

A Proposal for a Digital Display of Selected Pieces from the Tolland Historical Society Banking
and Insurance Collections

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Project Topic

The Banking and Insurance Collections at the Tolland Historical Society consist of museum pieces that were used by the banks and the insurance company that were operated in Tolland, Connecticut as well as documents that were produced by or for those organizations. This project will display selected parts of the Tolland County (CT) Bank and Tolland County (CT) Mutual Fire Insurance Company archives and museum pieces relating to banking.

Importance

This collection will be of value to residents of Tolland County and the surrounding areas because it helps to illustrate part of the history of the region. It could also be of interest to people who are curious about how banking and insurance have changed since the 1800s. The digital display could make researchers and staff from other museums dealing with similar topics or the same time period aware of the Tolland Historical Society's collections. The project features photos of a sign and desk from the Tolland County Mutual Fire Insurance Company. Also, it shows photos of a press used to print money and other banking objects. There is a scanned copy of a document relating to insurance.

Goals and Objectives

The goal is to create a digital collection for the Tolland Historical Society that will increase accessibility to their artifacts and documents that relate to the Tolland County Bank and the Tolland County Mutual Fire Insurance Company. Currently, the artifacts relating to these two companies are located on the second floor of the Old Tolland County Court House. There is no elevator in the building so visitors who are unable to climb stairs have no way of viewing the

collection. Most of the documents from the Tolland County Bank and the Tolland County Insurance Company are not on public display and have not been cataloged. This project will enable the public to see these documents via the Internet and could improve the Historical Society's internal access to the documents.

By posting these images as a digital display online using CONTENTdm the collection could be located by people anywhere conducting Internet searches. Also, links to the digital collection can be shared with town residents through local websites and E-mail. This could help to generate interest in the Tolland Historical Society and possibly reinforce their volunteers and membership. With the permission of the Tolland Historical Society, I will ask local libraries and institutions to share the link to the digital display. Perhaps one of these organizations could host the images with their digital collections at the end of the project in August 2013.

Materials

The digital display contains images of both objects and documents. There are 25 records included in the digital display. Museum pieces are cataloged individually. They have been assigned their own accession numbers if they were not previously accessioned and cataloged. Items that had accession numbers before the beginning of this project kept their current numbers unless it was determined that the number had been reassigned to another piece in the collection. Two accession numbers were assigned to the archival collections that were included in this project. One number was assigned to the Tolland County Bank Collection and the other to the Tolland County Mutual Fire Insurance Company collection. In the digital display bankbooks and checkbooks are labeled as parts of a larger archival collection with letters added to the end of each accession number to distinguish between different parts of the collection.

Equipment / Methods

The objects relating to the Bank and Insurance Company were photographed using a Canon PowerShot A1100 IS digital camera. Documents were scanned in color using a CanoScan LiDE 600F scanner or photographed with the previously mentioned digital camera. The completed digital display was made available online using CONTENTdm.

Metadata Description

Elements to Be Used with Definitions

The Dublin Core Elements Set will be used in the creation of metadata for this project. Some elements have been removed and other elements will be repeated with specialized titles.

1. Accession Number: (This is mapped as an “identifier.” It will be where the unique number for each object or document is recorded.)
2. Title: (This field is required in CONTENTdm. The title for each object will be the accession number. The titles of photos composing compound objects will be the file name assigned by the digital camera.)
3. Creator: (This will be the company or individual responsible for creating an object if known.)
4. Description: (This will be a description of the physical appearance of each object.)
5. Subject: (This will be a vocabulary-controlled name for each item. It is referred to as “Object” in the thesaurus (Blackaby, Greeno, & The Nomenclature Committee, 1995) and in the current catalog used by the Tolland Historical Society.)
6. Subcategory: (This will be a vocabulary controlled name for the subcategory that the Subject is part of. This is currently listed in the Historical Society’s database. This descriptor is being retained because some “objects” in the controlled vocabulary are repeated in different subcategories. It is necessary to know both the subject and subcategory to know with certainty

what an object is. Also, a broader term is necessary to help people who are planning exhibits or are unfamiliar with the controlled vocabulary to find items. It will be mapped as “Subject.”)

