

THREE EXAMPLES OF POETIC COLLECTING SCOPE STATEMENTS

ACTIVE COLLECTIONS: WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

NEMA Conference, Tuesday, Nov 17, 2020

Stacen Goldman, Curator, Framingham History Center, curator@framinghamhistory.org

Annie Murphy, Director, Framingham History Center, director@framinghamhistory.org

Rainey Tisdale, Independent Museum Professional, raineytisdale@gmail.com

1. OYSTERPONDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BEFORE collecting scope (from collections policy):

The By-Laws of the Oysterponds Historical Society state that 'The Oysterponds Historical Society preserves and interprets the heritage of Orient and East Marion (formerly Oysterponds) by maintaining a museum that collects, preserves, and exhibits artifacts pertaining to Oysterponds history and life; by maintaining a research library of material relevant to Oysterponds history; by providing cultural opportunities through educational and public programs and activities; and by promoting an interest in the history of Oysterponds.'

The collections of the Society must, therefore, include artifacts and archival materials that pertain to the history and culture of this area from its earliest settlement to the present time. Objects and materials outside the geographic parameters of the Society's collections may be included for purposes of research, comparison, or as representative examples of styles, types, or forms.

AFTER collecting scope (approved by the Collections Committee in November 2018):

We collect objects that help residents see their place in a long continuum of people who, for hundreds of years, have found this place special.

- Belonging: how we claimed "this secluded place," and how it in turn claimed us
Examples include:
 - records documenting the ways families stay rooted in Oysterponds for generations
 - oral histories of how individual residents found Oysterponds
 - records documenting the common pattern of first renting and then eventually buying a home here

- Living close to the land and the sea: the fields, the marshes, the stone beaches and the bay, the weather, the views, the light, the smells, potatoes and vegetable farming, oysters, clams, scallops, fishing, cooking
Examples include:
 - objects that represent the work of farming and fishing (tide charts, tools and implements, gathering baskets, Dominick di Lorenzo's painting "The Root Harvest")
 - the records, models, and portraits of ships with local ties

- outdoor recreation artifacts (swim suits, cross-country skis, the ice boat)
- local recipes
- The patterns and rituals of our community: the four seasons and their derivatives (fishing season, the return of the ospreys), the Memorial Day parade, the ferry, Wednesday dinners at the Congregational Church and Thursday dinners at the yacht club, annual events
Examples include:
 - photographs and archival documentation of these longstanding community patterns
 - ferry schedules
- Our families: the old families, the new families, “families of choice,” the ways families experience this place and commit to it, Oysterponds’ family tree
Examples include:
 - Genealogies
 - family photographs and letters
 - special objects passed down in Oysterponds families through generations
- Institutions and activities that are the social glue of our community: Oysterponds School, Poquatuck Hall, the volunteer fire departments, the yacht club, our churches, OHS
Examples include:
 - organizational documents and photographs (the minute book of the Orient Literary Society)
 - The Oysters baseball shirt
 - Records of the events held each year in Poquatuck Hall
- Our special places: the causeway, Orient Point, the hamlet post offices, Marion Lake, Village Lane, beloved local businesses
Examples include:
 - maps and images of these places showing how they have changed over time
 - architectural fragments and artifacts (the retired PO boxes from the Orient post office)
- Community inflection points: moments of both change and resistance to change, efforts to protect Oysterponds
Examples include:
 - materials from local political and social campaigns (temperance banner, buttons and bumper stickers)
 - artifacts and records documenting contentious local issues (dispute over Cross Sound ferry expansion, suit against water authority, Oki-Do oyster factory)
- Our creative spirit, whether professional or amateur: artists, writers, musicians, scientists, thinkers, tinkerers.
Examples include:
 - creative output (artwork, poetry, literature, music), with special emphasis on items that depict Oysterponds (William Steeple Davis’s photographs of local scenes, Jonathan Galassi’s *New Yorker* poem “Orient Epithalamion,” Hilda Mollineaux’s *Orient 1900* quilt)
 - Records documenting the density of creative people living here
- Our stories: Accounts that show a distinctively Oysterponds perspective on the world.

Examples include:

- records that document the effect of national or international events on Oysterponds (British Captain Charles Paget's letter to Joseph Perry during the War of 1812 about the burning of the smack *Jupiter*, Roy Latham's letter to Pearl Bugbee about the flu pandemic of 1918)
- artifacts related to local residents who served during wartime (John Henry Young's Civil War diary, Marcus Duvall's WWII flight jacket)

Time Period:

We collect artifacts and archival materials representing the entire span of Oysterponds history, from evidence of its first inhabitants 10,000 years ago up to present day.

OHS does not collect:

- Objects that represent regional or national histories but have no specific tie to Oysterponds. Such objects may be acquired to serve as exhibit props or for the education collection, but they should not be formally accessioned.
- Objects with no provenance and/or no local story
- Duplicates of existing collections items

2. WORCESTER, VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Scope of Collections (2020)

Worcester has been and continues to be made up of people who have lived with determination, ingenuity, perseverance, and out-and-out quirky aplomb. We appreciate the varied personalities and backgrounds that make our community whole and vibrant, where we can all live together, comfortable in our individuality.

We collect artifacts that reflect the heritage and particular history of this wonderful and quirky town.

Our collections tell the stories of:

- The land within the six-mile square that delineates the Town of Worcester: the Worcester Range and foothills, the North Branch valley, the brooks of its watershed, and at its heart, our village.
- Its people and their day-to-day lives.
- The traditions and celebrations that have grounded us.
- The community organizations that have woven us together.
- The working lives of people involved with logging and saw mills; dairy farms; trades and other small businesses; the stores; the mink farms; and the sundry pursuits of yesterday and today.
- How schools have anchored our town.
- The forces of change that have affected us.
- Families and individuals who have left their mark.
- And – the unexpected.

3. FRAMINGHAM HISTORY CENTER

Scope of Collections, Approved 2019

We collect artifacts, tangible and intangible, that are quintessentially Framingham. Our collections hold up a mirror to the community while answering the question "What makes this place special?"

Our collections tell the stories of:

- Our Special Places: villages, neighborhoods, and communal spaces (Downtown Common, Centre Common, places of worship, Shopper's World)
- Industry and Business: The evolution from cottage industries to global corporations and their impact on the community (straw bonnets, mills and manufacturing, biotech...)
- The Creative Spirit: moments of invention, innovation, and art (Margaret Knight, Meta Warrick Fuller, Floyd Walsler, Dennison products...)
- The Land: Its variety, its beauty, and its natural resources
- The Changing Built Environment: the coexistence of rural, urban, and suburban development
- A Regional and Cultural Crossroads: The intersection of railroads, highways, and diverse communities
- The Volunteer Spirit: serving community and country (The Heart Study, Civil War enlistment, Peter Parker in China, the Military Girls' Club...)
- The Lived Experience of Framingham: attending its schools, building its houses, working in its factories (farm diaries, personal letters, photos...)
- Families: Old families, new families, and families of choice; the ways they direct and drive the community
- Institutions, Traditions, and Celebrations: Those that are lost and those that continue (Town Meeting, Centennial celebrations, the FHC, the First Parish...)
- Immigrant Communities: how they developed, interacted and became part of the fabric of Framingham
- Class: class mobility, where classes mingle, where they diverge (Millwood Hunt, The North/South divide, Gentleman Farmers, Mill workers...)
- Community Inflection Points: Moments of change and resistance to change
- Presence: Framingham's participation in significant national and international events. (Harmony Grove, Crispus Attucks, Heart Study, President Clinton in Framingham...)