

COLLECTIONS POLICY OF THE MUSEUM OF MISSISSIPPI HISTORY

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of Collections Policy

The purpose of the collections policy is to provide guidelines for the Museum's collections-related activities, insuring that these activities meet high professional standards. The Museum's collections policy is a public statement of the Museum's commitment to care for and manage its collections properly.

B. Statement of Purpose/Mission of the Museum

The purpose of the Museum of Mississippi History (hereinafter referred to as the Museum) shall be the education of the public in the social, political, cultural, and economic history of the state of Mississippi from earliest times to the present. To accomplish this purpose, the Museum shall collect, research, preserve, exhibit, and interpret objects in accordance with the collection categories listed below. The Museum of Mississippi History is administered by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH), a state agency established in 1902. The Museum was founded in 1957 under the name Mississippi State Historical Museum. In January 2006 the Department's Board of Trustees approved the name change to Museum of Mississippi History.

C. Types and Status of Collections

Collections is the term used for all material holdings of the Museum. Specific collection categories are defined as follows:

1. Permanent Collection

Those significant objects which directly relate to the purpose of the Museum. Objects accessioned into the permanent collection are cataloged, documented, preserved, and managed according to prescribed procedures meeting current professional museum standards.

2. Interpretive Collection

Those expendable objects which contribute to the educational programs of the Museum and which are available directly to the public for examination. Objects in the interpretive collection are readily available or duplicate objects and are not accessioned into the permanent collection.

3. Prop Collection

Those expendable objects which do not relate directly to the purpose of the Museum but which contribute to and enhance the visual and educational impact of exhibits. Objects in the prop collection are not accessioned into the permanent collection.

D. Scope of Permanent Collection

The scope of the collection of the Museum shall be artifacts of Mississippi history and culture from the earliest times to the present. Objects acquired by the Museum shall represent material culture in Mississippi. The collection shall include documentation of individuals and cultural

groups as well as objects which illustrate events and the history of arts and crafts in Mississippi. (See Collections Categories and Descriptions.)

NOTE: In January of 2005 due to a lack of adequate storage space the Museum requested and the Board granted a moratorium on collecting. The only exception to this moratorium is artifacts that fill significant deficiencies which limit the Museum's ability to interpret Mississippi history and those groups of artifacts that have been of significant scholarly or public interest in the past.

E. Delegation of Responsibility for Implementation of the Collections Policy

The Museum Director is responsible for supervising the proper implementation of the collections policy. The Museum Director has delegated the day-to-day care and management of the collections to the Curator of Collections.

II. ACQUISITION

A. Policy

The Museum may acquire objects by donation, by bequest, by purchase, or by transfer. Authority for the acquisition of objects for the permanent collection is held by the Curator of Collections, or the Curator's designee, the Museum Director, the Department Director, and the Collections Committee.

NOTE: In January of 2005 due to a lack of adequate storage space the Museum requested and the Board granted a moratorium on collecting. The only exception to this moratorium is artifacts that fill significant deficiencies which limit the Museum's ability to interpret Mississippi history and those groups of artifacts that have been of significant scholarly or public interest in the past.

B. Criteria for Acquisition

The following criteria have been established for the acquisition of objects:

1. Objects must be relevant to, and consistent with, the Museum's purposes and activities: chiefly research, preservation, exhibition, and/or interpretation.
2. The Museum must be able to provide proper care and storage for objects in keeping with professionally accepted standards.
3. It is intended that objects in the permanent collection shall remain in the collection as long as they retain their physical integrity, their authenticity, and their relevance and usefulness for the purposes and activities of the Museum.
4. The Museum and its staff shall be in full compliance with state, federal, and international laws and regulations governing the acquisition, sale, and transfer of cultural properties.

5. Title to all objects acquired for the permanent collection shall be obtained free and clear without restrictions to use or future disposition.
6. The present owner shall have a clear and verifiable title of ownership to the object and shall have obtained the object legally and ethically.
7. The Museum shall be provided with (or allowed to copy) all documents and information in the present owner's possession that pertain to the historical significance and provenance of the object.
8. Acceptance of the object will not result in major expense in conservation disproportionate to its usefulness.

C. Procedures

All offers of objects to the Museum whether by donation, by bequest, by purchase, or by transfer should be referred to the Curator of Collections, the Curator's designee, the Museum Director, or the Department Director. The potential donation is then reviewed by the collections committee. The collections committee consists of the Curator of Collections, Registrar, Collections Manager, and Museum Director. The object will be placed on temporary deposit until the next meeting of the Collections Committee and the potential donor will be given a Temporary Custody Receipt for the object. The Temporary Custody Receipt should be signed by the object's owner and the Museum staff person receiving the object (the Curator of Collections, the Registrar, the Museum Director, the Department Director, or their designee). This receipt outlines the terms of temporary custody, the length of which cannot exceed sixty days. After study and review of the object, the Collections Committee will determine whether or not to acquire the object.

