



**museum of
danish america**

Collections Management Policy

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1. Overview

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Collections Management Policy establishes and documents the Museum of Danish America's policies and guidelines concerning all collections related activities including the acquisition, development, management, and use of the collections. The Collections Management Policy, hereafter referred to as the Policy, deals with all major aspects of collections stewardship, which is the careful, sound, and responsible management of that which is entrusted to the care of the Museum of Danish America, hereafter referred to as the Museum. Collections are held in trust for the public and are made accessible for the public's benefit.

A comprehensive Collections Management Policy helps to facilitate adherence to the standards and best practices recommended by the American Alliance of Museums. It is a guide for Board, staff, and volunteers as they perform their individual and collective duties.

This current revision to the Policy has been expanded to more fully address areas such as collections' purpose and scope, statements of authority, and adherence to laws and ethics. Increased emphasis has been placed on the key topics of acquisition and deaccessioning given their importance in shaping our collections.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Museum's Mission provides the focus, context, and direction for all collections activities.

Mission Statement: The Museum of Danish America celebrates Danish roots and American dreams. (Approved by the Board of Directors, June 2011)

Collections as Embodiment of Museum's Purpose: The Museum collects examples of material culture which illustrate the history of the earliest Danish immigrants in terms of their lives in Denmark before emigration, their travels to and means of reaching America, and life here including occupations, social organizations, schools, churches, and homes. The Museum also collects representations of subsequent generations of Danish Americans, artifacts which reflect their achievements and contributions, continuing ties to Denmark and Danish traditions, and their efforts to maintain communal expressions of their Danish heritage. Since Danish immigration is ongoing, both historic and contemporary artifacts are appropriate for the collections.

1.3 SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS

The Museum has two distinct artifact collections: the permanent collection and the utility, education, research/reference (UER) collection. A third group of materials is collected and retained by the Museum's Genealogy Center. This collection has a different purpose and function than those of the Museum's permanent and UER

collections, and is guided by the “Collection Development Guidelines” for the Genealogy Center (See Addendum E).

In scope and content, the Museum’s collections will always be consistent with and supportive of the Mission Statement of the Museum of Danish America.

Permanent Collection: Artifacts of all types added to this collection may be used for exhibition, research, and documentary purposes. Such artifacts should relate closely to the Mission and purpose of the Museum. Artifacts should have strong provenance and/or associations with specific people, institutions, or events; artifacts with such associations are preferable to those without. The Museum commits to long term care of these artifacts, which may only be removed from the collection through formal deaccessioning. (See Deaccessioning, section 4). Artifacts in the permanent collection may be loaned to other institutions (see Loans, section 5).

Utility, Education, Research/Reference (UER) Collection: UER artifacts are “hands on” artifacts. This collection focuses more on purpose and support for exhibitions and less on provenance. Such artifacts are allowed to “live out” their normal lives through use and handling. Pieces in this collection may be used as general reference material for the public, serve to illustrate talks and demonstrations, or provide visitors and program participants “hands on” knowledge, meaning that the artifacts may be touched. Such artifacts may be used in exhibit situations where the environment and/or security might threaten the preservation of a permanent collection artifact. UER artifacts may be loaned to other institutions (see Loans, section 5). Reproductions may also be made of artifacts in this collection by qualified professionals. Artifacts will be removed from the collection once they are no longer useful for Museum purposes.

Excluded from this collection are objects with no interpretive function that are donated or purchased specifically for general use by the Museum for hospitality events (e.g. dishes for receptions). Items that do not go through the donation process with associated paperwork are excluded from the collection.

1.4 STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

Board of Directors: The Board of Directors is the legal entity responsible for the governance of the Museum of Danish America. The Executive Director and Museum staff are responsible for implementation of established strategies, policies, and practices, and are accountable to the Board for such.

Board’s Collections Committee: The Board of Directors’ Collections Committee, together with the Executive Director, Curator of Collections, or alternate designated staff, is responsible for establishing the principles and strategies supporting the integrity, organization, development, and management of the Museum’s collections, and recommending such principles and strategies for approval by the Board of Directors. This committee, in collaboration with the Executive Director and professional staff, works to establish and develop the strategies, policies and long-term planning goals for the collections. Curators serve as “ex-officio” members of the Collections Committee.

