLHA.
5. They become redundant to CLHA's objectives.
6. They have conditions attached by the donor which CLHA cannot or chooses not to fulfill.
7. They are hazardous to the collections, staff or patrons.

Recommendation to deaccession objects will be initiated by the Collections Committee. The manner of disposal shall be in the best interest of CLHA, the public it serves, and the public trust placed in it. Therefore, every effort shall be made to ensure that the artifact remains in the public domain. Recommendations as to the most appropriate method of disposal will be made by the Collections Committee.

The Collections Committee will not approve disposal directly to CLHA board members, officers, staff or volunteer, a contractor or the families or other representatives of such persons.

**Acceptable methods of disposal include:**

1. Gift to another museum
2. Exchange with another museum

3. Public sale
4. Return to donor
5. Intentional discard

**Prior to deaccessioning the Collections Committee will:**

1. Complete a title search to determine CLHA ownership
2. Complete a Condition Report and fully catalogue the object
3. Photograph the object

Subsequent to deaccessioning an object, all collection records will be suitably amended. Deaccessioning forms must be completed in full according to this policy. All monies realized from the sale of deaccessioned objects will be deposited into the Collections Fund to be used to strengthen and expand the collection. All decisions made by the Collections Committee regarding deaccessions are final.

## **V. SAFE HANDLING AND PREVENTATIVE CONSERVATION**

Preventative conservation will assist in the longevity of the CLHA collection by taking measures to inspect and record the building's interior environment, properly handle objects and controlling the use of food and drink inside the museum. Museum staff, board members and volunteers must agree to adhere to these rules to maintain a professional stewardship of the collection. Safe handling and preventative conservation is a shared responsibility by all board members, museum staff and volunteers. The museum is currently under restoration; therefore, environmental control is virtually impossible at this time. In the future, windows will receive UV-filtering film. Nevertheless, the condition of items in the museum will be monitored and problems reported to the Collections Committee.

**A. Handling Objects** Accidental damage is a common occurrence by inappropriate handling of items. Objects in displays should not be moved under most situations except when changing, covering and cleaning displays. Some handling guidelines include:

1. Before moving an object, determine the condition of the object. If any paper objects are delicate, they might have to be supported by a thick sheet of polyester or an archival file folder.
2. Inspect the destination of the object and make sure it is clear of debris, is secured, stable and can properly support the object. If an item has a round base find an adequate support for it.
3. Do not place an item on top of another item.
4. If there are loose pieces to an item, move them separately.
5. Cotton or latex gloves should be worn when handling objects. Paper items can be moved by hand if someone washes their hands before handling them.
6. Move large items by the lowest load-bearing part or center of gravity. Lift a chair by its seat. Never drag or push furniture.
7. If furniture must be moved, remove objects that are on top that might be damaged.
8. Do not move heavy furniture without assistance.
9. Do not carry more than one item at a time. If numerous items are to be moved, a cart or tote with appropriate barriers is acceptable.



10. Museum-approved tape measures, used to measure items, should not contain any metal parts that can scratch items.

11. Use care and common sense when covering items at the end of each season.

**B. Controlling Food, Drink and Smoking** The control of food, drink and smoking is crucial to protect and preserve the building and the collection that is housed in the museum. There are three main concerns that result from irresponsible use of food and drink: (1) attraction of insects and rodents who may consume the collections, (2) accidental spills on the collection and (3) mold caused by irregular cleaning of food residue. These three elements are important to many museum and CLHA functions, but there are precautions that must be taken.

1. No food or drink is allowed in the building except in the working kitchen, the meeting room during public functions, and on the porch. A sign at the entrance should notify visitors that food and drink are not allowed in the museum.

2. Food should be stored in the refrigerator or in a sealed container. Food is not to be consumed while in transit through the building.

3. Any spills must be **immediately** and adequately cleaned.

4. During regular operation of the museum each season, the **trash must be removed daily**. Floors where food and drink is consumed must also be swept and cleared of any food residue, including and especially in the off-season.

5. **Smoking** There is absolutely no smoking allowed in the building or on the porch.

6. **Other** Use of floral and plant materials can attract pests and molds into the museum and should be used with caution.

**C. Conservation Treatment** Conservation is any intervention method to stabilize a permanent collection item that was damaged or has deteriorated.

