

## **Alexandria Washington Lodge No. 22, A. F. & A. M.**

### **Collection Policy**

#### **Section One – Introduction and Collection History**

Alexandria Washington Lodge No. 22, A. F. & A. M of Alexandria, Virginia maintains an extensive collection of objects and archival material related to the Lodge, its association with George Washington and the history of Alexandria. In addition, the collections include a number of objects that were collected beginning in 1812 as part of the creation of the “Alexandria Museum,” a local public museum featuring artifacts related to American history, international culture and the natural world.

Alexandria Washington Lodge No. 22 originally received a warrant from the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania on February 3, 1783, designating it Alexandria Lodge No. 39. Upon the return of this warrant, it was issued a charter by the Grand Lodge of Virginia on April 28, 1788 with George Washington serving as the Charter Master of Alexandria Lodge No. 22. In 1805, the Lodge was renamed Alexandria Washington Lodge No. 22 in honor of Washington, who died in 1799.

Since its inception, the Lodge has acquired objects for both its operation and adornment. However, in December of 1811, a proposal was made to create a public museum under the auspices of the Lodge. Upon its establishment in 1812, the collection grew rapidly through numerous donations, including many items related to George Washington given to the lodge by family members and associates. The “Alexandria Museum” experienced setbacks in the 19th century. It was shuttered in the late 1850s and during the Civil War and, upon reopening, a devastating fire destroyed parts of the collection in 1871.

The Lodge and its collections remained a popular destination for locals and tourists alike, and the need to accommodate these visitors, as well as protect the collections from calamities such as the 1871 fire, was the basis for the creation of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, where the Lodge and its collection now reside, using venues like the Replica Lodge Room to display the Lodge’s material heritage.

#### **Section Two – Mission Statement**

The Archives of the Alexandria Washington Lodge No. 22 are intended for the enjoyment, understanding, and preservation of the material history and archival material of the Lodge, its association with George Washington and other individual members, and the legacy of the “Alexandria Museum,” through its unique collections and exhibits based in the Replica Lodge Room and elsewhere.

#### **Section Three – Scope and Areas of Collection**

The collections of the Alexandria Washington Lodge are extensive, and include a wide variety of materials – paper, textiles, decorative arts, metalwork, ceramics, furniture, weaponry, paintings and prints, archeological samples, as well as extensive archival material including minute books, petitions, and a large library with examples of rare volumes. These objects have been collected since the Lodge’s inception, and

the Lodge continues to accept donations related to its mission and collections policy. The collections can be roughly divided into four categories:

1. Material related to the history of Alexandria Washington Lodge. This includes objects and material related to individual members of the Lodge, as well as objects from other Masonic lodges or brethren donated to the Master and / or the Lodge as tokens of esteem and brotherhood.
2. Material related to George Washington. Though Washington was an individual lodge member (honorary) and Charter Master, his association with the Lodge has, from the beginning, been specifically highlighted, and much of the collection centers on this association. As such, the collections include material used by Washington in his roles as Freemason, general, statesman and private citizen. This material also includes artifacts related to some members of his family.
3. Material related to the legacy of the "Alexandria Museum." A number of artifacts in the collection date from the establishment of the public museum in Alexandria, begun in 1812 under the auspices of the Lodge. This museum had a far wider collecting policy, and the founders were intent on making it a general museum for public education, with an emphasis on national and local history, as well as natural history. As such, today, the collection includes a number of artifacts that are otherwise not specifically connected to George Washington, the Lodge, its members and its history.
4. Material related to the history of Alexandria. The collections include a number of artifacts that speak to the history of the city, its founders and the Lodge's role as part of this community. Some of this material can also be classified as legacy objects as detailed in category three.

#### Section Four - Collecting and Accession Policies and Procedures

In general, the Lodge does not engage in active collecting to augment the existing collections, though purchases through auction or private sale may be considered on a case by case basis as part of a consultation between the ~~Trustees-Committee on Archives~~ and the Lodge Archivist. A written report should be submitted to the Chair of the ~~Trustees-Committee on Archives~~ outlining the specific nature of the object and the reasons for acquisition.

