

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE  
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY 2016-001  
COLLECTIONS POLICY**

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## DESCRIPTION OF STAFFING

The Champaign County Historical Museum is a volunteer organization and may be unable to fully staff the positions outlined in this policy.

**Executive Director** – The Executive Director is responsible for the administration of the museum on behalf of the Board of Trustees. The Executive Director shall oversee the staff outlined below as well as maintain responsibility for the non-accessioned Props and Furnishings Collection. In the absence of the paid staff person, the role of Executive Director shall be the President of the Board of Trustees.

**Archivist** – The Archivist is responsible for the proper care, cataloguing and maintenance of the Object, Archives, and Institutional History, Collection. In the absence of a paid staff person, the role of Archivist will be the Chair of the Collections Committee.

**Librarian** – The Librarian is responsible for proper care, cataloguing and maintenance of the materials found in the museums library. In the absence of a paid staff person, the role of Librarian will be appointed by the Board President.

**Director of Education** – The Director of Education is responsible for proper care, cataloguing and maintenance of the Teaching Collection. In the absence of a paid staff person, the role of Education Director will be the Chair of the Education Committee.

**Curator of Collections and Exhibits** – The Curator of Collections and Exhibits is responsible for the interpretation, fabrication and exhibition of the collections. In the absence of a paid staff person, the role of Curator of Collections and Exhibits will be the Exhibit Committee Chair.

## ETHICS

The Champaign County Historical Museum hereby accepts the Code of Ethics established by the American Association of State and Local History:

Historical organizations and agencies exist to serve the public interest and must always act in such a way as to maintain public confidence and trust.

- A. All governing authority members, administrators, volunteers, and staff members shall carefully avoid the reality or the appearance of using their positions or the information and access gained from their positions for personal gain.

- B. Board members, volunteers, and staff shall refrain from personal collection in any manner that conflict with the interests or credibility of the Institution. Institutions are encouraged to obtain statements of personal collection interests before individuals become associated with the institution.
- C. Collections shall not be made available to any individual on any basis for personal use, either on or off the premises, or for any purpose contrary to the adopted collections policy.

## DESCRIPTION AND SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS

The Champaign County Historical Museum maintains six collections related to the history of Champaign from the states founding in 1818 to the present:

- Object Collection
- Archives Collection
- Teaching Collection
- Library Collection
- Institutional History Collection
- Props and Furnishings Collection (non-accessioned collection)

While the Object and Archives Collections are the Museum's main collections—and the focus of a significant portion of the Museum's research, cataloging, preservation, and access efforts—the Museum holds additional collections which supplement and enhance the interpretation of the exhibits and education programs.

The Museum will advance its mission statement by collecting, assembling, organizing, preserving, interpreting and exhibiting relevant materials throughout its six collections.

### Object Collection

The Object Collection is the accessioned collection and the primary focus of the Museum. The Museum carries out its mission and vision primarily through the Object Collection. The collection consists of objects that document the growth and development of Champaign County that represent Champaign County's ethnic diversity, people's relationship to their physical environment, gender roles, stage of life, political and economic divisions, the history of institutions and organizations and civic culture and iconography. The Museum actively seeks to mirror the diversity of Champaign County in its collection.

Preservation is of the utmost priority in any decision regarding stewardship. Objects are primarily acquired through the generosity of donors. Purchases are limited to available funding.

The Curator of Collections and Exhibits is responsible for the care and management of the object collection including identifying, acquiring, and cataloging accessions to the collection and recommendations for deaccessioning from the collection.

## Archives Collection

The archives consists of textual and pictorial material that relates to the history of Champaign County and supports the mission and vision of the Museum. The purpose of this collection is to maintain, for public and museum staff use, materials which provide information useful for the study of Champaign County history from the State of Illinois' founding in 1818 to the present. Items may be used in exhibits to the extent that proper preservation care can be taken. The museum recognizes that the official repository of archives in Champaign County is the Champaign County Archives at the Urbana Free Library. The museum will work closely with the Archives and may donate large amounts of archives to that institution for proper cataloguing and preservation.

The archives is considered a permanent collection but items in it are not formally accessioned. The Archivist is responsible for the care and management of the collection including identifying, acquiring and cataloging additions to the collection and recommendations for removal from the collection.

