

NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF
STATE HISTORY MUSEUMS

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Revised by the Policy Subcommittee: September 2008

Approved by Collections Management Section Chief:

John M. Campbell 10/15/2008

Approved by Director, Division of State History Museums:

Kenneth B. Howard

Approved by Deputy Secretary, Department of Cultural Resources:

Jessie Brown

Approved by the North Carolina Historical Commission:

Kenneth B. Howard

11/18/08

Table of Contents

- I. Mission Statement
- II. Purpose of the Collections Management Policy
- III. Scope of Collections
- IV. Acquisitions
- V. Deaccessions
- VI. Loans
- VII. Access to the Collection
- VIII. Appraisals
- IX. Insurance and Risk Management
- X. Inventory
- XI. Record Keeping and Documentation
- XII. Public Disclosure
- XIII. Care of Collections
- XIV. Integrated Pest Management
- XV. Policy Approval and Change

The Division of State History Museums was founded in 1902 as a state agency under the name North Carolina Hall of History. After much growth and several name changes, the Division currently resides within the Office of Archives and History and as a subsection of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources.

I. Mission Statement

The Division of State History Museums collects and preserves artifacts and other historical materials relating to the history and heritage of North Carolina in a local, regional, national, and international context to assist people in understanding how the past influences the present. The Division interprets the state's history through exhibitions, educational programs, and publications available to the visitor on-site or through distance-learning technologies.

II. Purpose of the Collections Management Policy

This Collections Management Policy document establishes policies for the management and care of the tangible collections owned by the Division of State History Museums. The policy is intended to serve as instructions to the Division staff responsible for collections management and as general guidelines and information for interested members of the public.

A. Responsibilities

The Division of State History Museums holds the responsibility to collect and preserve historical objects that contribute to the story of the development of North Carolina culture, and according to approved museum practices, to classify, accession, preserve, and, when feasible, exhibit such materials and make them available for study (North Carolina General Statute § 121-7). Therefore the Division has sole authority to accession gifts and loans of collections utilized by the Division. (The flagship museum is the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh, with the following branches: the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum in Hatteras; the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort, with a branch at Southport; the Mountain Gateway

Museum and Heritage Center in Old Fort; the Museum of the Albemarle in Elizabeth City; and the Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex in Fayetteville.

B. Code of Ethics

In all matters dealing with the collection, the staff will ascribe to the standard ethics policies set forth by the American Association of Museums (AAM) and American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC). Under no circumstances shall staff members use their positions for personal financial gain. Museum staff should strive to avoid situations in which there is a potential for a conflict of interest that may affect the quality of work, lead to the dissemination of false information, or give the appearance of impropriety. No staff member will appraise artifacts for any purpose. Staff of the Division of State History Museums and their immediate families shall not acquire objects through the deaccessioning process.

III. Scope of Collections

A. The permanent collections of the Division of State History Museums shall be said to comprise artifacts that reflect the cultural history of North Carolina and are included in the following general categories:

1. Political and Social History Collections
2. Military History Collections
3. Costumes and Textiles Collections
4. Agriculture and Industry Collections
5. Furnishings and Decorative Arts Collections
6. Folklife Collections
7. Community History Collections
8. Sports and Leisure Collections

B. No expansion of the collections beyond that outlined in III.A is permitted without the formal approval of the North Carolina Historical Commission, the Division's Acquisitions Committee, and the Division Director.

C. Types of Collections

1. The *Permanent Collection* contains accessioned items that have been considered under the criteria established in the Scope of Collections above. These objects have been acquired by the museum for preservation, study, exhibition, and programming purposes in fulfillment of the Division's mission. The highest degree of care and documentation is given to the objects, and the greatest degree of accountability is attached to this collection. Only those objects deemed suitable for acquisition into the Division's permanent collection are accessioned and curated and managed by the Collections Management Section.
2. The *Educational Resource* or *Teaching Collection* contains materials that are not accessioned into the Division's permanent collection and have been acquired for use in exhibitions or educational programs as props or teaching tools. They consist of objects that may be reproductions or period pieces, and they do not meet the criteria established in the Scope of Collections. These collections are managed by the Education Section.

