

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Cortland County Historical Society

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I. Introduction to the Cortland County Historical Society

The Cortland County Historical Society (CCHS) was founded in 1925 and officially incorporated in 1931. It is subject to the guidelines of the New York State Board of Regents under the New York State Education Law.

In its early years, CCHS had a presence in the Cortland Free Library until it established a home in a room and closet on the third floor in the Court House. In 1964, the Suggett House was gifted to CCHS by John Chester Birdlebough, grandnephew of John Suggett. The Suggett House- located at 25 Homer Avenue in the city of Cortland, New York- is a nineteenth century Italianate residence that continues to serve as a permanent headquarters, research center, and public museum. While the ground floor is primarily dedicated to interpreting the history of the people, places, and events of Cortland County through exhibits, it also houses much of CCHS's objects collection. The Kellogg Memorial Research Center was added as an addition in 1976 and provides access to books, manuscripts, photographs, and other materials used in the research and interpretation of the people, places, and events of Cortland County.

The Cortland County Historical Society has preserved and promoted the history of the greater Cortland community for nearly a century. It has collected and maintained thousands of artifacts, photographs and manuscript collections that document the county's rich history.

A. Mission Statement

Engaging its multiple constituencies, the Cortland County Historical Society (CCHS) promotes an informed perspective on Cortland's past through the safeguarding and interpretation of the region's historical resources.

II. Reason for this Policy

The purpose of the Collections Management Policy is to provide guidance on maintaining the collections under the care of CCHS. This policy outlines basic procedures and practices that are consistent with the mission of CCHS while also adhering to ethical and legal standards as outlined in this policy. Furthermore, this policy aims to refine the collections—not necessarily just grow them—and outlines specific ways in which this goal can be achieved. It serves as a guide for those who interact with the collections or museum such as volunteers, interns, staff, researchers, donors, and the general public.

B. Review of this Policy

This policy is subject for review on an annual basis through the efforts of the Collections Committee, who will hear and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees for policy adjustments. This process will begin in September when an ad hoc committee will discuss potential revisions. If any changes are made, a new draft will go before the Collections Committee for review in October. Final approval regarding policy changes must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

C. Roles and Responsibility

CCHS is governed by an all-volunteer Board of Trustees, employs two full-time staff including a Director and a Collections and Research Assistant, and relies heavily on committees, general volunteers, and interns to operate smoothly. Collections responsibilities include:

The Board of Trustees

- The Board is responsible for final approval of policy changes/updates through voting privileges.
- While the Board retains the primary authority through voting measures, delegation and general oversight of the collections shall fall within the Collections Committee, which is guided by a chair, and the Collections and Research Assistant.
- The Board is responsible for approving deaccessions, and long-term loans beyond six (6) months, at the recommendation of the Collections Committee.
- The Board should consult members of the Committee regarding decisions largely relating to the maintenance and general well-being of the collections.

Collections Care Committee

- The Chair of the Collections Care Committee will be selected from the Board of Trustees and appointed by the President of the Board.
- The Committee's primary role is to make decisions on acquisition and deaccessioning of the collections, as well as provide general oversight and care to the collections.
- The Committee will review the Collections Management Policy annually for necessary updates.
- The Committee will inform the Board on activities relating to policy changes, acquisitions, deaccessions/disposal, loans, duplication/access, and other general services involving the maintenance, preservation, and conservation of the collections.
- The Chair of the Committee is responsible for reporting routine updates to the Board and for relaying any requests or recommendations for consideration as well as organizing Committee meetings.
- The Committee can be made up of members from the Board and the membership base who have a general interest or knowledge relating to the specific collections or collecting practices.
- The Committee may request funding for general care of the collections or for special projects.

Volunteers, interns, staff

- Volunteers and staff are ultimately responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the policies and practices guided by the Committee.
- No single committee, Board, volunteer, or staff member shall make an independent or final decision on accessions, deaccessions/disposal, policy changes, or loans without seeking input from the committee, or where Board approval is required.
- Volunteers and staff may make recommendations or provide updates to the committee to review and consider.
- All members must adhere to the Code of Ethics as well as the general principles and

practices of the Collections Management Policy.

Collections and Research Assistant

- The Collections and Research Assistant is primarily responsible for the day-to-day processing and maintenance of the collections. These responsibilities include but are not limited to:
 - Donor relations: Engaging with prospective donors to obtain information about donations as well as make preliminary rejections on those items that obviously do not meet the criteria of permanent collections.
 - Processing new accessions including creating PastPerfect records and storing items following best practices as closely as possible.
 - Making recommendations on collections items to be deaccessioned.
 - Performing collections care as needed.

III. Standards of Conduct and Code of Ethics

CCHS, its staff, and volunteers recognize that to maintain public confidence in and support for purposes of this institution it is necessary to adhere to a high standard of professional and personal conduct. CCHS will adhere to the [American Alliance of Museums \(AAM\) Code of Ethics](#), last amended in 2000. CCHS and all affiliates are guided by the following ethical principles:

A. Conflict of Interest and Personal Collections

Members and volunteers will not abuse their affiliations with CCHS to satisfy any forms of personal, financial, or political gain. Under no circumstances will affiliates of CCHS appraise the financial value of current objects or those considered for donation or acquisition. The Board requires full written disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest from its members, as outlined in the Conflict of Interest Policy.

All society affiliates which include, but are not limited to, committee members, staff, volunteers, interns, contractors, and other full- or part-time staff, shall refrain from engaging in collecting practices that directly compete with the institution. This includes knowingly purchasing any item being sought by or intended for CCHS. Further, they shall not use on-site and collections space to store personal items or unaffiliated collections.

