

# **The Mascoutah Historical Society Collections Management Policy**

## ***Mission Statement***

The mission of the Mascoutah Historical Society is to collect and preserve artifacts of Mascoutah Township and the area served by Mascoutah Community Unit School District 19, to make the collection accessible to the public, and to promote interest in the history of the area.

## ***Collection Goals***

To build upon the strengths of the present collection of archives and objects in the following areas:

- Clothing and accessories, including military uniforms and memorabilia
- Items for the home, including furniture, kitchen items, furnishings, grooming supplies, photo albums and journals
- School papers, pictures, yearbooks, uniforms, supplies
- Church items
- Toys, games, and sports equipment
- Music and musical instruments
- Artworks and art supplies, decorative arts
- Crafts and supplies (sewing, embroidery, knitting, etc.), children's crafts
- Travel, transportation, and maps
- Items from organizations, including Scouts, lodges, and civic groups
- Items from local events
- Flags
- Business items and work equipment, including promotional items and advertising
- Native American artifacts found locally
- Farm tools and implements
- Printed materials including books, directories, newspapers, atlases, pamphlets, catalogs, posters
- Manuscript materials including letters, diaries, journals, service records, account books, genealogies
- Audio-visual materials and equipment: photos, slides, cameras; movies, videotapes, projectors; records, phonographs; CDs, players; cassette tapes, tape recorders, etc.
- Histories of local homes

## ***Acquisitions***

### **Acquisition Criteria**

The Society shall have clear title to all acquisitions. It shall not accept objects on long-term loan, except in special circumstances as determined by the Executive Board. It shall make no special agreements as to use or disposition of an object by the Society.

All acquisitions shall be clearly related to the history of Mascoutah. Objects represented as related to specific events, places, or persons shall be authenticated by documentation if possible. Donated objects that are not related to specific events, places, or persons shall still be typical of an element in Mascoutah's history. Items which are merely sentimental, attractive, or unusual shall not be made part of the permanent collection.

Acquisitions shall be in good enough condition so that they can be useful to the museum without straining the financial or technical resources for preservation and exhibition. Large items shall be accepted only if the museum can adequately store and preserve them.

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The Accession Committee shall have the authority to decide what to accept for the museum and how to use or dispose of what is not added to the collection. The Committee shall consider:

- How is it related to Mascoutah or a resident?
- Do we already have it? How many do we have?
- How old is it?
- If it is a photo, is it identified?

### Means of Acquisition

Materials and objects may be acquired by purchase, commission, bequest, gift, or abandonment. No materials or objects shall be knowingly or willfully accepted or acquired that are known to have been illegally collected in the United States contrary to state or federal law. The Society shall refuse to acquire materials and objects where there is cause to believe that the circumstances of their collection involved needless destruction of historic sites, buildings, structures, habitats, districts and objects.

### Acquisitions Procedures

Authority to acquire archival material and objects rests with the Executive Board.

No representative of the Society shall assign values to acquisitions; donors desiring to take an income-tax gift deduction must obtain an independent appraisal from an authorized appraiser.

Any donation of items shall be accompanied by a Deed of Gift which shall be signed by the donor or his or her representative. The donor shall be issued a copy of the Deed of Gift for his or her records. The Deed of Gift form shall include the name of the donor or representative, the full address and contact information, a signature of the donor or representative and a member of the Historical Society, a list of items including descriptions and historical significance. The original owners of the item, where they lived, how the object was used, where it was used, and any other pertinent information shall be noted whenever possible.

### *Accessioning*

Accessioning is defined as the process of accepting items into the permanent collection of the Society.

### Numbering

Each object shall be assigned an accession number. The accession number shall be a series of digits separated by periods. The first set of numbers denotes the year the item was donated. The second set of numbers denotes the donor number. The third set of numbers shall be the sequential item number contributed by the donor. If there are separate parts of an object, each part shall receive a number and a letter. A collection of items which are all the same shall be given one number, with no need for an additional letter. Donor number 500 is “unidentified donor.”

Examples:

17.310.47 The item was donated in 2017, by donor number 310 (Kathleen Bell), and this is the 47<sup>th</sup> item that Kathleen has donated.

