



## **MARTHA'S VINEYARD MUSEUM**

### **Collections Development and Acquisitions Policy**

The Collections Development and Acquisitions Policy supplements the 2003 Collections Policy, by establishing procedures for the management and care of collections owned by the Martha's Vineyard Museum (MVM).

This policy statement provides a description of subjects and formats that the Museum seeks to collect in accordance with its mission to “promote interest and understanding of the Island’s unique cultural, physical and historical characteristics.” The focus of our collections is on items that contribute to recording, demonstrating, and/or interpreting the history of the Island. Furthermore, the MVM seeks to continue to “grow” its collection appropriate to the study of the history of Martha’s Vineyard.

To ensure the proper implementation of this new policy, the Collections Development and Acquisitions Policy outlines specific staff responsibilities and procedures. This policy statement will be reviewed annually by the Collections Committee so as to remain current with scholarly and educational trends as well as curatorial and archival best practices.

#### **Accessions (additions to the collection):**

The Museum shall follow current ethical standards as set down by the American Association of Museums, American Library Association, and the Society of American Archivists in regard to acquiring and deaccessioning collection items.

#### **Criteria for Acquisition:**

Items to be considered, whether as gifts, bequests, exchanges or purchase shall be judged before acceptance for:

- their value in relation to the history of Martha’s Vineyard
- whether or not the same item/items already exist in the collection
- their potential usefulness for research or exhibition relative to the history of Martha’s Vineyard
- the Museum’s capacity to preserve, store and if appropriate, exhibit the item
- the item is unencumbered by donor restrictions/provisions
- the adherence to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 – no Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects or objects of cultural patrimony will be accepted

An item which does not meet the above criteria but which could be used through exchange or sale to acquire another item of historical significance to the Martha's Vineyard Museum or to make a cash deposit to the collection fund for such a purpose or which is felt to be of specific value to the Museum may also be considered

**Nature of Ownership:**

Items may be added to the collections by means of gifts, bequests, purchases, or any appropriate transaction by which full and absolute title is effectively transferred to the MVM. The Museum shall not accept for accessioning items and collections on "deposit," or "long-term, indefinite or permanent loan," or in any manner whereby the Museum is not the owner of the items, except in a unique instance when the Collections Committee approves of such an arrangement for a uniquely valuable item or collection that would further the MVM's mission.

Acquisition of items shall be accompanied by documentary evidence warranting ownership in the prior owner and effectively transferring ownership to the Museum. The Museum will not knowingly acquire for its collections any item that has been stolen, illegally exported from its country of origin, or whose recovery involved unscientific or intentional destruction of or damage to historic sites. Every effort will be made before acquisition to determine that the item has a clear and legitimate provenance.

The MVM will attempt to acquire whole collections rather than break up assemblages with meaningful contexts and potential for further research. The Museum's collections shall normally have no restrictions assigned to them. Any limitation on use, or any restriction or condition affecting ownership by the Museum, shall be subject to review by the Collections Committee.

The Museum strives to collect "original" or "first generation media" records, but an exception may be made in an extraordinary instance when the mission of the Museum will be clearly served by accepting copies. The curator and/or librarian may make such a determination. If the Museum acquires or makes such a copy, it shall attempt to receive a copyright to the images as copied, regardless of media form. If the owner of the original item retains ownership and/or copyright, such ownership and/or copyright shall be clearly indicated and the item marked "for reference purposes only."

Sensitive material may be found within collections. The MVM librarian or curator will discuss with a donor the possibility of restricting parts of a collection to protect the privacy of the donor or of others. The MVM will normally agree to reasonable and equitable restrictions for periods of time.

**Authority to Acquire:**

The Museum's curator and librarian and/or designated staff are responsible for the collection to which the item is appropriate and is to be added. After considering all the above factors, they may accept on behalf of the Museum such unrestricted gifts as they deem appropriate (subject to the Collections Policy). All collection purchases or large

gifts are governed by the Collections Policy and subject to approval by the Collections Committee.

All items acquired, regardless of method, shall be included in the registrar's accession reports. A copy of these reports shall be maintained as permanent records of the Museum. These records shall be available to the Collections Committee at all times.

### **Acquisitions Procedures:**

A Collection Committee consisting of at least three members of the Board of the Museum, the curator, librarian, and interested Museum staff shall be established. The director will be advised of all meetings and invited to attend.

The curator and librarian will accept items on a day to day basis for accession consideration. The Accession Record/Donation Record Form is filled out for items deposited and the donor is asked to complete the Donor Survey Questionnaire concerning the history and background of the deposited material.

