Resurrection Bay Historical Society

Collections Management Policy

Approved by Board of Directors, May 1, 1992

Revised and adopted by the Board of Directors, Feb. 24, 2011

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Revised and adopted by the Board of Directors, Oct. 24, 2024

Sue A McClure — 10-24-2024

RBHS President — Date

[signature] — 10/24/2024

RBHS Secretary — Date

Table of Contents

This policy serves as instructions and guidelines to the Resurrection Bay Historical Society (RBHS) and as general information for the City of Seward staff and the public.

1. Definitions

Acquisition: gifts, purchases, exchanges, transfers, bequests, or any other transaction by which title to an object transfers to RBHS.

Accession: formal process used to accept and record an object, photograph or archive into the RBHS permanent collection.

Collection: a group of objects, photographs or archives.

Collections Committee: committee appointed by the RBHS Board of Directors that has expertise in museum collection care.

Historical Society: An organization that seeks to preserve and promote interest in the history of a region, a period, or a subject.

RBHS Board of Directors: the society's governing body elected at large from the RBHS membership.

RBHS collection: objects, photographs and archives generated by, or belonging to, the Resurrection Bay Historical Society.

Permanent collections: any collection that has been accessioned.

Secure storage: locked storage area reserved for accessioned collections. Access to this area is restricted to lead Seward Museum staff and representatives of entities with collections management agreements with the City of Seward.

Seward Community Library & Museum: a department of the City of Seward which includes the Seward Museum. The Seward Community Library & Museum department manages, operates and maintains the facilities and programs, including materials and collections. The Seward Community Library & Museum also co-manages collections belonging to other entities including Resurrection Bay Historical Society, and the Seward Community Library Association. The City of Seward abides by entity specific agreements regarding each entities' collection care.

2. Introduction and Mission Statement

Introduction

Resurrection Bay Historical Society (RBHS), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, operated the Seward Museum, located in Seward, Alaska from 1966 to 2011. During that time RBHS collected, preserved, interpreted, and exhibited an extensive collection of objects, photographs, and archive materials related to Seward's history. On March 29, 2011 the City of Seward and RBHS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding that commenced on January 1, 2012, whereby the City of Seward agreed that RBHS would retain ownership of its collection and that the City of Seward would house the collection, provide it with security, insurance, and staff to manage the collection in compliance with Seward City Code 2.25.130-135.

The City of Seward employs a museum curator who facilitates the use and maintenance of Seward Museum spaces.

Since 2012 RBHS has continued to accept Seward related materials into its collection housed within the Seward Museum. The RBHS Collections Committee continues to process, preserve, interpret, and make the collection available to researchers and the public. RBHS shares curatorial space within the Seward Community Library & Museum but remains an independent entity.

RBHS Mission Statement

- To collect, preserve and make accessible to the public materials that help establish and illustrate the history of the Seward area.
- To stimulate interest and disseminate information about the history of the Seward area.
- To encourage the preservation of historical buildings, structures, and sites in the Seward area.

The RBHS Collections Management Policy shall not replace any city, state or federal law, statute or regulation under which the Seward Community Library & Museum is legally or ethically bound to operate.

3. RBHS Code of Ethics

Introduction

RBHS collects, preserves, and makes accessible to the public materials relating to Seward, the Resurrection Bay area, and eastern Kenai Peninsula of Alaska. RBHS expects its board and volunteers to uphold the ethical and performance standards adopted by the American Association for State and Local History. The following ethical statements and related professional standards apply to the members of the governing authority of the RBHS collection.

Historical Resources
In fulfillment of their public trust, RBHS recognizes that it must be a responsible steward of the collections within its direct care and is challenged to be an advocate on behalf of the historical resources within its community.

It is important to document the physical condition of collections, including past treatment of objects, and to take appropriate steps to mitigate potential hazards to people and property.

- All RBHS board members and Collections Committee members shall give priority to the care and management of the collections within their custody and always shall act to preserve their physical and intellectual integrity.
- RBHS shall manage its historical resources, including collections, in accord with comprehensive policies officially adopted by its governing authority.
- Collections shall not be capitalized or treated as financial assets.
- Collections shall not be deaccessioned or disposed of in order to provide financial support or for any reason other than preservation or acquisition of collections, as defined by institutional policy.
- Historical resources shall be acquired, cared for, and interpreted with sensitivity to their cultural origins.

Access
RBHS is committed to providing nondiscriminatory access to its historical resources and collection through exhibitions, educational programs, publications, electronic media, and research. Access and limitations of access are governed by institutional policies and by applicable rights of privacy, ownership, and intellectual freedom.

