

McLean County Historical Society

COLLECTION POLICY

Purpose

In accordance with the Statement of Purpose, Article II of the Constitution, adopted by the McLean County Historical Society; it is the Mission of this society to educate the general public on the history of the people of McLean County by operating museums and libraries which provide exhibits, public programs and research collections; to develop publications; and to acquire and preserve collections which reflect the diversity of McLean County.

The McLean County Historical Society recognizes that it holds its collections in the public trust and is committed to maintaining professional standards as set forth by the American Association of Museums.

The intent of this policy is to direct the society in its functions. All previous collections policies are replaced by this document.

Forms used in carrying out these policies are attached and are considered integral to these policies

Objectives

The primary collecting objective of the society is to procure and preserve materials that improve the quality of exhibitions, research capabilities and educational activities.

There are four types of collections that the McLean County Historical Society maintains:

1. Museum

The museum collections are for preservation, scholarly research and interpretation. The collection consists of materials which document the growth and development of McLean County from the pre-historic period to the present and which represent McLean County's ethnic and racial history, people's relationship to their physical environment, political and economic divisions, the history of institutions and organizations and civic culture and iconography.

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

The museum collection consists of seven sub-collections:

1. **Household:** Objects representing home life, particularly of McLean County, to include furnishings, tools, appliances and decorative objects from 1830 to the present.
2. **Personal:** Clothing, toiletries, adornment and personal belongings, particularly of McLean County prior, which represent area lifestyle and taste from 1830 to the present.
3. **Military:** Objects comprising weapons, uniforms and accouterments of American conflicts of the 19th and 20th, particularly of McLean County participants.
4. **Farming:** Agricultural and livestock implements, machinery and tools, particularly of McLean County, from 1830-1940.
5. **Art:** Fine art which reflects/represents the landscape and people of McLean County, fine art works by local artists, folk art by local artists and folk art which reflects/represents the traditional crafts of the area.
6. **Native American:** Native American objects of the pre-historic period through 1830 excluding human remains, objects of cultural patrimony and sacred artifacts.
7. **Work:** Objects produced by or used in the operation of business, industry and government, particularly of McLean County from 1830 to the present.

2. Archives

The archives consist of printed and written material that relates to the history of McLean County. The purpose of this collection is to maintain, for public and museum staff use, materials which provide information useful for the study of McLean County local history from 1830 to the present. The Librarian/Archivist is responsible for the care and management of the collection including identifying, acquiring and cataloging additions to the collection and recommendations for deaccessioning from the collection.

This collection includes:

- a. Personal correspondence relating to people and events in McLean County and military and travel experiences of McLean County residents.
- b. Business records of small businesses, particularly correspondence, letter books, day books, journals and product photographs.
- c. Manuscripts relating to McLean County history or written by residents of the county.
- d. Club records of local organizations including correspondence. Yearbooks, program manuscripts, minutes and membership lists.
- e. Maps of McLean County towns, roads, and surveys, and also general maps of Illinois.
- f. Printed ephemera produced by and for local businesses, schools, political campaigns and organizations including: flyers, cards, brochures, posters and pamphlets.
- g. Photographs of local people, buildings and activities, and also of activities of McLean County residents elsewhere which includes art photography, photo journalism and postcards.
- h. Periodicals of local businesses, newspapers, newsletters, and magazines, sample copies of nationally distributed newspapers and magazines.
- I. Sound and video recordings of interviews and local events, musical and theatrical performances. Samples of nationally distributed musical forms such as blues, big-band, classical, country western and rock and roll.
- j. Digital electronic materials relating to local electronic Aweb@ sites and digitalized copies of any of the above materials.
- k. Microforms including microfilm and microfiche of local records, newspapers and federal and state records relating to McLean County and copies of archival material of local interest held elsewhere.

3. Library

The library consists of a non-circulating collection of printed works that relate to the history of McLean County as set forth in the Mission Statement of the Society. The purpose of this collection is to maintain, for public and museum staff use, books, pamphlets and periodicals which provide research information needed for the study of McLean County local history from 1830 to the present and for research on Midwestern American material, intellectual and popular culture and social history. A significant part of the collection relates to the study of genealogy and is separately owned by either the McLean County Genealogical Society or the Letitia Greene Stevenson Chapter of the N.S.D.A.R.. The Librarian/Archivist is responsible for the care and management of the collection, including identifying, acquiring and cataloging additions to the collection and recommendations for deaccessioning from the collection.