Executive Director: The Executive Director, as chief executive of the Museum, is directly accountable to the Board for the overall administration and management of the Museum of Danish America including all programs and business operations. As such, the Executive Director is responsible for the effective custody and administration of the Museum's collections and the implementation of the Collections Management Policy. He/she shall delegate day-to-day administration and management of the collections to the Curator of Collections and the Registrar, and other professional staff as appropriate. The Executive Director, in collaboration with designated staff, identifies specific priority needs of the collections and communicates those to the Board of Directors.

Curator of Collections: The Curator of Collections' primary responsibility is to ensure the integrity of the collections by following professional standards in managing and administering all collections related activities and processes. He/she participates in focused collecting and deaccessioning, and develops, updates, and implements detailed policies relating to the collections. He/she is responsible for controlling both physical and electronic access to the collections, for overseeing the care and protection of all artifacts, and for approval of all loan requests. The Curator of Collections conducts scholarly research, and assists with exhibitions to coordinate with the Curator of Exhibitions appropriate display methods for artifacts.

Registrar: The Registrar's primary responsibility is to maintain, consistent with professional standards, all records pertaining to the artifacts for which the Museum has assumed responsibility, both as collections and loans. He/she is responsible for the development, administration, and retention of all legal forms pertaining to collections management. Additionally, the Registrar is responsible for obtaining necessary signatures, maintaining deaccessioning records, and monitoring the locations of artifacts. The Registrar also develops, updates, and implements specific procedures relating to the management of records.

Curator of Exhibitions: The Curator of Exhibitions ensures that all exhibitions, programs, and other interpretive activities maintain a level of professional care and preservation for collections involved. This includes, but is not limited to: 1) planning appropriate artifact installation methods, involving cases and protective barriers as needed; 2) being mindful of the physical condition of artifacts when selecting pieces for exhibitions; 3) in collaboration with the Curator of Collections, ensuring that environments for on-site and traveling exhibitions meet the preservation and security needs of the collections involved.

Collections Review Committee: The staff's Collections Review Committee consists of the Executive Director, Curator of Collections, Registrar, Curator of Exhibitions, and Manager of the Genealogy Center. This Committee is responsible for following the Collections Management Policy with respect to recommending artifacts for acquisition and deaccessioning, designating placement of accepted artifacts in the permanent or UER collections, and determining disposition of those artifacts not approved for

acquisition. Voting members shall be employees of the Museum, though interns and volunteers sitting in on meetings may participate in discussions.

2. Legal and Ethical Standards

2.1 LEGAL STANDARDS

The Museum was incorporated pursuant to Chapter 504A of the Iowa Nonprofit Corporation Act of the Code of Iowa in November 1983. The Museum acquired tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service under the Internal Revenue Code Section 501c3.

Artifact donations may qualify as tax deductible contributions consistent with the provisions of IRS Code Section 501c3.

In policy and in practice, the Museum shall follow all applicable local, state, federal, and international laws and regulations, including U.S. copyright law incorporated in Title 17 of the U.S. Code and all subsequent legislation pertaining to copyright and other issues of intellectual property.

2.2 ETHICAL STANDARDS

The Museum is responsible for seeing that collections in its custody are “lawfully held, protected, secure, unencumbered, cared for, and preserved” (AAM 1993). The Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers will follow the Museum’s Code of Ethics, and reference the American Alliance of Museum’s Code of Ethics (found in Addenda F and G).

As the museum holds its collection in the public trust, all activities surrounding the acquisition, documentation, care, storage, display, use, and disposal of the collection must meet professional museum industry standards and be outlined formally in this Collections Management Policy, approved by the Board of Directors. All actions will occur in accordance to the guidelines found herein.

No staff, volunteer, or Board member shall use his/her position at the Museum for personal gain or benefit at the expense of the Museum, its Mission, its reputation, and/or the community it serves.

2.3 APPRAISING DONATIONS / TAX DEDUCTIONS

The Museum’s staff or representatives will not act as appraisers for gifts offered and/or accepted for collections. Appraisals are the sole responsibility of the donor. A licensed appraiser may conduct appraisals for insurance purposes once artifacts are accepted for and processed into the collections.

