

Historic Wrightsville, Inc. Collections Policy

A. Statement of purpose.

Historic Wrightsville Inc., from this point forward referred to as HWI or the Museum, is organized and operated to promote an interest in the history of the community and to encourage the preservation of historic sites, structures, artifacts, and memorabilia of the community, defined as Wrightsville Borough and the surrounding area. HWI is a registered 501 (C) 3 nonprofit entity.

B. Purpose and scope of the collections policy.

The collection policy will be used as the guiding document for the development and management of the collection. It will explain how HWI may acquire and dispose of items and define when the Museum will, and will not accept items. HWI does not have the power to appraise items prior to acceptance and does not assign monetary value to such items for IRS purposes.

C. What the Museum will collect:

The collections of Historic Wrightsville will consist of both permanent and teaching collections. Permanent collections consist of those in fair to excellent condition that are well documented or unique. These items will be accessioned, catalogued, and deaccessioned when deemed appropriate. Teaching collections consist of items suitable for staff-directed educational purposes only and may be used until no longer useful and then disposed. Items will be collected based on these criteria.

1. Key themes:

a. History and development of Wrightsville Borough from 1700 to the present, including businesses, churches, industry, people, schools, transportation, and organizations.

b. The role of the Susquehanna River in the settlement and continuing development of Wrightsville from a "gateway to the west" to the present.

c. The Confederate invasion of Wrightsville in 1863.

d. The history of the Historic Wrightsville Inc. organization.

2. Geographic area, defined as the Wrightsville Borough, Long Level, Hellam Township, Lower Windsor Township, East Prospect, Columbia, Marietta, York County and the bordering Susquehanna River basin.

3. Type of items to be collected:

a. Including but not limited to maps, documents, genealogies, prints, photographs, diaries, letters, books, scrapbooks, business records, ledgers, postcards, paintings, textiles, and three dimensional objects representing key themes. Acceptance of an item does not guarantee that it will be placed on display. HWI does not currently have the facilities to store large agricultural, industrial, organizational, church, school or business items. Oversize items will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis due to storage limitations.

D. Accessibility:

Collections and records will be accessible to the general public through Museum displays, tours and other educational programs. Articles not on display may be made available for study to visitors and researchers by appointment.

E. Method of acquisition:

HWI shall acquire items for its collections by donation, gift, purchase, bequest or transfer from another historical society. Items of exceptional historical significance with restrictions and conditions will be accepted on a case-by-case basis. All items, with the exception of those acquired on the case-by-case basis, become the property of HWI and are obtained free and clear of obligation for use and future disposition. Items will be accepted into the Museum collections only upon the recommendation of both Co-historians. When in dispute, the Museum committee as defined by HWI bylaws, will make the final decision upon majority vote. This recommendation will be shared with the BOD for final consideration. Unaccessioned items, acquired by donation, gift or bequest, become the property of HWI and may be used or disposed of, by HWI as deemed appropriate

Acquisition Criteria:

1. Relevance - the museum only collects items that relate to the museum's purpose and key collecting areas.
2. Significance - priority is given to items which are significant for their historic, aesthetic, scientific/research or social/spiritual value.
3. Provenance and documentation - priority will be given to items where the history of the item is known and associated documentation and support material can be provided.
4. Condition, intactness, integrity - the condition of the item must be taken into consideration when acquiring material. Badly damaged items will not normally be accepted into the collection.
5. Interpretive potential - items which tell a story that adds to the interpretation of Museum themes will be prioritized.
6. Rarity - items may be prioritized if they are rare examples of a particular kind of object.
7. Representativeness - items may be prioritized if they are an excellent representative example of a particular kind of object.
8. Duplications - items that duplicate those already in the collection will not be accepted unless they are of superior condition and or historic value. In such a case, the duplicate may be considered for deaccessioning.
9. Legal requirements - the Museum only accepts items where the donor/vendor has legal title to the item.
10. Storage - items for which the Museum cannot provide proper storage, protection, and preservation, will not be accepted.

F. Collection Care: Documentation, conservation and storage

The museum aims at all times to maintain an effective documentation system. Donor forms, accession records, electronic files and inventory information will be kept at the museum, as well as off site in the event of natural disaster.

Documentation process:

1. Owner or agent brings the item to the museum. A deed of gift is issued to the owner, recording the item(s), address of the owner, contact number and date. Owner and co-historian sign form.

2. Notes on the history and associations of the item(s) will be taken for the co-historians to consider when assessing the item(s). Written notes/history in the owner's own hand will also be accepted.