A purchase of less than \$500 requires a simple majority vote of the ~~Committee on Archives~~~~Trustees~~. Purchases of more the \$500 require an Acquisition Proposal be presented to the members of the Lodge at the next stated communication and the approval of a simple majority of members present.

Whenever possible, the ~~Trustees~~, through the ~~Master and~~ Lodge Treasurer, should provide the Archivist, Assistant Archivist, or other approved agent the funds to make the purchase in advance, rather than purchasing through personal reimbursement.

Donations can be considered for the first three collection categories, though objects offered to the Lodge pertaining to the history of Alexandria should be referred to the Office of Historic Alexandria.

The Lodge will accept donated objects under the following conditions:

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- The donor, or a legal proxy, must sign an appropriate deed of gift form, countersigned by the designated representative of the lodge. This form acknowledges that the donor relinquishes any right or claim of title to the object(s) donated and transfers these to the Lodge.
- The donor may not impose conditions or restrictions on the use of the Lodge regarding display or dissemination. The Lodge reserves the right to use any donated material in order to fulfill its mission and best serves the collection, the Lodge and the community.

Additional donation considerations:

- Number of objects donated – the Lodge's permanent collection should not exceed a reasonable and practical number of similar objects, given the available space and resources of the Lodge.
- Size of object – the donation of any object requiring a storage area larger than three cubic feet must be reviewed by the [Trustees Committee on Archives](#).
- Condition – all objects entering the Lodge collection must be in a condition that they are not likely to damage to the collection, storage or display areas, or individuals working at or visiting the collection.

Donations may also come in the form of a bequest, where a person transfers ownership of material to the lodge after their death in a will. The Lodge is not obliged to accept any material left as part of a bequest and objects accepted follow the donation procedure.

Newly acquired objects, whether purchases, bequests or donations, will be immediately forwarded to the Lodge Archivist or Assistant Archivist or else stored in the Lodge Archives. The object will be recorded in an accession register kept in the Lodge Archives, assigned a unique catalog number, and electronically cataloged according to existing criteria and best practice. The object will also be tagged or otherwise identified with its unique catalog number and reference photography undertaken.

### **Section Five – Deaccession Policies and Procedures**

Objects will be acquired as carefully as possible to avoid the need for future deaccession – no object will be acquired for intentional deaccession. Objects currently in the collection that fall outside of the scope as detailed in the collection policy may be evaluated as part of a process of deaccession, but appropriate research should be undertaken to ensure any given object does not fall into one of these four collection areas. For instance, a sword in the collection may seem to have be outside the scope, but may have been donated by a member to the Lodge to mark some event or anniversary in the Lodge's history, qualifying it under category one.

The Lodge will engage in an open and transparent process of deaccession. The deaccession process will be thoughtful and deliberative with no reference to schedule and deadlines. The decision to deaccession an object from the permanent collection will not be governed by external deadlines or market concerns, but by the criteria outlined in this collection policy.

The Lodge must possess clear title to the object before it can be a candidate for deaccession. If clear title cannot be established, research should be undertaken to discover as much as possible about its provenance and how it came to be in the collection.

Objects in the collection may be considered for deaccession for one or more of the following:

1. Object is inconsistent with the mission of the collection.
2. Object falls outside the scope of the collection or the collecting areas detailed in the policy.
3. Object duplicates one or more objects in the collection.
4. Object is in poor condition that poses challenges to storage and conservation.
6. Object is dangerous or may cause damage to other objects in the collection, storage or display facilities, or individuals working at or visiting the Lodge collection.

To initiate a ~~deaccession~~deaccession action, a report detailing the reasons and justification for the action will be submitted in writing to the Chair of the ~~Trustees~~Committee on Archives. A majority vote of the ~~Trustees~~Committee is needed to proceed with the deaccession.