Internal Revenue Service forms related to donations will be completed by the Museum according to the following steps: 1) formal acceptance of the artifacts by the Museum, 2) signature on IRS reporting forms by the Donor, 3) signature on the IRS reporting forms by the Executive Director or Registrar, and 4) compliance with other applicable laws.

2.4 PERSONAL COLLECTING

Board members, staff, and volunteers will not compete with the Museum in any personal collecting. These individuals will use their best judgment, in consultation with the Executive Director and/or the Curator of Collections, to determine whether an object represents an artifact of current interest for the collections.

If such an object comes to the attention of board members, staff, or volunteers, either through gift or possible sale, the Museum will be informed of its availability and will have the first option to accept or reject it. If such an object is purchased by board members, staff, or volunteers, it will be offered to the Museum as a donation or for the price of purchase. Objects collected prior to an individual's association with the Museum, bequests, or personal gifts will be exempt from this policy.

Board members, staff, and volunteers may not participate in any dealing in objects similar to those objects collected by the Museum. For the purposes of this Policy, a dealer is defined as someone who buys and sells objects for profit on a regular basis.

3. Acquisitions

3.1 ACQUISITIONS OVERVIEW

The Museum of Danish America will build its collections primarily through donations, and through occasional strategic purchases. The collections are consistently built in an active and focused manner, which continually strives to reflect the evolving and changing story of Danish immigration.

Specific acquisition strategies will be employed to strengthen and/or expand collections in areas that are weak, limited, or missing entirely (e.g. artifacts representing contemporary Danish design or the post-World War II period).

All recommendations for purchases must be reviewed and approved by the Executive Director prior to purchase and upon recommendation by the Collections Review Committee. All purchases of \$5000 or higher must be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee prior to purchase.

Objects may be received by the Museum for the specific purpose of sale or trade, but only such objects as are not considered appropriate for the existing collections. Those objects accepted specifically for sale or trade will remain outside of all collections procedures.

3.2 TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR DONATIONS

All donations are subject to the Terms and Conditions for Donations found on the reverse of every Deed of Gift. These include, but are not limited to, the following: 1) all donations to the Museum will be outright and unconditional gifts, and donors may not issue restrictions; 2) the Museum does not guarantee exhibition of donated artifacts; 3) no security interest is held by any third party against the donation; and 4) donations may be tax deductible, but the Museum assumes no responsibility for providing an appraisal.

3.3 ACQUISITION RESTRICTIONS

The Museum may be restricted in its acceptance of some artifacts for either collection for a number of reasons such as lack of support for the Mission, lack of accurate and/or significant documentation, duplication, physical size, and need for excessive conservation care.

3.4 ACQUISITION PROCESS

Comprehensive procedures and detailed forms dealing with the acceptance, review, and accessioning artifacts are documented in the Collections Procedures Manual. The guiding principles and policies that direct those procedures are outlined here.

3.4.1 Temporary Artifact Receipt:

The first step in the donation process involves completing the Temporary Artifact Receipt. This form requires the signature of both the owner/donor and the Museum staff member receiving the donation. It lists all of the artifacts being offered and states

clearly the conditions under which these artifacts are being left in the Museum's custody. It officially gives the Museum permission to consider the artifacts listed thereon for the collections. Appropriate documentation is acquired at the time of donation and during the subsequent cataloging process.

3.4.2 Collections Review Committee:

The Collections Review Committee meets monthly to determine which offered artifacts will be accepted for the collections, transferred to other institutions (including the Genealogy Center), returned to donors, or otherwise disposed of. The Committee is also responsible for assigning a new acquisition to the permanent or UER collection. Donation offers are reviewed according to the following criteria: 1) consistent with the Mission and purpose of the Museum; 2) level of provenance or documentation; 3) duplication; 4) physical space required to care for, store, and exhibit; 5) need for excessive care and/or conservation due to fragility or damage; and 6) the potential hazard or risk to other artifacts in the collections and/or to people.

