

Wood County Historical Society
Collections Management Policy

Policy and Procedure for Acquisitions, Loans and Deaccessions
as voted on and approved by the Wood County Historical Society Board of Trustees
August 20, 1997

It is the mission of the Wood County Historical Society to collect, interpret and preserve the history of Wood County. The following policy governs the collecting aspects of the society in their efforts to comply with that mission.

The Wood County Historical Society recognizes that its responsibility for its collections is of prime importance. Acquisition, preservation and interpretation of the collections are the joint responsibility of the Board of Trustees and the professional staff of the Wood County Historical Center/Museum. Policy regarding purpose and direction of collecting activity shall be flexible. The collections exist for the public's benefit and should be made as accessible as is consistent with the safety of the items.

I. The Collections Committee

A. The Chairperson of the Collections Committee shall be appointed by the President of the Society upon consultation with the Executive Committee. The committee shall consist of not less than five (5) and not more than seven (7) members. The members shall be appointed by the President with the endorsement of the Board of Trustees and recommendations of the Collections Committee Chairperson.

1. The Collections Committee shall be a standing committee. Vacancies will be filled by appointment from the President.
2. The Collections Committee shall meet regularly or at any time action is required.
3. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority. If a quorum is not available, upon recommendation of the Chairperson, the President will appoint temporary substitute members in an emergency situation.

B. The Collections Committee shall review its policy annually or upon request of the President.

C. The Collections Committee shall be empowered to consider matters under its jurisdiction, make decisions and recommend any necessary specific action to the President and Board of Trustees.

D. The following areas relating to the collections will be within the Collections Committee's jurisdiction:

1. Gifts, bequests, purchases and field collecting.
2. Loans to the Museum.
3. Loans from the Museum.
4. Deaccessioning (schedule of disposition).
5. Appropriate storage of the collections.
6. Preservation and conservation.
7. Registration and cataloguing methods.
8. Policy and planning for collection-related publications.
9. Sale of reproduction and collection-related items by the Society or in the Museum.

II. Scope of Collections

A. Generally, the emphasis of collections will be concerned with objects, specimens, artifacts, and archival materials from Wood County and Northwest Ohio. The focus of collecting will include:

1. items representative of the natural and physical environment of Wood County and Northwest Ohio;
2. the social, religious, political, transportation, industrial and educational progress and physical condition of the area and its residents; and
3. the history of Wood County and other areas where they provide context and/or added dimension or understanding.

B. In the most general sense, the item or collection shall be significant in itself so that it merits inclusion. Social, historical and technological factors should be considered. Association, aesthetic merit, rarity and status in its own particular category should be considered.

C. The item(s) should possess potential for research and scholarship, now or in the future, and should be in such a condition as to be appropriate for exhibition purposes.

D. All items or collections should be carefully scrutinized.

III. Acquisitions

A. Gifts, Bequests and Other Acquisitions

1. The acceptance of gifts, bequests or other acquisitions will be left to the discretion of the Collections Committee.

a) The item or collection acquired shall relate to the mission of the Society or the scope of its collections.

2. It will be the responsibility of the Director to make recommendations to the Collections Committee regarding the acceptance of donated or proposed donated items.

a) The decision to accept certain items may be made by the Director with the understanding that the Collections Committee will be informed and have the right to take action on such decisions should they desire to do so.

(1) In this instance, “certain items” include those artifacts that the Director is confident belong in the Museum’s collection on the basis of relativity, spatial considerations, value and/or public interest and integrity.

3. The acceptance of all gifts and bequests shall be unrestricted with no commitment as to exhibition, attribution, or placement of the gift. No guarantee shall be made that the gift or bequest be retained by the Society in perpetuity. There shall be no exceptions to this policy unless any such restriction or special provisions are recommended by the Collections Committee and the President, and approved by unanimous vote of those present in a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees. A statement of approval will be recorded in the Society’s minutes.

4. All gifts and bequests shall be acknowledged by an Instrument of Gift Agreement.

5. Accession and registration papers for all acquisitions shall be filed with the Director and/or appropriate staff member for the Museum’s records.

6. The Collections Committee may authorize the listing of recent accessions in the Society’s newsletter or journal.

7. Items may be accepted for purposes of “prop classification.” Any item designated a “prop” is not considered or treated as an artifact. Such items may be useful for demonstration purposes or other functional reasons.

- a) Any item designated as a prop will be marked with the letter “P” and the year in which it was accepted.
- b) A record of items designated as props will be kept in the Museum office.
- c) Artifacts may be deaccessioned into the prop classification if their condition warrants such a decision. The Collections Committee will follow the procedures for deaccessioning under these circumstances.
- d) The loaning of props to outside organizations will be subject to the same conditions as the loaning of non-artifact items or equipment.
- e) Individuals wishing to donate items to the props collections can consult with the Director who will decide whether the item is useful and/or needed. A deed of gift instrument will be secured for non-mundane items.

