

**THE SUN PRAIRIE HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

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INTRODUCTION

The Collections Management Policy of the Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum (SPHLM) defines how the museum's mission is pursued through collections activity. The policy guides the Board, staff and volunteers in carrying out their responsibilities for collections development, care, and access. This policy should be reviewed regularly and includes ethical obligations that transcend legal requirements.

MISSION STATEMENT

As stated in the City of Sun Prairie Ordinance Chapter 2.76.010, the mission of the Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum is:

- A. The preservation and interpretation of the history of Sun Prairie and the surrounding area in order to effectuate a community which understands and has pride in its roots to the past.
- B. The preservation of written records, photographic records, artifacts, and the documentation of the physical landscape changed by the history of settlement.
- C. The collection, preservation, maintenance, interpretation, and display of historical collections of the development of city government, surrounding townships and daily life of the citizens of Sun Prairie to the community, in order to promote awareness and understanding of the rich history and heritage of the area.
- D. Connecting the community with its historical roots through outreach exhibits, community and school programs, tours, and displays.

SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS

The Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum collects items that relate to local history. This includes items that were created in Sun Prairie, that reflect the history of Sun Prairie's diverse residents over time, or that have a direct and important connection to an event in local history or to a prominent Sun Prairie resident.

SPHLM curates two types of collections for which collections standards and procedures vary: permanent and education.

The Permanent Collection holds artifacts with the highest interpretive and historical value that SPHLM plans to preserve indefinitely and for which the highest standards of care and processing are implemented. Permanent Collection items are subject to formal accessioning and deaccessioning procedures as defined in this policy. The Permanent Collection includes four broad categories that differentiate items based primarily on their physical characteristics.

1. ARTIFACT COLLECTION

The artifact collection includes three-dimensional objects, including but not limited to furniture, tools, ceramics and glass, textiles and costumes, paintings and other works of art.

2. PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION

The photograph and media collection includes photographic prints and negatives, as well as sound and film recordings.

3. MANUSCRIPT AND ARCHIVES COLLECTION

The manuscripts and archives collection includes unpublished materials created by individuals, organizations and government entities. Items include personal papers, correspondence, diaries and scrapbooks as well as business and organizational records.

4. LIBRARY COLLECTION

The library collection includes published books, newspapers, and other printed materials. Items include published histories of Sun Prairie and surrounding areas, materials about local organizations or residents, and books authored by Sun Prairie residents. The collection also includes locally produced publications like phone books, yearbooks and local newspapers. Additional resources include atlases, plat books, and individual unbound maps of Sun Prairie. As with all Permanent Collection items, library items are non-circulating.

The Education Collection includes objects created or acquired for hands-on educational access, exhibits and programming, and research reference. Such items may duplicate items in the permanent collection, be of lesser quality or historical significance, or be intended for short-term use. Education Collection items are not accessioned, are provided lower standards of care, and are not subject to formal accessioning and deaccessioning procedures. These items are minimally inventoried to ensure they are not mistaken for Permanent Collection items. The Education Collection includes three broad categories:

1. HANDS-ON MATERIALS

Hands-on materials are items designated for frequent hands-on use by the public. Such items will eventually be consumed through this use and may be disposed of when no longer suitable for this purpose.

2. EXHIBIT AND PROGRAM MATERIALS

Exhibit and program materials, sometimes referred to as props, are pieces used in exhibitions or events for interpretive purposes. Such items may be disposed of when no longer suitable for this purpose.

3. REFERENCE MATERIALS

Reference materials include research papers, articles, notes, and other resources derived from the Museum's collections and/or compiled and shared by Museum staff, volunteers, or members of the public. Such items offer context to the Museum's collections and are used by staff and volunteers to conduct research at the request of members of the public.

COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT

The Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum develops collections through a process of ongoing acquisition and deaccessioning. SPHLM maintains accession records that document the acquisition and provenance of each item. Accession records may include donor correspondence, certificates of gift, photographs, appraisals or other documentation related to the donor or item.

COLLECTIONS TEAM

The Collections Team is a group of staff and volunteers dedicated to guiding the SPHLM's collection management decisions. The team:

1. Reviews proposed acquisitions and recommends accessions into the collections.
2. Reviews proposed deaccessions from the collections and recommends disposition of items selected for deaccessioning.
3. Develops and implements policies and procedures related to collections management.
4. Advocates for the resources necessary to meet professional standards for collections management.

The Collections Team will convene on an as-needed basis. A brief report of Collections Team activities is regularly presented to the Board.

ACQUISITION

SPHLM acquires items for the collections by means of gift, donation, adoption of orphaned items, purchase, exchange, bequest, fieldwork acquisition, or any other transaction by which title passes to the Museum. Authority to acquire Museum items is delegated to the staff within the confines of this policy.