3.4.3 Deed of Gift:

A Deed of Gift is issued to donors for artifacts that are accepted by the Collections Review Committee. The Executive Director signs the Deed of Gift after the donor has done so. This completes the donation.

If the Deed of Gift is not signed by the donor within 90 days after acceptance by the Collections Review Committee, the artifacts listed on the Deed will automatically and completely become the property of the Museum. According to the Terms and Conditions listed on the Deed, no liability will accrue to the Museum or its agents or employees if reasonable attempts have been made to contact the donor for his/her signature. (Reminder letters are mailed to donors after 30 and 60 days.)

3.4.4 Declined Artifacts:

Artifacts that are not accepted are returned to the donor, transferred to other institutions, or otherwise disposed of according to guidance provided by the donor on the Temporary Artifact Receipt. Museum representatives should never directly and/or personally gain or benefit from artifact donations. Artifacts that donors do not want returned to them may not be acquired by Museum board members, staff, interns, or volunteers.

4. Deaccessioning

4.1 DEACCESSIONING OVERVIEW

The Museum of Danish America's permanent and UER collections are never intended to be static. The Museum is committed to continually strengthening the collections. One of the most important ways to do this is by thoughtful application of a disciplined process of continual refinement to remove duplicate or damaged artifacts, as well as those that are no longer consistent with the Mission or have insufficient documentation. Such actions make available space, funds, and staff time to devote to the existing collections and new acquisitions.

The deaccessioning process will follow all legal requirements and professional standards. No artifact may be removed from the collections without going through the accepted deaccessioning process detailed in this Policy. The deaccessioning process for permanent collection artifacts is different than that for UER artifacts.

Briefly, the deaccessioning process for all artifacts begins with a specific recommendation from the professional staff and approval by Collections Review Committee (CRC). Following this, actions to effect deaccessioning may be initiated for UER artifacts. Permanent collection artifacts require further approval by the Board's Collections Committee, and finally approval by the Board of Directors. Only when Board approval is obtained are the actions to effect deaccessioning initiated. If the recommendation to deaccession an artifact in either collection is denied by the CRC, the artifact is retained in its collection. If a permanent collection artifact's recommendation is denied by the Collections Committee or the Board, the artifact is retained in its collection.

An artifact may be removed from either of the collections if specific criteria are met. These include the following: 1) it has been proven that the artifact did not belong to the donor at the time of donation; 2) the artifact is no longer consistent with the Mission of the Museum; 3) the authenticity of the artifact has been disproved; 4) the artifact has deteriorated beyond usefulness or the ability of the Museum to care for it; and 5) the artifact presents a potential hazard risk to other artifacts in the collections and/or to people. Artifacts that meet one or more of these criteria, or similar to above, may still be retained in their collections.

Artifacts that have been formally deaccessioned may be disposed of in one of the following ways: 1) through transfer to the alternate collection (e.g. permanent to UER or vice versa) or to the Genealogy Center; 2) through transfer to another institution; or 3) through approved destruction or public auction.

Deaccessioned artifacts will not be returned to the original donors. All monies from sales will be used for the acquisition of new artifacts.

4.2 DEACCESSIONING PROCESS

Complete procedures and forms for deaccessioning artifacts are documented in the Collections Procedures Manual. The guiding principles and policies that direct those procedures are outlined here.

4.2.1 Review by Collections Staff:

If an artifact is determined to meet one or more of the criteria listed in section 4.1, collections staff will review the paper and electronic records for the artifact to confirm that all documentation is accurate and complete. Incomplete records will be completed as much as possible before proceeding. If clear and unrestricted title cannot be determined from the available paperwork, the deaccessioning process will stop.

4.2.2 Review by Collections Review Committee (CRC):

Collections staff will recommend to the Collections Review Committee that the artifact be deaccessioned. At this time, the recommended disposition of the artifact to take place after deaccessioning will also be made clear. The Committee must approve the recommendation or the action will stop and the artifact will remain in its collection. This is the final step for UER artifacts.

4.2.3 Review by Board's Collections Committee:

An approved recommendation from the Collections Review Committee for deaccessioning a permanent collection artifact will be presented to the Collections Committee at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Only upon approval by the Collections Committee will the deaccessioning process proceed. If the recommendation is denied, the artifact will remain in its collection.

