

# Collection Policy and Procedures of the Great Cranberry Island Historical Society (GCIHS) (April 2020)

(Background: This document was developed in 2018 from GCIHS existing policy, Seal Cove Auto Museum's 2016 Collections policy, and MDIHS policy which were shared with History Trust members in March 2018. It was revised and updated in 2019 and **approved by GCIHS Board 4/19/20.**)

The Great Cranberry Island Historical Society (GCIHS) collects, preserves, and studies the history and genealogy of Great Cranberry and its neighboring islands, and presents diverse cultural and educational programs. The GCIHS promotes a strong sense of community through its museum, archives, café, gift shop, recyclables shop, kids' recreational center and lively arts center at the Cranberry House. The grounds also include two public access trails to the shore, three gardens, two ponds, and Sammy Sanford's Cabin. Every day during the summer, GCIHS' free shuttle carries visitors from the town dock down the length of the island and back.

## Mission Statement and Overview of Collections Policy

### A. Mission:

The purpose of the Great Cranberry Historical Society (AKA Great Cranberry Island Historical Society) (AKA GCIHS) is the collection, preservation, presentation and study of the history of Great Cranberry Island, Maine, and of the other islands that make up the body of Cranberry Isles. These include Little Cranberry Island (Islesford), Sutton Island, Bear Island, and Baker Island. The GCIHS will promote this purpose by oral interviews, collection and care of materials, provision of facilities for the display and preservation of such materials, support for studies and publications, and other appropriate cultural enrichment activities. (From GCIHS By-laws Adopted 9 October 2011)

1. As a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization founded in 1993, the Museum's collection serves to educate the public about the history of the Cranberry Isles through exhibits, websites, public programs and events. GCIHS also serves as a resource for scholars, school children, and other interested parties. As part of its commitment to education, artifacts are loaned for exhibits and display to other museums and organizations that have facilities for the safe and accessible viewing of the loaned artifacts.
2. The core collection focuses on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and GCIHS continues to collect modern artifacts pertaining to the Cranberry Isles.

### B. Process of Establishing Policy:

1. This Collections Policy was researched and drafted by current and previous archivists and the President and Manager of the GCIHS. The Archives Committee, composed of the President, Archivist, Manager and other GCIHS members, reviewed and commented on the policy. This draft was submitted to the Board of Directors for comments and adoption in [April]

2018. Formal approval of this policy by the GCIHS Board validates the authority of this document, which is managed and enforced by the President.

2. This Collections Policy is to be considered a working document. Any errors, omissions, or other necessary changes will be identified and corrected by staff and/or the President, presented to the Archives Committee, and approved by the Board of Directors in a timely manner. An affirmative vote of 75% of the total membership of the Board of Directors is required for approval of changes to this policy.

C. General Responsibilities for the Collections:

1. The collection is owned by the GCIHS. Administration for and care of the collection is managed by staff in accordance to the policies and guidelines outlined in this policy.
2. The Board of Directors of the GCIHS is ultimately responsible for the care and preservation of all collections. On an annual basis, the Board, through its Finance Committee, establishes a budget to support care and development of the collections of the GCIHS. The Archives Committee, working with the professional staff, establishes the priorities for care, and approves/disapproves loans, acquisitions, and deaccessions.
3. The GCIHS Archivist reports to the President and is responsible for everyday administration of collection-related activities including managing collections records, condition reporting, storage and conservation of artifacts, providing public access to collections both online and in-house, and exhibition planning and development, as assigned. The Archivist and/or President provide reports to the Archives Committee as needed.
4. The GCIHS strives to provide professional care and documentation for all collections and loans, and keeps current with conservation, preservation, and industry standards through professional development and training, and a strong network of peers.

Role of Archives Committee:

The standards for collection acquisitions are outlined in this policy under Acquisitions. All acquisitions are managed on a case-by-case basis by the Archives Committee. The Archives Committee has authority to accept or reject objects for the collection.

