



Preserving our past.
Enriching our future.

GLENGARRY PIONEER MUSEUM

SUBJECT: Collections Management Policy

APPROVED: 21 March 2011

UPDATED: 13 November 2014

X REFERENCE TO OTHER POLICY DOCUMENTS: Conservation

THE GLENGARRY PIONEER MUSEUM (2013)

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

VISION: The Glengarry Pioneer Museum (2013), hereafter referred to as the Museum, is a steward of the history and heritage of Glengarry County and is committed to communicating the unique stories of this area in an inclusive, engaging and professional manner.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to provide the Museum Board, staff and volunteers with direction, and reinforce the standard of management necessary to fulfill the organizational responsibilities of the Museum. The artifacts in the Museum's collection are a tangible representation of the community's heritage. The artifacts are held in perpetual trust for this community. To retain their intellectual and historical value they must be properly cared for and documented. The Museum will demonstrate its stewardship and facilitate access to collections, and the information they hold, by maintaining a well organized, managed and documented collection.

SCOPE: This policy pertains to staff, Board members, and all others working at or for the Museum, be they permanent, part time, summer-seasonal, or contract employees, interns, students, researchers or volunteers.

POLICY:

1.0 HUMAN RESOURCES

- All museum staff (paid or volunteer) will closely follow the ethical guidelines set out in the Canadian Museum Association code of ethics with respect to collections activity.

- All staff will have proper training in the handling of objects in accordance with recognized museum and archival standards and practices.
- Staff is responsible for ensuring that anyone who handles the collection is made aware of the Museum's procedures and policies.

2.0 ACQUISITIONS

Collections Mandate

“The Glengarry Pioneer Museum has been established to tell the story of the pioneers who settled in the Glengarry County area from the time of first settlement until 1915. The Museum will research, collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret a collection of historical artifacts.”

Priority will be given to collecting those artifacts, and any associated documents, relating to Glengarry County, but extending into neighboring counties, if they had a direct historical connection to a community in Glengarry.

Consideration will be given to artifacts that are outside this time period, particularly if they are of extreme importance to the history of the community.

2.1 Ethics

The Museum is committed to conducting its operations in an open, honest and ethical manner. The Museum Board has adopted the Canadian Museum Association's Ethics Guidelines (<http://museums.in1touch.org/uploaded/web/docs/ethicsguidelines.pdf>) to assist Officers, Members and staff should they encounter ethical dilemmas and conflicts that must be resolved in a balanced manner, considering both the needs of The Museum and the broader public interest.

2.2 Authority

The Curator/Administrator, in coordination with the Acquisitions Committee has the final authority for the approval of acquisitions, but will continue, unless otherwise stated, to work in close association with, and take into consideration the opinions of, the Museum Board.

2.3 Conditions of Acceptance

The Museum will accept artifacts and associated material on the basis of historical significance, research, education and exhibition value, condition and duplication within the collection.

Significance

- An artifact will be accepted if it aids in the fulfillment of the mission and collections mandate of the Museum, and if the object's significance is based on its connection to Glengarry County - in that it was made, or used here, found to be representative of the County or somehow connected to the County.

Condition

- An artifact will be accepted if the condition of the object is deemed to be in "good" condition or better by the Curator/Administrator and it requires minimal conservation treatment.
- Appropriate storage and potential exhibit spaces are available to accommodate the artifact in order to maintain its condition and ensure its preservation.

Interpretive Use

- An artifact will be accepted into the Core Collection or Education Collection if the object aids in the interpretation of the Museum's Mission and Statement of Purpose, or specifically to the interpretation of a particular building on-site.
- The Museum has established a two-tiered system in object acquisition to distinguish between possible uses of the objects. The permanent Core Collection will be preserved, stored, displayed and researched with minimal alteration and maximum conservation measures to the best of the museum's abilities. The Education Collection reaches out to the public in a more direct manner and allows for a more hands-on experience with artifacts. These items may be used in demonstrations, taken off-site to schools or other groups and generally "used".
- Objects collected for the Education Collection will be catalogued, stored, and conserved in a manner distinct from the permanent Core Collection, but in accordance with basic care and handling procedures. The placement and classification of all acquisitions to either the Core or Education Collection should be predetermined and known to all parties.

Terms

- An artifact will be accepted if the object has no conditions or terms attached. Donated objects are accepted based on the premise that the object becomes an unconditional gift in perpetuity.

Provenance

- An artifact will be accepted if there is reliable information regarding its provenance. The Museum will ensure that legal title can be conveyed in written form for all material collected, and that the authenticity, source and provenance of the object are fully documented and ethically acceptable.

Duplicates will be accepted provided that:

- The object meets the standards of acceptance;
- The object(s) in the collection it duplicates is unique or rare and must be protected;
- The duplicate is in better condition than the object currently in the collection;
- The duplicate is not a reproduction, and it has not been restored or altered;
- The duplicate could have a use in the Education Collection.

Reproductions will be accepted provided that:

- The object has the true appearance of being part of the collection;
- The object is either donated or is affordable;
- The object in the collection it replicates is of such value that it must be protected;
- The object is catalogued into the Education Collection with note of its status as a reproduction.

3.0 MODE OF ACQUISITION

Artifacts are acquired by donation, bequest, or purchase.