4.2.4 Review by the Board of Directors:

An approved recommendation from the Collections Committee for deaccessioning a permanent collection artifact will be presented to the full Board for final approval. Only upon approval by the full Board of Directors will the deaccessioning process proceed. If the recommendation is denied, the artifact will remain in its collection.

4.2.5 Documenting Deaccessioning:

All deaccessioning decisions and actions will be documented using the Museum's collections database system, and all paper records will be updated. The original Deaccessioning Form will be signed by representatives from the CRC and by the Board President. Transfer Receipts and Witness of Destruction forms will be signed by the Registrar. This paperwork and associated files will be retained. Object identification numbers that were applied to an artifact when it was first accepted will not be removed during the deaccessioning process.

4.3 DISPOSAL OF DEACCESSIONED ARTIFACTS

An artifact being deaccessioned will be disposed of according to the action recorded on the Deaccessioning Form. The following are approved methods of disposal:

- Transfer of a permanent collection artifact to the UER collection, or vice versa, or to the Genealogy Center

- Transfer to another museum, archive, library, or other entity
- Public sales such as by auction, eBay, or professional dealer
- Discard/destroy

4.4 RESTRICTIONS FOR DEACCESSIONED ARTIFACTS

Deaccessioned artifacts will not be returned directly to original donors or their families or representatives. If artifacts are to be sold at public sales, donors may be notified of the impending sale. They may participate if they choose.

Monies from public auctions will be used only to acquire new artifacts for the collections. Artifacts removed from the collections will not be sold at any time to fund general operations. Consistent with museum industry ethical standards, the Museum of Danish America will not capitalize collections or treat them as financial assets.

Board members and staff should never personally acquire objects deaccessioned from the museum's collections unless the general public has first been given full access. For example, the first day of a sale of deaccessioned books will be restricted to the public only. Following that, board members and staff may make purchases from those books. Board members and staff may not purchase deaccessioned artifacts at public auctions due to the limited availability to the public prior to the beginning of the sale and the potential for a perceived conflict of interest.

5. Loans

5.1 LOANS OVERVIEW

Lending and borrowing artifacts for exhibition, research, and educational purposes is an integral part of the Museum's goal to make its collections accessible to the widest possible audience.

Artifacts are at risk while on loan. To reduce such risk, the Museum has developed policies which permit responsible use of artifacts while ensuring their physical integrity and security through proper care and handling.

All artifacts on loan to and in the Museum's custody are afforded the same level of care and attention as that afforded to artifacts owned by the Museum. The details of all incoming and outgoing loans are specified on the Loan Contracts issued by the Registrar, and will be followed unless changes are agreed to in writing by both parties.

Terms and conditions detailed in Loan Contracts include, but are not limited to, the following: 1) all artifacts, loaned or borrowed, will be afforded professional care and handling; 2) damages to artifacts, loaned or borrowed, will be photographed and reported to the Lender as soon as practical; 3) no alterations will be made to any artifact, loaned or borrowed, without prior written approval by the Lender; 4) no reproductions will be made of any artifact, loaned or borrowed, without prior written approval by the Lender; and 5) no loan period will be open-ended—all loans will be tied to the duration of the project for which they are intended.

All loan files will be retained permanently.

5.2 INCOMING LOANS

Incoming loans are solicited by the Curator of Exhibitions or the Executive Director for a specific purpose such as exhibition or research. The Museum does not store artifacts for other institutions.

The terms and conditions governing all incoming loans will be negotiated in advance to ensure that the Museum can comply with legal and other requirements. Questions or concerns will be addressed between the Lender and the Museum's Curator of Exhibitions and/or Executive Director. Details of loan terms and conditions will be communicated to the Registrar to ensure that all loan documentation is complete and accurate.

All incoming loans are covered by the Museum's insurance policy while in-house and in-transit for the value provided by the Lender. In the event the Lender chooses to maintain his/her/their insurance coverage in lieu of that provided by the Museum, the Lender is required to provide written, signed notice to this effect.

The Museum will not accept loaned material that is known to have been collected illegally, represents a hazard to the collections or staff of the Museum, or fails to conform to local, state, or federal law (e.g. human remains, sacred material, etc.).