IV. Acquisitions

Collection-building activity is fundamental to the long-term success of the Division of State History Museums. Objects are considered for acquisition on the basis of various factors that include: relevance to state history; quality; rarity; artistic merit and aesthetics; intellectual value; attribution and provenance; size, volume, or quantity of the objects; price; cost of conservation, storage, and maintenance; restrictions of use; and potential for use in exhibitions, educational programming, publications, and research.

Objects may be added to the collection by means of gift, bequest, purchase, transfer, or any other transaction by which title to an object passes to the

Division. All objects accepted into the collection become the Division of State History Museums' exclusive property and may be displayed, loaned, retained, or disposed of in the best interest of the Division and the public it serves. The North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources has the responsibility and authority to accept artifacts without limiting conditions as defined in N.C.G.S. § 121-7.

The Division of State History Museums does not acquire Pre-Contact, ethnohistoric archaeological objects or culturally sensitive American Indian objects. Culturally sensitive materials include objects whose treatments, custodianship, or use is a matter of concern to contemporary cultural groups. These groups, or individual members of these groups, are defined by their ability to demonstrate cultural affiliation and/or legal cultural standing.

Approval to acquire artifacts for the Division collection ultimately lies with the North Carolina Historical Commission as per N.C.G.S. § 121-7. Before the Commission reviews the slate of artifacts for a vote at its quarterly meeting, two other committees must have approved the artifacts.

First, the Division's Acquisition Committee reviews recommendations from the curators on potential artifact donations and purchases. This Acquisition Committee is composed of the Division Director, Chief Curator, Associate Director for Programming, Director of Internal Operations, and the Collections Manager. This committee examines each artifact that is recommended for the collection before it votes on acceptance. Many artifacts that are offered to the Division are not accepted for various reasons, including duplication of similar artifacts already in the collection, unsuitability to the mission of the Division, or poor condition.

When the Division's Acquisitions Committee compiles a list of artifacts recommended for the collection, the list is forwarded to a Department of Cultural Resources' Acquisition Committee that will review it and make its

recommendations. This agency-wide committee is comprised of: the Deputy Secretary the DCR Collections Manager, and various staff from North Carolina Historic Sites and the State History Museum. Upon approval by the DCR Committee, the slate of donations is forwarded to the North Carolina Historical Commission for a vote.

All acquisitions shall be considered by and voted on by these acquisitions committees for disposition with careful deliberation and emphasis placed on the Division's commitment to preserve the state's heritage and provide the time, space, and money for the stewardship of the collections. In the event that the acquisitions committee does not, or chooses not to, reach a decision regarding a nonroutine gift, bequest, or purchase, the issue shall revert to the DCR Acquisitions Committee and possibly the North Carolina Historical Commission for a decision.

Guidelines for nonroutine gifts, bequests, and purchases:

1. Size: defined as occupying a space, singly or grouped, exceeding 125 cubic feet (5 feet x 5 feet x 5 feet).
2. Extensive: comprising more than 50 artifacts.
3. The artifact represents a new area of collecting for the Division.
4. Funds must be solicited from private resources for the purchase, storage, or transportation.
5. Value exceeding \$20,000.
6. Potential problems or circumstances not enumerated above.

The Division seeks to secure exclusive or nonexclusive copyright license on all acquisitions. Identifying copyright ownership often requires extensive research that the Division of State History Museums undertakes as an activity of the acquisition process. In general, the fair use doctrine of the 1976 Federal Copyright Act permits the Division to carry out its exhibition programs, even when the Division does not hold copyright or a nonexclusive license. Unless the Division can document that it owns copyright, the

Division cannot grant rights to reproduce objects in the collection for any purpose. The acquisition of copyright is handled by the registrar's office when transfer documents are signed for new acquisitions.