B. Acquisitions and Disposals

To maintain transparency and adhere to best practices, CCHS shall not acquire, accept, or sell any materials that it knowingly believes to have been collected illegally or unethically. Materials are accepted into CCHS's collections only when proper storage, conservation and care can be provided to the materials. CCHS will maintain general documentation on materials acquired, in temporary custody, or disposed of, and such documentation shall be readily available to the public.

Disposals are to be considered a last resort option for materials where evaluation should be taken into consideration. For further information on disposal, consult the AAM Code of Ethics.

C. Access and Use

CCHS is required to allow reasonable and safe public access to materials of our collections on a nondiscriminatory basis. That said, CCHS has the added provision that members of the public must be under supervision when dealing with materials in our collection. The reason for this is to ensure the materials are viewed, handled, and transferred in a non-detrimental way. Objects and materials should never knowingly be placed in jeopardy.

When handling original documents, artifacts, or other materials, it is important to ensure that they are not damaged in any way. This means:

- For paper and books: having clean, washed hands, handling documents along the edges only with a delicate touch, using two hands when handling artifacts, etc.
- Setting documents flat on a surface, to prevent bending or warping.
- For objects: wearing nitrile gloves or for some fabric items, white cotton gloves, when handling.
- Ensuring surfaces where you are placing objects or documents are free of debris, spills, and other obstructions that could cause damage to the contents.
- Using pencil only when taking notes or otherwise writing around the vicinity of a collection's contents.
- Having no food or drink near any material being viewed or handled.

It is equally important that contents are stored in a manner appropriate for the given contents. To this end, all affiliates of CCHS ensure that:

- Documents are housed in document file-boxes or flat boxes, whichever are the best fit.
- Oversized documents should be in boxes appropriate for their size—not folded, rolled, or made to fit into smaller spaces. The exceptions to this are very large documents, such as maps, which are designed to be rolled.
- Artifacts or objects are stored in such a way as to not cause damage when in storage, nor when being transported to other institutions on loan, or when being removed from storage and onto display.

D. Cultural Responsibilities

CCHS strives toward the appropriate identification and treatment of objects of sacred significance, cultural patrimony, traditional knowledge, and of indigenous cultures. To this end, with adequate access to resources, CCHS will actively aim to be in compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) [<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nagpra/index.htm>] as required by federal and state law. CCHS does not knowingly acquire any materials that would violate the conditions of NAGPRA. Additionally, CCHS will not acquire objects that in any way support the illicit trading in antiquities, endangered species, or other materials.

IV. Scope of Collections

A. Collecting Areas and Background

CCHS is dedicated to the collection and preservation of Cortland County related artifacts and archival material that illuminate the county's rich history, that researchers seek, and that provide exhibit and educational opportunities. In the past, CCHS had a broader collecting goal of accumulating objects that illustrated the lifestyle of people in the era of our county's history irregardless of the provenance, however the committee no longer agrees that this breadth of scope is necessary to fulfill our mission, nor is it feasible considering physical and financial constraints.

Removal of earlier collections items will be performed only after a thorough review process that will consider the items' appropriateness to meet the CCHS mission, as well as current condition and whether they have become too damaged to preserve. Currently, some deaccessioning is vital to the maintenance of important collections, and no future donations of generic items will be considered.

B. Permanent Collection

Items accepted into the Permanent Collection include artifacts and archival materials that demonstrate a clear connection to Cortland County. Materials accepted into permanent collections shall be properly documented and cared for according to the highest professional standards.

Museum materials collected include, but are not limited to:

- Clothing, uniforms, and textiles
- Fine, decorative, and folk arts
- Tools and equipment
- Household and domestic items
- Novelty items relating to a business or event

The Library Collection include published and unpublished historical and genealogical materials with a clear connection to Cortland County, as well as some regional, state and national material in order to provide a broader context for research. This collection includes, but is not limited to:

- Unpublished papers and ephemera (records, manuscripts, archives, correspondence, pamphlets, etc.) of Cortland County residents, businesses, organizations that contain historically important information.
- Published histories relevant to Cortland County concerning businesses, buildings, organizations, and residents.
- Published and unpublished works by Cortland County residents and organizations, particularly those that are biographical in nature. This would include all publications from the Cortland County Historical Society.

- Published and unpublished genealogies that cover multi-generational Cortland County families.
- Yearbooks for public and private schools within Cortland County.
- Materials that provide geographical and residential information for Cortland County over different time periods. This would include maps, atlases, and city/county directories.
- Published histories relevant to surrounding geographical regions, namely those counties adjacent to Cortland (Broome, Tioga, Tompkins, Cayuga, Onondaga, Madison, and Chenango counties).
- Photographs, physical and digital
- Audio-visual items

C. Non-Permanent Collections

The Education Collection is non-permanent and includes duplicate materials in the permanent collection as well as non-accessioned items to be used in and outside of the grounds of CCHS. The items within this collection are not subject to the same standards of documentation and care, and are intended to be handled for the purposes of demonstration and education.

The Reference Collection is organized by subject (families, organizations, buildings, businesses, etc.). These include the “family files” and “general files/binders” used by CCHS staff and researchers. These collections are not intended to be catalogued, and library, manuscript, and archives materials should not be stored with these collections.

V. Acquisitions and Accessioning

Acquisitions refers to items obtained by CCHS through the means of gift, purchase, bequest, or transfer. Accessioning is the formal act of legally accepting an object, or collection of objects, into CCHS’s collections, held in public trust. Authority to acquire materials for CCHS resides with the Collections Committee.

Cortland County Historical Society expands its collection of artifacts and archival material by gift, bequest, purchase or exchange. CCHS subscribes to the acquisition guidelines of the New York State Board of Regents.

