

ARTIFACT DONATIONS

TO THE COLLECTION OF THE DANISH IMMIGRANT MUSEUM



Thank you very much for considering making an artifact gift to The Danish Immigrant Museum. We rely on the generosity of people like you to enhance our collection and assist us in meeting our mission:

The Danish Immigrant Museum shares the legacy and continuing influence of Danish culture as realized in the experiences and contributions of Danish immigrants, their descendants, and Danes living in America.”

As we strive to maintain professional museum standards, we have adopted certain policies and procedures which guide us as we continue to grow our collection. We recognize that many people are not familiar with the donation process, so the purpose of this hand-out is to assist those who are considering becoming a donor. Read on for the answers to our most frequently asked questions.

How does The Danish Immigrant Museum decide what material it will accept for the artifact collection?

All items submitted for donation to the Museum undergo a review process before being accepted into the collection. Criteria which must be met are as follows:

- Does this object fit within our mission and our Collections Policy?
- Does this object have significant history or documentation associated with it?
- What is the physical condition of the object?
- Is this a duplicate of something already in the Museum's collection?
- If this is a duplicate, is this piece have stronger documentation or a more stable condition?
- Does the Museum have the resources to safely and professionally preserve, store, and/or care for the object?
- Is this object a safety or health hazard to the staff or visitors?

If I have artifacts that may be appropriate for the Museum, how do I go about donating?

The steps all donation offers proceed through include:

- Temporary Artifact Receipt—All objects being offered are listed on this form as well as any documentary information associated with the gift. The donor must sign this form, thereby giving the Museum permission to evaluate the artifact(s) for our collection. Ownership is not transferred at this time.
- Collections Review Committee—All gift offers are reviewed by a group of staff members who use the

criteria listed above to determine if the objects being offered are appropriate for the collection. This Committee meets once a month.

- Deed of Gift—All objects accepted for the collection are issued a Deed of Gift. This form lists what pieces are being accepted and requires the donor's signature. Once this form is signed, the gift is complete and ownership is transferred to the Museum.

What happens to objects not accepted for the Museum's collection?

On the Temporary Artifact Receipt is a section where the donor can select whether he/she wants the donation returned if the Museum does not accept it, or if the Museum is free to transfer or otherwise dispose of unaccepted objects. If the donor selects the return option, we make arrangements for the donor to pick up the donation or for the Museum to ship it back. If the donor does not want the pieces back, we typically transfer them to another museum or appropriate institution.

Does the Museum purchase objects?

On rare occasions, the Museum may purchase objects. These pieces are still required to meet the same criteria as donated objects.

Does the Museum provide appraisals of objects?

Providing values for objects except for our own insurance purposes is not a professional or ethical practice for any museum. Donors who seek values for objects should contact a licensed appraiser.

Does the Museum accept objects on loan?

Because of insurance and liability issues and space constraints, loans are only accepted when requested for specific exhibits.

What is the Museum's policy on exhibiting donated objects? Will my piece be on permanent exhibition?

Exhibiting most types of objects for a very long period of time actually causes damage and therefore shortens life spans. We do our best to rotate objects into temporary exhibits as appropriate. Others are able to be viewed in our Visual Storage area, a room in our lower level with glass on three sides which allows visitors to see pieces that otherwise would be behind closed doors.

Does the Museum do repair or conservation work?

The Museum staff are not trained conservators and therefore do not repair or conserve objects. We are always happy to provide advice on how to care for objects within the home, and can recommend resources for supplies and further information. People who need an object conserved should speak with a trained, professional conservator.

Does the Museum remove objects from its collection? What happens to those objects?

The Museum is an educational institution which serves the public. The objects within our collection support that task and our overall mission. Most objects given to the museum will remain in our collection for the rest of their lives.

Occasionally, objects are removed from the collection through a process called deaccessioning. The process is a lengthy one and not taken lightly. Objects that may be considered for removal are:

- Those that have deteriorated to the point that they can no longer be preserved or exhibited.
- Those that demonstrate a risk to staff and visitors, such as grenades with live charges inside, fur items laced with arsenic, or plastics that are deteriorating and releasing toxic liquids and fumes.
- Those that are determined not to be genuine or in keeping with the Museum's mission.
- Those whose original ownership or details of the donation are in question.

Those objects that are removed from the collection are typically transferred to other museums or appropriate institutions. Those pieces that are in severely poor physical condition or are dangers may be disposed of in an appropriate manner. Pieces may be sold through a public auction venue with monies gained restricted for purchases of other artifacts or for the continuing care of the Museum's existing collection. Objects are not returned to the original donors.

If you have further questions about the donation process or wish to discuss your donation, please contact

Angela Stanford, Curator of Collections / Registrar, at
registrar@danishmuseum.org

Thank you to all of our members and donors who help us make this museum what it is.

THE DANISH IMMIGRANT MUSEUM

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