If the decision is made not to acquire the object, then the Curator of Collections, the Registrar, or the Collections Manager will be responsible for returning the object to the owner, according to the terms of agreement outlined in the Temporary Custody Receipt, and documenting the return. (See Section IV, "Incoming Loans," Part D, "Objects in Temporary Custody as Distinguished from Loans.") If the decision is made to acquire the object, then the Curator of Collections, Museum Director, or Department Director will initiate and complete the acquisition of the object in the following manner:

1. If the object is to be donated, an Unconditional Gift Agreement should be signed by the donor and the Curator of Collections, the Curator's designee, the Museum Director, or the Department Director. The Unconditional Gift Agreement formally transfers the complete ownership of the object to the Museum and shall be legally binding when signed and dated by both parties. A copy of the Unconditional Gift Agreement shall be provided to the donor, and Unconditional Gift Agreements shall be kept on file by the Curator of Collections.
2. If the object is to be bequeathed, a copy of the pertinent section of the will should be provided by the attorney or executor and shall be kept on file by the Curator of Collections.

III. DEACCESSION

A. Policy

The Museum has the right, carefully and judiciously, to deaccession and dispose of objects from its collection in a manner consistent with professionally accepted standards. A written deaccession request listing the reason(s) for deaccession and recommended means of disposal must be signed by the Curator of Collections, the Museum Director, and the Department Director before submission to the Board of Trustees. Only if the deaccession request is approved by the Board of Trustees, is the Museum authorized to proceed with the deaccession and disposal.

B. Criteria for Deaccession

An object recommended for deaccession must meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. The object has ceased to have relevance and consistency with the Museum's purposes and activities.
2. The object has deteriorated beyond usefulness.
3. The object is made of hazardous materials or is actively decomposing in a manner that directly affects the condition of other objects and/or the health and safety of the Museum's staff and/or visitors.
4. The Museum is unable to continue to provide care and storage for the object in keeping with professionally accepted standards.
5. The object's care and storage are far more expensive than the value of the object as it relates to the Museum's purposes and activities.
6. The object has failed to retain its identity or authenticity.
7. The object may be replaced with a similar object of greater significance, quality, and better condition.
8. The object is subject to legal and ethical standards such as the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act.

C. Methods of Disposal of Deaccessioned Artifacts

Deaccessioned objects will not be sold or given, publicly or privately, to any Museum employee or other Department of Archives and History employee, members of the Board of Trustees, their families, or their representatives. Complete records will be maintained on all deaccessioned objects and their subsequent disposition. A deaccessioned object may be disposed of in one of the following methods:

1. Transfer to another more appropriate division of the Department of Archives and History.
2. Placement in the Interpretive Collection or the Prop Collection of the Museum if appropriate.

3. Donation to an appropriate non-profit museum or scholarly or cultural institution or organization preferably within the state of Mississippi, especially if the object is from the state.
4. Repatriation to the federally recognized tribe which has established a legal claim to ownership of the object in accordance with the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act.
5. Sale at an advertised public auction or in the public marketplace in a manner that complies with state law and that will best protect the interests, objectives, and legal status of the Museum.
6. Destruction of the object (only if the object has deteriorated beyond usefulness and no other method of disposal is appropriate).

D. Use of Proceeds Derived from Deaccession/Disposal

Any funds derived from the sale of deaccessioned objects will be used solely for collections acquisitions or conservation.

V. INCOMING LOANS of ARTIFACTS

A. Policy

The Museum may borrow objects from institutions and individuals for specific purposes such as exhibition and/or research. Loans of objects from individuals are limited to a time period of five years or less. Loans of objects from institutions are usually limited to a time period of five years or less, but may under special circumstances be arranged for a specified time period of over five years at the recommendation of the Museum Director and with the approval of the Board of Trustees or the Board's Museum Committee. Authority for incoming loans is shared by the Museum Director, the Curator of Collections, and the Registrar.

According to prior museum policy and in accordance with Mississippi's Museum Unclaimed Property Act, the Museum will not under any circumstances accept so-called indefinite or permanent loans.

Objects on loan are to be provided with the same professional level of care afforded objects owned by the Museum. The Museum will not knowingly accept an object on loan if the physical condition is such that the object will not be able to withstand travel to and from the Museum and/or exhibition. Lenders to the Museum shall have obtained the object legally and ethically and have a clear and verifiable title of ownership to the object.

