



*The Most Inspiring Adventure In America.*

**Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum**

**Department of Collections and  
Exhibitions**

**Collections Management Policy**

Adopted August 2, 2005, Amended December 20, 2006; April 25, 2007; October 25, 2007; August 21, 2008

## Table of Contents

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Mission & Purpose.....                             | 3 |
| Acquisitions.....                                  | 3 |
| Procedures for Accessions & Incoming Loans .....   | 4 |
| Deaccessions .....                                 | 5 |
| Procedures for Processing Unclaimed Artifacts..... | 5 |
| Artifact Storage Access Procedures.....            | 6 |
| Ethics of Curatorial Collecting.....               | 6 |

### Appendices:

- i. Laws of New York State (Pertaining to unclaimed artifacts, Sect. 233-aa)
- ii. Collections Cataloging Procedures

## **Mission & Purpose**

The Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum is an educational not-for-profit institution dedicated to the exhibition and interpretation of history, science and service as particularly related to its home aboard the National Historic Landmark, USS *Intrepid*, one of twenty-four Essex class aircraft carriers that were built during World War II, and the Cold War submarine SSG *Growler*. The Intrepid Museum's mission is to honor our heroes, educate the public, and inspire our youth. The Museum's mission encompasses preservation, collection, exhibitions and interpretations of individual contributions, acts of integrity and heroism, community service, historical events and scientific advancements, particularly from the service era of the USS *Intrepid* through the present. This mission is realized through the Museum's commitment to provide a paramount visitor experience and to educate and inspire its global audience through a moving, innovative, dynamic and interactive environment for learning and enjoyment.

The Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum's strategic goals include the following: 1) aggressively pursue museum business activities and sponsorships that result in a positive fiscal outcome; 2) enhance the visitor experience by developing a visually consistent, dynamic and enriching exhibition environment that relates to our mission to honor our heroes, educate the public, and inspire our youth by interpreting the humanity behind the hardware, the human stories behind the machinery on display; and 3) establish and maintain a credible and innovative education program that effectively supplements classroom academic learning in history and science and/or offers learning opportunities which inspire a lifelong impression about human values and proactive citizenship.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures by which the Museum acquires and deaccessions objects into its permanent collections. These collections consist of museum-quality items that are used primarily for exhibition and publication. The Museum also has education and general property collections, which though not necessarily of museum quality, may indeed be useful supplemental materials to the permanent collections. The materials within the education collections may still be used for research and study purposes though they may not be of exhibition or publication quality, or because of their poor conservation state. In addition, the Museum collects actual aircraft, which guidelines and procedures can be found under the Aircraft Collection Management Policy.

## **Acquisitions**

The Museum acquires its collection materials through donation, purchase, or exchange. With the support of the Museum Advisory Council, established by the Board of Trustees, the curators within the Exhibits Department find potential acquisitions and present them to their curatorial colleagues within the department, a majority vote of those curators and Council members determining whether or not the proposed object is acquired by the department. Successfully proposed items are then submitted to the Board of Trustees for their final

approval. In proposing items for inclusion within the collection curators will make every reasonable effort to determine validity of ownership and provenance. For pieces considered by the curators to be of major importance, or have a value of more than \$20,000, or those that may have controversial historic associations or potentially disputed provenance, the curators will solicit the written opinions of at least two respected historians or professionals to justify that acquisition. The same procedure for acquisition as stated at the beginning of this paragraph applies. The acquisition procedure and votes are documented within a summary of each meeting, the meetings being held as needed. The Collections Manager keeps the records for such acquisition meetings, as well as all the records within the department on its collections. The piece, if accepted into the collections, is recorded per the following section below on Procedures for Accessions & Incoming Loans, assigned an insurance value through discussion with the curators and Collections Manager, and given a brief Condition Report or assessment on its Accession Worksheet.