The following criteria will guide the acquisition of materials to the collections of CCHS:

- a. The material is relevant to and consistent with CCHS’s mission and the collection areas as described above.
- b. CCHS can provide for the storage, protection, and preservation of the materials under conditions that ensure their availability for Society purposes and in keeping with professionally accepted standards.
- c. Title to objects acquired for the collections are to be free and clear, with no restrictions as to use or future disposition, with exceptions only to be made on a case-by-case basis by CCHS’s Board of Trustees when recommended by the Collections Committee.
- d. If possession of an object contains restrictions or limitations, then the conditions are to be stated clearly in the instrument of conveyance, and will then be followed strictly by

CCHS.

- e. All purchases for the collection will require recommendation of the Collection Committee and approval of the Board of Trustees. In all cases, the Board's approval must be obtained before the payment is made.
- f. Does not duplicate items of equal condition or historical value already in the CCHS collections.
- g. Item is in stable physical condition and able to withstand handling for research or exhibit.
- h. Does not pose a danger to people, the building, or other collection items (ex. mold).

A. Acquisition Schedule

When a donation is offered by a potential donor, the donor should be prompted to fill out a **“Potential Acquisition Questionnaire”** (appendix) before proceeding. This form is given to a prospective donor with the purpose of gathering information on a potential donation. It is intended to provide the Collections Committee with enough information to make decisions in the acquisition process without requiring the donor to leave their potential donation at the museum. However, if a donor requests to leave the object at the museum, they will be required to fill out a **“Temporary Custody Form”** (appendix).

While a collections care representative should make active efforts to reach out to the potential donor, it should be noted that an object under temporary custody of CCHS is still the sole responsibility of the owner. If any change in address, contact information, or donation intent occurs, it is the responsibility of the donor to notify a CCHS representative.

After the donor has presented the potential donation to the museum, the Collections Committee reviews the potential donation within 120 days and a staff member or Collections Committee representative contacts the donor to inform them of a decision. In the case that the Committee declines the donation and the donor has left the object in CCHS custody, the object must be returned to the donor or otherwise disposed of as indicated by the donor and a note of the final destination of the object in temporary custody must be noted on the “Temporary Custody Form”. However, if the potential donation is accepted by the Committee, the donor should be notified and asked to complete a **“Deed of Gift”** (appendix). A Deed of Gift is the official transfer of ownership from one entity to another entity. CCHS uses this formality to ensure that all collections in the society's possession are legally acquired and maintained. Any acquisition of primary and original documents or artifacts CCHS makes requires a Deed of Gift, no matter how small. A single Deed of Gift can be completed for multiple objects as long as the transfer of ownership occurs at the same time for all objects.

When a collection is accessioned, it will be assigned an accession number with the format year.collection # of that year. For example, if a collection is accessioned in the year 2022, and it is the third collection to be accessioned that year, the accession number will be 2022.3. The Deed of Gift on which this accession number is assigned is the start of the collection's “paper trail” and will be stored in an accession binder. All forms, notes, and documents relating to the collection will be stored indefinitely in the appropriate accession file.

Accessioned materials shall remain in the permanent collection as long as they remain physically sound, clearly identifiable, authentic and/or useful for the purposes of CCHS.

B. Undocumented Property and Conversion of Unclaimed or Old Loans

Acceptable means of acquisition also include adoption of undocumented property or conversion of unclaimed or old loans. Undocumented property, at CCHS referred to as items found in the collections, are those collections with no accession numbers (or numbers that cannot be cross-referenced to CCHS cataloging systems, past or present) or any characteristics that might connect them to existing documentation. Items found in the collections may derive from undocumented door stop donations, undocumented pending gifts, or items added to the collections before a formal accessioning process was implemented at CCHS. Unclaimed or old loans are those objects that are accompanied by some evidence or documentation that a loan to CCHS was intended by the owner.

Undocumented and old loan collection items may be accessioned into the permanent collections if they meet the acquisition criteria. Section 233-AA of New York State Education Law states that “a museum must demonstrate that it has held unclaimed indefinite loans or undocumented property for at least ten years before beginning the process. The exception to the ten-year period is for loans of a definite period of time where the lender has failed to claim the property. In this instance, the museum must demonstrate that it has held the property for five years after the date upon which the loan was to have expired.”

CCHS will take care to implement the actions necessary to acquire title to unclaimed property as required by Section 233-AA of New York State Education Law. Undocumented and old loan items that are accessioned must be recorded as “Found in collections” to make clear that the transfer of ownership is undocumented.

When considering the disposal of objects of unconfirmed ownership, CCHS will consider additional factors such as the value, distinctiveness, history of exhibition, and proposed disposal method of the item(s) in question.

VI. Deaccessions

Deaccessioning is the process of removing a collection or objects from the Permanent Collection.

A. Guidelines for Deaccessioning

The decision to deaccession should be cautious and deliberate and follow the standards outlined in the rules of the Board of Regents (8 CRR-NY 3.27).

One of the following criteria must be met:

- a. the item is inconsistent with the mission of the institution as set forth in its mission statement;
- b. the item has failed to retain its identity;
- c. the item is redundant;
- d. the item's preservation and conservation needs are beyond the capacity of the institution to provide;
- e. the item is deaccessioned to accomplish refinement of collections;
- f. it has been established that the item is inauthentic;

- g. the institution is repatriating the item or returning the item to its rightful owner;
- h. the institution is returning the item to the donor, or the donor's heirs or assigns, to fulfill donor restrictions relating to the item which the institution is no longer able to meet;
- i. the item presents a hazard to people or other collection items; and/or
- j. the item has been lost or stolen and has not been recovered.

B. Authority to Deaccession

CCHS personnel who identify collections for deaccessioning must present findings to the Collections Committee who will make a formal recommendation for deaccessioning to the Board of Trustees for approval.