If approved by the ~~Trustees~~Committee on Archives, the Lodge Archivist will prepare a Deaccession Proposal to be presented to the members of the Lodge at the next stated communication. The proposal, published by the Secretary as part of the proceedings, will lay over for a month or longer if the Worshipful Master determines that more time is needed for the members to assess the proposal. It will be read again at the next appropriate stated communication and a simple majority vote by the members present is required for the deaccession to be undertaken. Once this approval is received, the object may be disposed of by means of donation, sale, or destruction.

In order to maintain the public trust with which objects were entrusted to the Lodge, all effort will be made to donate the deaccessioned object to another 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(10) organization where the object will remain preserved for the public and be interpreted within an appropriate context.

Objects that cannot be donated to another institutional collection and are deemed to be in such poor condition that they are of no likely value or potentially dangerous will be disposed through destruction.

Only after a reasonable effort to locate another institutional home for the object is unsuccessful will the Lodge consider disposal through private sale or auction.

If a deaccessioned object is offered for private sale, at least two offers must be obtained and presented to the ~~Trustees~~. No member of the lodge or their immediate family may purchase a deaccessioned object through direct sale.

If a deaccessioned object is to be sold at auction, it must be identified in the auction catalogue as the property of the Alexandria Washington Lodge No. 22. The Lodge will solicit bids from at least two auction

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firms to be considered by the Trustees. A written justification for the selection of the buyer or the auction venue must be signed by the Chair of the Trustees and the Worshipful Master.

The Trustees designate the Lodge Archivist to act as the point of contact for any sale. If the Lodge Archivist cannot fulfill this role, the Trustees will designate a member of the Committee to act as point of contact.

Funds received from the sale of deaccessioned objects are to be used to meet the needs of the collection – conservation, storage, supplies and equipment – or for the acquisition of new objects for the collection. They should not be used to pay salaries or other recompense or be utilized for general Lodge expenses.

### **Section Six – Loans**

In general, the Lodge does not engage in requesting objects on loan from outside institutions. Exhibits and other uses for objects draw primarily from the existing Lodge collection. However, if a situation arises where loans from outside institutions are considered necessary, the Lodge Archivist should act as a point of contact and report details to the [Trustees Committee on Archives](#), including expenses (storage, insurance, security, etc.) The Trustees will be consulted should any expenses to the Lodge be considered required.

Requests for loans of object to other institutions are considered on a case-by-case basis by the Lodge Archivist. If the Lodge Archivist deems an object appropriate for a loan, he should submit a proposal to the [Trustees Committee on Archives](#) detailing the request, the institution making the request and the length of the loan. A simple majority vote of the [Trustees Committee](#) is necessary to initiate a loan, under the guidelines of the current and established by-laws, as well as Standing Resolution No. 3 regarding all offsite movement of Lodge artifacts.

No loan to an outside institution (including the George Washington Masonic National Memorial) shall exceed a period of three years. However, a loan may be extended by another three year period if the [Trustees Committee on Archives](#) agree to the extension, pursuant to an evaluation of the current condition of the object on loan, its physical security and its use as an exhibit display.

For details of the Lodge's loan policy, see the Alexandria Washington Lodge No. 22 Outgoing Loan Agreement form.

### **Section Seven – Care of Collections**

The Lodge Archivist and the [Trustees Committee on Archives](#) will strive to meet professional standards regarding the handling, storage, and displaying of artifacts from the collections. Any cleaning, repair, or artifact conservation must be done by or under the direction of the Lodge Archivist. If a professional conservator is needed to examine, analyze or treat an object, the Lodge Archivist should present a proposal to the [Trustees Committee](#) detailing all pertinent aspects of the treatment, including extent of conservation, cost and goals for treatment.

### **Section Eight – Access**

Requests for access to study objects or records within the collection will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and facilitated by the Archivist or another Lodge representative. Requests to reproduce images of objects and other materials held in the collection are communicated through the Archivist to the [Trustees Committee on Archives](#) for approval, as well as a recommendation for a fee for reproduction and publication rights.