### **Procedures for Accessions & Incoming Loans**

Objects to be acquired for the permanent collection must have an Incoming Receipt form completed by the Collections Manager or a curator when the object enters Museum property. The donor must also sign and complete a Deed of Gift for the object, also indicating on the Deed that he/she has reviewed this Collections Management Policy. Multiple objects may be entered on one Receipt and on one Deed of Gift. When an object becomes part of the permanent collection, it is tracked both electronically and on paper by the accession number assigned by the Collections Manager. Objects may be loaned to other museums or private parties by completing the Outgoing Loan form as well as one prepared by the borrower's agent, and having the loan approved by one of the department's curators as well as the Executive Director. Approved loans are then presented to the Board of Trustees. The curators, for their exhibitions, may also borrow items from museums and private collections by completing an Incoming Loan form and submitting it to those lenders for approval, and those items are subject to the same receipt process as all other collection objects. Shipping Orders are completed for all loans or deaccessions that leave the building. When loans from the museum's permanent collection are returned, new Incoming Receipt forms are completed when the object is back in the museum's possession. The Collections Manager tracks all object movement to assure its safety and security both on and off museum property. However, should an object on loan to the museum become damaged while in its possession, the Collections Manager will notify the lender immediately, and the lender has the right to terminate the loan in lieu of conservation no later than thirty (30) days upon receiving notice. Unless the loan agreement states the contrary, if immediate attention is required to ensure the safety of the object or if the safety of the staff becomes jeopardized, the museum may apply conservation measures without first giving formal notice to the lender if the following applies: 1) the lender cannot be reached via phone, email, fax, or writing; and 2) the lender does not grant permission within three (3) days or does not terminate the loan and retrieve the

object within thirty (30) days. That which is not mentioned in the above statement follow similar provisions established by the New York State Museum, New York State Education Law (NYSEL), Sect. 233-aa (see Appendix, i. Laws of New York State).

### **Deaccessions**

The curators within the Exhibits Department along with the support of the Museum Advisory Council may, through majority vote, decide to deaccession individual objects within the collection that they deem inappropriate, or that they wish to move from an accessioned permanent collection to an education collection or general property category for reasons of conservation or re-evaluated significance. Their actions and the reasons for this deaccession are recorded in a summary by the Collections Manager and filed along with all documentation pertaining to the individual object. If the piece might be considered by some to be an important one valued at more than \$20,000, the curators will solicit the written opinions of at least two respected historians or specialists to support that proposed deaccession. Upon receiving approval from the Museum Advisory Council, the department should arrange to dispose of the item in the following sequence: 1) the object should be offered for sale, exchange or gift to another museum or similar non-profit institution; 2) if, after offering the material to at least three institutions no sale or exchange can be made, the piece can then be offered for sale, first via public auction and, second, through a private dealer if no auction house can be readily located to dispose of the item; 3) finally, if no one of those methods is found to be successful in disposing of the artifact, the curators may use their discretion in so donating, transferring, trading, selling or destroying the work. In accordance with the New York State Museum, NYSEL, Sect. 233-aa (see Appendix, i. Laws of New York State), any monies received from the sale of deaccessioned items can only be used to acquire new items for the permanent collection, or help conserve existing pieces within the collection. Proceeds from the sale of such items will be deposited in a restricted fund with the Collections Manager keeping a record of this transaction.

### **Procedures for Processing Unclaimed Artifacts**

Objects found in the collection for which there is no known documentation and/or provenance will be accessioned or deaccessioned under provisions established by the New York State Museum under NYSEL, Section 233-aa (see Appendix, i. Laws of New York State). In summary, should the museum wish to acquire title over the artifact in question, the Collections Manager must provide written notice via certified mail, return receipt requested, to the lender, if the lender is known. If the lender does not respond within 120 days upon receipt of the letter, the Collections Manager will send a second notice. If after 120 days after receipt of the second notice the lender still does not respond, the museum shall acquire all rights to said artifact. However, should the museum wish to acquire title over an undocumented artifact and/or artifact of unknown lender, the following procedures must be enacted regardless of the artifact's value: 1) notice of unclaimed property to be published in a local newspaper of general circulation

once a week for at least three consecutive weeks; 2) if responses to the public notice do not provide evidence to establish ownership after 180 days of the final publication, the museum will place a description of the property on the Unclaimed Funds Registry of the Comptroller's website for an additional 180 days; 3) if responses still do not establish ownership following this period, the museum shall then acquire title to the artifact in question.

### **Artifact Storage Access Procedures**

Only Exhibits Department staff may access artifact storage rooms. When departmental staff enters artifact storage locations they must sign a log entering their name, date and time entered, as well as log the time they exit. Museum staff, contractors, or the public may not enter these spaces unless accompanied by a member of the Exhibits department staff. In times of emergency, the museum's security department may access these spaces to permit museum workers entry for emergency repairs, or any other necessary work. Security staff who do this must inform the Exhibits Department of this action, and also log the entry and exit times, their name, and the names of all others accompanying them, and inform the Exhibits Department of such specifics for transfer to their department log. Keys to artifact storage locations are to be only in the possession of relevant Exhibits department staff and the Director of Security, and such keys must be within lock boxes in each of those departments. Entry and exit log sheets for these spaces are to be prominently displayed adjacent to the doorways within each respective artifact storage space, and the Exhibits Department will maintain a secure file, within their fireproof storage vault, of completed log sheets.