The Division shall ensure that a valid deed of gift is created to document transfer of ownership for objects donated and that a valid bill of sale is secured for objects purchased. These documents shall fully describe the objects to which they pertain, record the precise conditions of transfer, convey title of ownership (including intellectual property rights, when possible) to the Division, and be signed by the donor/vendor and an authorized representative of the Division. The Museum Registrar shall keep all documentation related to objects as part of the permanent accession.

Objects promised to the Division as future gifts or bequests will not be presented to the Acquisitions Committee unless the intent of the donor is expressed in a written instrument that is irrevocable and binding.

V. Deaccessions

Deaccessioning is the formal process of permanently removing an acquisition from the collections of the Division. The purpose of deaccessioning an acquisition is to allow for the improvement of the overall quality of the collection. The deaccessioning process for artifacts is lengthy and prevents random or rash decisions. The Chief Curator generally initiates the process of deaccessioning, with input from the Curation Section staff. It is the responsibility of the Collections Management staff to actually dispose of deaccessioned items.

Criteria for deaccessioning:

1. The artifact is no longer relevant and useful to the mission of the Division.
2. The Division cannot preserve the artifact.
3. The artifact has deteriorated beyond usefulness.

4. There is a need or opportunity to upgrade the collection.
5. The object poses a hazard or risk to other objects in the collection or to staff.

Authority: N.C.G.S. § 121-4(6)

All deaccessions shall be considered by and voted on by the Division's Acquisition Committee for disposition. The following personnel at the North Carolina Division of State History Museums must approve the deaccessioning of artifacts: the sponsoring curator, the Chief Curator, the Collections Manager, and the Division Director. From there, the proposed objects are reviewed by the DCR Acquisitions Committee and the North Carolina Historical Commission, and they, in turn, vote whether to concur or not with the proposed deaccessioning.

Disposal:

1. Once deaccessioned, an artifact's disposition shall be decided by the North Carolina Historical Commission upon the recommendation of the Chief Curator, the Curation Section, the North Carolina Museum of History, or their designee(s), in consultation with the curatorial and conservation staffs and the Collections Manager. In choosing a means of disposal, the Division must preserve and promote scrupulous adherence to ethical standards as observed by the profession.
2. The greatest benefit to the Division should govern the means of disposal, as long as there is no compromise or appearance of compromise in ethical conduct.
3. Preferred methods of disposal are: transfer or exchange with another public institution or sale through publicly advertised auction. Every effort should be taken to identify and evaluate the various advantages and benefits available through different means of disposal.

- a. If an artifact cannot be disposed of through preferred methods, other options may be explored and then proposed to the Chief Curator.
- b. In the case of disposal by public auction, the Division's ownership shall be acknowledged in the sale catalog unless deemed inappropriate by the Division Director.
- c. Any proceeds realized from the sale of deaccessioned objects shall be deposited and used only for further acquisitions as per N.C.G.S. § 121-7.
- d. As a last resort, materials with a condition that is too poor for resale, exchange, or transfer may be disposed of in a sensitive manner.

VI. Loans

Loans are temporary assignments of collection objects from the Division or temporary assignments of similar objects to the Division for stated purposes, such as exhibition and research. These assignments do not involve a change in ownership.

The Division cannot hope to acquire title to all objects it needs in its exhibits and interpretive programs. Therefore, the Division will also accept, for a limited time, custody of objects belonging to others for the purpose of exhibition, examination, authentication, and research. The Division also recognizes that it owns objects that can benefit the programs and exhibitions of other museums or sites, and therefore, the Division will lend objects to other agencies whenever feasible.

It is the policy of the Division not to loan objects to individuals for any reason. Loans are only made to nonprofit, educational institutions with

the ability to properly care for artifacts. The registrar must be notified of all loans, so that proper records can be maintained.