Complete records on all incoming loans are maintained in the Collections Office by the Registrar.

B. Procedures

For objects on loan from individuals or institutions for a period of five years or less, an Incoming Loan Agreement must be signed by the lender and an authorized Museum staff person (the Museum Director, the Curator of Collections, the Registrar, or their designee) **the lender must also be notified by Museum Staff of Mississippi's Museum Unclaimed Property Act even if the loan is a renewal.** For objects on loan from institutions for a period of over five years, an Incoming Loan Agreement must be signed by the lender and the Museum Director with prior approval from the Board of Trustees or the Board's Museum Committee. The Incoming Loan Agreement outlines the terms of the loan specifying the loan purpose, time period, insurance coverage, and the responsibilities of both the borrower and the lender. Copies of the Incoming Loan Agreement and Mississippi's Museum Unclaimed Property Act will be provided to the lender; Incoming Loan Agreements will be kept on file by the Registrar. A condition report on the borrowed object(s) will be prepared by the Registrar; a copy of the condition report will be provided to the lender if requested.

The Museum will normally photograph borrowed objects for recordkeeping and security purposes unless instructed by the lender not to do so. The Registrar will be responsible for the packing, shipping, and/or transportation, and insurance coverage for borrowed objects. The Lender is responsible for the cost of any object appraisal(s) if needed for insurance purposes. The Museum will make all reasonable efforts to return borrowed objects to the lender in accordance with the terms outlined in the Incoming Loan Agreement and in accordance with **Mississippi's Museum Unclaimed Property Act.**

V. OUTGOING LOANS of ARTIFACTS

A. Policy

The Museum may lend objects to qualified museums for specific purposes such as exhibition and/or research for a specified time period if such museums meet professional standards of collections care and management. **The Museum will not under any circumstances lend objects to individuals.** Outgoing loans to qualified museums will be permitted for a period of five years or less with an option for renewal if agreeable to both parties. No object will be lent if its physical condition is such that the object will not be able to withstand travel and/or exhibition. The Museum will not lend objects which are needed for exhibition and/or research purposes. Authority for outgoing loans is shared by the Museum Director, the Curator of Collections, and the Registrar subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees or the Board's Museum Committee.

B. Procedures

Museums seeking to borrow an object(s) must make a written request to the Museum Director stating the specific object(s), purpose, and time period of the proposed loan, and guaranteeing payment of all costs associated with the loan including packing, shipping, and/or transportation, and insurance. A Standard Facilities Report will be supplied to the proposed borrower, and it must be completed and returned to the **Museum Director** in a timely manner. The Collections Committee will jointly review the written loan request and the completed Standard Facilities Report to determine if the proposed borrower meets professional standards. If professional standards are not met by the proposed borrower, the Museum Director or the Curator of Collections will notify the proposed borrower.

If professional standards are met by the proposed borrower and if the loan of the object(s) will not endanger its physical condition or interfere with the Museum's own exhibition and/or research needs, the Museum Director may make a written recommendation to the Board of Trustees or the Board's Museum Committee to approve the loan. Upon approval by the Board of Trustees or the Board's Museum Committee, the Museum is authorized to proceed with the outgoing loan.

An Outgoing Loan Agreement must be signed by the authorized representative of the borrowing museum and either the Museum Director, the Curator of Collections, or the Registrar.

VI. ACCESS TO AND USE OF COLLECTIONS AND COLLECTIONS RECORDS

A. Policy

The Museum will strive to make its collections and collections records available for study and examination by individuals for scholarly research and other legitimate purposes.

The Museum will allow access to and use of its collections and collections records in a controlled, professional manner that protects the physical and intellectual integrity of the collections and collections records. Access to the collections and collections records will not be unreasonably denied. However, acknowledging its responsibility to safeguard the collections and collections records, the Museum reserves the right to control access to prevent the following:

1. Deterioration, mutilation, loss, or dislocation of objects and/or collections records
2. Undue interference with the administrative, professional, and technical operations of the Museum
3. Undue impact on the furnishing of services to other Museum users.

Authority for permitting and monitoring access to and use of the collections and collections records is shared by the Museum Director, the Curator of Collections, and the Registrar. Should particular questions arise regarding proper, legitimate access to and use of the collections and collections records, the Museum's legal counsel will be consulted.

B. Procedures

A written request specifying the objects and records to be examined (and if the researcher wishes to photograph the objects and in what format), the purpose and proposed date of the examination, and the researcher's current address and daytime phone number, should be submitted to the Curator of Collections or the Registrar.