### **Ethics of Curatorial Collecting**

Curators and other employees of the Department of Collections and Exhibitions at the Intrepid Museum follow standard ethical practices of most other museums, and as adopted by the American Association of Museums. At the Intrepid Museum, the department staff cannot actively collect the same types of materials for their own personal use or gain as they would for their own institution. Likewise, the department staff and their immediate families cannot obtain de-accessioned or discarded permanent collection items for their own personal use. This policy will be effective upon the adoption date of these collection policies. As in many other museums, if the employee wishes to acquire or acquires an object for their own personal use that might also be of great interest for the Intrepid's permanent collection, the employee must offer this object to the museum under the same financial terms that they acquired the work. If the museum does not desire to have that artifact for its collection, the employee may then keep it for their own use. If the employee decides to sell an item from their own collection that would relate to the museum's collecting interests, the employee should give the museum the right of first refusal to acquire it. If an employee of the department wishes to donate an object to the permanent collection, it must be acquired per the Acquisitions policy above, as are all other

acquisitions. Employees of the department cannot provide donors or others with appraisal values; the department will refer such requests to the American Association of Appraisers or by providing donors with a list of local professionals and auction houses who provide such services.

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## Appendices

### **i. Laws of New York State**

<http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/menugetf.cgi?COMMONQUERY=LAWS>

(Scroll down the list and click on Education. This lists all the Consolidated Education Laws, each portion of which has its own title. Sect. 233-aa comes under Title 1, Article 5, Part 1, University of the State of New York, General Organization, Property of the state museum.)

§ 233-aa. Property of other museums. 1. As used in this section:

- (a) The term "museum" means any institution, including but not limited to museums, historical societies, zoological gardens, aquariums, botanical gardens, and arboreta, having collecting as a stated purpose in its charter, or owning or holding collections, or intending to own or hold collections, that is a governmental entity or not-for-profit corporation. The term museum does not include the state museum.
- (b) The term "deaccession" means the permanent removal or disposal of property from the collection of a museum by virtue of its sale, exchange, donation, or transfer by any means to any person.
- (c) The term "person" means any natural person, partnership, corporation, company, trust association, or other entity, however organized.
- (d) The term "property" means any inanimate object, document, organism, or tangible object under a museum's care which has intrinsic historic, artistic, scientific, or cultural value.
- (e) The term "loan" means a deposit of property with a museum not accompanied by a transfer to such museum of title to the property.
- (f) The term "lender" means a person legally entitled to, or claiming to be legally entitled to, property held by the museum or, if such person is deceased, the legal heirs of such person.
- (g) The term "unclaimed property" means property which is on loan to a museum and in regard to which the lender, or anyone acting legitimately on the lender's behalf, has not contacted the museum for at least ten years from the date of the beginning of the loan, if the loan was for an indefinite or undetermined period, or for at least five years after the date upon which the loan for a definite period expired.
- (h) The term "undocumented property" means property that has been in the possession of a museum for at least ten years and for which the museum cannot determine the lender, donor, or owner by making a good faith and reasonable search for the identity and last known address of the lender, donor or owner from the museum records and other records reasonably available to museum staff.
- (i) The term "conservation measures" means any actions taken to preserve or stabilize a property, including, but not limited to, proper storage, support, cleaning, and restoration.

2. The acquisition of property by a museum pursuant to this section

must be consistent with the mission of the museum.

3. Prior to the acquisition of property by gift, a museum shall inform a donor or prospective donor of the provisions of this section and shall provide a donor or prospective donor with a written copy of its mission statement and collections policy, which shall include policies and procedures of the museum related to deaccessioning.

4. If the museum has knowledge of a planned bequest of any property prior to the death of the testator, the museum shall provide the testator with a written copy of its mission statement and collections policy, which shall include policies and procedures of the museum relating to deaccessioning, provided, however, that any museum that routinely makes its mission statement and collections policy available on its website shall be deemed to have complied with this subdivision.

5. Proceeds derived from the sale of any property title to which was acquired by a museum pursuant to this section shall be used only for the acquisition of property for the museum's collection or for the preservation, protection, and care of the collection and shall not be used to defray ongoing operating expenses of the museum.

6. (a) Notice by mail required by this section shall be mailed to a lender's last known address by certified mail, return receipt requested; provided, however, that notice shall be given by publication pursuant to paragraph (b) of this subdivision if the museum does not:

- (i) know the identity of the lender; or
- (ii) know the address of the lender; or
- (iii) receive proof that the notice mailed under this section was received within thirty days of mailing.

(b) Notice by publication must be given at least once a week for three consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in:

- (i) the county in which the property is held by the museum; and
- (ii) the county of the lender's last address, if known.