No acquisition shall be appraised by a council or staff member for the donor. By law, Library and Museum staff cannot give tax advice or appraise the monetary value of a collection. However, staff members may render impartial assistance to donors in seeking independent qualified appraisers. It is the donor's responsibility to arrange for and bear the cost of any appraisal. In certain circumstances, it may be possible for a donor to take a tax deduction for the donation of a manuscript collection or artifact. (See U.S. Tax Reform Act of 1984 and Internal Revenue Service regulations relating to the act.)

At the Collection Committee meeting, the curator and the librarian will present their lists of items to be considered for accession. Also considered will be items to purchase for the collection with collection funds. Committee members wishing to view collection items may make arrangements with the curator or archivist.

Following acceptance of collection items, the registrar will give each item an accession number and record all information concerning the donor and the material in the collection records and file receipts and any correspondence. The curator will photograph the items, enter them into the collections' database, and place them in a designated storage area according to the AASLH nomenclature system. All library donations will be catalogued following library and archival standards and placed in a designated space.

### **Subject Areas and Formats of the Collections**

The collections are those groupings of related items accessioned and maintained by the Museum on the history of Martha's Vineyard in all media formats and on all subjects associated with important individuals, groups, organizations, events, or places. These items are intended to contribute to the institution's research, preservation, and educational objectives. For most of its history, the Museum emphasized collecting materials on the Vineyard's maritime industry and legacy, European settlement of the Island, Wampanoag cultural artifacts, relations between the Wampanoag peoples and

European settlers, genealogical records, and the Island's place in American history. However, in the past two decades, its collecting interests have extended to the present.

***Subject Areas* collected include, but are not limited to, the history of:**

- **Architecture:** Selected historically significant Martha's Vineyard (MV) structures and sites of many types.
- **Agriculture:** Selected historically significant MV farmers and farm families.
- **Business:** Selected historically significant MV businesses, including small individually owned businesses.
- **Colonial America:** Selected historical significant records of the European settlement of the Island. Special attention devoted to the colonizer's economic, social, cultural, environmental, and political impact.
- **Communities:** Selected historically significant records of the development of and changes to the six municipalities and surrounding areas.
- **Conservation:** Selected materials of conservation efforts ranging from the establishment of land trusts, to land restoration efforts, as well as to environmental activism.
- **Education:** Selected historically significant individuals, organizations, and teaching materials.
- **Under-Represented Groups:** Wampanoag, African-American, Brazilian, Portuguese as well as other identified ethnic and social groups; selected historically significant individuals and their families and specifically identified communities, businesses, clubs, and organizations.
- **Families:** Personal, professional, and family papers of selected historically significant Vineyard families as well as family genealogical materials.
- **Government:** Selected historically significant MV government developments and leaders. But, not records maintained under the authority of a government archive.
- **Labor:** Historically significant skilled and unskilled labor organizations and professions.
- **Maritime Industry:** Materials on selected historically significant MV seamen and their families who were involved in the fishing, whaling, or transport industries.

- **Military Conflicts:** Experiences of and documentation on selected historically significant MV soldiers and military units, soldiers and their families during wartime (with special attention to the Civil War, World War One and World War Two).
- **Natural History:** Materials on the geologic formation of the island and its natural habitat, such as fossils, shells, geological material, and botanical samples.
- **Notable Vineyarders:** Historically significant MV individuals who are well-known for their past activities and contributions.
- **Oral Histories:** Oral accounts given by individuals and groups that relate to life on Martha's Vineyard.
- **Politics:** Historically significant politicians and political groups from the 17<sup>th</sup> century through the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- **Professions:** Historically significant attorneys, doctors, and other individuals who exemplify the professions.
- **Religion:** Historically significant individuals and identified religious communities and organizations, but not groups which have an active denominational archive on the island.
- **The American Revolution:** Selected historically significant records of the war's domestic, economic, political, social, and other aspects related to MV.
- **Tourism:** Historically significant records of the growing leisure industry and its economic, social, cultural, and political impact on MV.
- **Women:** Selected historically significant women and specifically identified businesses, clubs, organizations; "activism" relating to economic, education, health, political, and social issues.

Subject area collections may include one or more formats described below.

