

Policy & Procedure: Collection Management

Collections are the foundation for any museum. It is the responsibility of The Lutheran Heritage Center & Museum to acquire artifacts that fall within the guidelines of its mission, to maintain and preserve them for use in promoting Saxon Lutheran Heritage, as well as the interpretation and education of the history of the Saxon Lutheran colonization, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the first Evangelical Lutheran seminary west of the Mississippi River, and the German-American cultural heritage. It is important that the Museum follow standard practices for accessioning and care of all artifacts.

Care of Collections

The Curator is responsible to the Director for care of all artifacts. In carrying out that responsibility, the Curator will work with the Collections Manager to ensure that policies and procedures are adhered to. The Collections Manager is responsible for the tracking of all objects as they enter or leave the Museum's control and will work with curatorial staff to ensure the safe handling and accurate documentation of the collections. In absence of a Curator and/or Collections Manager, all tasks revert back to the Director.

Standards of Care and Conservation

All objects in the permanent collection are subject to the same standards of professional care. Conservation action may only be taken by trained, professional conservators and any treatment must respect the integrity of the object. Once conservation treatment is done, the conservator must provide a written report of all actions, which will be maintained in the object's PastPerfect Accession file. Objects on loan to or from the Museum will not be repaired, cleaned or otherwise treated without written permission from the owner of the objects.

Insurance

The Museum's permanent and loaned collections are covered by the Organization's insurance policy. Annually, the Collections Manager will review the values of the Museum's collections to ensure that collection descriptions and values are current. Objects placed in the temporary custody of the Museum for the purposes of identification, research, or evaluation as a potential acquisition or loan will not be insured.

Record Management

The Collections Manager will maintain all accession, deaccession, and loan records through PastPerfect Museum Software. The following information is restricted and will only be given out to those individuals approved by the Director: names of donors, former owners, or lenders who wish to remain anonymous; mailing addresses and telephone numbers of all donors, former owners, and lenders; storage locations of objects; object values if known, including purchase prices, appraisals if necessary for acquisition, and insurance evaluations if necessary for acquisition.

Acquisition Protocol:

The Museum subscribes to the policy of selective acquisition. Because of limited storage space and financial and ethical constraints, it is neither feasible nor professionally responsible for the Museum to allow for unlimited growth of the collections. The Accessions Committee processes all requests for donations and loans, and along with the Director, has the final authority to accept or deny any proposed objects. Donations are reviewed with consideration of the object's provenance, condition, clarity of rights and title, and pertinence to the Museum's mission.

Under no circumstances will Museum staff provide appraisals for donations, loans, or objects placed in the custody of the Museum for identification or research purposes, nor will they make arrangements for an appraisal on behalf of the donor or lender.

Legal Documentation for Donations and Loans

The acquisition of all collection objects must be documented using professional standards, through the use of PastPerfect Museum Software. A written agreement must be prepared and include authorized signatures of both the Lender/Owner and the Museum. Any special conditions, requests, or restrictions must be discussed with Museum staff in advance and documented on the appropriate forms. Objects may not be withdrawn without adequate prior notification.

Objects accepted for Acquisition should meet the following conditions:

1. Priority for acquisition will be given to objects that meet the ongoing research, exhibition, and educational programs of the Museum; that fill gaps and improve the existing collections; and that represent the history and culture of the East Perry County Region.
2. The Museum can meet professional standards for storage and protection and ensure the accessibility of objects for Museum purposes.

Loans/Temporary Custody

Objects may be placed in the temporary custody of the Museum for the purposes of exhibition, research, identification, or consideration for acquisition into the collections. Placement of an object in the temporary custody of the Museum does not constitute a transfer of legal title to the Museum. Objects on loan will be stored properly and monitored. All loaned objects are subject to the conditions set forth on the Temporary Custody Receipt form. The Museum will return the object to the lender listed in the Temporary Custody Receipt form, and will only give the object to another party with written authorization from the lender.

