

THE
COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY
OF
THE SOUTH CHARLESTON MUSEUM



311 D STREET
SOUTH CHARLESTON, WV 25303
TEL 304-744-9711
FAX 304-720-3769

Revised by the South Charleston Board of Directors
16 June 1999,
with policy added and approved 14 September 2005

from the previous edition which was adopted by the Board of Trustees,
30 October 1998

approved by the SCMF Board of Directors, 16 June 1999

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A.	Aims of the Museum	1
B.	Statement of purpose	1
C.	Scope of collections	1
D.	Acquisition of objects	
	1. General	2
	2. Purchases	2
	3. Loans	3
E.	Items placed in the Museum's custody	3
F.	Outgoing Loans	3
G.	Deaccessioning	4-5
H.	Care and recording of the collections	
	1. Records	6
	2. Inventories	6
	3. Conservation	6
I.	Insurance	7
J.	Access to the collections	7
K.	Photographic policies	8
L.	Examination, identification and appraisal	8
M.	Ethics	8
N.	Policy Addition	9

A. Aims of the Museum

1. To promote the permanent preservation of cultural artifacts for the benefit of South Charleston and the Kanawha Valley.
2. To promote the social, educational, and cultural history of South Charleston and the Kanawha Valley.
3. To maintain, promote and manage the Museum and grounds as the South Charleston Museum for the enjoyment and education of the public.

B. Statement of Purpose

1. The purpose of the Collections Management Policy is to ensure that the aims of the Museum insofar as they relate to the collections are carried out in a responsible and professional manner.
2. This Policy will be revised from time to time by the staff of the Museum and, or the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee, and any revisions will be submitted to the Board of Directors for approval.

C. Scope of Collections

1. The Museum will collect objects significantly associated with South Charleston and the Kanawha Valley's cultural, industrial and social history, dating from the earliest times (i.e. Native American) to the present.
2. The Museum will collect objects both for exhibition and for study.
3. At the discretion of the Collections Committee, the Museum will also collect significant objects that do not pertain to the aims of the Museum, which would otherwise be destroyed and which cannot be taken by another institution such as the Sunrise Museum or the West Virginia State Museum. Such objects shall be held in reserve until an appropriate home can be found for them. Such items will be reviewed annually by the Director/ Curator as to deaccession.
4. The Board of Directors shall elect members to sit on the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee in order to act as set forth in the Bylaws and the Collection Management Policy of the South Charleston Museum.

D. Acquisition of Objects**1. General**

- a) The Museum will only collect objects consistent with the collections goals outlined in Section C. The Exhibitions/ Collections Committee must approve any exceptions, upon recommendation of the Director/ Curator.
- b) The Museum shall provide proper care and storage for the objects it acquires. Therefore, as a rule, the Museum will not accept objects that will involve major expenses in conservation, storage or maintenance. The Exhibitions/ Collections Committee must approve exceptions to this rule.
- c) The Museum will not accept any object collected in circumstances contravening international or local laws regarding cultural property.
- d) The Museum will not accept any human remains for exhibition or for the collection.
- e) As a rule the Museum will not accept objects encumbered with conditions or restrictions. If restrictions on the use of the objects are unavoidable every effort shall be made to impose a reasonable limit on the time for which they shall apply, and to define the conditions under which their force may terminate. All such conditions must be outlined in a legal conveyance, and the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee must approve all such acquisitions.
- f) In the event that an object of great significance to South Charleston's history is offered to the Museum, but is unacceptable under the above clauses, the decision whether to acquire it or not will be referred to the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee and then presented to the Board of Directors.

2. Purchases

- a) The Museum will not purchase an object if it, or a comparable object, can be obtained by gift or bequest.
- b) A revolving purchase fund may be drawn upon for purchases for the Museum, following a request from the Director/ Curator to the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee, and subject to approval by said Committee.
- c) Any purchase from the revolving purchase fund with a total cost of more than \$500.00 must be approved by the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee and the Financial Committee.
- d) The authenticity and worth of any object with a total cost of more than \$500.00 must be verified to the satisfaction of the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee before the purchase is made.
- e) The vendor must sign a statement certifying that he or she (the vendor) has the legal right to sell or dispose of the object.

D. Acquisition of Objects (continued)**3. Loans**

- a) Loans to the Museum will not be considered except under the following circumstances:
 - i) Loans will be accepted for documentation or study for a specified period of time.
 - ii) Loans will be accepted for exhibit for a specified period of time.
 - iii) Permanent or long-term loans will only be accepted from fellow institutions and from governmental agencies.
- b) All incoming loans must be approved by the Director/ Curator.
- c) All loans will be monitored by the Director/ Curator.
- d) The Museum will not accept human remains on loan for exhibition or study.