The Archivist will review loans, acquisitions and collecting plans, deaccession proposals, and present recommendations to the Archives Committee; review and recommend collection-related policies, assist in the development of plans relating to

collections; and will report activities of the Archives Committee to the Board of Trustees.

The Archives Committee of the GCIHS is a Committee of the Board of Directors. All committee members must be members of the GCIHS appointed by the President who is also a member of the committee; the Archivist serves as Chair.

### The GCIHS Collection:

The GCIHS collection occupies rooms on the first floor of the Cranberry House, where items are on exhibit in the Preble-Marr Museum, and is stored in the building's basement where the staff work space is located. The collection consists of documents, photographs, artifacts, and genealogical information about the life and times of those living on the Cranberry Isles (especially Great Cranberry Island) from the early 1700s to the present.

As of May 2017, the archive contains approximately:

150 historical and ethnographic items including furniture, tools, and textiles

50 individual ceramic and glass objects

40 art objects § 400 photographs, all processes

50 scrapbooks, albums, and pamphlets

100 audio and video items, mostly oral histories

60 linear feet of unbound archival records

20 maps and other oversized items

25 linear feet of unprocessed materials

12 linear feet of bound volumes, including town records

2,000 un-cataloged digital photos

(Figures are from May 2017 assessment conducted by HistoryIT and History Trust)

### Collections Care

The GCIHS is committed to improving its collections and curatorial management practices to meet the standards outlined in its May 2017 HistoryIT assessment. (Attachment 1)

1. Care for the collection and all objects on loan to GCIHS will meet the highest standards possible given the resources and facilities of GCIHS. Collections storage and data management systems are presently being upgraded to reflect industry standards. All objects are entered into collections management software with condition and images available.

### Risk Management

Note: See GCIHS Collections Emergency/Recovery Plan (April 2020) developed specifically for the Archives area (not the whole building) for how to proceed in event of a disaster involving the collections.

1. Priority shall always be given to the safety of the staff and visitors. See Manager's operational plan for procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.
2. The building is equipped with security and fire detection systems, smoke detection systems, emergency lights, fire extinguishers, and an overhead sprinkler system. All staff and volunteers are to be trained on emergency response.
3. The Cranberry House has a passcode door lock system that is activated whenever the building is unstaffed. Keyed and coded access is granted by the President or Manager to staff, certain contractors, and others as deemed appropriate. (The Carriage Shed, Smart Shack (children's recreational building), Whale's Tale Gift Shop, and Sanford Cabin have neither security nor fire alarms at present. [Note: Only the Carriage Shed and Sanford Cabin have collections artifacts in them.]
4. The GCIHS carries insurance on its collections including all items on loan. Collections coverage includes artifacts on site, off site, and in transit. The amount of liability coverage should be reviewed annually upon policy renewal. Insurance for the collection should be reviewed by the Board periodically.

D. Accessioning:

Acquisitions:

- General Statements: As defined in the GCIHS Mission Statement – “The purpose of the Great Cranberry Historical Society is the collection, preservation, presentation and study of the history of Great Cranberry Island, Maine, and of the other islands that make up the body of Cranberry Isles.”
- GCIHS actively collects and preserves materials that tell the story of these islands from a variety of perspectives through changing times.
- The GCIHS seeks additions to its collections that will further its mission. Given the limited nature of storage and exhibit space in the current facility, potential acquisitions will be accepted only if the material is directly relevant to the mission and vision of the GCIHS.