The collection is composed of:

- a. Local histories; all works concerning McLean County with two copies kept on the shelf and two copies kept in reserve; works on all central Illinois communities and counties with priority given to counties adjacent to McLean County; local histories of areas of source migration to McLean County.
- b. Genealogical works on McLean County families, institutional and vital records, census records and church publications. Works on methodology, sources on localities to the south or east of McLean County, exchange genealogy periodicals, published census and non-McLean County family histories are collected by the Genealogical Society and DAR.
- c. Works on material and popular culture and intellectual, technical and social history which support the analysis and interpretation of the museum artifact collections. This includes catalogs, cookbooks, works on etiquette, housekeeping, architecture, folklore, medicine, women, children, education and transportation.
- e. Directories and annuals of cities, rural residents, schools, professional, social and religious organizations.
- f. Works on any subject written by McLean County residents.
- g. Works reflecting the educational development of the community to include academic works from Illinois State University or Illinois Wesleyan University including all published works written by faculty and students in the 19th century and samples of work produced in the 20th century.
- h. General reference works including dictionaries and encyclopedias published in 20 year intervals, atlases and

- specialized works such as historical dictionaries.
- I. General histories limited to a few works needed for contextual reference of collections and events or movements directly affecting McLean County such as the World=s Fair of 1893, 1904 and 1933.
 - j. Military histories, histories of units in which McLean County residents served, American Civil War works, works on military conflicts in American history including the Acold war.@
 - k. Biographies, compendiums and individual works that feature McLean County or central Illinois residents.
 - l. Lincoln, only works donated to the collection. This is a low priority.
 - m. Religious works, sermons by McLean County residents or sermons delivered in McLean County, hymnals used by all religious sects in McLean County, sacred books of religions practiced in McLean County, historical works on religions practiced in McLean County which reference this county, 19th century works of Quakerism, reference works on religions practiced in McLean County, samples of Roman Catholic missals and prayer books and Bibles representing languages read or spoken in McLean County of the period 1700 to the present, binding types, and Bibles owned by local notable families.
 - n. Agriculture, works on 19th century American agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture year books, State of Illinois publications, University of Illinois College of Agriculture extension publications and works referencing practices and technologies relevant to McLean County agriculture.

4. Education Collection

A small collection of duplicate and reproduction artifacts is maintained as tools for teaching people to understand how and why McLean County evolved and developed as it did. This collection provides (makes available) sensory experiences in the education process. The collection is managed by the Director of Education in consultation with the Director of Collections and Exhibits.

Acquisition

Definition: for the purpose of this policy, acquisition is defined as the discovery, preliminary evaluation, taking custody of and acknowledging receipt of materials and objects.

ACQUISITION CRITERIA

1. The materials collected must be relevant to and consistent with the purposes and activities of the Society.
2. The Society can 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.
3. Items will have permanency in the collections as long as they retain their physical integrity, their identity, and their authenticity, and/or as long as they remain useful for the purposes of the Society.
4. The materials, if possible, should be documented as to provenance. Provenance is not an issue for library or archival materials.
5. All moral, legal and ethical implications of an acquisition must be considered.
6. All donations of materials are considered outright and unconditional gifts to be used at the discretion of the Society. Title to all objects acquired shall be free and clear, without restriction to use or future disposition. The Society assumes copyright on unpublished materials in its care, including photographs.
7. Appropriate documents of transfer must be obtainable at the time of acquisition.
8. Considerations in regards to duplicate objects already in the collections and foreseeable use of the materials must also be considered.

MEANS OF ACQUISITION

Materials may be acquired only through the appropriate staff person responsible for each collection. The Librarian/Archivist is responsible for acquisition of Library and Archival collection materials. The Curator of Collections & Exhibits is responsible for acquisition of museum collection materials. The Director of Education is responsible for acquisition of education collection materials. The Executive Director has authority to accept material for all Society collections.

Materials maybe acquired by purchase, commission, bequest, gift, specified loan (see loans) exchange, field collection or abandonment. 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 Society 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 Society will develop its artifact collections primarily through the process of gift and bequest.

The Society subscribes to the provisions of the Native American Graves Protections Act.

The Society subscribes to the provisions of the International Conference of Museum=s Convention of 1970. The Society 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.

ACQUISITION PROCEDURES

No staff member may obligate the Society to accept any object not consonant with the intent or spirit of the acquisitions policy without approval of the Director or the Board of Directors= Operations Committee.