C. Documentation

An adequate record of the conditions and circumstances under which objects are deaccessioned and disposed of shall be made and retained indefinitely as part of CCHS's collection records.

D. Disposal

Deaccessioned collections may be disposed of by donation or sale, or in some cases (i.e., serious disrepair, or a danger to collections) destroyed. In considering the various alternatives for the disposition of deaccessioned items, CCHS shall see that:

- a. The manner of disposition is in the best interests of CCHS, the public it serves, and the public trust it represents in owning the collections.
- b. Preference is given to retaining in the State or Nation material that is part of the historical or cultural heritage of New York State or the United States respectively.
- c. Consideration is given to placing the object, through gift, exchange or sale in another tax-exempt public institution wherein it may serve the purpose for which it was acquired by CCHS. If objects are offered for sale elsewhere, preference is to be given for sale at advertised public auction or in the public marketplace, in a manner that will best protect the interests, objectives and legal status of CCHS. No deaccessioned item will be sold privately.
- d. Objects are not given or sold privately to Society employees, former employees, officers, or members of the Board of Trustees, or to their representatives.
- e. Before disposing of any objects from the collections, reasonable efforts shall be made to ascertain that CCHS is free to do so. Where restrictions as to use or disposition of the objects under question are found to apply, CCHS shall act as follows:
 - i. Mandatory restrictions will be observed strictly unless deviations from these restrictions are authorized by a court of competent jurisdiction. Objects to which restrictions apply, will not be disposed of until reasonable efforts are made to comply with the donor's wishes.
 - ii. If practical and reasonable to do so, considering the value of the objects under question, CCHS will notify the donor if it intends to dispose of such objects if

- disposition is to occur within ten (10) years of receiving the gift.
- iii. If there is a question as to the intent or force of restrictions, CCHS will seek advice of legal counsel.

Proceeds derived from the sale of deaccessioned collections must be used solely for the acquisition, preservation, conservation, protection, or direct care and management of the existing CCHS collections. In no situation shall the proceeds derived from the sale of deaccessioned collections be used for operating expenses or for any purpose other than the aforementioned reasons.

VII. Public Access and Use

CCHS recognizes the right and importance of the public to have access to the collections within its care, and the responsibility of CCHS to serve the public equitably and inclusively. In the interest of continuing to conserve the collections to the best of the society's ability, access is granted to the collections on a case-to-case basis. All collection materials are handled by those bound to the code of ethics (members, staff, volunteers, interns, etc.) and the policy for handling such materials is to be followed as a requirement of access to such materials.

During normal operating hours, the collections shall be accessible for legitimate research and study by responsible investigators or the public, subject to procedures necessary to safeguard the objects and to restrictions imposed by limitations of space and facilities, exhibition requirements, condition of the object and availability of appropriate staff. Inquiries into accessing collections outside of normal operating hours will be reviewed on a first come, first serve, case-by-case basis. A statement of public access policy and procedures shall be available to the public to explain this process. Information on donors and appraised values of an object or collection will remain confidential, but other cataloging information will be available.

Because CCHS is a non-profit organization, earned income from photocopy, scanning, and research services help sustain operations. Fees are based on cost recovery with a modest increase to support the preservation and maintenance of CCHS collections.

A. Duplications

CCHS may authorize photographs and other reproductions of collection artifacts and archival materials, subject to certain restrictions.

- The reproduction or adaptation of any collection object must not, in any way, endanger that object.
- No collection object may be reproduced or adapted in any form or by any means, without the approval of CCHS.
- Appropriate fees for reproductions and/or usage rights shall be charged. Note: Possession of a digital reproduction does not constitute permission to publish or exhibit the image.
- Any cataloging information or original research, materials, artifacts, objects, recordings, etc. used in a publication by researchers must be credited to the CCHS.

B. Digitization Procedures

Making CCHS collections widely available online is an on-going process. Digitized collections exist within New York Heritage publicly, an open access online repository.

In order to broaden access to the collections, and reduce the impact of frequent handling, priority will be placed on digitizing the most valuable and used collections. High-resolution surrogates of the digitized collections are created and will be made available for researchers, scholars, and the public to view for personal and educational purposes.

Digitization efforts will be carried out in accordance with established best practices for archival storage. A list of requirements will be prepared and made available to those assisting in digitization projects.

Pictures intended for use on social media platforms will be scanned at a low resolution with an unobtrusive watermark placed in a bottom corner. These watermarks are placed to ensure source information remains available even if the photo is shared without proper attribution to CCHS, as well as to prevent the unauthorized use of these images for monetization purposes through use in videos, publications, paywall websites, social media channels, “influencer” building, merchandise, or other similar uses where the unauthorized use earns income for the seller. Researchers may request reproductions without a watermark; see further guidelines and fee information in “Image Licensing Rental Agreement” form in the Appendix.

C. Patron Services Procedures

The Kellogg Memorial Research Center is a research-focused non-circulating library. It shall serve as an information center on the history and interpretation of the history of Cortland County. Interested persons, under adequate supervision, shall be allowed to utilize the Research Center’s resources in their research. The Center shall be a means of encouraging both the professional and lay communities to deepen their understanding of Cortland County, while providing the tools for them to do so.

Researchers will be assisted in their research by a staff member or volunteer and should not attempt to pull or re-shelf materials on their own. Additionally, no food or drink will be permitted during visits. Upon arrival, researchers will sign in at the entrance as well as fill out the research form that includes relevant rules and regulations as well as the Digital Camera Terms of Use. Pencil over pen is required for note-taking, and electronic notetaking is also permitted. Until a separate public Wi-Fi network is established, researchers will not be provided access to internet through personal devices. All researchers are expected to understand and comply with security and safety standards and procedures.