Interpretation
Historical interpretation may be presented in a variety of formats.

- All interpretation must be based upon sound scholarship and thorough research.
- Intellectually honest interpretation reflects the cultural context of the subject matter and recognizes the potential for multiple interpretations.

Management
The primary responsibility for governance, institutional policies, financial stability and legal accountability of the RBHS collection rests with the governing authority (i.e., RBHS Board of Directors). Operational responsibility rests with the RBHS Collections Committee.

- RBHS employees and volunteers deserve respect.
- RBHS has the responsibility to engage employees and volunteers, who have appropriate training and expertise and to provide them with opportunities for additional training necessary to continue to meet their responsibilities.

- RBHS shall maintain financial records from which accurate information can be generated to manage in a fiscally sound manner.

Revenue Producing Activities
All activities that involve the marketing and sale of products, programs, and services are carried out in ethical ways to produce support revenues and increase public awareness of, and participation in, RBHS.

- No such activities shall be undertaken that violate or compromise the integrity of the RBHS mission, the ability of the institution or an individual to meet professional standards or the institution's not-for-profit status.
- Control of a product (e.g., exhibition, publication, program) shall neither be delegated nor abrogated to outside parties in order to obtain financial support.
- RBHS shall review the potential cultural sensitivity of materials considered for commercial use with representatives of the appropriate affiliated communities.

Conflict of Interest
RBHS exists to serve the public interest and must always act in such a way as to maintain public confidence and trust.

- All governing authority members, employees, and volunteers shall be careful to avoid the appearance and the reality of using their positions or the information and access gained from their positions for personal gain or for the benefit of another organization. They must exercise discretion and maintain the confidential nature of proprietary information.
- RBHS volunteers and employees shall refrain from personal collecting in any manner that conflicts with the interests or credibility of RBHS and its policies. RBHS is encouraged to obtain statements of personal collecting interests before individuals become associated with them.
- Collections shall not be made available to any individual on any basis for personal use, either on or off the premises or for any other purpose contrary to the adopted collections policies.
- RBHS and its representatives must protect the integrity of the institution from both the reality and the appearance of undue influence by donors, sponsors, and other sources of financial support.

Social Responsibility
RBHS shall act to ensure that the breadth of American cultural experiences and perspectives is represented accurately in all programmatic, staffing, and operational activities.

Intellectual Freedom
Historical scholarship and interpretation depend upon free and open exploration and interpretation of the human experience.

- At the same time, historical institutions must recognize other legal, ethical, and cultural standards regarding individual privacy, human based research, and access to and use of sensitive cultural materials.
- RBHS and its representatives shall respect the rights and authority of individuals and cultures that had no voice in the disposition of those collections related to them.

4. Staff Responsibilities and Authority

Collections Committee
The Collections Committee consults with local and support groups to ensure that the appropriate action is taken regarding potential donations, purchases, and deaccessioning of the RBHS collection. The Collections Committee shall be empowered to consider matters under its jurisdiction and make decisions. The Collections Committee shall meet any time action is required. Any actions will require majority approval.

The SCLM curator may hold a committee seat in an advisory capacity.

The following areas relating to the RBHS collection are within the Collections Committee's jurisdiction:

1. Accessions: gifts, bequests, purchases, and field collecting.
2. Loans from the RBHS collection to other qualified facilities.
3. Deaccessioning (schedule of disposition).
4. Appropriate storage of the collections.
5. Preservation and conservation.
6. Registration and cataloging methods.
7. Policy and planning for collection-related publications.
8. Sale of reproduction and collection-related items by RBHS.

5. Collection Scope, Uses and Access

Collection Scope: Permanent Collection
RBHS collects materials that are significant to interpreting the rich and diverse history of Seward, Resurrection Bay, and the eastern Kenai Peninsula area of Alaska including archival material, material culture items, and natural history items. To promote sound growth and prevent random expansion, the RBHS collections will support its mission statement and goals for exhibition and education.

RBHS primary collecting areas, subjects, and themes include, but are not limited to:

- William H. Seward
- Benny Benson and the Alaska Flag

- *Phoenix*
- Lowells
- Founding of Seward
    - Early Growth (pioneer business)
    - Big Game Hunting
    - Tourism
- Railroads: Alaska Central, Alaska Northern, Alaska
- Alaska Nellie
- Iditarod Historic Trail
- Jesse Lee Home and Seward Sanatorium
- Schools, Hospitals, Churches
- Maritime History
- World War II
- Seward Highway
- 1964 Earthquake and Aftermath
- Seward Artists
- Seward Pioneers
- Seward Historic Furnishings and Equipment
- Local Native History
- Native Art and Artifacts

All collections managed by RBHS shall be documented and cared for according to American Alliances of Museums' national standards and best practices. All objects and materials shall be registered and acknowledged promptly, accessioned, and record data entered in the accession files. RBHS will only accept items that it is capable of caring for.

