

# **Cliveden Scope of Collections Statement**

## **Mission**

Cliveden's mission is to help people understand our shared history and motivate them to preserve it by providing access to the rich continuity of history and preservation in one community and family over time, and by offering direction and knowledge about preserving our built heritage and its value.

We fulfill this mission:

- first, by preserving our houses, grounds and collections;
- second by interpreting Cliveden and Upsala meaningfully to the public based on solid research;
- third, by working with local businesses and community revitalization and historical organizations to be a catalyst for preserving and reusing historic buildings to sustain economic development for historic Northwest Philadelphia and beyond;
- fourth, by promoting our community's cultural life and historic preservation efforts;
- and fifth by being a model of historic site management and preservation outreach.

Approved by Board of Directors, April 26, 2006

## **Scope of the Collections**

### **Cliveden**

Cliveden of the National Trust endeavors to fulfill its mission by helping people understand our shared history and humanity. We will do this through research, interpretive display, and educational programming based on our collection, which represents the history of the Chew

family and their lives from their arrival in Philadelphia in 1754 until their departure from Cliveden in 1970.

The Cliveden collection came into being in 1970 when the Chew family donated the house, grounds and much of the house's contents to the National Trust. There are approximately 3,300 items in the collection that are related directly to the Chew family, and this remarkable collection makes Cliveden one of the few historic sites that can tell the story of its owners through the use of their own artifacts

Two parameters maintain the immediacy and relevance of our collection and define its scope. First, Cliveden's accessioned collections include items made or used before 1970—the year the Chew family left the site. Second, to be part of the collection an item shall be related to either the Chew family of Philadelphia or to the Battle of Germantown.

In addition, there are two classes of materials that Cliveden does *not* normally collect. One of them is archival materials, which will instead be directed to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania for inclusion in the Chew Family Papers collection. The other is books, which shall first be offered to the Library Company of Philadelphia for addition to its own Chew collection.

## **Upsala**

The ultimate uses for the Upsala collection have yet to be determined, but one important parameter has already been established: for items to be retained in the Upsala collection they must have a Johnson provenance.

## History of the Collections

### Cliveden

Cliveden's collection can be divided into three categories: gifts from the Chew family (primarily of Chew family items), Chew family items found in the house at the time of its purchase (FIHATOP), and items (primarily non-Chew family) donated by non-Chew donors. Since the Chew family materials constitute the majority of the collection, it makes sense to start with those first.

The largest donors to Cliveden were, and remain, Samuel Chew (1915 – 1989) and his sister Anne Chew Barrenger (1913 – 1989). In all Sam made a total of fourteen gifts totaling 384 items or item groups, while Anne made ten gifts with a total of 306 items or item groups. These donations were made between the years of 1972 and 1983. The FIHATOPs category was gathered together in twenty accessioned groups of approximately 669 items, all of which were found in the house after the time of purchase and were later accessioned into the collection.

The balance of the collection is consists of slightly more than 100 other gifts and purchases from non-Chew sources, the largest single one of them being the Cliveden guides. Nearly all of these acquisitions regardless of source were acquired prior to 1981 during the tenure of Executive Director Raymond Shepherd. The few items collected by the site *since* 1981 are by and large either related to the Henry Banning Chew family at Epsom, or are popular culture items associated with the Chew family or the Battle of Germantown and are intended for the Reference Collection.

## **Upsala**

Upsala's collections were placed under Cliveden's care when the Orphan's Court of Philadelphia dissolved the Upsala Foundation in 2005. Unlike Cliveden, Upsala has only a few items associated with the Johnson family, the ancestral owners of the building and property. Having spent its recent life as a volunteer-run historic site, the vast majority of the material currently housed there was donated by individual non-family donors, and many of the pieces on display at the time of its acquisition are believed to carry no Johnson provenance. Unfortunately the records of Upsala's collections are minimal at best, and were only brought together in one volume in 1980, in some cases decades after donors had dropped off their gifts. Upsala experienced several years of relative inactivity before it merged with Cliveden in 2004. It is therefore impossible to trace the provenance of most Upsala items with certainty, and there are no supporting documents such as deeds of gift or loan papers.