D. Copyright and Citation

Researchers shall be responsible for any copyright clearances applicable to the reproduction and use of materials. CCHS requires proper citation of materials when used. See an example below:

[item name], from the Cortland County Historical Society collections.

E. Loan Policy

CCHS participates with outgoing and incoming loans to disseminate knowledge, share information, and broaden public access. Outgoing loans are facilitated through organizations only, such as historical, cultural, or educational institutions, while incoming loans may also occur on the individual level. Outgoing and incoming loans must benefit public, not private, interests.

Reasons for a loan may include:

- Exhibition
- Research and study

Outgoing Loans

Requests for outgoing loans will be considered by the Collections Committee with a recommendation for approval or denial to the Board of Trustees. Loan requests must be received in writing on behalf of an organization. Items requested must be suitable for transfer physically and legally. All items will undergo a formal inspection to ensure their ability to be loaned. Upon acceptance of a request, the requesting institution may be asked to provide a certificate of insurance and will be required to sign a loan agreement. Additionally, shipping costs may be applied to the requesting institution. The Collections Committee will make the formal arrangements for the loan but reserve the right to provide conditions upon the outgoing items.

Any restoration or conservation efforts are strictly prohibited unless agreed upon in writing by CCHS. All professional preservation standards should be adhered to by the borrowing institution which then applies to any staff members who may routinely come into contact with the materials. Citation and credit will be applied to the lending institution regarding photographs, labels, or research (see Access and Use for citation). CCHS reserves the right to deny duplication services and photography and must be granted in writing prior to taking place

CCHS has engaged in permanent loans and are handled on a case-by-case basis. Loan agreements in this situation are renewed every three years. The permanent loan is upheld in perpetuity or until either party wishes to break the agreement.

All loan requests or renewals will be evaluated on an individual basis and may be accepted or declined by CCHS for the following reasons:

- Type of institution
- Condition of item(s)
- Length of loan period
- Condition of facility / preservation concerns from borrowing institution
- Other unlisted concerns may be evaluated on a case-by-case basis

Additional requirements:

- a. CCHS shall loan collection objects for primarily educational or aesthetic purposes to other educational institutions or organizations only. No loans will be made to staff, trustees, volunteers, or to other individuals. No loans will be made for commercial display or social functions unless the display is sponsored by an educational institution, is

- educational in nature, and is short duration.
- b. Only institutions capable of providing proper care and security for Society collection objects while in their possession will be considered for the possible loaning of objects by CCHS. Objects that are delicate, unstable, or of extraordinary importance, value or rarity shall not be loaned. The Director of CCHS may deny a loan request upon the recommendations of the professional staff.
 - c. No loan object may be altered, embellished, modified, or dismantled in any way. Nails, pins or other support material that may leave marks or evidence on the loaned object are not to be used.
 - d. Loaned collection objects shall be packaged and transported carefully to protect the objects while in transit. The borrower may be required to pay for the packing and transportation, and the methods and personnel shall be chosen or approved by CCHS.
 - e. In general, loans shall be made on a short-term (one year or less, renewable) basis.
 - f. The professional staff shall be responsible for proper recording and documentation of all outgoing loans.

Incoming Loans

CCHS takes on a liability when agreeing to the conditions of an incoming loan request. Incoming materials should relate to CCHS's mission. The Collections Committee will assess and make formal requests for all incoming loans.

- CCHS may borrow objects from the collections of other institutions or individuals for exhibition, study, or research only.
- In general, loans will be made on a short-term basis (one year or less, renewable). CCHS shall not provide long term care or storage to objects that do not belong to the Society.
- CCHS personnel shall provide all necessary paperwork on incoming loans.
- A certificate of insurance shall be provided upon request.
- Objects on loan to CCHS shall receive proper care and attention. No conservation of loaned objects will be undertaken. The professional staff will notify the lender immediately of any deterioration or conservation needs of an object on loan to CCHS.
- CCHS shall not exhibit borrowed items of questionable provenance, nor shall the Society exhibit borrowed objects for the purpose of increasing their value.
- An object loaned to CCHS for the consideration of purchase shall be treated as any other loaned object until the title to the object passes to the Society.

VIII. Collections Care

Collections care applies to anyone directly handling any objects, materials, and exhibits. This responsibility includes staff, Board members, and volunteers. CCHS may engage in conservation efforts but also recognizes that preventive care may be the most effective and economical means of ensuring the long-term preservation of its collections. CCHS will attempt to monitor and protect all materials within its care.

A. Preservation and Conservation

Preservation is the practice of prolonging the existence of materials through proper storage, handling/use, and monitoring. Conservation is the profession devoted to the preservation of cultural property for the future. Conservation activities include examination, documentation, treatment, and preventive care, supported by research and education. CCHS seeks to maintain and preserve collections under its care. Materials that may be at risk and require conservation efforts will be assessed by the Collections Committee. Arrangements will be made through a third-party service to ensure appropriate and professional care. Conservation treatment must respect the historic and artistic integrity standards established by the American Institute for the conservation of Historic and Artistic works. There shall be full documentation of any treatment performed on an object, and any significant original material removed will be preserved as part of the object record. Due to budget constraints, conservation efforts may be dependent upon external funding.

B. Handling

All staff, Board members, interns, and volunteers will adhere to current professional standards when handling materials. This also applies to incoming loans. Training in the proper handling of the collection shall be provided to all staff and designated volunteers. Staff will limit handling and moving collections whenever possible to prevent damage and loss. Large or heavy items should be handled by more than one individual. All approved outgoing loans will be packed, shipped, and arranged by a staff member and/or Collections Committee.

Only designated staff, and volunteers/interns under the supervision of staff may retrieve or replace objects in collection storage areas, and record what has been taken out.

