

## **Collections Development: Analysis and Initiatives**

### **1. Assign collecting areas for assessment**

Each area has a specialist who should be able to prepare an assessment of that collection not only by types of material but also by the content of that material. The staff collections committee can then discuss the assessments and prepare preliminary outlines of areas of need.

### **2. Inventory followed by systematic analysis**

In order to systematically and scientifically develop collecting goals and initiatives, we need to understand the collection as it stands. A computerized and complete inventory will allow us to analyze the collection as a whole and in separate genres, searching by Library of Congress subject headings and geographic locations, for example. Since a complete inventory of the RIHS collections will not exist for many years, sampling will have to suffice.

### **3. Historical Research and identification iconic objects and ideal collections**

Assign a decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to each collections staff member to research in general and to then develop a list of major events and themes for Rhode Island history. The major events and themes in national and local history will be discussed by the Staff Collections Committee and a list of the iconic items and groups of items to best represent these themes and events.

### **4. Identify sources**

Based on the list of items and groups of items, staff members will identify sources for items, or seek help in finding sources.

### **5. Develop goals, priorities, and initiatives**

In addition to filling in the gaps by collecting targeted items and groups, the Society may choose to pursue parallel initiatives with multiple facets.

For example, in analyzing the current collection of items documenting the congregations in Rhode Island, Library staff members have already identified many pamphlets, booklets, histories and photos representative of the Main Line Protestant and traditional Catholic congregations in Rhode Island, but little that documents the rise of storefront congregations and more recently arrived ethnic groups. The RIHS can launch a program to reach out to these communities, recording oral histories, taking photographs, and collecting material to preserve the history of these groups and the changing face of RI. At the same time, the Society could host performances by traditional ethnic performers, develop curriculum guides on changing ethnic groups in RI or how students can document family and community history, for example, giving children cameras to make portraits of their friends and families, collecting those photos, and hosting an exhibition of them.

### **6. Begin active collecting**

Other methods could include brochures describing the projects, media coverage, community visits, and direct solicitation of individuals and businesses identified as important in documenting the state's history.