Museum items are frequently acquired through gifts or donations. Donors desiring to take an income tax deduction must obtain an independent appraisal from an authorized appraiser. Appraisal of any acquisition shall be the responsibility of the donor. Appraisals may not be done by staff, board members, volunteers, Museum members or their families. Staff and board members may not recommend appraisers.

Acquisition may occur by the adoption of orphaned items that meet the Museum's accessioning criteria. Orphaned items, sometimes referred to as items found in the collection, are those items with no identifying information and no characteristics that might connect them to existing documentation. With orphaned items, there is no evidence held by the SPHLM that someone else owns these items.

The Museum Director is authorized to purchase items of a value less than \$250. Purchases beyond that designated amount must be brought before the Museum Board for approval. Money for the acquisition of items can only come from the Museum's special revenue fund and not from the general operating budget.

Items to be acquired through exchange with another institution and items bequeathed to the Museum are to be brought before the Museum Board for approval.

No staff, volunteer, or board member may obligate the Museum for the acceptance of any item not consistent with the intent or spirit of this policy.

ACCESSIONING

Accessioning is the act of making an item part of the permanent collection. Items offered to the Museum must meet the following criteria before accessioning can take place:

1. Does the item document the history of the city or its residents?
Items must contribute to the understanding and interpretation of Sun Prairie history and be consistent with the purposes of the Museum as stated in the Mission.
2. Can the museum properly care for the item?
The Museum must be able to adequately provide for exhibit or storage to ensure the item is protected, preserved according to professional standards, and available for Museum purposes.
3. Do we have full background information on the item?
The origin, ownership, and chain of custody of the item is documented to prove provenance and relevance to Sun Prairie history.
4. Will we have full ownership of the item?
The item must be an unrestricted gift with proper documentation, to be used at the discretion of the Museum.
5. Is the item in good condition?
The item must be in good to excellent physical condition. Exceptions will be made only for items of significant historical value.

6. Does the item duplicate or complement existing holdings?
Duplicate items are typically not accepted. Exceptions may apply to replace a lower quality item or for use in the Education Collection. Items that complement or fill gaps in existing collections are typically suitable for accessioning unless the above criteria are not met.

Museum staff may decline to acquire offered items if those items do not meet the above criteria. Museum staff may also accept items for uses other than addition to the permanent collection or education collection.

DEACCESSIONING

Deaccessioning is the permanent removal of an item from the Museum's collection. Reasons for deaccessioning may be:

1. Inconsistent with the Museum's mission and scope of collections
2. Not useful for research, exhibition, or educational purposes
3. Physically deteriorated or creates risk or hazard to individuals or other items in the collections
4. Duplicate of or inferior quality to similar items in the collections
5. Beyond the capacity of the Museum to adequately maintain
6. Lacking authenticity or proper documentation

APPLICATION FOR DEACCESSIONING

Consideration of any item for deaccessioning should be brought to the attention of the Collections Team by staff. The item will be presented with object ID, object name, description, accession number, donor/source, how acquired, the terms under which the item was accepted (typically a Certificate of Gift) and reasons for deaccessioning. Deaccessioning must be permissible based on the terms under which an item was accepted. If an item is orphaned or abandoned property, the Museum adheres to Wis. Stat. § 171.30-33 and other applicable legal and ethical considerations.

The Collections Team will review the application for deaccessioning and recommend approval or disapproval of the deaccession, along with suggested disposition methods for deaccessioned items. The Team's recommendations will be presented to the Board for final approval or disapproval.

DISPOSITION OF DEACCESSIONED ITEMS

The Collections Team will recommend methods for staff to use in deaccession using the following options, in order of preference:

1. Transfer to Education Collection.
2. Gift or exchange to another museum, library, archive or educational/research institution.
3. Sale through public auction. No advertising should reflect ownership by the SPHLM. No private sale between individuals is permitted. No sale, gift, or disposition may be made to any staff, volunteer, or board member of the SPHLM.
4. Partial or total destruction or disposal. This pertains to items that are badly deteriorated, damaged beyond reasonable conservation, inherently hazardous, and/or items determined to be of little or no value.

Proceeds realized from the sale a deaccessioned item may only be used for the direct care of collections or the purchase of new acquisitions.

INCOMING LOANS FOR EXHIBITION

SPHLM may borrow items from private sources and public institutions for its own exhibitions or programs. SPHLM does not own title to such items and does not intend to accession them. SPHLM exercises the same degree of care for items on loan at SPHLM as it does for items in its own collections (except that SPHLM may provide special insurance for items on loan and satisfy other conditions which are imposed by the lending source as requirements for the loan of items to SPHLM). The terms and conditions under which incoming loans are accepted may be subject to approval by the Museum Board.