In the future, the Archives Committee will work on a Collections Plan which will identify interpretive stories the Museum seeks to tell and consider which artifacts it would like to collect or borrow for future exhibits

Acquisitions will be evaluated using the following conditions:

1. Accessions must meet the mission of the Museum.
2. Accessions must present a unique and compelling story that complements, and does not overlap with, existing collections.
  - Physical condition of materials: The GCIHS must be able to provide adequate care for the object as determined by established, professional standards;
  - Care for this object must not compromise GCIHS' ability to care for other portions of the collection;
  - The object must be of the highest possible quality in terms of stability and condition, or in provenance.
3. Terms and Conditions:
  - The owner of an object offered to the GCIHS must have clear and legal title to that object. Clear title must be transferred to the GCIHS with the gift, including all copyrights if applicable.
  - No object will be knowingly or willingly accepted by the GCIHS if the object was illegally imported or illegally obtained in the U.S. as determined by local, city, state, federal, or other laws, regulations, treaties or conventions, [also see GCIHS Ethics Policy TBD]. No object will be knowingly accepted if there is evidence that its collection involved the illegal destruction of historic sites, buildings, structures, or artifacts.
    - The GCIHS will not accept any material with the condition that it must be permanently displayed, and gifts will be made without encumbrance of any restrictions. Any proposed restrictions on donated articles must be approved by the Archives Committee before acceptance.

Authority:

1. The President will receive recommendations for acquisitions from volunteers, staff, Board members and others for consideration. The President will review the information and pass it on to the Archives Committee for confirmation that it meets the criteria of this Collection Policy. The Archives Committee determines whether the GCIHS should choose to accept the object. If approved by the Archives Committee, a Deed of Gift will be prepared to complete the acquisition. The GCIHS Deed of Gift is the legal article of conveyance.
2. Certain items, such as an article of clothing, books, photographs, or tools, with an estimated value of less than \$100 (100 hundred dollars) that are deemed to be of interpretive use by the Archivist do not need to be submitted to the Archives Committee for approval.

3. Gifted items that require an outside appraisal subject to IRS regulation require approval of the Board of Trustees based upon recommendation by the Archives Committee.
4. The Archivist is responsible for overseeing policies that manage the collection, working in partnership with the Archives Committee to review loans and potential acquisitions/deaccessions, make recommendations related to conservation, and report to the Archives Committee about collections related topics.
5. The Committee will also review acquisitions that require special consideration. Such considerations include:
  - Materials that may not clearly meet the collecting criteria;
  - Materials that will require exceptional use of institutional resources;
  - Materials which are to be accepted with restrictions or unusual donor conditions.
6. The Archivist, with the aid of Archives Committee volunteers, is responsible for processing all acquisitions for the collections, completing all administrative tasks relating to this process, and providing the Archives Committee with a report of all acquisitions.
7. The Archives Committee will keep the GCIHS Board members informed regarding matters relating to collections acquisitions.

#### Procedures:

The GCIHS may acquire objects by purchase, donation, bequest or transfer. Purchases shall be made from current budget allocations, monetary gifts for such purposes, income from designated funds, or special allocations by the Board of Trustees from operating or unrestricted funds.

- A line for acquisitions may be built into the annual operating budget or the GCIHS Board may prefer to finance acquisitions in a different manner. In this case, the Finance Committee and the Archives Committee will make a proposal to the entire Board for approval by the President.

#### Donations:

- A Deed of Gift, acknowledging transfer of title, will be issued to the donor. Prior to making the gift, the donor is legally responsible for obtaining an

appraisal, if desired, for tax purposes. No staff or Board member can appraise items offered to the GCIHS for any reason.

- Bequests are encouraged by the GCIHS, but the GCIHS also reserves the right to renounce its interest in property left under a testamentary instrument, by the laws of intestacy, contract or trust. Renunciation of interest will be done nine (9) months after the official notification of the bequest.
- Items may be acquired by transfer to the GCIHS from the collections of another institution.
- Many items acquired by GCIHS in its early years have no apparent documentation or known provenance and so are “undeeded.” Over the years great effort has been expended to discover their provenance but many such items still remain.
- Presently, many items are donated to GCIHS when island houses change ownership and the new owner wishes to be rid of things left behind. In these cases we know the donor and attempt to interpret the historical significance of the donation based on knowledge of past residents and local history.
- In the future, if objects are found in the collection with no records concerning the source, GCIHS will work to comply with the abandoned property laws of the State of Maine to seek to transfer the legal title of the material to the GCIHS.
- No donations will be accepted by the GCIHS without transfer of legal title.