No staff member shall offer appraisals of the monetary value of materials or objects to donors, or reveal the Society's insurance value, for the purpose of establishing a fair market value of gifts offered to the Society. Donors desiring to take an income tax deduction must obtain an independent appraisal.

Staff members will not appraise or otherwise place a monetary value on objects casually brought to the Society.

As a public service, staff may attempt to attribute, identify or authenticate items brought to the Society by the public. Such attributions, identifications and/or authentications shall be for the sole use of that individual. All materials deposited with the Society for these purposes shall have identification and be covered by insurance by the owner. Such objects are not to be deposited on Society premises longer than thirty days. The Society accepts no responsibility for notification of individuals for the return of such deposits. Items not claimed within sixty days of deposit are considered abandoned property and as such are subject to state law pertaining to same. Abandoned property, of negligible value, may be disposed of by the Director. Property of greater than negligible value may be disposed under law by the Executive Committee.

ACCESSIONING/REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Definition: Accessioning is defined as the process of accepting items into the permanent collections of the Society.

All materials shall be processed under procedures and policies adopted by the Board of Directors for each collection and shall be kept in accordance with accepted professional standards. Duplicate copies of records will be kept in a safe place off-site.

Library/Archival Collections

Library and archival materials shall be acquired in accordance with the general acquisitions guidelines set forth elsewhere in this document.

The authority to acquire library or archival materials rests with the Librarian/Archivist and/or the Executive Director, within the restrictions of the annual budget approved by the Board of Directors or with its consent. Materials valued at less than \$100 may be acquired or purchased by the Librarian/Archivist. Materials to be purchased that cost between \$100 and \$1000 require the authorization of the Executive Director. Purchases in excess of \$1000 require approval of the Board of Directors Executive Committee.

Publications purchased by staff members for use outside the Library but purchased with Society funds are considered part of the Library Collection.

Accessioning Archival Material

Materials that are badly worn, deteriorated or in disrepair will not be accessioned into the Archives Collection

unless they possess extraordinary historical value.

Materials accepted for inclusion into the Archives Collection shall be accessioned and receive preliminary processing at the time of their receipt. The procedure shall include the assignment of a permanent accession number (consisting of date and series information), suitable physical storage, a review of possible related materials, and brief descriptive cataloging. The permanent accession number should be noted on the *Gift Agreement* and accompany all subsequent processing or cataloging. Old accession numbers (consisting of numbers within a round MCHS stamp, white numbered labels, or numbers written in black marker) shall also be included in any processing and cataloging updating of previously accessioned materials.

Detailed processing and cataloging of archival materials should take place as soon as feasible after receipt, under the supervision of the Librarian/Archivist, and following accepted archival standards and procedures.

Major collections shall have appropriate entries made and submitted for inclusion in the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC).

Accessioning Library Material

Materials added to the Library Collection shall be accessioned as soon as possible after their receipt, and cataloged according to current American Library Association procedures and OCLC guidelines. Computerized records of new acquisitions shall be sent to the appropriate state library authority on a regular basis according to contractual agreement.

Museum Collections

Authority to acquire museum materials is delegated to the Curator of Collections and Exhibits and/or the Executive Director. For the purpose of purchase, authorization to acquire materials with a value of less than \$1,000 is delegated to the Curator of Collections & Exhibits and the Executive Director. Museum acquisitions shall be made within annual budgets approved by the Board of Directors. The purchase of objects, having a value of \$1,000 or more, shall be approved formally or informally by the Executive Committee, prior to purchase. Appropriate documentation of purchases shall be kept as part the Society's permanent records. Ownership commences at the time of payment.

A gift agreement must be completed and signed by the object owner or his agent and by the Curator of Collections & Exhibits or the Executive Director for all museum donations. Ownership commences at the time the gift agreement is signed.

Ownership of objects received from other institutions commences when the society has accepted and received the object.

Ownership of abandoned materials commences in accordance with the legal statutes of the State of Illinois as pertaining to receipt of objects by abandonment.

All items acquired shall be accessioned and adequately documented according to the Society's registration procedures for museum collections.

CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF COLLECTIONS

The museum will acquire only those materials that can be properly cared for and maintained by the Society using the professional standards established by professional bodies including American Association of Museums. Care and maintenance will ensure that:

- a. Condition of all items will be noted during the accessioning process.
- b. All materials shall be stored in a manner to provide optimal security, accessibility and preservation.
- c. Materials in need of restoration shall be restored as soon as possible.
- d. Major restoration 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.
- e. Materials, whether in use or in storage, shall be protected from life-shortening forces such as excessive

heat, cold, humidity, dryness, dust, ultraviolet light, insects, vermin or improper handling.