The date of notice under this paragraph shall be the date of the third published notice.

(c) In addition to any other information required by this section, any notice given under this section must contain the following:

- (i) The name of the lender, if known.
- (ii) The last address of the lender, if known.
- (iii) A brief description of the property on loan to the museum referenced in the notice.

(iv) The date of the loan, if known, or the approximate date of acquisition of the property.

(v) The name and address of the museum.

(vi) The name, address, and telephone number of the person to be contacted regarding the property.

(d) A copy of all notices required by this section pertaining to property in the form of identifiable works of art known to have been created before nineteen hundred forty-five and to have changed hands in

Europe during the Nazi era (1933-1945) shall be sent to The Art Loss Register or any successor organization having similar purposes on or before the date on which such notices are mailed or first published pursuant to the requirements of this section.

7. Unless there is a written loan agreement to the contrary, and notwithstanding any other provision of law regarding abandoned or lost property, a museum that has made a good faith and reasonable search for the identity and last known address of the lender from the museum records and other records reasonably available to museum staff may terminate a loan for unclaimed property in its possession in accordance with the provisions of this subdivision.

(a) If the museum has identified the lender and the lender's last known address, the museum shall give notice by mail, in accordance with subdivision six of this section, of its intent to terminate the loan.

(b) Such notice shall be entitled "Notice of Termination" and must include a statement containing substantially the following information: "The records of the (name of museum) indicate that you have or may have property on loan at (name of facility). The museum is seeking to determine whether you wish:

(i) that the museum return the property to you,  
(ii) that the property remain on loan to the museum subject to annual renewal (if the museum also wishes that the property remain on loan), or  
(iii) that the museum obtain all of the lender's rights to the property, either to take the property into its collection or to dispose of the property, in its sole discretion. Please contact (name of contact) in writing within one hundred twenty days to advise the museum as to which of the above alternatives you wish to follow."

(c) If the lender does not respond to the notice of termination, within one hundred twenty days following receipt thereof, the museum shall send a second notice to the lender containing the following information: "On (date of first notice), the (name of museum) sent you a notice concerning property that, according to our records, has been lent to the (name of museum). You have not responded to that notice, a copy of which is enclosed, and the museum will commence proceedings to acquire title to the property if you do not contact (name of contact) in writing within one hundred twenty days of receiving this second notice."

(d) If the lender fails to respond to the second notice within one hundred twenty days of receipt thereof, the museum shall acquire all of the lender's rights to the property.

(e) If the museum does not receive proof that the notices mailed pursuant to this subdivision were received within thirty days of mailing, or if the museum has undertaken a good faith and reasonable search of museum records and other records reasonably available to museum staff but has been unable to determine the identity and last known address of the lender, the museum may terminate the loan by complying with the procedures established in subdivision eight of this

section for acquisition of title to undocumented property.

8. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law regarding abandoned or lost property, a museum may acquire the rights of the lender, donor, or owner to undocumented property by giving notice by publication, in accordance with subdivision six of this section, that it is asserting title to the undocumented property.

(b) Such notice shall be entitled "Notice of Intent to Acquire Property" and must include a statement containing substantially the following information: "The (name of museum) hereby asserts its intent to acquire title to the following property: (brief description of property). If you claim ownership of this property, you must contact the museum in writing and make arrangements to collect the property. If you fail to do so within one hundred eighty days, the museum will commence proceedings to acquire title to the property. If you wish to commence legal proceedings to claim the property, you should consult an attorney."

(c) If the museum does not receive contact from any person who can provide documentation or other evidence establishing an ownership interest in the property within one hundred eighty days of the date of notice by publication, the museum shall cause a brief description of the property to be submitted to the comptroller, who shall post such description on the unclaimed funds registry for not less than one hundred eighty days.

(d) If the museum does not receive contact from any person who can provide documentation or other evidence establishing an ownership interest in the property prior to or within thirty days following the conclusion of the unclaimed funds registry posting, the museum shall acquire title to the property.

9. The provisions of subdivisions seven and eight of this section shall not apply to:

(a) any property that was created before nineteen hundred forty-five and changed hands due to theft, seizure, confiscation, forced sale, or other involuntary means in Europe during the Nazi era (1933-1945); or

(b) notwithstanding any copy of a notice sent pursuant to subdivision six of this section, any property reported as stolen to a law enforcement agency or insurer or The Art Loss Register or any successor organization having similar purposes no later than three years following the theft or discovery of the theft.

10. A museum shall acquire all rights to undocumented property that is not solicited by the museum and that is delivered to the museum or left on museum premises after January first, two thousand nine if no person provides documentation or other evidence establishing an ownership interest in the property within ninety days of delivery of such property to the museum.