## Library Collection

The Library consists of a non-circulating collection of books, journals and other printed materials used as reference and research material by the Museum's staff, volunteers, curators and other Museum associates involved in the study and care of the Museum collections and also by researchers into the history of Champaign County. Objects in this collection support the mission and vision of the museum. The Librarian is responsible for the care and management of the collection, including identifying, acquiring and cataloging accessions to the collection and recommendations for removal from the collection.

## Teaching Collection

The Teaching Collection consists of materials maintained as a resource for teaching and outreach related to the mission of the Museum. This collection provides for and supports sensory experiences in the education process. This small collection includes duplicate and reproduction artifacts and other items that can withstand frequent handling. Objects are used for in-house and outreach programs and events and as a lending resource for educators. In these ways the objects are made available to audiences throughout Central Illinois.

Objects entering the Teaching Collection must not be accessioned. The collection is managed by the Director of Education in consultation with the Curator of Collections and Exhibits.

Acquisitions to the Teaching Collection are made through purchases, gifts, and deaccessions and withdrawals from other collections.

## Institutional History Collection

The Institutional History Collection consists of the records and documentation of the accessions and activities of the Champaign County Historical Museum. The objects are considered valuable and irreplaceable records of the history of the institution and its collections. This collection is considered

permanent but not accessioned. Preservation is considered to be the utmost priority when making any decision regarding stewardship. Copying through scanning, duplicating of digital files and photocopying is emphasized to allow the Collection to be used extensively with minimal impact to the originals. The Institutional History Collection is always expanding with the incorporation of new materials generated in-house or those acquired as gifts.

## Props and Furnishings Collection

The Props and Furnishings Collection consists of objects that are used to furnish and stage exhibits and decorate spaces. Because their use in the Museum is considered to be supportive of exhibits or decorative, they are distinguished from the objects belonging to the Museum's permanent collections.

This collection does not need to meet the higher standards required of the Objects Collection, is expected to be relatively small in number, and has great flexibility in acquiring and disposal.

Acquisitions to the Props and Furnishings Collection are primarily through purchases and occasionally gifts. Materials in the Props and Furnishings Collection are not accessioned.

## ACQUISITIONS POLICY

Acquisition is defined as the discovery, preliminary evaluation, taking custody of, and acknowledging receipt of materials and objects. It is the Museum's policy to acquire objects for the collections through gifts, deferred gifts, bequests, transfers, and purchases for the purpose of promoting the Museum's mission. Monetary donations and other types of contributions in support of the Museum are not covered under this policy.

Materials may be acquired by purchase, commission, bequest, gift, exchange, field collection, or abandonment.

The Museum recognizes the generosity and wisdom of the donation and/or bequest process that allows the collections to reflect the will and interests of the citizens of this county. For this reason, the Museum will develop its object collections primarily through the process of gift and bequest.

No staff or board member may obligate the Museum to accept any object not consonant with the intent or spirit of the acquisition policy.

The Museum will not capitalize or collateralize collections or recognize as revenue the value of donated works.

## Acquisition Criteria

Items acquired into the collections are subject to the following criteria:

- Objects must be the legal property of the donor or seller. Appropriate documents of transfer must be obtainable at the time of acquisition.

- The materials must be of value in promoting and supporting the objectives, purposes, and activities of the Museum.
- All objects will be documented as far as possible as to provenance, origin, previous ownership, and circumstances of acquisition by owner or adequate accounting of such as determined by the Acquisition Committee and Museum Director.
- Duplication of objects already in the collections should be avoided.
- Objects must be authentic, or if an object is a reproduction, mass-produced object, or fake, it must have value for the Museum's purposes as such.
- The Museum must be able to provide for the storage, protection, and preservation of the materials under conditions that ensure their availability for museum and research purposes and in keeping with professionally accepted standards. Items needing conservation should not be accepted unless resources are available to accomplish the proper conservation. Objects must not pose health risks or other hazards (for staff, visitors, the Museum building and grounds, or Museum collections) that are beyond the ability of staff and facilities to manage.
- All acquisitions must be in compliance with all laws of the State of Illinois and the United States.
- Objects consisting, in whole or in part, of human remains or sacred materials will not be acquired. Hair crafts may be accepted
- Items subject to copyright must be accompanied by documentation of the transfer of named copyrights or by documentation identifying copyright status to the extent possible. The Museum assumes copyright on unpublished materials sold or donated to it, including photographs.
- All donations of materials are considered outright and unconditional gifts to be used at the discretion of the Museum. The Museum shall determine whether donations are to be added to the Museum's collections, to which collection they are to be added, or whether they are to be accepted solely for the purpose of resale. An object cannot be accepted if the object is required to remain in the collection or on exhibit for any period of time or in perpetuity.
- No materials or objects shall be knowingly or willfully accepted or acquired which are known to have been illegally collected in the United States contrary to state law or to federal law, regulation, treaty or convention. The Museum subscribes to the provisions of the Native American Graves Protections Act. The Museum subscribes to the provisions of the International Conference of Museums Convention of 1970. The Museum shall refuse to acquire materials and objects where there is cause to believe that the circumstances of their collection involved needless damage to historic sites, buildings, structures, habitats, districts and/or objects.
- Materials that are illegible, mold ridden, and/or have suffered significant water damage will not be accepted into the Archives Collection unless they possess extraordinary historical value.