COLLECTIONS CARE

The Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum maintains physical control of its collections through preservation, replacement, insurance, and documentation. Staff monitors the condition of the collection and is responsible for training volunteers to maintain collections. Staff informs the Museum Board of collections care priorities and requests Board approval of projects that require a commitment of unbudgeted resources.

PRESERVATION

SPHLM strives to prevent deterioration or loss of collections while in storage, on exhibition, in research areas, or in transit, in the following ways.

1. Loss from factors like temperature, humidity, dust, light, mold, and insect infestation is minimized through building maintenance and the mechanical, electronic, and storage systems.
2. Loss from careless handling is minimized through established rules and procedures that authorize the person or persons who can handle collections and how they are handled. Staff is authorized to deny users access to the collections when careless handling or other negligence is observed.
3. Loss from theft is minimized through staff supervision, electronic security and surveillance systems, and other security procedures that monitor patrons and staff.
4. Loss from fire, flood, and other emergencies and disasters is prevented through established emergency response plans and procedures.

INSURANCE

Insurance of the SPHLM facilities and collections will always be carried and premiums kept current. The type of insurance protection for loss will be at the discretion of the City of Sun Prairie but shall be valued at fair market value. Valuations of the collections will be determined by outside certified appraisers according to guidelines by the insurance carrier. Valuations of the collections will be updated as required by the insurance carrier.

SPHLM does not insure items on the premises that are not part of the permanent collections. Insurance on objects brought to the Museum for research, possible gift, or other purposes will be the responsibility of the depositor.

SPHLM does not substitute insurance coverage for responsible collections care.

DOCUMENTATION

Records and inventories of the SPHLM will be maintained by the staff according to the best museum practices. SPHLM creates, holds and maintains documentation of collections development, care and access.

1. Collections development documentation includes accession and deaccession records, including receipts, donor information, provenance, conditions of acquisition, and methods of disposal.
2. Collections care documentation includes inventory records documenting location, physical condition and storage facilities reports, treatment reports and appraisals.
3. Collections access documentation includes exhibition loan agreements, reproduction and publication records, and other permissions for use.

COLLECTIONS ACCESS

The Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum encourages wide access to its collections through examination, exhibition, reproduction and publication. Access may be restricted because of resource limitations, care requirements or other considerations. Appropriate fees for access are established by the Museum Board on the recommendation of staff.

RESEARCH

Collections are available for research at SPHLM by special arrangement with staff. Copies of items in the collection may be requested for off-site research.

1. Rules for handling are established and enforced by staff.
2. Use of an item may be restricted due to its condition or for legal privacy reasons.
3. Photocopies, digital or other copies of collections are supplied through procedures established by staff and are for reference use only. Written permission for other use, including exhibitions and publications, must be secured from the Museum Director.

OUTGOING LOANS FOR EXHIBITION

Museum holdings may be lent for exhibitions at qualified institutions. Museum staff approves items for external exhibitions with consideration of the following conditions.

1. The item is available and not needed for other SPHLM exhibitions or programs.
2. The item is in suitable physical and aesthetic condition.
3. The item can be provided with suitable conditions for its care and safety.
4. The item is presented in a manner that preserves its intellectual integrity, i.e., portraying its intended meaning in proper context.
5. The borrower assumes all costs of the loan, including documentation, transportation, conservation and insurance.
6. The borrower agrees not to use the loaned items for commercial or other revenue-generating purposes.
7. The borrower gives appropriate credit to SPHLM.
8. SPHLM does not loan items to individuals.

9. SPHLM does not loan items to private or corporate establishments, except for educational, non-profit purposes. Priority is given to museums, historical societies or other educational or non-profit institutions using loaned items for purposes consistent with the Museum's mission.
10. Requests for outgoing loans, including satellite exhibits (displays created by the Museum but housed in other locations), may be subject to approval by the Museum Board.

GLOSSARY

Accession: (1) item(s) added to the collection; (2) the act of recording/processing an addition to the collection.

Acquisition: an addition to the collection, by purchase, donation, transfer, exchange, or bequest, for which title is given to SPHLM.

Collection: tangible objects owned by SPHLM for the public trust and intended to be held for the foreseeable future, to be cared for and accessible.

Deaccession: (1) item(s) removed permanently from the collection; (2) the process of removing an item permanently from the collection.

Preservation: measures that prevent or delay future degradation of collections, e.g., the provision of environmentally sound and secure storage, the restriction of access to fragile items.

Provenance: the place of origin or source, the history of transmission of ownership.

Restriction: limit or restraint on the use of an item.