11.(a) The museum shall give a lender prompt written notice by mail, in accordance with subdivision six of this section, of any known injury

to, or loss of, property on loan or of the need to apply conservation measures. Such notice shall advise the lender of his or her right, in lieu of the application of such conservation measures, to terminate the loan and, no later than thirty days after having received such notice, either retrieve the property or arrange for its isolation and retrieval. The museum shall not be required to publish notice of injury or loss to any undocumented property.

(b) Unless there is a written loan agreement to the contrary, the museum may apply conservation measures to property on loan to the museum without giving formal notice or first obtaining the lender's permission if immediate action is required to protect the property on loan or other property in the custody of the museum or if the property on loan is a hazard to the health and safety of the public or the museum staff; provided that:

(i) the museum is unable to reach the lender at the lender's address or telephone number before the time by which the museum determines action is necessary; or

(ii) the lender either (1) does not respond to a request for permission to apply conservation measures within three days of receiving the request or will not agree to the conservation measures the museum recommends; or (2) fails to terminate the loan and either retrieve the property or arrange for its isolation and retrieval within thirty days of receiving the request.

If immediate conservation measures are necessary to protect the property or to protect the health or safety of the public or museum staff, the conditions set forth in subparagraphs (i) and (ii) of this paragraph shall not apply.

(c) Unless provided otherwise in an agreement with the lender, if a museum applies conservation measures to property under paragraph (a) of this subdivision, and provided that the measures were not required as a result of such museum's own action or inaction, such museum shall acquire a lien on the property in the amount of the costs incurred by such museum, including, but not limited to, the cost of labor and materials, and shall not be liable for injury to or loss of the property, provided that such museum:

(i) had a reasonable belief at the time when the action was taken that the action was necessary to protect the property on loan or otherwise in the custody of the museum or that such property on loan was a hazard to the health and safety on the public or the museum staff; and

(ii) exercised reasonable care in the choice and application of conservation measures.

12. A lender shall promptly notify a museum, in writing, of any change of address or change in the ownership of property on loan to such museum.

13. The museum shall maintain or continue to maintain, as the case may be and to the extent such information is reasonably available, a record

of acquisition, whether by purchase, bequest, gift, loan or otherwise, of property for display or collection and of deaccessioning or loan of property currently held or thereafter acquired for display or collection. Any such record shall:

(a) state the name, address, and telephone number of the person from whom such property was acquired, or to whom such property was transferred by deaccessioning or loan, and a description of such property, its location, if known, and the terms of the acquisition or deaccessioning or loan, including any restrictions as to its use or further disposition, and any other material facts about the terms and conditions of the transaction, which records shall be updated if a lender informs the museum of a change in address, ownership of the property or other relevant information, or if the lender and museum negotiate a change in the terms of the transaction;

(b) include a copy of any document of conveyance relating to the acquisition or deaccessioning or loan of such property and all notices and other documents prepared or received by the museum; and

(c) in the case of property acquired pursuant to this section, include records documenting the search for the identity and last known address of the lender, and copies of all notices and other documents prepared or received by the museum in connection with the acquisition of title to such property.

14. Nothing in this section shall limit the ability of a lender and museum to bind themselves to different loan provisions by written agreement, nor shall this section abrogate rights and obligations of a lender or museum pursuant to a written agreement.

\* NB Effective September 5, 2008

\*\*\*\*\* End of Appendix i \*\*\*\*\*

## **ii. Collections Cataloging Procedures**

All artifacts within the museum's collections are to be assigned an individual accession number by the Collections Manager. Numbers shall be assigned according to the following guidelines:

1. All numbers shall start with the year in which the artifact was received into the museum's possession (i.e. 2006, 2007, 2008, etc).
2. Following the year will be a period and then the chronological number in which the acquisition was received within the given year (i.e. 2008.01, 2008.02, 2008.03, etc).
3. If more than one artifact is received in the same acquisition on the same date, then another number shall follow the second, distinguishing between each artifact in that particular acquisition (i.e. 2008.01.01, 2008.01.02, 2008.01.03, etc).
4. Finally, artifacts that do not belong within the permanent collection of artifacts will receive a letter preceding the accession number, further distinguishing it from other museum collections:

L = an artifact on permanent loan to the museum (i.e. L2008.01)

ED = an artifact that is part of the education/study collection (i.e. ED2008.01)

FIC = an artifact that has been "found in collections," with no documentation (i.e. FIC2008.01)

\*\*\*\*\* End of Appendix ii \*\*\*\*\*