

Historic Hale Brynes House



Delaware Society for Preservation of Antiquities Collection Policy for Historic Hale-Byrnes House

The Historic Hale-Byrnes House interprets the life of a Quaker family living along the banks of the White Clay Creek during the colonial through New Republic eras, with a specific focus on Delaware during the American Revolutionary era.

Our niche is the time period 1750 through 1850. The collection policy helps us remain true to our mission without amassing irrelevant or inappropriate material.

Mission Statement: DSPA's mission is to protect, preserve, and promote the buildings and grounds of the historic Hale-Byrnes House, an 18th century Quaker farmhouse.

Vision Statement: DSPA's vision includes the careful and accurate maintenance, repair, restoration, and historically sensitive renovation of the Hale-Byrnes House and grounds. As the southern anchor of the White Clay Creek Wild and Scenic River designation, we aspire to remain a small but friendly, historically accurate, and welcoming meeting place for families, Revolutionary War scholars, fishermen and eco-tourists.

Descriptions of the collections and the museum's immediate collections-related goals

A large part of the charm of the Hale Brynes House and grounds is its informality. As DSPA tightens up its collections policy and moves closer to interpreting home life in the Revolutionary era, it is important not to lose the sense of this house as a giant study collection where modern families and children are welcome to come in, sit down, and handle many, but not all, of the antiques.

Of particular interest are antiques and artifacts that reflect life in Revolutionary and Early Republic days in Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Delmarva Peninsula. Gifts of appropriate 18th century (and earlier) furniture, decorative arts and tools are encouraged, with the caveat that donors understand that this house is a primarily a study collection and meeting place, and is not climate controlled.

Potential donors offering antiques and reproductions that do not fit into the time period 1650-1850, or are otherwise inappropriate for the character of the Hale-Byrnes House should be firmly

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but graciously steered to a more appropriate institution, such as Delaware Historical Society or Pencader Heritage.

Reproductions should be limited as much as possible to comfortable but authentic-looking chairs and benches, tools, clothing and cooking implements, all of which may be used by visitors to enhance their educational experiences.

With the exception of early Boyce family artifacts which may be displayed in the Boyce room, items that would not have been used or understood by the Quaker families who lived in the house in the period of significance are not to be accepted.

The curator with the assistance of the board and DSPA volunteers should keep both a paper copy and computerized copy of a written and photographic inventory up to date, with new accessions being added as they come in the door.

The following principles should be applied:

1. Each acquisition entering the Hale-Byrnes House must be properly documented.
2. The collections must be regularly inventoried and monitored.
3. All activities related to monitoring the collection must be documented.
4. Each individual collection element must be put in its specific place in the collection storage array.
5. The collections storage area must be regularly monitored.
6. As much as possible, collections should be stabilized for long-term preservation and should be housed in a proper storage environment.

Deaccessioning. Deaccessioning of an object in the collection may be appropriate if the object is being transferred to another museum, if the object is badly deteriorated and/or threatening other objects (mold, insects, etc.), or is inappropriate for the period being interpreted.

The decision to deaccession includes two parts. Generally, first choice is to transfer an object to another use in the house museum, such as deaccessioning a duplicate object from a permanent collection into a teaching collection. Second choice is to transfer the object to another institution, generally with local institutions such as Pencader Heritage or Delaware Historical Society having priority. In the case of deaccessioning, DSPA follows the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics which states that: "Money or compensation received from the deaccessioning and disposal of objects and specimens from a museum collection should be used solely for the benefit of the collection and usually for acquisitions to that same collection"

Outgoing and incoming loans

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Hale Brynes artifacts may be loaned to other museums and institutions that have appropriate insurance and can provide appropriate care and handling of our materials while they are on loan. Two copies of the loan form must be signed by authorized representatives of both institutions with date of return clearly specified. Long-term loans to the Hale Brynes House and antiques belonging to the resident curator should be clearly accessioned and photographed with a paper copy and disc where possible on file with both parties.

Review and revision of the policy

The collections plan must be posted on the website. Board members, potential donors, and tenants should be made aware of these policies. The collection policies should be reviewed at least every five years to see if any revisions are needed.