7. Category: (This is the general subject area or “Category” (Blackaby et al, 1995) that each item falls under as described by the thesaurus. This descriptor exists in the Historical Society’s current records. It is being retained to help users who are not familiar with the thesaurus retrieve items and aid in identifying items. It will be mapped as “Subject.”)

8. Time Period: (This will be mapped to “Coverage-Temporal.” It will list the date or time period when the item was created if known.)

9. Provenance: (This will be the provenance of the item if known. It will be mapped to “Provenance.”)

10. Acquired: (This will be the year that the item was acquired by the Tolland Historical Society if known. It will be mapped to “Date.”)

11. Donor Code: (This will be the numerical code that is assigned to the donor. For privacy reasons it will not be publicly visible. This is a controlled vocabulary. The Tolland Historical Society has a list in their current database and accession books that gives the names of individuals and organizations associated with each donor code. The element will be mapped to “Source.”)

12. Digital File Names: (This will be mapped as a “Title-Alternative.” The names of the digital files that were used to create a compound object are listed here. If there is only one image of an object its file name is listed here.)

13. Physical Repository - Specific: (This is the name of the storage area or exhibit where an item is on display or being stored. This field uses a controlled vocabulary that is specific to

the Historical Society. I have added new locations to the controlled vocabulary. For security reasons it will not be publicly visible. This element will not be mapped.)

14. Physical Repository - General: (This is the name of the museum where the item is on display or being stored. A controlled vocabulary listing parts of the Historical Society will be used for this element. I have added new areas to the controlled vocabulary as needed. For security reasons it will not be publicly visible. This element will not be mapped.)

15. Display History: (This will be a listing of exhibits and museums where the item has been previously displayed. This field is blank on most records because the objects have not been displayed previously or there is no information available on where they were displayed. This information could be useful in aiding researchers who visited the museum a long time ago. This field is not mapped.)

16. Owner: (This is mapped to “Rights - Rights Holder.”)

17. Rights: (This contains contact information for the Tolland Historical Society and instructions so that users can ask permission to copy images. The field is mapped to Rights.)

18. Subject (AAT): This field was added to the digital display as an experiment to see if the objects in the Historical Society collection could be better cataloged using the Art & Architecture Thesaurus. I have decided that the current thesaurus is better suited to the Historical Society’s situation, but I have left the subjects from the Art & Architecture Thesaurus in the display so that users from outside of the organization can use those search terms.

Coding System to Be Used

The Tolland Historical Society uses accession numbers that consist of the year that the item was acquired by the Society followed by a decimal point and a three-digit number. The three-digit number is assigned to objects in the order that they are received by the Society. Some

objects that have been owned by the Society since before the numbering system was put in place contain “xx” in their call numbers. Accession numbers starting with “xx” have been assigned to the items that are included in the digital collection that were not previously numbered or cataloged. The digital collection will follow this numbering system for accession numbers that begin with the year so that the new records are compatible with existing records. For accession numbers beginning with “xx” the number after the decimal point has been changed to a four-digit number. Because the Tolland Historical Society has begun to use numbers over 1000 a “0” will need to be added to all numbers under 1000 in order to get the records to sort numerically.

Authority Headings and Controlled Vocabularies

The Tolland Historical Society uses the following to classify its collection:

Blackaby, J. R., Greeno, P. & The Nomenclature Committee. (1995). *The revised nomenclature for museum cataloging: A revised and expanded version of Robert G. Chenhall's system for classifying man-made objects*. Walnut Creek: Alta Mira.

This system will be used for the digital collection to have compatibility with the existing records. The Tolland Historical Society has labeled each category and subcategory in the list of headings with a number. These numbers will be used in the digital collection for consistency.

A controlled vocabulary will also be used in describing the current location of each item. The Tolland Historical Society created the list of names for exhibit areas and I have added to it.

Some of the objects were also classified using the Art & Architecture Thesaurus.

J. Paul Getty Trust. (n.d.). Art & Architecture Thesaurus Online. Retrieved from:

<http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat/>

References

Blackaby, J. R., Greeno, P. & The Nomenclature Committee. (1995). *The revised nomenclature for museum cataloging: A revised and expanded version of Robert G. Chenhall's system for classifying man-made objects*. Walnut Creek: Alta Mira.