

NEWSTEAD
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Akron, New York

COLLECTIONS
MANAGEMENT POLICY

Adopted June 3, 2021

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Mission Statement

The Mission of the Newstead Historical Society is to ensure a sense of community by preserving and interpreting the Town's rich social and cultural history through education and programming.

B. Vision

The Vision of the Newstead Historical Society is that our museums be an integral part of the Newstead Historical Society's fulfillment of its Mission and contribute to, and provide a service for, our community.

C. History

The Newstead Historical Society (Society) was organized on February 13, 1958 when the constitution was signed. On April 29, 1960 the NYS Education Department granted the Newstead Historical Society a Provisional Charter and the Society was authorized to operate exclusively for educational purposes. On April 29, 1979 the NYS Board of Regents extended the 1960 Charter to authorize the purchase and restoration of the Rich-Twinn Octagon House built circa 1850 and to operate as an historic site and cultural center. In 1981 the Society acquired the Rich-Twinn Octagon House. On September 23, 1983 NYS made the 1960 Provisional Charter an Absolute Charter. The Rich-Twinn Octagon House was restored to its former glory and earned a place on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. The Society took possession of the house located at 123 Main Street, Akron, NY on December 23, 1997 and dedicated it as the Knight-Sutton Museum on July 5, 1998. The Newstead Historical Society is an entirely volunteer based organization.

D. The Permanent Collection

The Newstead Historical Society Permanent Collection is made up of materials, dating from Newstead and Akron's earliest days to the present, that enhance the public's understanding of the Town, Village and their inhabitants. The Permanent Collection also includes the buildings owned by the Newstead Historical Society and materials that reflect the historical nature of the buildings. The collection includes but is not limited to items in the following categories: items (i.e. historic structures, furniture, textiles, clothing, glass, wood, tools, ceramics, etc.); photographs (i.e. framed and unframed photos, tin types, film, negatives, etc.); archives (i.e. family records, deeds, certificates, receipts, documents, newspapers, etc.); and, library (i.e. books of all types).

E. The Program/Exhibit Collection

The Newstead Historical Society Program/Exhibit Collection is made up of materials that do not meet the criteria for inclusion in the Permanent Collection but have some historical significance or use in future museum exhibits.

F. Undocumented Property

In accordance with Section 233-AA of New York State Education Law: The Newstead Historical Society shall acquire all rights to undocumented property that is not solicited by the Society and that is delivered to the Society or left on Society premises if no person provides documentation or other evidence establishing an ownership interest in the property within ninety days of delivery of such property to the museum.

G. Location of Collections

The Newstead Historical Society Collections are currently housed at two properties operated by the Society. The artifacts housed at both properties will be considered part of the Newstead Historical Society Collections.

The Rich-Twinn Octagon House, located at 145 Main Street in the Village of Akron, New York houses the majority of the Permanent Collection's items. The Rich-Twinn Octagon House is operated as a historic house museum and is open to the public.

The Knight-Sutton Museum, located at 123 Main Street in the Village of Akron, New York houses the majority of the Permanent Collection's photographs, archives, and library and the Program/Exhibit Collection. The Knight-Sutton Museum is used for storage of artifacts, historic exhibits, and research and is open to the public.

II. GOVERNANCE

A. Role of the Collections Management Committee

The Collections Management Committee shall be charged with the management of the Collections and accept responsibility for the acquisition, deaccession, care, and conservation of material and items in the Collections. The Collections Management Committee shall seek Executive Board approval for the purchase of artifacts.

B. Role of the Curator or Collections Manager

The Curator or Collections Manager shall assemble a Collections Management Committee. The Curator or Collections Manager shall preside as chairperson of the Collections Management Committee and shall be responsible for documentation of the Newstead Historical Society's Collections. The Curator or Collections Manager shall be responsible for maintaining a back-up copy of the records of the Permanent Collection at an off-site location.

C. Role of the President

The President of the Newstead Historical Society shall appoint a Curator or Collections Manager with the approval of the Executive Board. The President shall participate with the Collections Management Committee on major acquisition and deaccession decisions.

III. PERMANENT COLLECTION

A. Acquisition

An acquisition is the full and absolute transfer of title of an item to the Newstead Historical Society by purchase, bequest, gift, or any other appropriate transaction.

To be accepted into the Society's collections, a potential acquisition must meet the following criteria:

1. The item must support the Newstead Historical Society's collecting objectives.
2. A written statement should be provided that includes the item's provenance and how and by whom the provenance was determined.
3. The item must be free from donor imposed restrictions unless agreed to in writing by the President of the Newstead Historical Society in consultation with the Collections Management committee.
4. The Society must be able to care for and display or store the item in an appropriate manner.
5. The item must be in reasonable condition. It must not require significant expense for repair or conservation in order to make it useful, unless the item is of historical importance and the repair or conservation is approved by the Executive Board.

All gifts to the Newstead Historical Society are tax deductible for the year in which they are donated. Donors are responsible for obtaining tax valuations by a qualified appraiser prior to completing the donation. No representative of the Newstead Historical Society may participate in the appraisal/valuation. Donors wishing the Newstead Historical Society to sign IRS forms documenting the donations must provide the President, Curator or Collections Manager with a copy of the appraisal along with the appropriate IRS forms.

Before the acquisition of an item by gift, the Newstead Historical Society shall inform the prospective donor of the provisions of this section and shall provide them a written copy of its mission statement and collections policy, which shall include policies and procedures related to deaccessioning. In lieu of a printed copy of these items, the prospective donor may be directed to the Newstead Historical Society's website.

B. Accession

Items acquired for the Permanent Collection will be accessioned according to standard procedures by the Curator or Collections Manager.