E. Items Placed Temporarily in the Custody of the Museum

Items left temporarily in the custody of the Museum for study, documentation, identification, or to be considered for acquisition, will be referred to as Temporary Deposits, and will be recorded separately from acquisitions.

F. Outgoing Loans

1. Loans of Museum objects will not be made to individuals.
2. All institutions and organizations wishing to borrow objects from the Museum collection must request, in writing, which objects are desired on loan from the Museum collection.
3. All institutions and organizations desiring to borrow objects from the Museum collection must complete a Facilities Report before consideration by the Director/ Curator and the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee.
4. After Facilities Reports are accepted, all institutions and organizations desiring to borrow objects from the Museum collection must complete an Outgoing Loan form.
5. Loans of Museum objects will only be made to institutions and organizations when the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee is satisfied with the security, standard of care, insurance needs, and display conditions for the object as indicated by the prospective borrower on the completed Facilities Report and Outgoing Loan form.
6. Loans of objects on loan to the Museum will not be made without the written permission of the owner.
7. Outgoing loans will only be made for a specified period of time, subject to approval by the Director/ Curator as to the proper amount of exposure time for said objects.
8. Outgoing loans will be monitored by the Director/ Curator.
9. Insurance of items loaned to institutions and organizations is the direct responsibility of the borrowing institution or organization.

F. Outgoing Loans (continued)

10. Shipping and receiving costs, both from and return to the Museum, of items loaned from the Museum collection to institutions and organizations are the direct responsibility of the borrowing institution or organization.

G. Deaccessioning**1. Criteria**

- a) Museum objects considered for deaccession must meet at least one of the following:
- i) The material or object is outside of the scope of the charter purpose of the Museum and/ or its acquisition policy.
 - ii) The material or object has failed to retain its identity or authenticity, or has been lost or stolen and remains so for more than two years.
 - iii) The Museum is unable to properly preserve the object(s).
 - iv) The material or object has deteriorated beyond usefulness for study or exhibition.
 - v) The material or object as been accessioned twice.
 - vi) The material or object is the triplicate of two other exact objects in the collections.
 - vii) The material or object is damaged beyond repair.

2. Deaccession Policy

- a) The Director/ Curator may recommend deaccessioning material if, in his or her best judgement, one or more criteria for deaccession have been met. If so, the Director/ Curator shall make the recommendation in writing to the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee. The recommendation will specify:
- i) the source and/ or provenance of the material.
 - ii) the current market value.
 - iii) the recommended means of disposal according to the specifications set up in Section G, item 3, of the Collection Management Policy of the Museum.
 - iv) the reasons for recommendation according to guidelines specified in Section G, item 1, of the Collection Management Policy of the Museum.
- b) The Exhibitions/ Collections Committee will respond in writing, approving or disapproving the recommendation and designating means of disposal. These records shall be posted with the object file.
- c) Any deaccession approved by the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee shall be submitted to the Board of Directors in writing for full Board approval.

G. Deaccessioning (continued)**3. *Disposal of Deaccessioned Objects***

- a) Once it has been determined and approved that certain objects are no longer needed for research, exhibition, education, or educational programs at the Museum, such items may be disposed of as to the following methods:
 - i) Where appropriate, consideration may be given to donating the object to another public institution, either as an outright gift, or in exchange for another object.
 - ii) In the case of the sale of an object, preference must be given to public auction over private sale.
 - iii) Negotiated private sales, public auctions, time sealed or open bids are acceptable methods. A reserve price may be agreed upon and approved jointly by appropriate staff, the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee and the Board of Directors in the event it is necessary for the final sale of an object.

4. *Ethics of Deaccessioning*

- a) Objects will not be given or sold privately to Museum staff, volunteers, members of the Board of Directors, or their representatives.

5. *Public Disclosure*

- a) Copies of the Acquisition Policy shall be available to any donor or prospective donor upon request. Also, a list of any materials deaccessioned from the permanent Museum collection within a five year period shall be kept current and may be disclosed upon responsible inquiry.
- b) Where possible, the donor should be notified of the intent to deaccession the object

6. *Record Keeping*

The Director/ Curator and the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee must keep proper records of their decision, including the reasons for deaccessioning an object and the method of disposal. A copy of these records must be kept with the accession files.

7. *Proceeds*

Funds realized from the sale of an object, shall be used for the benefit of the collections, whether through new acquisition, or through improvements in care and management.

H. Care and Handling of Collections

1. *Records*

- a) Every object that comes into the Museum should be recorded as soon as possible.
- b) All objects approved for accessioning will be accessioned and documented according to professional standards, and such records will be updated as additional information becomes available.
- c) The Director/ Curator is responsible for maintaining the records for each object in an orderly and retrievable form.
- d) Collection records will be periodically inspected by the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee to ensure that they are being properly kept.