- Donations and bequests must be approved by the Acquisitions Committee and the Curator/Administrator.
- Any requests for tax receipts will result in the appraisal of the artifact at fair market value. If the fair market value is believed to exceed \$1,000, a qualified appraiser at arm's-length from the Museum must conduct the appraisal.
- Artifacts will be sought out and purchased only if they are affordable and represent an important need within the collection.

4.0 DOCUMENTATION

All acquisitions of artifacts into either the Core Collection or Education Collection shall be documented in keeping with accepted museum practices. Consideration will be given to the transfer of legal title, contextual information, provenance, and details on fabrication and function of an object. Such information is essential for collections management and future interpretation of the object.

The Museum will continue to fully document its current collection, which includes updating the computer database and completing the artifact inventory, ensuring that digital photographs are included and the database is current, relevant and relates directly to the collection. Managing the documentation – past, and present, is a key factor in maintaining the collection. Organized documentation will help steer the future of collection development, research, and conservation, all the while providing better access to the holdings.

For detailed procedures on documentation, refer to the Museum's Collections Management Procedural Guide.

4.1 Guidelines

Temporary Deposits

- Temporary Custody Receipts will be made and signed upon arrival of any artifact offered for donation. As much contact information, provenance and context must be recorded at this time. These items will be stored in a secure location and handled in accordance with proper museum standards.
- In the event that a donation is not accepted into the collection, for any reason, it must be picked up within 60 days of the time when the donor has been informed, or it will be considered abandoned property to be disposed of as the museum deems fit.

Accession Records

- Once the artifact has been accepted into the collection from the Curator/Administrator and the Acquisitions Committee, an accession number will be assigned from the Accession Register for that year and the catalogue process will begin.
- Two Deed of Gift forms, officially transferring ownership, will be mailed to the donor for signature, with one to be retained and one returned to the museum to be included in the records.

- All paper documentation pertaining to the object and the donation will be stored together.

Cataloguing

- The museum will record all information pertaining to an artifact, including its description, provenance, maker, condition, current location, etc. Any changes in the artifact's location or condition will be properly noted on the appropriate documents.

Loans

- Incoming and outgoing loans of any artifact will be properly documented with a Loan Form and a condition report, which will be made before departure and upon return.
- Insurance will be the responsibility of the lending institution.
- Loans will only be made to other museums or locations that have a secure and adequate environment to exhibit the artifact.
- A clear timeframe will be provided in writing for the return of artifacts on loan.

De-accessions

To permanently remove artifacts from the collection, the Museum will follow the *Ethics Guidelines* provided by the Canadian Museums Association.

Disposals can strengthen and refine the quality of a museum collection; but generally there is a strong presumption against the disposal of accessioned collections to which the museum has acquired legal title.

Full records will be kept on all de-accessions, including method and date of disposal, and the item will not be deleted from the database, but will be marked as “de-accessioned”. All identifying information located on an object must be removed once the object has been approved for de-accession.

- Criteria for considering the de-accession of an artifact include:
 - a. The item is outside the scope of the Collections Mandate and Mission of the Museum;
 - b. There are duplicates in the collection;
 - c. The item has deteriorated beyond repair;
 - d. The item poses a physical hazard or danger to health;

- e. The item is determined to be a fake and is not necessary for the Education Collection;
- f. The Museum is unable to preserve the item properly.
- Before de-accessioning an artifact, it must be determined that:
 - a. The Museum has clear title to the objects proposed for disposal and/or in the case of undocumented material, that it has made a serious and documented effort to locate the owners;
 - b. There are no restrictions associated with the material from when it was acquired;
 - c. It is not suitable for the Education Collection;
 - d. The de-accession has been approved by the Museum Board, on the recommendation of the Acquisitions Committee.
- Methods of disposal, in order of preference:
 - a. It is preferable that artifacts remain in the public domain whenever possible. The Museum will first offer the artifact to another public museum or appropriate public institution, as a gift. Out of respect for the donor, the Museum will notify the original donor or their heirs of this desire to transfer the artifact to a more suitable location.
 - b. As a less favourable, secondary resort, the museum may sell an artifact at a publicly advertised auction, run at arms length from the Museum. It is unethical for the Museum to dispose of collections in order to provide funds for purposes other than for the acquisition of, or direct care of, museum collections. To avoid any conflict of interest, any artifact offered for sale at auction shall not be purchased by any staff, volunteer, or Board Member of the Museum. It is, however, acceptable for the original donor to purchase the object for fair market value at a public auction, regardless of having received a charitable receipt.
 - c. Destruction of an artifact, although least desirable, is a viable option if the object is in such poor condition that conservation is not feasible and it is no longer useful for teaching purposes. Such material should be permanently and completely destroyed before witnesses, or disposed of in a fashion that ensures it cannot be reconstructed in any way. Objects posing a hazard to the collection, staff, volunteers, or visitors should be safely destroyed or appropriately removed without consideration of other methods of disposal.

5.0 INSURANCE

The Museum's insurance policy is with the Economical Mutual Insurance Company through Rozon Insurance Brokers Ltd. in Lancaster.

The Museum will maintain a close relationship with the Insurance Broker to ensure the museum has adequate coverage for its events, programs, collections, buildings and staff.

6.0 POLICY REVIEW

This Collections Management Policy will be reviewed by the Museum Board, every three years. Amendments may be required at other times and must be approved by all appropriate committees and staff.