

George Hail Free Library Collections Management Policy for the Historical Collection in the Charles Whipple Greene Museum

The George Hail Free Library is a 501(c)3 non-profit membership organization committed to providing materials and services that advance intellectual discovery and meet the educational, recreational and technological needs of the library community and in the town of Warren, Rhode Island. The historical collection housed in the Charles Whipple Greene Museum focus is to provide cultural resources, and educate the community about the history of the town. The George Hail Free Library Board of Trustees with the advice of the museum committee, is responsible for, and advises the Library Director about, the policies, procedures and actions relating to the library's historical collection. The Library Director will include information concerning collection activities, condition, and major acquisitions in their annual report.

Scope of the Collections

The Library acquires items, by gift, or purchase, with a documented association with Warren's history.

The collection includes scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, deeds, wills, maps, oral histories, photographs, postcards, decorative arts, videos, paintings, books, reference works, journals, manuscripts, items and ephemera in many formats from the 16th century through the present. The financial and administrative files of the Library's operations and the Library's publications are also included, as well as exhibit props and event materials. The George Hail Free Library also maintains extensive research files on subjects, events, buildings, and people related to Warren, RI.

Acquisitions & Donations

Thoughtful consideration is given to the following criteria before acquiring items or accepting donations in order to be sure the items contribute to the mission of the Library, have a clear connection to the history of Warren, do not duplicate current items, and can be cared for and stored appropriately:

1. Does the donor have clear ownership?
2. Does the item reflect Warren's history?
3. Is the item part of a priority area of the current collection? (see note below)
4. Is provenance and any other supporting documentation provided?
5. Can the item's stable and good condition be well maintained by the Library?
6. Is there space available for this item?
7. Does the item offer new opportunities for research, education, display or programs?
8. Would a scan or photo of the item suffice?

After considering these factors, the Library Director will decide if an item will be acquired or a donation will be accepted. A record will be made of each item acquired by cataloging and photographing it for our separate digital collection database.

NOTE, currently the Library is particularly interested in collecting materials related to the following areas:

- The diverse voices who make up our town, including immigrants and people of color
- Arts & letters, businesses, inventions & inventors
- Family histories and other genealogical records
- Materials and items related to maritime, military and daily life in Warren

Accessioning & Deed of Gift

Donors will be provided with a Deed of Gift (see attached), which will include a description of the item, any supporting documentation, and a statement that the item will be held by the Library without any conditions, restrictions, or encumbrances. The donor must sign the Deed and submit it to the Library, and a copy will be returned to them. Any donor requiring a tax deduction may obtain an appraisal from an authorized outside appraiser. No deposit collections will be accepted. For all items which are accessioned into the permanent collection a record will be made for entry into our collection database.

Conflict of Interest

Any Board member, Committee member, or employee of the Library should avoid any conflict of interest in the acquisition of items that both the Library and the individual wish to own.

Access and Reproduction

Current access to the collections occurs through displays, exhibits, presentations, and by research request. The Library makes the collections available to the public for research. Researchers will contact the Library Director or Head Librarian who will determine the level of access needed on a case-by-case basis. Presently, digital photography is the only reproduction method available.

Reproduction Rights

Permission to reproduce items from the collections for any purpose requires approval from the Library Director. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns, or, where granted, by the George Hail Free Library. In order to begin this process, policy and form #21 must be completed.

The rights to unpublished documents and manuscripts are negotiable between the Museum Committee and the requestor.

Lending Policy

With the consent of the Board items may temporarily leave the collection for study, exhibit, or conservation. Loans may not be made to individuals or for commercial purposes and must have a written agreement between

the Library and the borrower (see attached). The Loan Agreement should include details of security and care during transportation and usage. Any necessary insurance arrangements and payments will be covered by the borrower. All labels, publicity or exhibition catalogs created by the borrower will give credit to the Library.

Credit: In the display of any Museum item, credit must be given to the “Charles Whipple Greene Museum, at the George Hail Library, Warren, RI.”

Preservation

The Library recognizes the need for appropriate storage for all permanent collection items, based upon professional standards regarding temperature, light, humidity levels, water hazards, and integrated pest management. In addition, these factors are considered during handling and exhibition in order to maintain the longest functional life of the items.

Deaccessioning

As responsible stewards of our collections, the Library may, from time to time, deaccession and dispose of objects from the collections as deemed necessary by the Board. All deaccessions shall be documented in the item’s permanent record in the collections database.

An item may be deaccessioned if:

1. the Library has free and clear ownership of the item
2. the item is no longer relevant to the goals and activities of the Library
3. the item cannot be stored, preserved, or displayed consistent with museum standards
4. the item has deteriorated to a degree where no benefits exist
5. deaccession of item(s) has been approved by the Board

Method of Disposition

Items may be sold, bartered, or traded to another nonprofit institution, or sold in a sale open to the public, such as a yard sale or auction. Items may be destroyed if they cannot be repaired or conserved. Any funds derived from deaccessioning items will be used only for acquiring items or for preservation and maintenance of the collection. If the Library is unsuccessful in selling the items, deaccessioned items may be given, exchanged, or sold privately.

Voted on by the George Hail Free Library Board of Trustees in May, 2025. Completed by the Charles Whipple Greene Museum Committee in October 2025.