2. *Inventories*

- a) The Director/ Curator should conduct a comprehensive inventory of the collections once every five years, to check that nothing is missing, that objects are properly labeled, that the location records are correct, and to monitor the growth of the collections.
- b) During a comprehensive inventory, conservation reports will also be taken for objects in the collection in urgent need of conservation.
- c) If an object appears to be missing, the Director/ Curator will make every effort to determine its whereabouts, and the reason for its disappearance. If it is not found, the object will be recorded as missing, placed on the missing objects list, and reported to the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee.

3. *Conservation*

- a) The Museum will adequately protect its collection in storage and on exhibition from fire, theft and vandalism.
- b) Conservation needs will be monitored during regular inventories of the collections (see above).
- c) The Director/ Curator is responsible for the safe packaging and shipping of Museum artifacts (outbound).

I. Insurance

1. As a rule, insurance will be carried on the Museum's collections when they are in the custody of the Museum.
2. The question of insuring outgoing loans will be decided by the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee, since the insurance on outgoing loans is the responsibility of the borrowing institution or organization, as discussed in Section F., item 9, of the Museum Collection Management Policy.
3. As a rule, the Museum will not take out additional insurance policies for incoming loans, unless so moved by the Board of Directors, upon recommendation of the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee and Director/ Curator.
4. Objects left in the custody of the Museum, but not accessioned or under loan, will not be insured by the Museum.
5. Insurance records will be kept by the Director/ Curator.
6. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors must approve deviations from general insurance policies, on the recommendation of the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee and the Director/ Curator.

J. Access to the Collections

1. Access to the collections of the Museum will be granted by the Director/ Curator, provided that:
 - a) A written request, including reason for request and which objects would be examined, is received by the Director/ Curator at least three business days in advance of the desired date.
 - b) There is a staff member available to ensure proper handling of objects and good security.
 - c) The Director/ Curator is satisfied that the person has good reason for examining an object or objects.
 - d) The material will not be used in any way to promote or advocate the destruction of historic or archaeological sites in an unscientific manner and/ or for financial gain.
 - e) The visit should take place during normal Museum hours.
2. No one but Museum staff is to have access to high security exhibit cases or their contents. Any exceptions to this must be approved unanimously by the Exhibitions/ Collections Committee.
3. Fees may be charged for staff time or services that are deemed to be outside the normal course of work.

K. Photographic Policies

1. Photographs may be taken, except where specifically asked not to do so for conservation, copyright, or other reasons.
2. Permission to photograph objects in storage or in display cases must be obtained at least three business days in advance from the Curator, following the stipulations in the previous Section.

L. Examination, Identification and Appraisal

1. As a service to the public, professional staff will, where possible, identify objects brought in for identification. "Identification" means: indicating the general class of an object.
2. The Museum will not provide authentication or valuation of objects for members of the public. "Authentication" means:
 - a) Differentiation between a genuine object and a faked or forged one.
 - b) Establishing the exact provenance of an object."Valuation" means: placing a monetary value on an object.

M. Ethics

1. No member of the Museum staff or of the Board of Directors is permitted to start a collection, which may be in conflict with the Museum's interests.
2. If a staff member is offered an item known to be desirable for the collections of the Museum, the Museum's option to acquire the item must be considered paramount over the individual's opportunity to acquire the object.

N. Policy Addition (added 14 September 2005)

At a meeting of the South Charleston Museum Foundation Board of Directors on Thursday, August 25, 2005, approval was given for the clarification of the Museum's policy regarding Native American shows and programs. While the Museum Board has no control over displays and programs of organizations affiliated with the City of South Charleston, we hope that such entities will consider the merits of using the outlined process when Native American displays and programs are part of any public event or exhibit.

(Policy adopted and approved 14 September 2005)

1. The South Charleston Museum Foundation (SCMF) and its Board of Directors believes that all exhibits and programs produced under its supervision or, with its cooperation and endorsement, must meet the highest possible standards of professionalism. * This obligation requires special sensitivity when displays or programs involve Native American themes and exhibits due in part to the fact that since 1990 federal law regarding burial and funerary items of such groups must be observed. Therefore it is the policy of the SCMF that all Native American program and exhibits should be organized with:
 - a) Close attention to any provisions of the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which may be applicable.
 - b) Consultation and advice from the appropriate and relevant Indian tribes and federations, Native Alaskan village and Corporations and Native Hawaiian organizations and that good faith effort be made at implementing their suggestions.

**For example, see the standards of The American Association of Museums.*