Incoming Loans

For exhibitions, research, or other stated purposes, the Division will make arrangements with institutions or individuals for the loan of materials to the Division. It is the policy of the Division not to accept indefinite/permanent loans. All nonexhibit loans are subject to the approval of the Division's Acquisitions Committee. Long-term loans will be accepted for a period of not more than five years, renewable, and only for exhibition or research purposes.

Outgoing Loans

For exhibitions, research, or other stated purposes, the Division will agree to arrangements with other like institutions for the loan of items from the Division of State History Museums' permanent collection. Loans of objects from the collection can only be made to other nonprofit, educational institutions, and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. All outgoing loans are subject to the approval of the Division's Acquisitions Committee. All loans will be made for a period of one year or less, with the option of renewal. To qualify for a loan, the borrowing institution must supply an AAM Standard Facility Report, a certificate of insurance, agree to bear all costs of packing and transporting objects in a manner agreeable to the Division, and agree to protect the object in ways consistent with sound museum practice, subject to stipulations by the conservation staff. The borrowing institution must file a request for a loan with the Division of State History Museums no less than 90 days in advance. An outgoing loan agreement will accompany all loans originating from the Division and will be signed by both parties. The Division's collection will not be loaned to individuals.

Both incoming and outgoing loans are subject to the conditions listed on the respective loan forms (see appendix).

Authority: N.C.G.S. §§ 121-4(6), 121-7, 143B-62(2)a

VII. Access to the Collection

The collection is an educational resource and will be made available to the public for research, close inspection, and photography, under proper control, subject to the approval of the Collections Manager. Access to storage and conservation areas is limited to those who are accompanied by a collections staff member or those who are authorized by the Collections Manager. The size of the group may be limited at the discretion of the collections staff. No food, drink, or tobacco usage is permitted in collection storage or exhibit areas.

Visitors wishing to use the collection must request an appointment in advance of the time of visit and must be approved by the Chief Curator or the Collections Manager. Access to the collection will be decided using the following criteria:

1. The individual must have a legitimate reason for examining the collections (e.g., scholarly research, family relation, and so on).
2. The individual should have knowledge of appropriate techniques for handling objects or be given this instruction by staff before handling objects.
3. The individual must comply with the general security precautions for the collection and the Division's collection procedures.
4. The individual must provide necessary equipment to complete his/her project and expect to work during the Division's regular operating hours.
5. If the individual wants to take images of artifacts, authorization is

required even for private and personal use. Images to be used for patron publications must follow all Divisional credit guidelines, and Divisional copyrights must be respected.

Exceptions to these criteria must be resolved in advance of the visit and be approved by the Collections Manager. Visitors who have previously abused their status or caused damage to objects may be denied access to all collections.

Keys are only issued to staff members. Collection storage units and areas, offices, and records will be locked or protected from public access when no staff members are present.

Electronic Access

The Division maintains a computer database of its collection records. Division employees have access at various levels. Certain sections (Collections Management and Curation) have full access with the ability to add and modify records. Other sections have only partial access for research purposes and cannot make any changes to records.

The Division's collection database is available to the public on the Internet. The public can see only data necessary for basic research (artifact description, accession number, artifact class, associations, dimensions, materials, date made, place made, place used, use history, expanded description, and historical significance). Data that provide sensitive information, such as location and value, are not made visible to the public.

Authority: N.C.G.S. §§ 121-4(2)(6)(9), 121-5, 121-7, 143B-62(2)a

VIII. Appraisals

There is an inherent conflict of interest if the Division, its employees, or its representatives appraise the monetary value of artifacts for the public.

Therefore, no employee will give appraisals for the purpose of establishing the fair market value of objects owned by another institution or by the public or offered to the Division. Donors wishing to take an income-tax deduction must have an independent qualified appraisal made of the value of their gift. If requested to suggest an independent appraiser, staff will provide information without any recommendations for or against a particular appraiser.

Division staff shall not appraise, identify, or otherwise authenticate objects under circumstances that could encourage or benefit illegal, unethical, or irresponsible traffic in such objects. Identification and authentication may be given for professional or educational purposes and in complying with the legitimate requests of professional or governmental bodies or their agents.