C. Storage

CCHS operates under a limited storage capacity. The Collections Committee has the responsibility to determine appropriate storage areas and needs for existing collections and new acquisitions. They will identify practical ways to ensure long-term storage within budgetary and space constraints. Collections and storage needs will be evaluated periodically to ensure preservation practices are being exhibited that may lead to additional conservation efforts.

Collection storage areas will be restricted to designated staff members, or by volunteers/interns under the supervision of staff.

D. Environmental Control

CCHS operates within a historic structure which presents a challenge to environmental controls such as air quality, humidity, and temperature. CCHS actively monitors RH (relative humidity) and temperature throughout the facility in order to take corrective action when necessary. Every effort to reduce exposure to light will be made.

A disaster plan shall be formulated and maintained to provide a clear course of action in case of fire, flood, natural disaster, bomb threats, or public disturbance. A plan shall be formulated for the reporting of theft and vandalism.

E. Housekeeping

Storage areas are routinely and appropriately cleaned, swept, or vacuumed, and trash disposed of regularly. Food and drink are not permitted within storage, exhibit, and collection spaces. All areas will be monitored for pest control maintenance. Any potential need for pest management will be brought to the Board for approval.

F. Conservation Assessment

In March of 2012 CCHS received a Collections Assessment report from the American Conservation Consortium. This report outlined immediate, short-term, and long-term needs which in turn informed CCHS's strategic plan as it relates to collections care and access.

Much work remains to be done, and a future Collections Assessment may be conducted to determine potential new issues that may have arisen in the meantime, as well as determine that collections work is following standards as outlined in this policy.

IX. Records Management

Museum records are critical to the operation of the institution. Records protect the museum's legal rights and its ownership of property. The care, security, ownership, and changing conditions of the collection are also documented.

A "record" is defined in this document as information created, received, and maintained about or for a collection. A record has value as evidence of institutional activity. The goal of records management is to ensure that the museum's documentary heritage is preserved and appropriately maintained.

A. Ownership

All records created by CCHS-affiliated individuals intended for CCHS use are property of the historical society. Records are managed by qualified representatives appointed by the Collections Committee. Representatives may include and are not limited to staff members, Board members, or qualified volunteers with experience in records management.

Records must be managed from the point of creation and may not be discarded, deleted, or removed from the museum except in accordance with formal procedures as outlined in this policy.

B. Storage of Records

CCHS follows the general "3, 2, 1" rule for records storage. This rule states that ideal records storage consists of *three* copies of a record located in *two* different locations, *one* of which is on a digital cloud service. All original physical copies of collection records will be stored on-site at the Cortland County Historical Society in the appropriate and associated accession file. This information is also entered into the database system PastPerfect, and this PastPerfect file is then backed up onto a cloud service.

At no point should original copies of CCHS files/forms, digital or otherwise, reside outside of the organization's set locations for record storage. Under no circumstances should original

copies of CCHS files/forms leave the Cortland County Historical Society premises. Digital files should be permanently stored within the PastPerfect database system and the cloud service. Personal C-Drives and personal Google Drive accounts are not adequate permanent storage for CCHS files.

Efforts to digitize past accession records have recently been undertaken in order to comply with this rule.

C. Research Library Records

Books that are accepted into the Research Library will have a Library of Congress number recorded in the library database along with all pertinent information. Books will be stored on shelves by Library of Congress order.

D. Forms – Loans, Licensing

Occasionally, CCHS will get a request from another reputable institution requesting to borrow objects. In the instance in which another institution wishes to borrow an item from the permanent collection, an “Outgoing Loan Agreement” must be completed by an institution representative, such as a curator, Board member, or director. Copies of this form should be placed in the accession file of the object being loaned. At the end of the loan term, a Condition Report should be filled out. Similarly, CCHS will sometimes request items from other institutions for the purposes of exhibition. In this case, the “Incoming Loan Agreement” will be completed.

All licensing information is available in the appendix.

E. Records Retention and Disposition Schedule

All original records relating to collections, including but not limited to accession records, loan records, condition reports, etc., are to be kept indefinitely following the aforementioned “3, 2, 1” rule. Photocopies of original records or collections documents are to be discarded whenever no longer needed.

F. Revisions

In 2012, a Collections Management Policy was developed for CCHS. The Collections Committee has noticed a lack of elements critical to an effective collections management policy, and therefore revamped the entire policy to reflect modern technology, museum practices, and current legal and ethical standards. This policy supersedes any previous collections management policies. This policy will be reviewed annually. Revisions must be documented and dated upon approval by the Board of Trustees.

This policy was created in 2022 by the Collections Committee, revised in 2023.

References

- Beloit Historical Society. (2021). *Collections Management Policy*.
http://www.beloithistoricalsociety.com/research/collections_management_policy.pdf
- Delaware Historical Society. (2010). https://libraries.delaware.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/123/2018/10/Delaware_Historical_Society_Collections_Policy_editedJune2010.pdf.
- Oswego County Historical Society. (2022). *Collections Management Policy*.
- Watertown Free Public Library. (2013). *Local History Collection Policy*.
<https://www.watertownlib.org/194/Local-History-Collection-Policy>

X. Appendix: Forms

Potential Acquisition Questionnaire

Thank you for considering a donation to the Cortland County Historical Society! In order to make sure that we can make an educated and informed decision regarding your offer for donation as quickly, accurately, and effectively as possible, we ask you to please take a few minutes to answer the following questions regarding your offer of donation. Please note that the Collections Care Committee meets monthly, so your donation request will be processed at the nearest meeting. You will be contacted with the committee's decision within 90 days.

Donor Information

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Object/Collection Information

Items and description:

How long have you been in possession of this object? _____

How did you come to possess this object?