The Museum is responsible for all costs associated with the transportation of incoming loans unless other arrangements are made.

5.3 OUTGOING LOANS

Requests for all outgoing loans require the approval of the Curator of Collections and the Executive Director.

The Borrower will sign and return the Loan Contract prior to the requested artifacts being transferred to the Borrower's custody. Once the Executive Director signs the Contract, the loan is finalized, and the artifacts will be shipped or delivered.

All outgoing loans will be covered by the Borrower's insurance while in-house and in-transit for the value provided by the Museum. The Museum may request a Certificate of Insurance from the Borrower in advance of the loan. If proof of insurance coverage cannot be provided, the loan request may be denied.

The Museum will deny requests for loans of artifacts that are inherently unstable or in such condition that traveling or exhibition would exacerbate the problem or subject the artifact to other unnecessary risks. Requests may also be denied if the Museum needs the artifact for its own use, or if the amount of time between the date of request and the date that the artifact is required by the borrower precludes the Registrar from making necessary preparations.

The Museum may recommend that a high quality reproduction be substituted for the original artifact being requested if that original artifact is unavailable for loan. The cost of producing the reproduction will be borne by the Borrower.

The Borrower is generally responsible for all costs associated with the transportation of the loan unless other arrangements are made.

5.3.1 Loans from the Permanent Collection:

The Museum lends only to professional museums, galleries, and other historical organizations that receive a satisfactory evaluation by the Museum based on information provided in an AAM Facility Report.

The Museum does not lend to individuals or to organizations that do not receive a satisfactory evaluation based on the AAM Facility Report. Any exception to this policy requires either the written approval of the Executive Director and/or an on-site visit by a professional staff person to establish that physical conditions and operating standards of the requesting institution meet the Museum's requirements.

5.3.2 Loans from the UER Collection:

The Museum lends artifacts from the UER collection to museums, galleries, and other historical organizations. Pieces from this collection may also be loaned to groups that are not professional and/or historical in nature such as churches, schools, or social organizations.

The intended use of all requested UER artifacts must be consistent with the Statement of Purpose in this Policy, and with the Museum's commitment to cultural and educational programming.

6. Unclaimed Loans, Abandoned and Found Objects

6.1 Unclaimed Loans, Abandoned Property

Objects in these categories are typically unsolicited by the Museum. These are objects left in its custody without being requested or approved by the Museum. The Museum is guided in managing such objects by Iowa's Museum Property Act (See Addendum C—*Iowa Code Chapter 305B—Museum Property Act*).

Documentation of all attempts to contact the original owner/lender will be maintained permanently in the loan file for the object, as will copies of all public notices and/or subsequent paperwork relating to it.

6.1.1 Unclaimed Loans:

Unclaimed loans are objects for which a loan contract exists, but contact with the owner/lender has lapsed. For the Museum to terminate the loan or assume title to the object, the Museum must make a good faith effort to contact the lender to officially notify him/her of the termination of the loan.

Such loans will not be considered for termination and their titles transferred to the Museum unless the following requirements have been met: 1) The object has been on indefinite loan and held by the Museum for seven years or more, or 2) The object has been on loan through a contract with a clear termination date but no action has been made by the lender to claim the object once the loan period has expired and the Museum has given notice of the termination of the loan.

6.1.2 Abandoned Property:

Abandoned property is defined as any object held by the Museum for a period of seven years or more for which there is no formal paperwork, and for which the owners have made no effort to contact the Museum. Such objects shall become the property of the Museum if a good faith effort is made by the Museum to notify the owners of its intent to claim ownership and no reply is received.

6.1.3 Notice Requirements:

Notice of termination of loan or abandonment of property requires the Museum to do the following:

- Send a notice by certified mail (return receipt requested) to the last known owner at the most recent address on record
- If the address on file is not current, publish a notice in a newspaper in the area of the owner's most recent address
- If the Museum receives no written proof of receipt of notice within 30 days of the date mailed OR there is no current address on record, publish a notice, at least once each week for two consecutive weeks, in a newspaper of general circulation in both the county in which the Museum is located and the county of the last known address of the owner if available. This notice shall contain a description of the object, the name and last known address of the owner, a

request that anyone knowing the whereabouts of the owner provide written notice to the Museum, and a statement that if written assertion of title is not presented by the owner to the Museum within three years from the publication date of the second notice, the object shall be considered abandoned or donated and shall become the property of the Museum.

