



Collections Management Policy

O'Reilly House Museum

Placentia, NL

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The **O'Reilly House Museum** will display and preserve objects and artefacts that reflect Placentia area history from the 16 century to the present.

VISION STATEMENT

To ensure that the communities of the Placentia Area know and continue to respect their heritage, a quality that can uplift and bring pride to its people and also encourage the development of a tourism industry.

MISSION STATEMENT

To promote the study, knowledge and preservation of the history of the Placentia Area.

COLLECTION POLICIES

The **O'Reilly House Museum** is operated by the Placentia Area Historical Society (PAHS). The PAHS will accept items¹ into the museum collection that fit the following criteria:

- * Written narratives² (transcribed or recorded format) of Placentia area³ residents.
- * Artefacts that fall within the mission of the museum.
- * Narratives that have been recorded using media other than paper such as wood, metal or porcelain.
- * Items that relate to the history of the Placentia area as outlined in the mission.

The museum will accept only those items that are acquired by the following methods:

- * Artefacts relating to mission of the museum.
- * Objects that have been purchased by the museum to supplement an exhibit of narratives.

1 "Items" refers to artefacts and writings, such as poems and prose.

2 Narratives refers to text (e.g. prose, poetry).

3 Placentia Area is defined as Argentia, Dunville, Ferndale, Fox Harbour, Freshwater, Jerseyside, Point Verde, Ship Harbour, Southeast Placentia and Townside Placentia.

- * Gifts⁴ to the museum from residents within the communities served by the museum.
- * Collected as part of research undertaken by museum researchers or external researchers.⁵
- * Collected as part of research by museum or external researchers within the communities.

The museum will not collect items that include the following: objects not related to the mission of the museum; items that are beyond the museum storage capacity or are detrimental to existing collections; artefacts or narratives that contain/depict language/images deemed as offensive.⁶ All decisions are considered and approved by the PAHS.

Exceptions can be made in the following situations:

- * Written materials that are not narratives as defined by the museum, but do contribute contextually to the collection.

Duplicates of non-narrative items may be collected for the purpose of display if the original is considered to be too fragile to remove from storage. Loans may be accepted for the purpose of a temporary exhibit or research that also involves items from the museum.

Additions to the collection may be recommended by a 1) residents within the communities of the Placentia area; 2) researchers working with the collection; 3) museum curator/archivist; 4) visitors to the museum. All recommendations will be assessed and approved by the museum curator/archivist and or museum committee.

Accessions

The following procedure and associated forms will be used for items placed in the care of the museum:

- * *Temporary acceptance*: if an object or written narrative is intended to be donated to the museum, a temporary receipt is required with copies for both donor and museum; if accepted, the item will be registered and if declined, it will be returned to the donor with a note of gratitude for their support.
- * *Registration*: 1) dependent upon the nature of the acquisition, a registration or gift form stating legal transfer of item will be signed by both donor and museum

4 Gifts are donations and will only be accepted if they are bequests (offered to the museum under a will); promised (offered to the museum with the intention of donation); or gifts that carry a condition (e.g. restricted access)

5 All research that involves the collection of artefacts and/or narratives follows procedures that require researchers to obtain signed consent from their participants. These consent forms release the information obtained and assure participants that release for research purposes will require the approval of the PAHS.

6 This will be determined by the PAHS.

- curator/archivist; 2) item will be assigned an accession number.
- * *Cataloguing*: Descriptive and historical information will be documented for all items; dependant upon whether an item is an object or a narrative, particular forms must be used and filed accordingly.
 - * *Addition to Collection Management Software* (Collection management software being used is *Museum Archive*): When an artefact has been accessioned, it is given an accession number and added to the *Museum Archive* software. Other information is also recorded such as the name of the donor and other details related to the artefact.
 - * *Labelling*: Following the addition of an artefact to the collection, it is labelled. The label contains the name of the artefact as well as its accession number.

Care and Conservation

The museum is aware of its responsibility to preserve and protect the collection and will endeavour to do this by following the standards established by the ABCs of Collection Care and the “Rules for Archival Description (RAD).”⁷

Care of the collection initiatives include:

- * Use of special gloves when handling artefacts.
- * Regular visual monitoring of the collection.
- * Some PAHS members have attended training workshops in order to enhance care and conservation efforts.
- * Every five years, the PAHS undertakes an inventory to ensure that all artefacts are labelled and correctly entered in the *Museum Archive* software.
- * At the end of the summer, the museum is closed and all the exhibits are covered with dust cloths. Paintings and photographs are also removed from exterior walls.

Conservation activities include:

- * Periodic measurements of environmental conditions in the museum.
- * Removal and treatment of artefacts and items that have been compromised and affected by any deteriorating agents (e.g. infestation, temperature or humidity, etc.).
- * Use of display cases in order to limit deterioration, damage and loss resulting from factors such as dust, handling, theft.

Deaccessions

Deaccessions shall be made through a process that requires the approval of the PAHS. If an artefact that is to be deaccessioned was donated, it will be initially offered to the original donor.⁸ However, if this individual does not wish to have the artefact returned, the PAHS will either donate it to another museum or sell the artefact.

7 Canadian Committee on Archival Description. Canadian Council on Archives
<http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/intro.html>. Last visited 24 March, 2011

8 If the original donor is deceased, the PAHS will make discuss return of the artefact with the family.

If an artefact that is to be deaccessioned was purchased by the PAHS, it will be offered to another museum or sold.

Any proceeds from deaccessions shall be directed toward the improvement of the museum collection. At no point can the PAHS acquire or profit directly from the deaccessioned items.

Responsibility of Volunteers and Staff

The PAHS is comprised solely of volunteers. Each of these individuals is involved in the different aspects of collection management. The PAHS meets monthly and members are able to raise concerns regarding the collection (for e.g. care, conservation, monitoring, etc.).

During the summer, the PAHS employs students as museum guides. While in the employ of PAHS, these individuals are expected to clean the museum and exhibits. In addition, the museum guides visually monitor the exhibits for signs of damage or the presence of deteriorating agents.

Access to the Museum

Access to the museum exhibits will be open to the public during set hours, mostly in summer. Otherwise direct access to the collection or museum records will be given to researchers who are either completing private research or work for a governmental or educational institution with the approval of the PAHS. Access for the purposes of research will ideally require individuals provide an indication of their research request to the museum (PAHS) at least one day before their scheduled arrival. But requests will be accommodated within the staff and budget limitations.

The museum reserves the right to remove from the collection any legally held item that is no longer relevant to the museum collection. This will be completed with approval from the museum curator/archivist and or museum committee.

This policy will be reviewed biannually by the PAHS. A copy will be kept off-site and will be available online at www.placentiahistory.ca.