If purchased, where was this object purchased from? _____

Creator/User: _____

Birth Date of User: _____ Death Date of User: _____

Brief Summary of User's Life:

User's Occupation: _____

Place Made: _____ Date Made: _____

Was this object created for a particular purpose or occasion?

What is this object's connection to Cortland County? Why is it important to Cortland County history? _____

Do you know of any changes made to this item? _____

Are there any additional parts or accompanying objects that the museum should be aware of?

Additional comments:

Please include photos of the object, including detailed photos. Also attach any available documentation for this item. Photocopies or originals are okay.

Temporary Custody Agreement

Received by: _____

Date: _____

Received from: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

The items listed below are left in the custody of the Cortland County Historical Society to be considered as (select ONE):

- An unconditional donation. The museum reserves the right to keep, lend, or otherwise dispose of the donated material, including being sold to benefit CCHS.

OR

- To be considered for acquisition. Source will pick up if not accepted for collections.

Preferred disposition if not accepted for acquisition (select ONE):

- Please dispose of or destroy.
- May be sold to benefit CCHS
- Other:

Items and description:

Please see back for conditions of Temporary Custody.

The objects listed on this form are left in the temporary custody of the Cortland County Historical Society for the benefit of the owner and on the initiative of the owner.

CCHS will give the objects left in its custody the same care provided similar objects of its own, but it assumes no additional responsibilities or liabilities in regard to such objects. This receipt shall constitute a release and waiver of CCHS, its employees, officers, and agents from any liability in connection with the objects while in temporary custody or in transit, except for clearly negligent conduct.

Museum personnel will not make statements regarding the monetary value of an object, nor are they or CCHS liable for statements concerning the authenticity or identity of the object(s).

The owner shall be given a copy of this receipt with which they may use to withdraw the deposited objects during the specified term. Authorization of other individuals for withdrawal requires the owner's written and signed consent presented to CCHS.

It is the responsibility of the owner to notify CCHS of any change of address while objects are in temporary custody. **This agreement expires after 120 days of signing.** A museum representative will contact the owner during this time, but it is the responsibility of the owner to reclaim any objects left in temporary custody. Any objects not claimed within 90 days of the expiration of this agreement may be disposed of at the discretion of CCHS. The organization is not obligated to find a new repository for the object(s).

I agree to the above terms and conditions, and certify that I have full authority to do so.

Signature

Date

Museum Use Only

Temp. Custody # _____ Dimensions _____

Temp. Holding Location _____

Processed By _____

Where did the item go?

Accessioned at CCHS

Sold

Sent to different institution

Disposed of/Destroyed

Returned to sender

Other: _____

Deed of Gift

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Street Address

Apartment/Unit #

City

State

ZIP Code

Phone: _____

The Cortland County Historical Society has received the items described below as a gift. By signing below, I verify that I am the lawful owner of the described items or am acting as the authorized agent of the same, and do hereby irrevocably and unconditionally give and transfer to the Cortland County Historical Society all right, title, and interests in and to the following described property. The Cortland County Historical Society shall have the right to exhibit, loan, dispose of, or otherwise deal with the items described below in what it considers to be in the best interests of the museum.

Description of Gift

Help us tell its story by adding any historical information related to the above gift (anything pertaining to who owned/used it, what, where, etc.):

By my signature below I accept the foregoing conditions and acknowledge reading any attached information.

Donor/agent: _____ Date: _____

Donor/agent: _____ Date: _____

Date:

Received by

This gift is given in memory of: _____

Accession # _____

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Outgoing Loan Agreement

ORIGINAL ____ OBJECT FILE COPY ____ BORROWER COPY ____

Borrower:

Name

Title

Institution

Address

Phone #

Email

Period of Loan: From _____ to _____

Purpose of Loan:

Object(s) to be Loaned:

Accession #

Object

Condition

Est. Value

Please see next page for conditions of Outgoing Loans.

The Cortland County Historical Society has a legal and ethical responsibility to preserve the historical collections in the institution’s possession. Original materials in the permanent collection are lent **only** for the purposes of exhibition, research, and study.

All requests for loans are considered on a case-by-case basis, and the lender gives no guarantee that a request for loan will be accepted. Requests must be submitted in writing and must detail the intended use of the object. If the intended use of the object(s) changes for any reason during the term of the original loan, a new request must be completed.

The borrower may not lend, alter, add to, copy, or treat any objects owned by the lender. Loaned objects may only be photographed in the context of exhibition. The lender retains all reproduction rights unless otherwise agreed upon with the borrower.

The borrower will provide insurance coverage for the loaned object(s) in an amount determined by the lender based on estimated values of the object(s) (see front sheet) for the full loan term. The borrower assumes all responsibility for the loaned object(s) during the loan term.

The borrower must credit the lender and the original donor within the exhibit. The lender assumes no responsibility for obtaining copyright for the loaned object, nor does the lender assume any responsibility for granting permission to publish or use the objects. This responsibility rests with the borrower.

The object will not be used to assert or imply the lender’s endorsement of any commercial project or enterprise, or agree with the opinions in or confirm the accuracy of any test or narrative used with the object.

Additional conditions: _____

I agree to the above terms and conditions, and certify that I have full authority to do so. I agree to adhere to these terms and conditions for the full term of this agreement.

Borrower’s Signature

CCHS Representative’s Signature

Date

Date

Incoming Loan Agreement

ORIGINAL ____ BORROWER COPY ____

Lender:

Name

Title

Institution

Address - Return shipment will be made to this address unless otherwise specified.

Phone #

Email

Period of Loan: From _____ to _____

Purpose of Loan:

Object(s) to be Loaned:

Accession #

Object

Condition

Est. Value

Please see next page for conditions of Incoming Loans.