6.2 Found in Collections

The Museum possesses objects with insufficient documentation to determine if they are or should be part of the permanent collection. Objects that are “Found in the Collection” (FIC) differ from abandoned property and unclaimed loans in that no record of past or current ownership exists.

Documentation of all attempts to contact the original owner will be maintained permanently in the accession file, as will copies of all public notices and/or subsequent paperwork relating to it.

6.2.1 Care and Documentation:

While in the Museum’s possession, FIC objects will be cared for in the same manner as artifacts in the collections, but will be stored separately as much as possible to avoid or limit any confusion between formally processed artifacts and FIC’s. Such objects will be described, labeled and tracked by the Registrar.

6.2.2 Assuming Ownership:

Should the Museum wish to retain ownership of an FIC object, it will be accessioned into the collection following current accessioning procedures, though such objects must be designated as “Found in Collection”. The Museum recognizes the possibility that the object may be claimed by the rightful owner at a later date and shall return the object upon presentation of adequate proof of ownership. The Museum’s legal counsel may be consulted for advice in such cases.

6.2.3 Disposal:

Should the Museum decide to dispose of an FIC object after all reasonable attempts to identify its owner have failed, it recognizes the risks involved, such as subsequent claims by rightful owners and the inability to sell with a guarantee of legal title.

FIC objects will be evaluated, recommended for removal, and disposed of following current deaccessioning procedures. These objects may be donated to another institution; such action is less likely to have repercussions for the Museum should the rightful owner make a claim. If FIC objects are to be sold, they must be done so with a statement expressly not warranting legal title. The Museum’s legal counsel may be consulted in any of these cases.

7. Care and Maintenance of the Collections

7.1 CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF THE COLLECTIONS

7.1.1 Permanent Collection:

All permanent collection artifacts will be housed in climate controlled storage areas when not on exhibition. Such areas currently include the Registrar's and Curators' offices, Permanent Storage, Visual Storage, the Main Vault, and the South Vault. Permanent collection artifacts will only be handled with gloves by trained staff, interns, and volunteers, protected according to professional standards, and fully and properly documented according to the Collections Procedures Manual.

7.1.2 UER Collection:

All UER artifacts will be afforded the highest level of care consistent with their status and use. Such artifacts may be housed in climate controlled areas while not in use, but are allowed to be stored and exhibited in non-climate controlled areas (e.g. Jens Dixen House). Such artifacts will be handled with care to maintain their long-term usefulness. UER artifacts will be fully and properly accessioned and documented according to the Collections Procedures Manual.

7.1.3 Conservation and Reproductions:

As the Museum does not employ a trained Conservator, collections staff will only provide preventative conservation, such as proper mounts for support of fragile artifacts, and will not attempt in-depth cleaning or repairs. The Museum will consult or contract with a trained conservator for these services.

Creating reproductions of artifacts may be considered. In some cases, an artifact may be in particularly fragile condition and, to share its history and information with the public, a reproduction may be appropriate. Photocopies or scanned copies of photos or archival material will be permitted if the material is not copyrighted. Collections staff will make such copies to ensure proper handling of artifacts.

The Museum is obligated to ensure to the best of its ability that images of collections objects and reproductions of photographs and documents are used in an appropriate manner and in accordance with federal regulations and international treaties regarding copyright and intellectual property laws.

7.1.4 Pest Management and Environmental Conditions:

Collections staff monitor insect traps placed throughout the Museum and Bedstemors House. These traps will be monitored monthly when pest activity is normal and more frequently if problems are suspected or confirmed. The identity and quantity of the pests found on or in the traps will be recorded on Excel spreadsheets and retained permanently.

Collections staff also monitor the temperature and relative humidity levels throughout the Museum, Bedstemors House, and at the Genealogy Center. HOBO dataloggers

take readings every 30 minutes and are downloaded monthly. Any problems that arise with the HVAC system will be reported to the service provider.