## Acquisition Procedures

A potential acquisition by the Champaign County Historical Museum may be identified by a potential donor, seller, Museum staff, or other interested party. Information is then gathered and an Acquisition Report is prepared.

The report is to include all relevant information required to make an informed decision regarding whether the object fits the Acquisition Criteria. The report will include basic description, catalogue information, provenance, images, and staff and curator reviews and recommendations, as well as assessment of cultural, ethnographic, and historical significance. The report may be presented as a standardized form. (Attachment)

The Acquisition Report shall be reviewed by the Executive Director and Collections Committee (or as proscribed by the Board of Trustees) acting as the Acquisitions Committee. This Committee reviews the Acquisition Reports and critically evaluates whether the objects meet the Criteria for Acquisitions. The Committee decides to accept each item and for which collection. Objects that are not appropriate for any of these collections may be declined or may be recommended for acceptance as a donation for resale.

The Board of Trustees shall then vote to accept or decline the acquisition. If accepted, the Chair of the Collections Committee (or person proscribed by the Board of Trustees) notifies the donor of the Acquisition Committee's decision and facilitates the signing of the *Deed of Gift Form* or *Memorandum of Understanding* indicating transfer of title and documentation of transfer of copyrights as appropriate. If objects have not been previously received, the Chair of the Collections Committee facilitates the physical transfer of the objects to the Museum prior to the completion of the *Deed of Gift Form* or *Memorandum of Understanding*.

## Accessioning and Registration Procedures

When an item has been accepted for acquisition, the Archivist (or designee) begins the accession/registration process. An item is registered by the assignment of an accession number recorded in the appropriate ledger and/or database. Objects are physically numbered, photographed, weighed, measured, and documented as completely as possible. The accession numbering scheme shall indicate to which collection an item belongs. The museum subscribes to the standard tripartite number system Year-Collection-Object Sequence. (Ex. 2016-001-0001a) The Object Sequence shall be reset each year. Objects containing sub-pieces shall be give the alphabetic letter "a,b,c,d..."

## DEACCESSIONING

Deaccessioning is the process of removing permanently from the collections accessioned materials. Because the Museum holds its collections in the public trust, the deaccessioning process shall be cautious, deliberate and completed with the utmost integrity. Deaccessioning is a legitimate part of the formation and care of collections and, if practiced, should be done in order to refine and improve the quality and appropriateness of the collections, the better to serve the Museum's mission.

### Deaccession Criteria

In order to deaccession from the Museum's collections, the material must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The work is of poor quality and lacks value for exhibition or study purposes.
- The work is a duplicate that has no value as part of a series.
- The museum's possession of the work may not be consistent with applicable law, e.g., the work may have been stolen or illegally imported in violation of applicable laws of Illinois or the United States or the work may be subject to other legal claims.
- The authenticity or attribution of the work is determined to be false or fraudulent and the object lacks sufficient historical importance to warrant retention. In disposing of or retaining a presumed forgery, the museum shall consider all related ethical issues including the consequences of returning the work to the market.
- The physical condition of the work is so poor that conservation is not practicable or would compromise the work's integrity or the artist's intent. Works damaged beyond reasonable repair that are not of use for study or teaching purposes may be destroyed.
- The work is no longer consistent with the mission or collecting goals of the museum.
- The work is being deaccessioned as part of the museum's effort to refine and improve its collections, in keeping with the collecting goals reviewed and approved by the museum's Board of Trustees.
- The museum is unable to care adequately for the work because of the work's particular requirements for storage or display or its continuing need for special treatment.
- In the case of library materials, the material has been superseded by another resource.