Prop Collection
RBHS processes objects created specifically for in-house exhibitions, public programs, and other purposes. These objects collected may receive special catalog numbers to set them apart from the permanent collection, which allow for the tracking and documentation of their use. SCLM has a dedicated secure storage space for these objects. These items are not in the permanent collection and are not used for research or loan. While many of these objects are acquired by RBHS via donations or exchanges, the degree to which they are cataloged is often less complete. This collection may be used when the security or environmental conditions are not determined to be the standard required for permanent holdings. When the Collections Committee determines the object in the prop collection is no longer of use, items are deaccessioned and disposed of in a way permitted by the Collections Committee.

Collection Uses
The permanent collection will be used in support of the RBHS mission, cultural awareness, artistic expression, and educational activity. Exhibits of the permanent

collection will seek to educate audiences and provide a vehicle for the appreciation of history, art, and cultures represented in the collection. The permanent collection can also be used for outgoing loans.

Access to Collections
Any collection materials in the public areas of the Seward Museum are available through exhibition and interpretive programs. Materials in secure storage areas are accessible, but only through permission and supervision of the Collections Committee.

Only the RBHS Collections Committee and Seward Museum curator shall have access to the permanent collections, storage areas, and collection records of RBHS. Others shall not be allowed in storage areas unless under the supervision of the RBHS Collections Committee, other entities with collection management agreements with the City of Seward, or lead Seward Museum staff

RBHS may restrict access to collections both for security reasons and the safety and care of the objects and reserves the right to refuse access to, or use of, its collections.

6. Collections Care

RBHS recognizes its role of being responsible for the safety and maintenance of the collections it holds in the public trust. Care of the collections includes documentation, security, physical protection, conservation, storage, access, inventory, and records systems in accordance with the American Alliance of Museums' national standards and best practices.

Under the direction of the Collections Committee, all appropriate Seward Community Library & Museum personnel shall be made aware of their basic and continuing responsibilities to preserve and protect collection objects on exhibit and in storage.

Documentation
Documenting every object in the permanent collection is imperative and the accession records should reflect the highest accuracy and attention to detail possible. All objects acquired for the collection are recorded and documented in the manner that conforms to nationally accepted museum practices.

Transfer of Title
A deed of gift form must be signed by the donor transferring the title of ownership, establishing the donation as the outright and unconditional property of the Resurrection Bay Historical Society and will fully describe the object. The form is countersigned by an RBHS board member.

A bill of sale must be in the permanent record for objects purchased by RBHS.

Accession Log
Accessions are entered into the collections management database and a handwritten accession log will be maintained.

Collections Management Database
This database contains all relevant information about each object. The RBHS Collections Committee has primary responsibility for maintaining this database.

Inventory
An inventory of the collection is to be completed at least every 10 years and spot inventories are to be executed annually.

Preservation and Conservation
Every effort will be made to care for and to detect, avoid, block or mitigate the agents of deterioration that affect the collection. Only archival materials and nationally accepted museum practices will be utilized for collection storage. In an effort to prevent infestation from pests, no food or drink is permitted in the secure storage area. Water in covered containers is allowed in the workroom if it does not present a risk to the collection.

Object Handling/Movement
Only trained Collections Committee members, the Seward Museum curator, or volunteers may handle objects in the permanent collection with RBHS supervising all movement. The Collections Committee and/or Seward Museum curator will train appropriate staff/volunteers in object handling.

Insurance
Insurance for the Resurrection Bay Historical Society collection is provided by the City of Seward.

7. Acquisition and Accessioning of Objects

Acquisition
The criteria for accepting objects into the permanent collection include, but are not limited to: authenticity, quality, historical relevance/cultural merit, aesthetics, intellectual value, uniqueness/rarity, physical condition, and provenance. Objects will support the mission of RBHS.

The Collections Committee will meet as needed to approve new accessions for the RBHS collection. All actions will require majority approval.

An object must meet the following general conditions to be accepted or otherwise acquired by RBHS:

- It is relevant to, and consistent with, the mission, collecting goals, and activities of RBHS.
- It is in good physical condition, and its projected future maintenance and conservation costs are within the scope of RBHS resources.
- RBHS can store, protect, and conserve the object under conditions that ensure its availability for exhibit or research purposes and in keeping with professionally accepted standards.
- It shall have permanency in the collection as long as it retains its physical integrity, authenticity, and relevance for the purposes of RBHS.
- It is accompanied by all rights, copyright, and title.
- It has not been illegally recovered or excavated, nor has a questionable, undetermined, or unprincipled history of ownership.
- Details of transfer, authenticity, and provenance of the object, including legal origins and ownership must be accepted by the Collections Committee.

