



Schenectady County Historical Society, 32 Washington Ave, Schenectady, NY 12305  
(518) 374-0263 x3 | [librarian@schenectadyhistorical.org](mailto:librarian@schenectadyhistorical.org)  
(518) 374-0263 x4 | [exhibits@schenectadyhistorical.org](mailto:exhibits@schenectadyhistorical.org)

### Artifact Donation Guidelines

In making the decision to accept an item into the Schenectady County Historical Society collections, SCHS requires potential donors to complete a Donor Questionnaire form, which considers such issues as relevance, provenance, title, location, intrinsic value, and condition.

It is SCHS's preference to receive donations at SCHS during normal office hours. In some instances, instructions will be given for shipping items. Upon physical examination, SCHS always reserves the right to decline a proposed donation. **No items will be accepted without the submission of the Donor Questionnaire, and without the approval of SCHS staff and/or Board of Directors.**

Once the item(s) have been received, SCHS staff prepares an inventory of the donation and forwards this together with SCHS's standard Deed of Gift form to the donor(s) for review and signature. It is preferable for donor(s) to expedite the collection inventory, gift documents, and the cataloging process by preparing their own advance itemized listing of their donated items.

The donor(s) is asked to sign and return one copy of the final Deed of Gift. Please provide complete description(s) of item(s) to be donated in the final Deed of Gift (size, material, color, age or date of manufacture, and provenance). An agent may sign for a corporation. Upon return of the signed forms, the donated item(s) move from pending acquisition status to that of donated object(s) or material(s).

Once donated, item(s) become part of the SCHS permanent collections. SCHS carefully holds in public trust all items which it has received by donation. Disposal or exchange of any artifact(s) is called a "deaccession" and is made in full conformity with SCHS guidelines for management of interpretive collections. Deaccessions of item(s) in the permanent collection are at SCHS discretion.

#### **Use of Gifts**

Only a percentage of SCHS collection can be displayed at any one time. Donated items are periodically rotated on display and periodically "at rest" in SCHS artifact storage areas. Documentary, manuscript, books, printed, and pictorial materials are the purview of the Grems-Doolittle Library, and reside under jurisdiction of the SCHS Librarian/Archivist. Accompanying cash contributions are encouraged to help process, conserve, properly store, and make readily available large and significant donations.

#### **Donor Recognition**

Donors to SCHS receive the satisfaction of knowing their donated items become a permanent part of the collections of the SCHS. Where appropriate, SCHS may publicize the donation through social media or in its newsletter.

#### **Appraisals**

If desired, a formal appraisal of a gift is the responsibility of the donor. The IRS does not permit the benefiting institution to appraise donated objects.

#### **Tax Deductions**

Donations to SCHS are tax deductible, to the full extent allowed by law, for both federal and State of New York income tax purposes. It is the responsibility of donors to confer with their tax advisors regarding the tax benefits, details, and implications of large donations. SCHS cannot offer tax advice. As a general rule, the IRS permits advance formal appraisals only 60 days prior to the actual date of gift.

**Reasons a museum might decline the donation of an object**

While we sincerely appreciate you considering the donation of an object to the Schenectady County Historical Society, we want to remind you that a museum and/or library is not to be considered a regional or community "attic". The following is a list of five common reasons SCHS might decline the donation of an object:

1. Object is out of SCHS's scope (wrong subject, geographic area, etc.) We may provide you with a list of alternative museums that might be interested.
2. Duplicate(s) already in collection – We might have similar objects of the same era already in our collection. We may provide the proposed donor with a list of alternative museums that might be interested.
3. Poor condition - We must be very wary of accepting items in poor condition that may tax museum space and conservation resources or are too fragile to exhibit.
4. Large Size - We must be wary of accepting items that may tax our limited storage and display space.
5. "Conditional gifts" and "Permanent loans"- Museums and libraries generally reject objects donated with "conditions". We cannot accept an artifact with the condition, "This item must always be on display."

After completely reading this gift policy and procedure you are interested in donating an object to the Schenectady County Historical Society, please email or mail a completed Donor Questionnaire form and photographs of the object(s) (multiple views) to:

Schenectady County Historical Society  
32 Washington Ave  
Schenectady, NY 12305

Please note that you may not receive an immediate response to your donation request.

**PLEASE DO NOT SEND ANY ARTIFACTS UNTIL CONTACTED BY SCHS. THANK YOU.**