The borrower may not lend, alter, add to, copy, or treat any objects owned by the lender. Loaned objects may only be photographed in the context of exhibition. The lender retains all reproduction rights unless otherwise agreed upon with the borrower.

The borrower will provide insurance coverage for the loaned object(s) in an amount determined by the lender based on estimated values of the object(s) (see front sheet) for the full loan term. The borrower assumes all responsibility for the loaned object(s) during the loan term.

The borrower must credit the lender and the original donor within the exhibit. The lender assumes no responsibility for obtaining copyright for the loaned object, nor does the lender assume any responsibility for granting permission to publish or use the objects. This responsibility rests with the borrower.

The object will not be used to assert or imply the lender's endorsement of any commercial project or enterprise, or agree with the opinions in or confirm the accuracy of any test or narrative used with the object.

Additional conditions: _____

I agree to the above terms and conditions, and certify that I have full authority to do so. I agree to adhere to these terms and conditions for the full term of this agreement.

 Lender's Signature

 CCHS Representative's Signature

 Date

 Date

Image Licensing Rental Agreement

Thank you for your interest in obtaining image(s) from the Cortland County Historical Society (CCHS). Please review our licensing policies and complete the form below to request images for study or publication purposes.

Contact Information

Name _____

Organization _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Request Purpose _____

Object(s) to be Loaned:

Accession #

Object

Cost

Total Cost:

Please see next page for conditions of Image Licensing Rental.

1. License. CCHS grants to the Licensee under any copyrights, trademarks, and other intellectual property rights that CCHS may have, the right to reproduce, distribute, and publicly display the Authorized Image(s), solely in connection with the agreed upon uses. Any reproduction from materials not supplied by CCHS is prohibited. Licensee may not modify the Authorized Image(s) in any way not contemplated herein when exercising its rights under this Agreement. The Licensee agrees to pay the full fee due to CCHS prior to publication (please see table below).

Intended Use (Per Image)

Research/Educational (with watermark)	No fee
Genealogy/Personal Use	With watermark: \$5 Without watermark: \$15
Not-For-Profit Commercial/Publication; (with watermark)	No fee
For-Profit Commercial/Publication	Per director's discretion
For decoration in private commercial offices, lobbies, public spaces of commercial business, restaurants, government buildings, etc.	\$40

2. Reproduction Limitations. CCHS may request that the Licensee submit proofs in advance of publication. Each image must be reproduced in its entirety without cropping, bleeding, alteration, splitting, or other modification. If a detail is shown, the caption must include the word “detail” and a full view must be shown as well.

3. Attribution. *In the instance of print/web:* Attribution must appear adjacent to the image(s) and/or in an appendix. The credit line will include all of the information listed with each text as described in the permission agreement. *In the instance of Video/Broadcast:* Captions and/or credits must appear in the broadcast credits.

4. Return of Materials. Digital images must be destroyed upon the publication of the Project.

5. Ownership. CCHS grants the license requested only to the extent of its ownership rights relating to the request. Certain material may be protected by copyright, trademark, or related interests not owned by CCHS. The responsibility for ascertaining whether any such rights exist and for obtaining all other necessary permission remains solely with the Licensee. CCHS reserves the right to request copies of such permissions.

6. Review. Licensee must submit a copy of the completed Project as published. In addition, prior to publication CCHS may require Licensee to provide samples of the Authorized Image(s) as they are to appear in the Project. CCHS reserves the right to approve the

samples for quality and adherence to any trademark guidelines of CCHS, and the licensee shall not use the Authorized Image(s) until the samples have been so approved.

7. Disclaimer. CCHS makes no representations or warranties of any kind with respect to the texts in connection with this agreement. CCHS specifically disclaims any and all implied warranties or conditions of title, merchantability, satisfactory quality and fitness for a particular purpose. Without limiting the above, CCHS disclaims any warranty with respect to copyright, trademark, rights of publicity or privacy, or any intellectual property right that may be embodied in the artworks, or any warranty that the rights granted herein are sufficient for Licensee's purposes. Licensee acknowledges that the licensee bears the sole obligation to acquire such sufficient rights.

8. Duplicates. The Image may not be duplicated without CCHS's prior approval. *In the instance of web:* Licensee will employ technology that will prevent copying of the Image(s) from the digital project and will prosecute infringement.

9. Limitation of Liability. CCHS shall not be liable to Licensee for any damages, direct or indirect, including without limitation special, consequential, or incidental damages arising out of this agreement, whether based on warranty, contract, tort (including negligence or strict liability), or otherwise.

I agree to the above terms and conditions, and certify that I have full authority to do so.

Licensee's Signature

CCHS Representative's Signature

Date

Date

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Image Licensing Fee Waiver

Contact Information

Name

Organization _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Request Purpose

Reason for Waiving Fee

Please attach this fee waiver to the matching Image Licensing Rental Agreement form. A CCHS representative will contact you when a decision is made. If the waiver request is denied and the licensee still wishes to license the agreed upon images, the licensee is still responsible for paying the full fee noted on the associated Image Licensing Rental Agreement form.

Licensee's Signature

CCHS Representative's Signature

Date

Date

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Artifact Condition Report

CORTLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Object _____ Form Completed By _____
 Object Number _____
 Location _____ Position _____
 Date Completed _____

Description of Object

Dimensions _____

Condition	Types of Damage Present		
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Mold/Mildew	<input type="checkbox"/> Abrasion	<input type="checkbox"/> Craquelure (Crackle)
<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Insect	<input type="checkbox"/> Chip/Crack	<input type="checkbox"/> Fraying
<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Stains	<input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion	<input type="checkbox"/> Warped
<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Fading/Discoloration	<input type="checkbox"/> Loss	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Description of Condition/Damage

Is the Object Stable? YES / NO

Priority: LOW MED HIGH

Additional Notes: _____