If these conditions cannot be met, then the objects shall not be accessioned into the RBHS permanent collection.

RBHS follows the principles adopted by American Alliance of Museums in regard to the disposition of all cultural property and artifacts that may have been taken unlawfully, as well as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

RBHS may re-evaluate the decision to acquire as opportunities arise.

RBHS will take all reasonable steps to obtain provenance information on objects to ensure legal ownership before acquiring them.

Donations
Donations to the RBHS collection will only be accepted if the object can be displayed, stored, loaned, photographed, or disposed of at RBHS's discretion. All conditions or restrictions by the donor must be agreed upon in writing with the approval of the Collections Committee before it can be accepted. All restrictions will be kept with the accession information.

Purchases
RBHS may purchase objects for its collection which support the mission through public and private sources.

Bequests
RBHS can accept a bequest into its collection if the object supports the RBHS mission and collection policy. RBHS is under no obligation to accept a bequest and reserves the right to decline a bequest offer. Preferably, RBHS should be

notified of a proposed bequest at the time the will is being drawn so that it may determine if the object fits its mission.

Restrictions
Restrictions that may harm the collection or compromise the mission of RBHS, such as requiring perpetual or permanent exhibition, are unacceptable and will only be accepted under the rarest of circumstances.

Accessioning
All objects acquired for the permanent collection will be accessioned.
Accessioned items will never be traded or exchanged with private individuals, collectors, or dealers.

8. Loans

Outgoing and Incoming Loans
"Outgoing loans" are temporary assignments of objects belonging to the RBHS permanent collection to other institutions. "Incoming loans" are temporary assignments of objects belonging to other institutions (e.g., private collector, gallery or museum) to RBHS for stated museum purposes, such as exhibition and research. These assignments do not involve a change in ownership.

All loans from the RBHS collection will be approved by the Collections Committee. Material and objects being loaned or borrowed will be in good enough condition to travel. The borrower and lender should agree on any special packing, shipping, exhibition, or insurance arrangements that need to be made. All loan transaction records, and the borrower's and lender's signed receipts are retained in the accession file. Long-term loans, or "permanent" loans, are highly discouraged unless an agreement is renewed on an annual basis. RBHS is discouraged from accepting or making indefinite or long-term loans.

9. Deaccessioning

"Deaccessioning" is the process by which an object is permanently removed from the collection. Deaccessioning is a means of refining and improving the collection in accordance with the Collections Management Policy. The Collections Committee should periodically review and re-evaluate the relevance of the RBHS collection compared to the mission statement.

Criteria
Primary collection materials being considered for deaccession must be legally owned by RBHS and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The object is no longer relevant and useful to the purposes and activities as set forth in the RBHS mission statement and Collections Management

Policy. Care will be taken to ensure that objects are not deaccessioned because of tastes or trends in the museum profession.

- RBHS can no longer properly take care of or preserve the object properly according to American Alliance of Museums' standards because of lack of funds or storage space.
- The object is damaged beyond repair or has deteriorated beyond usefulness.
- There is a need or an opportunity to upgrade an object or obtain a better one in its place.
- There are duplicates or similar objects.
- The object has been lost or stolen and remains missing for ten consecutive years.
- The object is found to be a forgery.

Disposal

The proper method of disposal will be agreed upon by the Collections Committee and authorized by the RBHS Board. The disposal of an object will take into consideration the integrity of RBHS, the trust of the people of Alaska, and the local community it serves.

Methods:

- Objects may be disposed of by sale, donation, or exchange with another non-profit museum, historical society, educational institution, or organization in accordance with American Alliance of Museums policy.
- An auction house, auction website, or private dealers may be used to dispose of objects.
- Deaccessioned objects may be returned to their owners or heirs. The Collections Committee will attempt to inform the donor of the deaccession as a courtesy but does not need their permission to dispose of the object.
- A community sale may be used in some circumstances, but clear records will be kept justifying this form of disposal. RBHS provenance should be kept private.
- If the object cannot be disposed of in any of the above manners, it shall be destroyed by the Collections Committee. No remains of the object may be retained by RBHS, SCLM Staff, or affiliated parties. Prior to destruction, the object will be evaluated to ascertain whether it contains any hazardous materials. If any hazardous materials exist, the object will be destroyed in accordance with all federal or state laws, including health and safety procedures.