Any conservation work shall be reversible and utilize methods that are minimally intrusive to the original composition of the item. Only trained museum staff or qualified volunteers shall conduct *basic* conservation treatments. Many items that need conservation require someone specially trained in a particular material and a professional conservator will be hired in those circumstances.

If conservation is necessary, a well-defined, written agreement between CLHA and the conservator is required. The agreement shall include the conservator's proposal, the time needed to complete the project and if the item has to be taken to the conservator's workspace. Conservation by outside conservators is expensive and is a large factor to consider. If conservation is performed on an item, the records of the treatment will be kept in the item's history folder.

## **VI. COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

**A. Value Assignments** Values will be assigned to artifacts for insurance purposes only. Value statements will be given by the Collections Committee. If appraisals are needed for tax purposes, an outside appraiser will be consulted. In the case of donations, the donor is responsible for the appraisal. Value will not be assigned for use by the IRS, given to the donor or given to the general public. If a donor requests a receipt for a donation, a copy of the Donor Form will serve this purpose.

- B. Risk Management** CLHA does not currently have a disaster preparedness plan for the collection in case of damage to any of the collection. A plan should be developed.
- C. Terms of Acquisitions** All acquisitions must include all legal title, without any limitation, condition or reservation together with any copyrights, permanently and forever. Above said legal title passes to CLHA upon completion of the Donor Form (including signatures). CLHA, individual board members, officers, staff and other volunteers denies responsibility for any object not dealt with in accordance with this policy.
- D. Records** The Collections Committee is responsible for proper record keeping. Proper records technique is explained herein. Objects collected prior to adoption of this policy will be dealt with according to the Museum Property Act of the State of Indiana.
- E. Collections Security** At present, the museum security system serves as an important component of collection security. Items in display cases have some security, by providing barriers between items and visitors. The remaining form of security is our museum staff, who monitor the building when on-site.

## **VII. ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS**

Collections will be available to the public through exhibits, publications and public programs. Collections will be available for special study upon request and approval of the Collections Committee. The public may take photographs of exhibits and displays, except any that are on loan from other institutions. Publication of documents, photographs or any museum records must be identified as property of the Lake of the Red Cedars Museum and CLHA. All copyrights remain with CLHA.

## **VIII. LOANS**

All loans, incoming or outgoing, will be processed on official agreement specifying terms, period, value, condition, purpose and insurance.

### **Incoming loans will be accepted under the following conditions:**

1. No permanent loans will be accepted.
2. Insurance is the responsibility of the owner.
3. Loans will be accepted only to fill exhibit needs in the collection (see *CLHA Collections Development Plan* – to be adopted in 2013).
4. Loan forms must be completed in full according to this policy.
5. Loan periods shall not exceed one year.
6. All loans must be approved by the Collections Committee.
7. Unclaimed loans will be handled in accordance with the Museum Properties Act of the State of Indiana.

### **Outgoing loans will meet the following conditions:**

1. No permanent loans will be authorized.
2. All outgoing loans must be approved by the Collections Committee
3. Insurance of objects on loan is the responsibility of the receiving institution. Proof of insurance is required.
4. Postage, freight, packing and handling costs are to be paid by the receiving institution.

5. All objects must carry a credit line to the Lake of the Red Cedars Museum and CLHA.
6. Loan periods shall not exceed one year.
7. Loans for commercial purposes or to commercial institutions will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the Collections Committee.
8. No loans will be made to public officials or other individuals for decorative or similar use.
9. Loan forms must be completed in full according to this policy.

## **IX. CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS AND ETHICS**

Staff members may acquire, collect and own objects of the same or similar nature as those collected by the museum, however, museum considerations must come first. No one may purchase objects for the museum and similar objects for themselves at the same time. Collections committee members should disclose to CLHA their collection activities. Museum and personal collections may not be comingled on or off the museum's premises unless loans are accepted as per policy. Board members, officers, staff and volunteers may not acquire museum deaccessions. Board members, officers, staff and volunteers may not use their official museum connections to foster their own collection activities. Board members, officers, staff and volunteers may deal in objects of any type except those types of objects collected by the museum. Board members, officers, staff and volunteers must use the museum's collections honestly and objectively. Board members, officers, staff and volunteers who create collections documentation may not have part or total ownership of the documentation.

**NAGPRA and Other Legal Issues** As stated in sections of this document, the Cedar Lake Historical Association, Inc. shall comply with all federal and state antiquity, archaeological and historic preservation laws, including the Museum Property Act of Indiana.