#### E. Deaccessioning

From time to time, objects that are outside the scope of the GCIHS collecting interest may be found within the collection. These items will be identified as candidates for deaccessioning.

The GCIHS recognizes the process of removing objects from the collection is an irreversible action that can only be approved after careful deliberation. Realizing these inherent consequences, the GCIHS staff and Board will attempt to identify any possible future uses for the artifacts in question.

The GCIHS will make every reasonable effort to ascertain that it has clear and free title to the item in question. Deaccessions will not be processed unless clear title to the object is established. In any case where restrictions or restrictive agreements seem to apply, the advice of independent counsel will be sought.

Note: There is a difference between *rejecting* an item offered for donation and *deaccessioning* an item catalogued in the GCIHS collection. GCIHS accepts items from donors 'pending approval of the Archives Committee' for which a Deed of Gift is signed with the caveat that if an item or items in a donation are rejected by the Committee, GCIHS can dispose of the donated item(s) appropriately. Donations "pending archives committee approval" are kept separately from the catalogued collections until review by the Archives committee, and decisions to accept or reject items are recorded in the notes of Archives Committee meetings.

If rejected items are sold on-site at the Sea Wind 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Recycled Shop, or on-line via E-Bay, at least 50% of the proceeds must go to the GCIHS General Operations Account or the Capital Campaign Account. [Money made from selling a collections item should go back to maintenance of the collection.] Neither the Archivist nor a member of the Board of Trustees may purchase these rejected items.

Criteria for deaccessioning:

- a. The material no longer fits the mission of the museum.
- b. The material is outside the scope of the collections as defined in the acquisitions criteria.
- c. The material is a duplicate or redundant copy.
- d. The material lacks physical integrity and cannot be reasonably conserved.
- e. The material threatens the physical safety of the staff, visitors, or facility or other collections and this condition cannot be remedied.
- f. A better example of the material has been acquired by the GCIHS.
- g. The GCIHS cannot properly care for the material.

Procedure for deaccession:

1. The Archivist will propose an object for deaccessioning by submitting a written proposal to the Archives Committee. If the Archives Committee agrees, the proposal moves on to the Board.
2. Any rejected recommendation may be reconsidered by the Board at a later meeting.

Disposition:

The GCIHS will attempt to place deaccessioned items with another educational institution or museum if possible. Approved methods include donation to or exchange with the other institution. If this is not possible, one of the following options will be considered:

- Sale to the public. In this case, neither the Archivist nor current members of the Board of Trustees may purchase the item. This ensures no conflict of interest.
- Disposal or donation to another public non-profit organization.

Any income from deaccessioned artifacts will be placed in a designated fund for maintenance of the GCIHS collections.

Documentation:

- All records, including the acquisition files, catalogue sheets, etc., pertaining to the deaccessioned item shall be marked DEACCESSIONED with the date of authorization and kept in perpetuity.
- Information regarding the final disposition of the item and amount of consideration received shall be included on the permanent records, which will then contain the entire history of the item while in custody of the GCIHS.
- These records become part of the permanent files of the GCIHS.

F. Access to collections:

- The GCIHS is committed to providing public access to its museum and resource collections by telling the story of the Cranberry Isles by means of museum and online exhibitions, public programs and special events, and research activities.
- Procedures and rules for public access are designed to support appropriate use of historical collections, while ensuring the highest possible standards of care and preservation of the collection.
- The GCIHS staff manages procedures for public access. If at any time, in the judgment of staff, the safety of the collections is compromised by anyone, staff may act to mitigate the situation. The circumstances of the

incident will immediately be reported to the President, who will then pursue appropriate actions.