## Deaccession Process

- Written documentation using the board-approved deaccession sheet (see attachment b) on the material and the criteria for deaccessioning shall be presented by the Collections Committee Chair to the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall present the proposed deaccession to the Board of Trustees at a regular or special meeting. At that meeting the board shall take a vote on deaccession. A simple majority is required to deaccession an object. The minutes of the Board meeting shall reflect the board's final decision. At this time the Chair of the Education Committee shall review the deaccessioned material and may transfer the item(s) into the education collection.
- After deaccessioning is approved, the material will be disposed of in manner most appropriate and most beneficial to the institution. Appropriate methods of disposition include sale by bid, trade, offer at public auction, outright gift to another nonprofit institution, sale to a bona fide dealer without a conflict of interest, and destruction. If the deaccessioned item was donated, consideration will first be given to placing the material, through gift, exchange, or sale, in another tax-exempt educational institution. Disposal of all items will be overseen by the Executive Director.
- No member of a museum's board, staff, or anyone whose association with the museum might give them an advantage in acquiring the work, shall be permitted to acquire

directly or indirectly a work deaccessioned, wholly or in part, by the museum, or otherwise benefit from its sale or trade. In general, Museum affiliates should work to avoid the appearance or reality of impropriety.

- Funds received from the sale of deaccessioned materials from the collections will be used for acquisitions. Proceeds may not be used for general operating expenses under any circumstances.
- Records of all deaccessioned materials and the method of disposal shall become part of the Museum's permanent record. The museum will make publically available information on deaccessions.

## Disposition of Non-Accessioned Materials

Non-accessioned materials are defined as those items donated to the Museum or abandoned which but never added to the accessioned collection, because they (1) do not fall within the collection policy guidelines, (2) are part of an acquired collection but have little or no historic value, or (3) are not worthy either by their physical state or nature to be accessioned as part of the permanent collection.

Disposition of non-accessioned materials from permanent collections is done according to the same process as the accessioned collection.

Disposition of items in the non-permanent (Teaching and Props and Furnishings) collections is at the discretion of the appropriate staff members. Non-accessioned materials from these collections may be disposed of by the appropriate staff member only after agreement with the Executive Director that the material fits one or more of the criteria for non-accessioned materials and the disposal is in compliance with the Illinois unclaimed property act. Disposition of these materials will be made according to the standards established for deaccessioned materials.

## 2016 REEVALUATION OF COLLECTIONS

As a result of the 2016 reorganization of the Champaign County Historical Museum, the Museum shall undertake a complete reevaluation of all the collections.

This includes updating the digital records software, reorganizing storage areas, considering accessioned items for reassignment to another collection or for deaccession, and evaluating non-accessioned items for inclusion in one of the collections or disposition.

## APPRAISALS

No staff member shall offer appraisals of the monetary value of materials or objects to donors, or reveal the Museum's insurance value, for the purpose of establishing a fair market value of gifts offered to the Museum.

# CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF COLLECTIONS

Careful handling of artifacts is a critical element of a preventative conservation program. The most preventable type of damage comes as a result of improper handling of artifacts. If artifacts are not handled properly, they break and/or deteriorate, and their value as documents of the past diminishes. Furthermore, artifacts are a non-renewable resource; once damaged or destroyed, the original artifact is gone forever.

The Museum will acquire only those materials that can be properly cared for and maintained by the Museum using the professional standards established by professional bodies including the American Alliance of Museums. For that reason:

- Condition of all items will be noted during the accessioning process.
- All materials shall be stored in a manner to provide optimal security, accessibility, and preservation.
- Materials in need of conservation shall be conserved as soon as possible.
- Major conservation shall be performed only by qualified professionals using approved techniques and substances. Minor procedures may be performed by trained staff or trained volunteers under the direct supervision of trained staff.
- Materials, whether in use or in storage, shall be protected to the extent possible from life-shortening forces such as excessive heat, cold, humidity, dryness, dust, ultraviolet light, insects, vermin or improper handling.

## LOANS

A loan is defined as a temporary transfer of material from one institution or individual to another without transfer of ownership. Incoming and outgoing loans are undertaken according to the terms of the loan agreement.

Staff members are responsible for keeping a record of all incoming and outgoing loans from collections over which they have authority.