82.14.6a The item was donated in 1982, by donor number 14 (Pat Schroeder), and this is the 6<sup>th</sup> item that Pat donated. It is a World War I uniform. The letter “a” belongs to the uniform jacket.

82.14.6b The item was donated in 1982, by donor number 14 (Pat Schroeder), and this is the 6<sup>th</sup> item that Pat donated. It is a World War I uniform. The letter “b” belongs to the uniform pants.

17.310.62 The description of this item states, “A collection of 6 medicine bottles.” Because they are all the same thing, there is no need to distinguish among them, and an additional letter is not needed.

### Written Records

Donated items shall be recorded in two places: on the Deed of Gift, and on the donor’s record sheet. Information to be recorded shall be the item's accession number, a short object name of one or two words, and a description of the item. The description shall have as much information as possible about the object, including the material it is made from, the size, the color, any special use history, the type of fabric a textile object is made of, and any anecdotal information about the owner or donor.

### Marking

Accession numbers are marked on objects in different ways, depending on the material the object is made of:

| <b>Object/material</b>                              | <b>Preferred marker</b>   | <b>Location of mark</b>  |
|---|---|--|
| Paper, cardboard                                    | 1 <sup>st</sup> pencil; 2 <sup>nd</sup> black ballpoint pen   | Back lower right corner  |
| Book, brochure, pamphlet, magazine                  | 1 <sup>st</sup> pencil; 2 <sup>nd</sup> black ballpoint pen   | Inside back cover, lower right corner  |
| Clothing, fabric                                    | Black ballpoint pen on tag  | Safety pin attached in prominent location: interior of back neck, waistband of pants |
| Ceramic, plastic, metal, glass, china, wood, wicker | 1 <sup>st</sup> black permanent marker; 2 <sup>nd</sup> silver acrylic paint pen                                  | Bottom or rear of object, a place that won't be visible if the object is displayed   |
| Items too small to be marked                        | Place item in small plastic bag with cardstock card indicating the accession number and a description of the item |  |

Numbers shall be written as small as possible while retaining legibility, the idea being to damage the object as little as possible. Tape of any kind may not be used to attach anything to an object.

### Data Entry

PastPerfect Software is the Society's database. A record for each accessioned item shall be created in the database. The software shall be backed up periodically, preferably on a weekly basis. A duplicate backup stored off site shall also be created periodically, preferably on a monthly basis. Information to be entered into the database shall depend on the category of the item:

*Object:* Accession #, Brief description / (Catalog record) Object name, Description, Home Location

*Archive:* Accession #, Brief description / (Catalog record) Object name, Scope & Content, Home Location

*Photograph:* Accession #, Brief description / (Catalog record) Object name, Photographer (if known)  
Description, Home Location

*Library:* Accession #, Brief description / (Catalog record) Object name, Author, Title, Publication date, Summary, Home Location

## *Care of Collections*

### Conservation

Accessioning Committee shall determine how best to clean objects to remove dirt, mold, spiderwebs, and insects. Items are cleaned minimally if cleaning shall harm the object.

Objects in the Society's collection shall be stored in a manner to provide optimum security, accessibility, and preservation. Whenever possible, they shall be protected from life-shortening forces such as excessive heat, cold, humidity, dryness, dust, ultra-violet light, insects, vermin, or improper handling.

### Storage

- Three dimensional items shall be stored with other similar objects in numbered boxes or bins.
- Literature that accompanies an object stored in a box or bin shall be stored in a vertical file; this storage shall be noted on the orange inventory card by a dot beside the accession number.
- Items too large to be stored in a bin shall be stored on a labeled shelf or shelving unit with other similar items.
- A filing system for paper items has been established with topic categories such as "People", "Businesses", "City", "Churches", "Organizations", "Legal Documents" etc. Within these categories, files shall be stored alphabetically.
- Photographs shall be stored in acid-free protective covers along with a written description and identifiers, then placed within the filing system whenever possible according to the subject of the photo.
- Books shall be stored on shelving units, sorted by topic.
- Ephemera such as certificates, greeting cards, maps, brochures, etc. shall be stored (depending on size and quantity) in boxes, within the filing system, or on shelves.