- All visitors, vendors, researchers, family members, trades people, and the general public will be accompanied by a GCIHS person when in a non-public collection area.
- GCIHS images may be used for non-profit purposes with GCIHS cited as the source. Use in commercial endeavors requires permission. Citations should read: Courtesy Great Cranberry Island Historical Society, Cranberry Isles, Maine, gcihs.org – with the catalogue number of the item/photo when possible.

G. Loans: outgoing and incoming:

- All loans will have a detailed condition report completed upon entering and exiting the building, which will be recorded in the GCIHS collections management software.

Outgoing:

Outgoing loans are an important way of broadening public awareness of the GCIHS. The GCIHS loan policy is designed to ensure the safety of any items loaned from the collection.

Criteria: Items will be loaned from the GCIHS for exhibition, research, events, and educational program purposes. The GCIHS Archivist, in conjunction with the President, will oversee loan requests after their receipt.

Outgoing loans are initiated by a written request from the interested party. In problematic or extraordinary loan situations, the Archives Committee will refer the matter to the Board for a final decision.

Loan requests will be evaluated on an individual basis and may be approved or declined on the following:

- Length of loan period;
- Exhibition facilities and environmental conditions;
- Physical condition of the object requested;
- Prior commitment for use of object at the GCIHS or elsewhere;
- Other considerations as the situation warrants.

All loan requests will be processed, documented, and monitored by the Archivist. The terms and conditions of all outgoing loans are printed on the loan form and must be agreed upon by the institution requesting the loan. Knowledge of the suitability of the borrower's facility or a Standard Facilities Report (AAM) or equivalent detailing the borrower's institution is a requirement.

Incoming:

Objects from other institutions may be borrowed for temporary exhibition, long-term exhibition or for a special research project. No objects will be accepted for "permanent or indefinite loan" periods. All loans will be renewed on an annual basis and all conditions of incoming loans are printed on the back of the loan form. The GCIHS will exercise the same care and responsibility in respect to loaned items as it does in the safekeeping of comparable collections of its own.

All items on loan to the GCIHS will be fully insured for the value stated by the lender, or by appraisal if required by the insurance company.

I. Environmental Monitoring and Pest Management [Note: Manager will update this section when the new building addition is up and running in 2020.]

- The collections are maintained in a basement setting with a modicum of temperature-control. Heat and air conditioning fluctuate but are available all year through a wall-mounted unit. However, the museum does not have air conditioning or heat.
- Dehumidifiers are used in an attempt to maintain a fairly consistent relative humidity in the basement summer and winter. Air circulation and filtration should be improved to circulate airflow and reduce the risk of mold and pests.
- All necessary precautions will be taken to ensure the collections are reasonably protected. However, at present a three-sided shed houses a large buckboard and two dinghies leaving them unsecure and minimally protected from the elements. The Sanford Cabin has minimal protection from the elements, while the Shaw cabin fares better.
- Food and live plants will be limited inside the building to events, and programs, and staff comfort. All food and live plants will be removed from open spaces and garbage cans in the archives and museum at the end of each day.
- Dishes from events and staff must be cleaned or removed from the building at the end of each day.

- Pest monitoring will take place during collections inventory or through regular collections care.
- In case of an infestation, the object will be vacuumed with the special Nilfisk collections vacuum and monitored. In case of an active infestation, the President will be notified immediately, and an action plan will be developed. The preferred method of eradication is freezing the object outside in cold winter conditions. In extreme situations, anoxic or chemical options may be necessary.

#### J. Inventory

- Beginning in 2021, an annual inventory will be conducted of the collection, including condition reports.
- The Archivist will provide the Board annual condition reports on the collection each December, with the inventory likely conducted in October after the summer season.
- Condition reports and inventory results will be recorded in the collections management software.
- In the event that an object comes up missing during inventory, staff will immediately alert the President, who will report to the Archives Committee if the item is determined to be lost.

#### L. Conclusion

The collections at the GCIHS represent a unique historical and cultural resource. This Policy is to be reviewed and revised by the Archives Committee every five years, or sooner if significant changes to operations, facility, or collections take place.