DEACCESSIONING

Definition: Deaccessioning is the process of removing permanently from the collections accessioned materials that are duplicate, fail to meet collection criteria or are otherwise inappropriate to the collection. Because the Society holds its collections in the public trust, the deaccessioning process shall be cautious, deliberate and completed with the utmost integrity.

Deaccessioning Criteria - Museum and Archive Collections

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

- a. The material is irrelevant to the purpose of the Society.
- B. The material lacks physical integrity.
- c. The material has failed to retain its identity or authenticity, or has been lost or stolen for longer than two years.
- d. The material is duplicated in the Society's collections.
- e. The Society is unable to preserve it properly.
- f. The material has doubtful potential utilization in the foreseeable future
- g. The object has accidentally been accessioned twice.

Deaccession Procedure - Museum, Library and Archive Collections

1. Written documentation (using the board-approved deaccession sheet) on the material and the criteria for deaccessioning shall be presented by the appropriate staff person to: first, the executive Director, second, the Operations Committee and finally (with the approval of the above) to the Board of Directors at a regular or special meeting. The minutes of the Board meeting shall reflect the board's final decision. At this time the Director of Education shall review the deaccessioned material and may transfer the object(s) into the education collection.
2. After deaccessioning is approved, the material will be disposed of in the most appropriate manner. If the material was purchased, it may be disposed of in whatever manner the Board of Director's deems appropriate and most beneficial to the institution--it may be sold by bid, traded, offered at public auction, given outright or discarded. If the material was donated, consideration will first be given to placing the material, through gift, exchange, or sales, in another tax-exempt educational institution. Deaccessioned materials not disposed of in this manner normally will be sold at advertised public markets and only in a manner that will protect the interests, objectives and legal status of the institution. Disposal of items of less than \$250 in value will be conducted by the Executive Director and Director of Collections and Exhibits or the Librarian/Archivist.
3. The Society does not sanction the sale or gift of deaccessioned objects to its employees, officers, members of its Board of Directors or to their representatives.
4. Funds received from the sale of deaccessioned materials from the collections will be used only for conservation of collections and purchases for collections. Proceeds may not be used for general operating expenses.
5. Records of all deaccessioned materials and the method of disposal shall become part of the Society's permanent record.

Disposition of Non-Accessioned Materials

Definition: Non-accessioned materials are those items donated to the society or abandoned which do not (1) fall within the collection policy guidelines, (2) are part of an acquired collection but have little or no value either monetary or aesthetic, (3) are not worthy either by their physical state or nature to be accessioned as part of the permanent collection.

Discretionary judgement on the part of staff is required for disposition of non-accessioned materials. Non-

accessioned materials 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 non-accessioned materials will be made according to the standards established for deaccessioned materials.

LOANS

Definition: A loan is 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 Society lends materials from its collections only to museums, historical societies, libraries or other institutions that, in the Society's judgement, can comply with the conditions set forth in the loan agreement. The Executive Director and the Librarian 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 Museum 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 Society 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 his heirs for the return of the item(s), the Society will consider the item(s) abandoned and will accession or dispose of the item(s) according to the Non-accession Policy.

ACCESS

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

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 are cataloged on OCLC and are accessible through the Library's catalog, as well as through regional, statewide, and national computerized databases.

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 an *Application for Use of Archival Materials* 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 Society 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 Society and its staff.

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

Arrangements for research and reproduction of photographs and other materials owned by the Society may be made through the Librarian/Archivist or the Executive Director, according to the current printed *Fee and Service Schedule* issued by the Society. 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. The collections are only available for serious work by students, museum professionals or individuals who are engaged in research. A fee may be charged for access for lengthy periods of time. Intellectual access to the collections may be gained through the accession card file. Arrangements for the use of the file must also be made in advance with the Curator.

INSURANCE

The historical collections of the Society shall be insured for all perils on the museum premises at a level not lower than \$1,000,000. The collections will be insured while in transit at a level not to exceed \$10,000. 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.

ATTACHMENTS

The following forms are attached and are an integral part of this document

- a. Gift Agreement
- b. Outgoing Loan Form
- c. Incoming Loan Form

This Policy was voted upon and approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on the _____ Day of _____ 1996.

Attest

Barbara Allsup, Secretary