***Formats and Content Types* accessioned and maintained by the Museum include, but may not be limited to:**

**Printed and Published Material:**

- Almanacs
- Atlases (selected and limited)
- Biographies and Autobiographies

- Books and Pamphlets
- Broadsides
- Directories
- Ephemera (selected and limited)
- MV Literary Works
- Local Community Histories
- Maps (selected and limited)
- Memoirs
- Nautical Charts
- Newspapers
- Pamphlets
- Periodicals (selected and limited)
- Sheet Music (selected and limited)

### **Manuscript and Archival Material**

- Architectural Records
- Audio Recordings (selected and limited)
- Business Records
- Correspondence
- Diaries and Other First Person Accounts
- Legal Records and Deeds
- Maps and Surveys
- Oral Histories (selected audio recordings)
- Organizational Records
- Professional, Personal, and Family Papers
- Town and County Government Records
- US Government Records

### **Visual Material**

- **Ambrotypes**
- **Autochromes**
- **Daguerreotypes**
- **Engravings**
- **Lithographs**
- **Moving Images**
- **Paintings**
- **Postcards**
- **Posters**
- **Sketches**
- **Tintypes**
- **Woodcuts**

## **Artifacts**

The Museum has collected a wide range of artifacts that relate to Martha's Vineyard. It continues to collect three-dimensional objects. All accessions have to conform to the MVM's Collection Development and Acquisition Policy.

- Archaeological
- Artwork (Paintings, Prints, Sculpture)
- Bedding
- Costumes
- Decoys and Fishing Tackle
- Educational/School Materials
- Ethnographic Artifacts
- Guns, Swords, Armament and Equipment
- Household Furnishing
- Household Tools
- Medical and Scientific Tools and Equipment
- Musical Instruments
- Natural History
- Navigational Tools
- Photographic Equipment
- Scrimshaw and Ivory
- Ship Models
- Ship's Lighting
- Shipwreck Salvage
- Ship's Parts
- Tools: Ship's Objects
- Tools: Agricultural; Carpentry, Specialized
- Toys and Dolls
- Transportation Artifacts
- Writing Equipment

## **Items Ordinarily Not Collected, Except Selectively With Limitations:**

- **Active collections that are still being created or added to**
- **College and University records**
- **General fiction (except MV writers)**
- **Official Government Records (except when transferred pursuant to statutory process or by an authorized agent or legitimate owner)**
- **Stamps and Postal Covers**

## **Deaccessions (selective reductions to the collection):**

### **Criteria for Deaccessions:**

Items to be considered shall be judged for permanent removal:

1. they do not have value relating to the history of Martha's Vineyard
2. the object is a duplicate or triplicate of another item already in the collection
3. they lack potential usefulness for research or exhibition purposes
4. the Museum lacks the capacity to store, preserve, and if appropriate, exhibit the item
5. the Museum is not able to financially support and properly care for the item
6. the condition of the item is beyond reasonable repair

### **Deaccessions Procedures:**

The curator or librarian shall recommend removal of an item from the collection to the Collection Committee. All accession records and information concerning the item shall be assembled by the registrar and available for the committee meeting. Following a vote of approval, the committee shall approve the method of deaccession for the item.

The item may be given to an approved and impartial auction house for sale from which the proceeds from such sale shall go into the collection fund. The collection fund is to be used exclusively for the purchase, care or conservation of collection items and requires a majority vote from the collection committee for expenditure.

The deaccessed item may be an exchange by the MVM for an item of similar value and of Martha's Vineyard relevance through another museum, educational institution, and art, antique or archival dealer. The item may also be donated by the MVM to another museum or educational institution. Finally, the MVM may decide to destroy the item.

Accession records shall be marked to indicate the date and method of disposal of an item shall be filed with the accession records and a list made available for Executive Director, the Collections Committee, and the Board of Directors.

## **Loans (items accepted):**

### **Criteria for a Loan:**

Items may be accepted for loan by the Museum

- as specified by the MVM Loan Receipt Policy
- after a period of five years the MVM will notify the owner that the loan agreement must be reviewed and renewed or ended

### **Loan Procedures:**

The curator or librarian will arrange loans according to the Loan Receipt Policy. The policy will be kept in the curator's files and the lender shall have a copy.

### **Lending (sending items to other institutions)**

#### **Criteria for Lending:**

Items belonging to the MVM may be loaned to another museum or educational institution as specified by the Loan Conditions and Agreement Policy

#### **Lending Procedures:**

The Collection Committee shall meet to approve any application for loans from the MVM collections to another museum or educational institution. If the Committee approves an application for a loan, the curator or librarian will create a permanent paper record of the loan. In addition, the curator or librarian will revise the MVM'S collection catalogs to note the loan.

### **Use and Reproduction of MVM Collection Items**

#### **Criteria for Use and/or Reproduction:**

Individuals or institutions desiring to reproduce photographs, documents or use images of items from the Museum's collection in publications, films or commercial endeavors must comply with the MVM'S Photography and Photo Duplication Policies.

#### **Use and Reproduction Procedures:**

The MVM'S librarian, curator or director will present the Use Policy to the applicant who must provide the necessary information concerning the requested item and its use. Staff members will then determine the appropriate fee and return a copy of the application form to the applicant and proceed with the request upon payment of set fee.