If the request meets with the established access policy of the Museum, the Curator of Collections, or the Registrar will schedule an appointment with the researcher and will provide supervised access to the specified objects and records.

C. Reproductions of Objects in Collections

The Museum reserves all rights for the reproduction of objects in the Museum collections. **No commercial reproduction (replica manufacture of any sort) is permitted without a written agreement approved by the Museum Director and the Board of Trustees or the Board's Museum Committee.** In general, non-educational or commercial reproductions of objects will not

be approved. The Museum reserves the right to license vendors, collect royalties, initiate fees, or otherwise control the use of its collections as may be deemed appropriate and lawful.

D. Policy Governing the Reproduction of Flags from the Old Capitol Museum Collection

The Old Capitol Museum may grant permission to reproduce flags from the Museum's collection to educational groups, heritage groups, and individuals. If permission to reproduce a flag is granted, that permission is for a one-time reproduction with the reproduction to be used only for educational purposes. Requests by individuals to reproduce a flag will be handled on a case by case basis.

The Old Capitol Museum reserves all rights for the reproduction of objects in its collections. No commercial use of the information or flag reproduced under this section is permitted without a written agreement approved by the Museum Director, Department Director, the Board of Trustees, or the Board's Museum Committee. No part of this section shall be used or interpreted as granting rights for the commercial reproduction of any object from the Old Capitol Museum's collections. The Old Capitol Museum reserves the right to raise or waive fees charged for information related to the objects in its collections.

E. Procedure

All requests to reproduce a flag must be made in writing to the Museum Director or the Curator of Collections. The Collections Committee will review the request and decide if the request will be granted.

An individual representing the group must complete and sign a "Permission to Reproduce Flag" form and must agree to the conditions for reproducing flags as stipulated by the Museum.

The "Permission to Reproduce Flag" form must be approved by the Collections Committee, Director of the Museum and/or the Curator of Collections prior to starting the reproduction.

No information about the flag with the exception of photographs or slides may be released until the request to reproduce has been approved.

A representative of the group must sign and have on file at the Museum a copy of "Conditions for Reproducing a Flag."

The group is responsible for all cost associated with photograph or slide reproduction of the flag and for a use fee.

Requests from individuals wishing to reproduce flags will be handled on a case by case basis by the Collections Committee. If permission to reproduce a flag is granted to an individual that permission is for a one time only reproduction of the flag. No commercial use of the reproduction may be made at any time. Procedures for requesting permission to reproduce a flag are the same as a group requesting to reproduce a flag

F. Photography of Collections

1. Limitations on Public Photography of Collections

- No publication or commercial use of photographs taken in the Museum's exhibition areas is permitted without the written approval of the Museum Director.

2. Request for Photographs of Collections

- Requests for obtaining photographs of objects in the Museum's collections will be submitted in writing to the Curator of Collections or the Registrar.
- The Museum will establish and adjust as necessary a fee schedule for all photographic and other copy work.
- Due to limited staff resources and time, the Museum may be unable to fulfill a specific

- photographic request if there is not already an existing negative or transparency.
- Researchers wishing to photograph objects in the collections with their own photographic equipment may do so only with prior Museum approval.
 - Researchers wishing to hire an outside vendor to photograph objects in the collections may do so only with prior Museum approval. The Museum reserves the right to select the vendor to provide such special photographic services. The researcher must make direct arrangements with the vendor for payment of vendor services.
 - If the request is to publish a photograph of an object, then a Permission to Publish form stipulating that the photograph will be appropriately credited and that the Museum will be provided with a complimentary copy of the publication must be completed and submitted for approval by the Curator of Collections or the Museum Director.
 - Purchase of copyrighted photographic prints or transparencies of Museum objects does not convey to the purchaser any rights of copyright. Certain works of art as well as photographs of those works of art may be protected by copyright, trademark, or related interests not owned by the Museum. The responsibility for ascertaining whether any such rights exist and for obtaining all other necessary permissions remains with the purchaser.
- The Museum reserves the right to levy fees for the use of its copyright materials, photographs, and reproductions.
- The Museum reserves the right to deny a request for photographs of the Museum's collections if fulfilling the request would lead to one or more of the following conditions:
 - endanger the physical security of the collections
 - undermine the intellectual integrity of the collections
 - pose an excessive administrative burden
 - violate the terms of a loan
 - infringe on copyrighted material
 - involve a use for illegal or unethical purposes
 - violate privacy, publicity, or other personal rights of any party
 - libel, slander, or cause undue ridicule or embarrassment to any person or organization
 - imply an institutional endorsement of any product, company, or enterprise.