B. Purchases

1. Funds specifically allocated to the Society for the purchase of items, plus other monies that may become available for purchases, shall be retained in the Society’s financial accounts. The Treasurer will be responsible for informing the Collections Committee as to the amount in the “Collections Fund” available for purchases.
2. In addition to the general criteria cited in II. A-D, the following factors shall be considered by the Director, Collections Committee and the President:
 - a) Is the item to be acquired necessary for scholarship or for exhibition?
 - b) Will the item to be acquired have importance within the context of the museum’s collections?
 - c) Must the item be purchased? Have attempts been made to secure it as a gift?
 - d) Is the price fair?
 - e) Is the item in appropriate condition? Has it been carefully examined? Have factors of conservation, preservation, proper storage and restoration by a reputable conservator been considered?
 - f) Does the purchase appear merited when compared to other requests?
 - g) Have attempts been made to authenticate the item?
 - h) Has title of ownership been clearly established?
3. Should the Director have the opportunity to purchase an article or collection that is needed by the museum for its collections, said person shall be authorized to complete the purchase to a maximum amount of \$200. Any purchases proposed by the Director or the Collections Committee for more than \$200 must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

C. Loans to the Museum

1. With the exception of public records, there will be no loans to the Museum without a written agreement and a set time limit indicated. Public records cannot be deeded over and must be made available to the public upon request per the Public Records Act of the Ohio Revised Code 149.43.
2. The general policy shall be to accept as loans only items needed for exhibition and study. The Museum shall not serve as a place for free storage, to display items that are for sale - other than Society sanctioned - or to give a pedigree to items.
3. All proposed loans, including special exhibitions, will be brought to the attention of the President and Chairperson of the Collections Committee. The President shall have the option of either making a prompt decision on the matter or presenting it for a vote at the next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees.
4. All incoming loans will be recorded on the Loan Agreement form and filed with the Director or the appropriate staff person.
5. All loans shall be for a specified minimum period of time and indicated on the Loan Agreement form.
6. If the value of the item or collection on loan exceeds the current insurance coverage for loaned items, the Director and/or Collections Committee will make a recommendation to the President to either provide the additional coverage or investigate the possibility of the lending person or institution providing their own coverage. In the instance that the Wood County Historical Society takes responsibility for additional insurance coverage, the lending person or institution must provide written evidence of the value of the item and/or collection.

D. Loans from the Museum

1. Regarding loans from the Museum, the safety of the item in packing, transportation, and loan exhibition shall be the prime consideration.
2. No public documents may be loaned for any reason.
3. Items on loan from the Museum shall have full insurance coverage, with documented appraisal, where required, from the Director.
4. Loans of items or collections of minor importance may be arranged by the Director and reported at the Collections Committee meetings.

5. Loans of significant items or collections shall be authorized according to the procedure set forth in III. C-3.

6. All outgoing loans will be recorded on the Loan Agreement form and filed with the Director or appropriate staff person.

IV. Disposition

A. Deaccessioning includes condemnation for the purpose of destruction of items or for the purpose of exchanging or otherwise disposing of duplicates or items not wanted in the collections. Articles shall be permanently removed from the collections of the Museum when they fall into any of the following categories:

1. They lie outside the defined scope of the collections.
2. They are inappropriate for research, loan, exhibit, or inclusion in special collections.
3. They are damaged beyond economical repair.
4. They are needlessly duplicated in the collection.

B. In cooperation with the Collections Committee, the Director will provide the President with a list of any items being considered for deaccessioning. The Board of Trustees will then vote on the disposition.

C. Any article offered for sale shall be sold at public auction or to the public marketplace in a manner that will best protect the interest, objectives and legal status of the Society. All proceeds from such sales will be kept in the "Collections Fund" for the purpose of additional acquisitions.

D. The Director or appropriate staff person will keep a separate file of all deaccessioned items, including the manner of disposal and reason for disposal.

V. Ethical Responsibilities of the Wood County Historical Society's Administration and Professional Staff in Collecting and Collections Management

A. The Museum administration, (including the Collections Committee), and professional staff shall not willfully accept any item for which they cannot offer proper protection and/or care.

B. The Museum administration and professional staff shall act ethically and legally in acquiring, accepting and disposing of articles within its collections.

C. The Museum administration and professional staff will not accept items with attached conditions that could lead to potential litigation.

D. The Museum administration and professional staff will not accept items on the basis of personal interest and/or private collecting habits.

E. No items deaccessioned for sale may be privately sold to any individual other than through the process of public auction or through the public marketplace.

F. Proceeds from the sales of deaccessioned items may not be used for general operating purposes; see IV C.

G. Collections shall not be made available to any individual on any basis for personal use, either on or off the premises, or for any other purpose contrary to the adopted collections policies.

1. The Museum staff will provide volunteers with guidelines as to the handling and usage of the Museum's collections. A collections management procedural handbook will be available in the museum office.

H. Museum administration and professional staff shall not knowingly and willfully accept or acquire any article that was recovered under circumstances that support or encourage irresponsible damage to the natural environment, collecting sites, cultural monuments or human burial places.