The following rules apply to disposals:

- No RBHS member shall profit from objects deaccessioned and disposed of by RBHS.
- Private sales directly from RBHS to individuals are strictly prohibited.

- Deaccessioned objects will not be sold at the Seward Museum gift shop without prior agreement from the donor.
- All accession numbers on the object are removed.
- Objects designated for destruction must be destroyed in the presence of at least one RBHS member and one witness with no personal or professional connection to RBHS or the objects.

Any monies gained from the sale of deaccessioned objects will go toward collections care or the purchase of new objects for the permanent collection.

10. Legal Issues Governing the Collections

Rights and Reproduction Agreement
The RBHS Collections Committee is responsible for facilitating the use of intellectual property, including the use of collection images.

Artist Copyright Release
The RBHS Collections Committee will follow current US copyright laws with respect to artist ownership. If the artist/maker of an original work in the collection is living, RBHS will secure permission to either acquire the copyright from the artist upon acquisition of the object or negotiate a fair use agreement.

Cultural Property
The RBHS collection items are those not typically associated with the types of objects suspect of continental Europe between 1932 and 1946. Additionally, non-western materials in the collections are typically not associated with this time frame/issue.

Objects left in custody of RBHS (i.e., "Old Loans")
"Old loans" pertain to objects loaned to RBHS for at least seven years, and then contact with the lender has been lost or discontinued. RBHS will perform due diligence to identify the lender of any object left in its custody. The lender will be contacted at the address provided on the original loan agreement and any new or additional address provided subsequently. If the lender cannot be located, and the object has been held by RBHS for at least seven years, RBHS may obtain title following Alaska State Statutes, or dispose of the object.

Found in Collection (FIC)
"Found in collection (FIC)" are those objects in the collection with no identifying numbers, donor/lender names, deed of gift, or other information that would pertain to ownership. RBHS will perform due diligence to identify the owner/lender of any FIC object in the custody of RBHS. If after considerable research, no proof of ownership emerges, RBHS may obtain title following Alaska State Statutes or dispose of the object.

Establishing Title
Alaska Statute 14.57.210 Acquisition of Title to Undocumented Property outlines the process all Alaska museums must go through in order to acquire title to objects found in the collection. RBHS will follow all legally required procedures. The procedures are summarized here:

i. The Museum must document and verify in writing, that the property has been held by the Museum for at least seven (7) years.

ii. When this paragraph is applicable, the Museum must notify by mail all corporations, except nonprofit corporations, created under 43 U.S.C. 1601-1629e (Alaska Native Claims Settlement Page 23 of 49 Act) that the undocumented property appears to be a Native artifact, and invite them to act, as outlined in AS 14.57.210.

iii. The Museum must show that during the seven-year holding period, or longer if expanded by the application of a Native corporation, a person has not filed a claim with the Museum that the person is the owner of the property. The Collections Committee or SCLM Curator may create an official affidavit as a means of documenting the seven-year holding time.

iv. To acquire title, the Museum shall publish a notice at least once a week for four consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation, as described by AS 14.57.210.

v. The Museum acquires the title to the undocumented property, subject to reclamation of the property under AS 14.57.220, as of the 46th day after the date of the last publication of the notice, if all other requirements are satisfied and no valid claims have been made within 45 days after the date of the last publication of the notice under (d) of this section. If this summary conflicts or differs from legal requirements, only the legal requirements need to be followed.

The Collections Committee will work together to assess the status of the undocumented object, with the Committee preparing the required paperwork to obtain title.

Unsolicited Donations
In general, RBHS does not accept unsolicited donations. In the case of objects of extraordinary value, the Collection Committee may approve such donations. Rejected objects will be returned to the sender, if known. Otherwise rejected objects will be considered abandoned and RBHS reserves the right to dispose of such property as it sees fit. Donors are asked to contact RBHS with photographs

and descriptions of offered material so that the Collections Committee may review the object in terms of the collecting criteria and methods.

11. Collections Management Policy Review

The Collections Committee is responsible for monitoring compliance with the Collections Management Policy. Review of this policy will take place every five years from date of adoption. Revisions and amendments may be made any time and are subject to majority approval vote of the RBHS Board of Directors.

All new RBHS Board of Directors, Seward Community Library & Museum staff and Collections Committee members will receive a copy of the Collections Management Policy and the Museum Procedure Manual as a part of their orientation to the collection.

Sue A McClure — 10-29-2024

RBHS President — Date

[signature] — 10/29/24

RBHS Secretary — Date