### Inventory

- Orange inventory cards listing all items stored in a box or bin shall be kept up to date.
- Orange inventory cards listing items stored on each shelf or shelving unit shall be kept up to date.

### ***Deaccessioning***

Deaccessioning is defined as the process of removing permanently from the collection accessioned objects.

### Criteria for removal

To be considered for deaccessioning, objects shall meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The object is outside the scope or purpose of the Museum and its collection policy.
- The object is irrelevant to the purposes of the Museum.
- The object has been lost or stolen and remains lost for more than two years.
- The object is one of many identical items in the Society's collection.
- The Society is unable to store or preserve the object properly.
- The object has deteriorated beyond its usefulness.
- The object is a reproduction or forgery that lacks any educational value.
- The object has accidentally been accessioned twice.

### Deaccession Procedure

An object shall be deaccessioned only upon the approval by a majority of the Accession Committee.

If the deaccessioned object was purchased by the Society, it may be disposed of in whatever manner the Accession Committee deems appropriate and most beneficial to the institution. It may be sold, traded, given outright, or discarded.

If the deaccessioned object was donated to the Society, it shall be given to another nonprofit educational institution whenever possible. Deaccessioned objects not transferred to another nonprofit educational institution shall be sold or donated for charity sale only in a manner that shall protect the interests, objectives, and legal status of the Society. The Society does not sanction the sale or gift of deaccessioned objects to its officers or directors. Funds realized from the sale of deaccessioned objects shall be used only to benefit the collection. Proceeds may not be used to fund general operating expenses.

### ***Non-Accessioned Materials***

Non-Accessioned materials are those items donated to the Society that do not a) fall within the collection policy guidelines, b) are part of an acquired collection but have little or no value either monetarily or aesthetically, c) are not worthy either by their physical state or nature to be accessioned as part of the permanent collection.

#### Disposition of Non-Accessioned Materials

Recommendation for non-accession of an object may be made to the Accession Committee by any person working to accession a donation.

Non-Accessioned materials may be: a) returned to the donor, b) donated to another tax-exempt educational institution, c) kept by the Society for administrative use (i.e. exhibit enhancement, office use), d) sold, e) destroyed.

### ***Loans***

#### Loans from the Society

Objects from the Society's collection may be loaned to other institutions with the approval of the Executive Board. A "Museum Loan Agreement" shall be signed by the borrower and a representative of the Society.

#### Loans to the Society

##### *Short-Term Loans*

- The Society shall have the authority to accept short-term loans of objects for the purpose of displaying them in a temporary exhibit.
- The Accession Committee or an ad hoc committee which has been established by the Society to create a temporary exhibit shall have the authority to decide what to accept for display in the exhibit.
- Loaned objects shall be in good enough condition so that they can be useful to the museum without straining the financial or technical resources for preservation and exhibition.
- Upon acceptance of a loaned object, a Short-Term Loan Agreement shall be completed by the donor and a member of the Museum staff.
- At the close of the temporary exhibit, loaned objects shall be returned to their owners promptly, and may not be added to the Society's permanent collection without express written consent of the owners.

### *Long-Term Loans*

Special arrangements may be made by the Executive Board for long term loans with written consent of the owner. Such loans shall be renewed in writing annually. If an item is left over ten years without contact or written renewal from the owner or his/her heirs, the Society shall consider the item abandoned and shall accession the item into the collection or dispose of it according to the Non-Accession Policy.

### *Access to the Collection*

The Society believes the collection shall be used to advance knowledge and therefore shall make it accessible to Museum visitors. A primary consideration of availability of items for examination and use shall be based upon the condition of the item and availability of other sources, copies, or information. Access to the collection is secondary to the preservation of the collection. No item from the collection may be removed from the premises without permission from a member of the Executive Board.

### *Approval and Revision Process*

This policy shall be approved by a majority vote of the Mascoutah Historical Society Executive Board. The Board shall review this policy annually, and revisions may be recommended at that time. Revisions require a majority acceptance by the Executive Board.

Initial Collections Management Policy approved July 11, 2021

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Colleen Hoercher, Secretary

Revised July 3, 2022