In any case, Upsala's collections can also be divided into two classes. The larger of these consists of 306 items or item groups that are believed to have no association with the Johnson family. The second and smaller class includes fifty items that, according to Upsala's incomplete records, may have some relation to the Johnsons. At the time of this writing neither group is accessioned into the National Trust collections, and the consensus appears to be that the non-Johnson items should probably be disposed of in a responsible manner while the Johnson materials merit further scrutiny and consideration.

## Contents of the Collections

### Cliveden

The collection consists of accessioned objects that are the property of the National Trust of Historic Preservation. Cliveden's collection includes important groups of the following items:

*Paintings and prints:* Notable among Cliveden's paintings is a set of history paintings by Edward Lamson Henry (1841-1919), and a group of portraits by James Reid Lambdin (1807-1889) and George Cochran Lambdin (1830-1896).

*Textiles:* Cliveden has an extensive collection of late eighteenth century and nineteenth century clothing.

*Decorative arts:* Includes an early nineteenth century tea set bearing the Chew coat of arms and a silver epergne.

*Furniture:* Examples of Philadelphia's finest rococo tables, upholstered furniture and mirrors, as well as distinguished neoclassical furnishings from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Porcelain:* Includes 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese export porcelain, including some ordered specifically for the Chew family, as well as old Paris.

*Everyday Items:* Ranges from shaving brushes to clipboards to daily reminders.

*Transportation Artifacts:* The metal remains of two Eighteenth Century carriages burned in the Carriage House fire of 1970.

*Building Elements:* Miscellaneous building fragments, doors, chutes, shutters, and other woodwork removed from Cliveden's buildings over the last century.

**Upsala**

This collection is less diverse, including two wedding certificates, two beds, a variety of textiles, and some silver and assorted ceramics. There are approximately 50 Johnson-related pieces in the collection.

**Reference**

This collection consists of low value, expendable or replaceable unaccessioned objects that are the property of Cliveden of the National Trust, and are thought worthy of retention in some format for research or educational but do not rise to the level of artifact status. Examples include photocopies, souvenirs, duplicates and ephemeral materials.

The reference collection is divided for the sake of storage convenience into four groups: archival materials, photographic materials, books, and artifacts. These items may be copied for use or disposed of at any time.

**Collecting policy****Cliveden**

Cliveden is not actively collecting at this time due primarily to lack of sufficient funds.

However, it does acquire new items for the accessioned collections at a rate of one or two a year as opportunities arise. More frequent additions are made to the reference collections, but these are usually low value popular culture materials that relate to either the Battle of Germantown or Cliveden's role in the public eye.

Should funds become available for collection by purchase, possibilities for acquisition include silver and ceramic items with the Chew family crest which have turned up from time to

time on the market; graphic and fine arts materials documenting the appearance of the Chew House and the Cliveden property at various times would also be highly appropriate additions to the collection. Finally, any material that might document the history of the family's servants or slaves would be a tremendously important addition to the collection.

### **Upsala**

Given the unclear future of the Upsala collection further acquisitions to the collection should be approached with caution. This should especially be the case because there are two other established collections of Johnson and Germantown materials in the immediate area, one being at the Germantown Historical Society, and the other at Wyck. Should an item be offered for acquisition, a number of criteria should be considered. First, as mentioned elsewhere in this statement, any item considered for acquisition into the Upsala collection must have a clear Johnson family provenance. Second, it would do well to ask whether this item would better belong in one of the other two collections; only if the offered item is directly relevant to Upsala should it be considered at all for potential acquisition. Only if neither of these questions can be answered satisfactorily should the acquisition be considered.