7.2 COLLECTIONS AREA SECURITY, ACCESS, AND RESTRICTIONS

At all times, the doors to collections storage areas and offices will remain locked, and curatorial offices will be locked when artifacts are present and staff are not. Only curatorial staff, the Executive Director, and the Facilities and Grounds Manager will have keys to collections storage areas and offices. All other staff, interns, board members, and volunteers will gain access through one of these staff members. All contract employees will gain access through one of these staff members and, if necessary, will be supervised while inside the secured area.

Visitors and/or researchers who have scheduled appointments with one of these staff members will be supervised at all times while in the collections areas.

Members of the Museum at the “Contributing” level can gain access to the Museum’s collections database via PastPerfect Online. Sensitive or confidential information will not be uploaded to PastPerfect Online and will not be accessible online.

All collections staff, interns, and volunteers will be trained properly in the procedures and functions of the Collections Department and become familiar with all necessary policies. Volunteers will be supervised while working with or handling artifacts.

Board members, staff, and volunteers are prohibited from borrowing or using collections for personal purposes. The only exception would be for an object in the education collection and the intended user obtains permission from curatorial staff.

7.3 MUSEUM-WIDE PRESERVATION EFFORTS

One of the easiest ways to protect the Museum’s collections is to make sure that as many risk factors are removed as possible. These include the following:

- No smoking anywhere in the building.
- No food or drink allowed throughout exhibition or collections spaces. Food and drink should remain in the kitchen, conference room, and in some staff offices (only drinks with screw-on lids are allowed in the Collections Department offices).
- No pets or animals of any kind will be allowed in the building, with the exception of licensed service animals.
- No handling of artifacts at any time without prior approval by and supervision of collections staff, and none without gloves.
- No live plants in the building except for the front foyer, the kitchen, and the conference room. This includes potted plants and fresh flowers, with and without vases of water.
- No flash photography without specific prior authorization by the collections staff.

Board members, staff, or volunteers observing infringements or transgressions of the above required behavioral standards are requested to address such in a direct and timely manner.

7.4 RECORD KEEPING AND INVENTORIES

It is important to create and maintain complete and accurate collections records, particularly information on donors, artifact histories, and status of the physical condition of each artifact in the collections. Principal responsibility for creating and maintaining artifact records lies with the Registrar. The primary records currently maintained by the collections staff are listed and described in the Collections Procedures Manual.

No artifact will be relocated except by the Curator of Collections or by individuals who have been preauthorized by the Curator of Collections to do so.

Complete inventories should be conducted, at minimum, every ten years. Spot inventories will be conducted as needed, determined by the Curator of Collections.

7.5 INSURING COLLECTIONS

The Museum maintains a fine art insurance policy through Huntington T. Block for its permanent, UER, and Genealogy Center collections, as well as for those artifacts on loan or in the custody of the Museum. All Museum-owned artifacts are covered while on the premises of the Museum, in transit, and while in the custody of the borrower. All artifacts loaned to the Museum will be covered while on the premises of the Museum and in transit.

8. Review of the Collections Management Policy

Regular review of the Museum's Collections Management Policy (CMP) is required to maintain currency, relevance, and usefulness. All revisions will be guided by current AAM guidelines and professional museum standards.

The CMP will be reviewed every two years in advance of the October meeting of the Museum's Board of Directors. Such review will be conducted by the Curator of Collections. The Curator will advise the Executive Director and the Chair of the Collections Committee when a formal review of the CMP is recommended.

Review and revision of the CMP is a collaborative effort of the Curator of Collections, other designated staff, the Executive Director, and the Board's Collections Committee. Specific protocol for drafting revisions to the CMP will be agreed to at the time of review. The Collections Committee will review and approve draft revisions and will recommend them to the Museum's full Board of Directors for ratification.

All content and substantive format revisions of the CMP require approval and formal ratification by the Museum's Board of Directors. Addenda are not considered part of the formal CMP and do not require Board ratification for revisions.

History of Revisions of the Collections Management Policy:

*Original policy, October 13, 1984

*Revisions: October 1998
June 2005
June 2011
October 2011
October 2013
February 2015