1. Permanent files shall be maintained that include all legal documents concerning each accession and its origin: i.e. deed of gift, relevant correspondence, conservation reports and deaccession records.
2. In addition, location, condition, conservation records, correspondence and research shall be filed for each accession.
3. These files will be separate from the files for the Program/Exhibit Collection.

C. Care and Preservation

The Newstead Historical Society has an obligation to protect its collections which are held for the benefit of those interested in the rich history of the Akron-Newstead community. The Society shall adhere to the following guidelines to the best of its ability.

Primary responsibility for the management of the collections has been delegated to the President, Curator or Collections Manager and Collections Management Committee by the Board. They shall, to the best of their ability:

1. Provide a stable environment in storage or on display by providing protection from excessive light, heat, humidity and dust according to the environmental needs of the various materials in the collections.
2. Provide protection against theft, fire and other disasters by security and a written disaster plan.
3. When possible, copy paper materials to a digital format and store in a separate location.
4. When necessary, take appropriate conservation measures of collection items with the advice of a trained conservator.

D. Deaccession

Deaccession is the process of permanently removing accessioned items from the Permanent Collection.

Items must meet one of the following criteria to be considered for deaccession:

1. The item is inconsistent with the mission of the Newstead Historical Society.
2. The item lacks physical integrity or has failed to retain its identity or authenticity.
3. The item has been lost or stolen and remains lost or stolen for more than two years.
4. The item duplicates other items in the Permanent Collection.
5. The Newstead Historical Society is unable to preserve or conserve the item in a responsible manner.
6. The item lacks provenance and can be readily obtained on the open market.
7. The item has been extensively repaired or has deteriorated beyond reasonable repair.
8. The Newstead Historical Society is returning the item to the donor or the donor's heirs.
9. The item presents a hazard to people or other collection items.

Before any item is deaccessioned reasonable efforts must be made to determine if any restrictions had been placed on the accessioned item. Any restrictions will be reviewed and complied with.

The Curator or Collections Manager and/or the Collections Management Committee is responsible for applying the above deaccession criteria. Deaccession will be documented by a written statement supporting the reason for deaccession and the recommended means of disposal. All deaccession decisions will be approved by the President and the Curator or Collections Manager.

E. Disposal

Disposal is the process of getting rid of a deaccessioned item.

1. Means of Disposal of Deaccessioned Item(s):
 - a. Transfer to the Program/Exhibit Collection
 - b. Sell or trade to another non-profit organization
 - c. Sell at public auction or sale
 - d. Return to the donor or donor's family
 - e. Physical destruction if the item is infested, disintegrating, or in extremely poor condition
2. No item being deaccessioned shall be given, sold, or otherwise transferred publicly or privately to any Newstead Historical Society member or an immediate family member unless prior written approval is granted by the Executive Board.
3. All proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned items shall be deposited to the Newstead Historical Society General Fund and shall be earmarked for the acquisition, preservation, protection, or direct care of the Permanent Collection.
4. All records relating to deaccessioned items shall be marked "deaccessioned" and retained.

IV. LOANS

A. Outgoing Loans

1. The borrowing individual, organization or institution shall use the borrowed item(s) solely for educational, scholarly or cultural purposes.
2. The loan shall be documented on a Newstead Historical Society loan form signed by both parties. All documents relating to the loan shall be retained in the appropriate file.
3. The borrower shall be responsible for any damage or loss to the loaned item and shall take appropriate precautions to protect the item.
4. At the end of the loan period, the borrower shall return the item only to an authorized representative of the Newstead Historical Society. The loan document will indicate the date returned, the condition of the item and include the signature of both parties.
5. All costs for outgoing loans shall be the responsibility of the borrower.

B. Incoming Loan

1. The Newstead Historical Society may borrow items or materials for its exhibits, study or research. Materials may be borrowed for duplication with the permission of the owner. Care and security will be given to the item(s) equal to that given the Permanent Collection.
2. Approval of the Curator or Collections Manager must be obtained prior to the solicitation of borrowed item(s). The Exhibit Research and Design Team and/or the Collections Management Committee shall initiate all incoming loans. Loans will be documented on the Newstead Historical Society loan form signed by both parties, unless an institution requires use of its loan form. All documents relating to the loan shall be retained in the appropriate file.
3. The lender is responsible to notify the Newstead Historical Society of a change of address or change of ownership of the loaned item(s). If, at the end of the loan term the Newstead Historical Society is unable to contact the lender, the Newstead Historical Society will initiate action as allowed by the State of New York's abandoned property law.

V. ACCESS TO THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

Access to the permanent collection will only be granted by the Curator or Collections Manager at her/his discretion.

VI. PROGRAM/EXHIBIT COLLECTION**A. Acquisition**

The Program/Exhibit Collection holds items intended for use in the education and exhibit programing of the Newstead Historical Society. It is a collection of disposable items for use in hands-on programs. These items can also be used to complement Permanent Collection displays, can be used when original artifacts are not available or where fragile original artifacts would be placed at risk.

1. Acquisitions for the Program/Exhibit Collection shall meet the criteria identified in Section III. Permanent Collection A. Acquisition.
2. No item acquired for inclusion in the Program/Exhibit Collection shall be accessioned into the Permanent Collection.
3. All records pertaining to the acquisition, location, care and disposal of items in the Program/Exhibit Collection shall be maintained by the Curator or Collections Manager. These records shall be separate from the files for the Permanent Collection.

B. Disposal

Since items in the Program/Exhibit Collection are meant to be used, and therefore disposable, lost or broken items or items that can no longer be used shall be reported to the Curator or Collections Manager. The Curator or Collections Manager will make the determination as to the disposition of these items.