As a service to the public, Division curators may attempt to identify or authenticate objects brought to the various divisional museums.

Identifications are done on an appointment basis, and the individuals should take their possessions with them when they leave the divisional museum. At the discretion of the curator or Collections Manager, individuals may leave objects on a temporary basis, but must first read and sign a Temporary Receipt Form administered by the registrar. Objects are not covered by the Division's insurance policy unless a signed receipt is issued. At the time of deposit, the museum registrar or respective curator or Collections Manager will set a reclamation date. Objects must be reclaimed on or by the specified reclamation date.

Authority: N.C.G.S. §§ 121-4(6), 121-7, 143B-62(2)a

IX. Insurance and Risk Management

The Division recognizes that insurance is not the best risk-management method for providing the protection required for the Division's collection and

records. The Division acknowledges that careful handling, security, proper environmental control, conservation, and good housekeeping provide the first lines of defense against loss or damage to the objects. Many of the Division's collection objects are one-of-a-kind and could not be replaced, even if insurance is available. It is recognized that insurance can be used to acquire similar objects, and for this reason, the Division maintains insurance coverage on its collections.

1. The Division will carry insurance to cover all objects in the collection.
2. The Division will maintain insurance coverage on loaned items not owned by the Division.
3. Objects and traveling exhibitions loaned by the Division to other institutions will be insured by those institutions in the amount on the loan agreement. A Certificate of Insurance will be required from the borrowing institution.
4. The Division will require the owners of unsolicited objects left in the Museum on a temporary deposit to not hold the Division responsible for loss or damage to those objects.
5. The Division's collection is insured at full value while at other locations, while in transit, and while on loan, unless alternate insurance arrangements have been made.
6. Full insurance coverage is also provided for objects on loan from other institutions while in transit and while located at the Division.
7. Any theft or damage to collections or loaned objects should be reported to the Collections Manager and Division Director immediately.
8. Staff of the Collections Management Section is responsible for securing appropriate insurance coverage of all objects at the Division. The staff ensures that ethical and fair valuations are maintained, ensures that loan agreements and signed receipts are on file to document coverage, and coordinates the settlement of insurance and tort claims.
9. The Collections Management Section, in conjunction with the Division's Chief Operations Officer, maintains all records pertaining to insurance

matters relating to the Division's collection.

The Division strives to limit risk to its collection and to ensure that resources are available for recovery in the event of damage or loss. Insurance against damage or loss to the collection is an added consideration in the care of the collection, but it must not supersede its physical care.

Authority: N.C.G.S. §§ 121-4(6), 121-7, 143B-62(2)a

X. Inventory

A full collection inventory (including off-site storage facilities and regional museums) will be conducted periodically. A digital record and a paper record copy will be produced and stored in a secure location. If feasible, a digital photograph will be taken of each object and stored with the database information. Collection storage areas are spot-inventoried on an annual basis.

Authority: N.C.G.S. §§ 121-4(6), 121-7, 143B-62(2)a

XI. Record Keeping and Documentation

Division collections documentation will be maintained in the Collections Management Section by its staff. The records relevant to the Division's collection serve several purposes: 1) to document the legal status of an object; 2) to document the object's condition, movement, and care; and 3) to provide information that establishes the historic and cultural significance of an object as provided by the Division's curators.

The collection records consist of the following:

Temporary Receipt Log

When an object is brought into the Division, it is assigned a temporary receipt number. The log is the official record of receipt, in numerical order, with the following information: receipt number, date, description of collection, reason for leaving, person(s) leaving collection, location, and disposition.

Item History File

When an object is given a receipt number, the Item History File is immediately created. The file will contain the original Temporary Receipt form, copies of all legal documents, and any information relating to the care, condition, conservation treatment, and history of the object. The Item History Files are kept in the Records Room in fireproof cabinets.