3. Co-Historians assess the donation for inclusion in the Museum collection; their decision is documented; whether permanent, teaching collection or disposal.

4. Items accepted into the permanent Museum collection must be accessioned, i.e. numbered and cataloged. Where documentation relating to the significance of the item is available, it will be recorded on the accession record and electronic listing.

5. The item(s) and item(s) number(s) is/are listed under the name of the donor in the donor files. Items are cross referenced by year, record number, and subject in the electronic files.

6. Hard copies of the same information, as is recorded in PP the electronic database are maintained in notebooks at the museum with an additional copy kept off site.

Conservation and Storage:

The Museum aims to achieve best standards of collection care and storage.

Storage areas must remain clean, secure and protected from the weather.

Temperature in relative humidity should be kept as stable as possible.

Access to storage areas is to be controlled.

Ultraviolet light should be excluded from storage areas. When storage areas are not in use, lights must be turned off.

Archival quality storage materials should be used for all significant material.

Storage areas must be regularly checked for pests and other problems.

Objects should not be stored on the floor.

Untrained personnel should never attempt to clean, treat or restore museum objects.

G. Deaccessioning and disposal procedures - Deaccessioning is the administrative process of removing an item from the collection.

1. Criteria for deaccessioning

The item does not comply with the current collection policy of the museum.

The item is damaged beyond repair.

The conservation and storage costs for the item are beyond the means of the museum.

The item is a lesser quality duplicate of an object the Museum already owns. It lacks any supporting information to enable proper identification, or to establish its relevance to the collection.

2. Formal deaccession procedure.

- a. The object identified for removal from the collection must come before the Museum committee for consideration with close reference to the criteria stated above.
- b. The Museum committee will determine if the object is to be sold, transferred to another historical museum, placed in the teaching collection or destroyed.
- c. The object identified for deaccession must be held for a six month "cooling off" period before it is finally disposed of; this allows for further investigation, new evidence and clearance of any obligations.
- d. Staff, volunteers, and their families are discouraged from purchasing or otherwise obtaining a deaccessioned object. Museum committee members, involved with this process, are prohibited from obtaining a deaccessioned object, unless purchased at public sale for fair market price.
- e. Any funds acquired from the sale of the deaccessioned item shall be earmarked and be used for acquisitions or care of the collection.

H. Loans

Permanent and long-term loans, described as one in which ownership is retained by the donor, will generally not be accepted by the Museum. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis when deemed appropriate.

The museum may lend and borrow material to help meet its purpose.

The museum holds separate forms for inward and outward loans; each filed separately from the general collection files, both in paper and in electronic form.

The maximum loan period is 12 months.

I. Inward Loans

Inward loans, the temporary lending of historical items to the Museum, shall only be accepted for specific exhibitions or research and for fixed periods of time.

Inward loans shall be recorded in a separate loan register and in electronic form.

A co-historian and the lender will be required to sign an agreed inward loan form. Each party will hold a copy of this agreement. This form will record conditions of the loan and the period of the loan.

The Museum agrees to exercise the same care with respect to loans as it does for its own collection.

Loans shall remain in the possession of the museum for the time specified on the form.

The Museum can request to renew loans if required. Documentation recording renewal must be signed by the co-historian and the lender.

J. Outward Loans

The museum will lend objects to other museums and organizations holding collections, with current collections policies in place. It will not loan to private collectors.

Borrowers and a Co-historian from the Museum will be required to sign two outward loan agreement forms. Each party will hold a copy of this agreement. This form will record condition of the loan and the period of the loan.

The borrower must exercise care in the handling, transportation, storage, and the display of the loan object and must be prepared to meet the conditions outlined in the outward loan agreement.

The borrower will provide a secure, display and/or storage area.

The maximum loan is 12 months. Applications for extension of this must be made no less than 30 days prior to the loan expiration date. Failure to do so will result in legal repossession of said item(s).

Objects cannot be treated or altered in anyway without the written permission of the museum.

Loans will remain in the sole possession of the borrower until return to the museum.

K. Oral history policy - An oral history agreement is signed by the person interviewed, which clearly states the purpose and intended uses of the interview and what copyright provisions apply.

Oral histories will be transcribed into text format for interpretive and storage purposes.

Oral histories will be kept electronically, if possible.

L. Access - The collection is accessible to the public through regular open hours and by appointment. The collection records are accessible for research purposes by appointment.

M. Collection policy review - every 3 years, unless deemed necessary by majority vote of either the Museum Committee or the Board of Directors. Changes made between review years will be listed as footnotes or addendums in this document.

N. Date of Endorsement – September 22, 2025