Accessioning Procedure for Donations and Loans

The Accessions Committee and the Director must approve all donations and loans. When an object is presented to the Museum, a Temporary Custody Receipt form must be completed. The Collections Manager/Registrar then enters the donation into the Museum's computer cataloging system. Two copies of the paperwork are sent to the donor; one form is signed and returned to the Museum to be kept in the permanent records, and the other is for the donor's records. Once the item is accessioned and given an identification number, the object is placed in storage or in a designated exhibit.

Incoming and Outgoing Loans

The Director has the final authority over all incoming and outgoing loans. Loans from the Museum will only be made to other museums or not-for-profit institutions for education and public programs. Under no circumstances will the Museum's collections be loaned to individuals or organizations for personal or private use or benefit.

Requests for outgoing loans must be made in writing, and the borrower must prove that they are able to provide professional, museum-quality care and security for loaned objects. All loans must have a written contract between both parties, defining the loan period, and the condition and value of each object. The Museum does not make indefinite or permanent loans.

Requests for loans from the Museum's collections will be evaluated according to the following conditions:

1. The object is not too fragile to withstand handling, shipping, and changes in climate.
2. Conditions during the loan period will not endanger the object.
3. The object is not needed during the requested time period by Museum staff.

Deaccession Protocol:

Acquisitions are made with the intent of developing the Museum's collections and preserving them for future use in exhibitions and historical research. Objects accessioned into the collections will be permanently retained, provided that they continue to support the Museum's mission. However, the Museum may choose to remove any object, that it legally owns, which is deemed inappropriate for further retention. Once an object has been accessioned, it can only be removed by completing the deaccessioning process.

Process for Deaccessioning

A written proposal must be given to the Director of the Museum, explaining the reasons for deaccessioning the item, which will then be presented to the Executive Board for their vote. The deaccession recommendation and the action taken will be documented in the object's Accession File.

Criteria for Deaccessioning

To be considered for deaccessioning, an object must meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. **Relevance:** the object no longer supports the Museum's mission.
2. **Condition:** the object has deteriorated or been damaged beyond repair, or poses a health hazard.
3. **Care of the Object:** the Museum is not able to provide adequate care for special preservation requirements associated with the object.
4. **Duplication:** the object is an exact duplicate or unnecessarily duplicates the subject matter of another object.
5. **Authenticity:** the object is found to be falsely documented or a fake or forgery.
6. **Quality of the Collection:** deaccessioning of the object will improve or strengthen another area of the collections, furthering the goals of the Museum. In this case, the Museum must ensure that an object in one area of the collection is not disposed of purely for the sake of acquiring an object in another area.

Disposition of Deaccessioned Objects

Disposition of deaccessioned objects will be carried out in accordance with any local, state, and federal regulations and legal requirements. Lutheran Heritage Center & Museum employees, officers, members of the Advisory Board, and their immediate family members may not purchase or otherwise benefit from the disposition of a deaccessioned object. When necessary, an outside appraisal or qualified consultation should be obtained to help determine the appropriate disposal method.

Any disposition restrictions placed on an object by a donor will be strictly observed. If the object was a gift or bequest, donors or their heirs will be notified, when possible, of the Museum's intention to deaccession the object. This notification is done as a courtesy and does not serve as a request for permission to dispose of the object.

The method of disposition must be approved by the Director and documented on appropriate forms. Appropriate methods of disposition are:

1. Donation: the object may be donated to another repository or educational organization.
2. Sale: the object may be sold at public auction or sold privately to educational organization.
3. Destruction: if an object has deteriorated or been damaged beyond repair, poses a health hazard, is determined to be a fake or forgery, or has no intrinsic or monetary value, it may be deliberately destroyed.

The Museum will place all net proceeds (all proceeds less out-of-pocket expenses) from the sale of deaccessioned objects into its acquisition fund. This restricted fund will be used solely for the acquisition of objects for the Museum's collections or for the direct care of collections, which is defined as the conservation of collections objects or the improvement of collections storage facilities.

Person(s) Responsible for implementation of this policy:

Carla Jordan, Director

Gerard Fiehler, Curator

Jeanette Kuehnert, Collections Manager/Registrar

Implemented _____

Revised _____