### OUTGOING LOANS

The Museum lends materials from its collections only to museums, historical societies, libraries or other institutions that, in the Museum's judgment, can comply with the conditions set forth in the loan agreement. The Executive Director and the Librarian or Archivist have authority to loan materials from the Archive Collection and the Library Collection. The Executive Director and the Curator of Collections and Exhibits have the authority to loan materials from the Object collection. The Executive Director and the Director of Education have the authority to loan material from the Education Collection. No loan will be approved without the signature of both parties on the appropriate loan agreement.

### INCOMING LOANS

The Museum receives loans for the purpose of exhibition and research. Terms of the loan will be defined on the loan agreement and will include security considerations, credit lines, time length of the loan and proof of insurance. Loan agreements for a period of more than 12 months will include a review clause. If an item is left over ten years without contact or written renewal from the owner or their heirs for the return of the item(s), the Museum will consider the item(s) abandoned and will accession or dispose of the item(s) according to the Non-Accession Policy.

## ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

Library and archival materials do not circulate, but on-site reproduction in conformance with provisions of copyright law and donation agreements will be permitted.

All publications using Museum collections materials must cite the Museum in the publication. Provision of a copy of the publication for free or at a discounted rate is strongly encouraged.

### Library Book Stacks

1. Use of scanners in the library must be approved by the Librarian.
2. Patrons may use smart phones and/or digital cameras to take images of pages from books and journals found in the Library Stacks so long as a flash is not used.
3. Photocopying of library materials shall only be performed by museum staff.

### Archive Manuscript & Photograph Collections

Use of scanners, smart phones or digital cameras to take images of items held in the Archives is allowed with permission. If needed, museum staff will scan such images (cost will vary depending on type and number of items).

### Copyright

Patrons assume all copyright responsibility for all copies.

### Copyright Restrictions

The Copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be “used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.” If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law

## COLLECTION ACCESS

### Library

There is full physical access to the Library Collection, with the exception of materials kept in staff offices or elsewhere in the building. Prior arrangement must be made to use these latter materials.

Books removed from the library collection by staff or interns for more than a day are to be replaced by an '*Out*' card with the name of the user, the date and the reason for long-term removal.

Library materials will be cataloged in the museums online catalog software.

### Archives

Physical access to the Archives Collection is restricted to designated staff members and interns only. Patrons wishing to use specific archival materials must complete a request form and submit this to the responsible staff person. Patrons wishing to study a large volume of material are encouraged to make advance arrangements for use.

It is Museum policy that intellectual access to the Archives Collection is usually unrestricted. In rare instances, when there is a compelling interest in restricting public use of certain materials or collections for a given period of time or to individuals having the permission of the donor or his/her agent, the Librarian/Archivist, in consultation with the Executive Director, may attach a clear statement to this effect to the accession record at the time said material or collection is accepted. Such statement should be a part of all subsequent processing and cataloging records until the restriction is removed.

Archival material that has not been processed will be available for use on a limited basis at the discretion of the Librarian/Archivist.

All materials removed from the Archives Collection are to be replaced with an '*Out*' card, or, in the case of materials needed by staff members for longer-term use, listed on an *Archives Removal List*, which is given to the Librarian/Archivist.

Archival materials are to be handled according to the guidelines and/or instructions set out by the Museum and its staff.

Archival materials are accessed through the Archives card catalog, specialized indexes, or detailed collection inventories or on-line finding aids.

Arrangements for research and reproduction of photographs and other materials owned by the Museum may be made through the Librarian/Archivist or the Executive Director, according to the

current printed *Fee and Service Schedule* issued by the Museum. The Schedule may be changed on the authority of the Executive Director.

### Objects

Physical access to the Museum's object collection must be arranged in advance with the Curator of Collections and Exhibits or the Registrar. The collections are only available for serious work by students, museum professionals, or individuals who are engaged in research.

A fee of \$50.00 an hour for not-for-profits and \$100.00 an hour for for-profits may be charged for access to objects requiring more than 30 minutes of staff time. Such fees may be waived at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Intellectual access to the collections may be gained through the museums online catalog software database. Arrangements for the access to this database must also be made in advance with the Executive Director.

## INSURANCE

The collections will be insured while in transit at a level not to exceed \$25,000. Special riders may be purchased should the Society wish to transport objects or collections of greater value. Insurance for loans shall be negotiated by the Curator and Executive Director on a case by case basis. In all cases borrowers must fully provide insurance for collections items during transit and on their premises.