

Updates on Laws Surrounding Abandoned Property

Washington State recently passed legislation that changes notification requirements for Abandoned Property. Museums are no longer required to post the claims in a local newspaper and can have them posted to their websites instead. Because of this change we are letting people know that we have created a tab on the museum's website that has all of these notices posted.

What Qualifies as Abandoned Property?

Abandoned property "is considered unclaimed after it has been held for a designated period of time with no activity or owner contact, and a good faith effort has been made to locate the owner. The dormancy period is generally three years except for specific time periods set by state law for certain types of property."

For us, abandoned property generally consists of expired loans and items that have been separated from their documentation.

The Abandoned Property Claims Process

As always, our first step is to contact previous owners regarding their items. If we cannot get a hold of them for some reason (wrong address, telephone number, they are deceased, etc.) then we will go ahead with an abandoned property claim. During this period, I will type up all the information I have on an item with the last known information of the donor. That document will be posted on the museum's website for 30 days, after which will become the museum's property so long as no one contacts us regarding the claim within that time and can provide documentation that they owned the item.

How to access the page on our website:

Navigate to our website through this link

<https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/HistoricalSociety> , then select the tab that says "Historical Museum" and select "Collections Notices." This will take you to this webpage <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/HistoricalSociety/collections-notices.htm> Once you get to that page you will be able to see all active notices and their information.

To read the full RCW please visit this link

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=63.26.040&pdf=true>