Accession Register

Once an object has been accepted into the collection (approved by the Acquisitions Committee), and the ownership has been legally transferred (deed of gift signed and returned), it is assigned an accession number. The register is the official record of the accession, in numerical order, with the following information: accession number, date, description of object, from whom object was received, how the object is held, and location.

Legal File

Once paperwork (deed of gift, loan form, etc.) has been signed and returned, a legal file is created. This file contains original copies of all legal documents. The legal files are kept in fireproof cabinets, separate from the Item History Files.

Computer Database

Accession records, conservation records, and catalog records are kept in electronic form, as well as paper form. The computer database is backed up on a regular basis.

All records maintained by the Division of State History Museums are subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law (N.C.G.S. § 132).

Authority: N.C.G.S. §§ 121-4(2)(6)(12), 121-5, 121-7, 143B-62(2)a

XII. Public Disclosure

Public Records refers to all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, films, sound recordings, magnetic or other tapes, electronic data-processing records, artifacts, or other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance in connection with the transaction of public business by any agency of North Carolina government or its subdivisions.

Authority: N.C.G.S. § 132-1(a)

Disclosure of Collections Records

The public records and public information compiled by the agencies of North Carolina government or its subdivisions are the property of the people. Therefore, it is the policy of this state that the people may obtain copies of their public records and public information free or at minimal cost, unless otherwise specifically provided by law. As used herein, “minimal cost” shall mean the actual cost of reproducing the public record or public information.

Authority: N.C.G.S. § 132-1(b)

No person requesting to inspect and examine public records, or to obtain copies thereof, shall be required to disclose the purpose or motive for the request.

N.C.G.S. § 132-6(b)

XIII. Care of Collections

Collections Management shall provide, manage, determine access to, and oversee the care, safety, and preservation of the collection according to current and acceptable museum standards. Collections Management shall be consulted regarding measures possibly impacting the collection: environmental controls, surveillance and security systems, security, and fire detection and suppression systems.

Any Division staff working directly with the collection shall adhere to written guidelines or instructions provided by Collections Management.

The collections, collections storage, and exhibit areas shall be monitored or inspected periodically, and problems or concerns shall be addressed.

To fulfill its mandate to preserve the artifacts in its collection, Collections Management will use accepted professional methods of conservation, adhering to written conservation policy and procedure outlined in the Collections Manual to preserve and stabilize objects in its custody.

1. No conservation work done to an object shall be irreversible.
2. Artifacts shall be protected as much as possible from potentially harmful conditions such as extremes of temperature and humidity, light, dirt, improper handling, fire, water, and insects.
3. Artifacts shall be housed and stored in appropriate environments, and accepted archival materials shall be utilized for their care.
4. Materials detrimental to the collection shall be restricted from collection areas and exhibitions.

XIV. Integrated Pest Management

Collections Management utilizes a written Integrated Pest Management plan, which features a low toxicity, ecosystem approach to counter pests. It is a

systematic, environmentally responsible, practical process involving identification, monitoring, control, and evaluation.

Collections Management works to prevent insect and destructive elements, such as mold or mildew, from damaging the collection and implements procedures and guidelines for pest management programs.

Collections Management areas will be periodically inspected for pests. Implemented pest control measures shall pose no harm to persons or the collection. Collections Management should be consulted regarding contracted general or specific pest control measures implemented in the building.

In attempting to have a pest-free environment, infested or problem artifacts may be isolated to prevent damage to the collection, and incoming artifacts shall be quarantined for examination and/or treatment before inclusion in the collection.

XV. Policy Approval and Change

The North Carolina Historical Commission; Deputy Secretary, Office of Archives and History, DCR; and the Director, Division of State History Museums, on October 30, 2008 approved this policy. Any suggested changes should be submitted in writing to the Collections Manager, North Carolina Division of State History Museums. The Collections Manager shall submit any suggested changes to the Director, Division of State History Museums for approval. No changes may be made without the written approval of the North Carolina Historical Commission; Deputy Secretary, DCR; Office of Archives and History, DCR; and the Director, Division of State History Museums.