



# **COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Museum and Archives of Rockingham County

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## **I. Mission Statement**

The Rockingham County Historical Society Museum and Archives (MARC) is dedicated to preserving, disseminating, and exhibiting the history, culture, human and natural resources of Rockingham County, North Carolina, for the benefit of present and future generations.

The MARC houses a collection of objects, documents, books, graphics, and ephemera. This policy guides the accession, use, deaccession, and disposal of those items.

## **II. Scope of the Collections**

The MARC builds on the existing strengths of its museum collections. This has grown out of the existing collections that was created with the merger of the Rockingham County Historical Society and the Rockingham County Museum and Archives.

It is recognized that the MARC is a museum of the history, culture, and resources of Rockingham County, North Carolina. The museum maintains comprehensive collection of objects related to the history of the County of Rockingham, a superlative archival collection of objects related to the people and business of Rockingham County, and an educational research library.

Category (1). The material collection includes objects related to the history of Rockingham County. The curators exercise careful discretion in accepting or purchasing objects of Rockingham County provenance but shall bear in mind that objects from before the incorporation of the county, 1787, are also of historical importance for Rockingham County. These include topics related to but is not limited to: political and social history, military, costumes and textiles, agriculture and industry, furnishings and decorative arts, folklife, community history, sports and leisure, and natural history.

Category (2). The archival collection is built on the written and photographic collection detailing the history of Rockingham County. The Archives includes: public records, individual documents, collections of documents and letters, family records and Bibles, printed material, photographs, maps and poster, and electronic recorded material.

Category (3). The research library includes the compilation of scholarly and academic works collected by the MARC. The research library is to go beyond the bounds of the scope of the collection. It is to provide, local, state, regional, national, and international context to the work carried out by the MARC staff, volunteers, and visitors.

The objects collected by the MARC that meet the Scope of the Collections thus defined are placed in the permanent collections. Due to space and safety limitations, the MARC does not collect fur, taxidermy, human remains, and objects that resided in the county but do not have a history connected to the county (objects with connections only as items in area antique stores, objects merely collected by a county resident or entity, etc.).

### **III. Acquisitions**

#### **A. General**

1. The term “the Collections” as used in the Collections Management Policy refers the objects owned by the MARC that fall within the Scope of Collections.
2. The MARC may acquire objects by gift, bequest, purchase, partial purchase/partial gift, exchange, field collection (archaeology), or abandonment (including found-in-collection). Given the long-term costs associated with collections care, maintenance, and storage, particularly stringent criteria should be applied during the decision-making process leading to acquisitions.

#### **B. Criteria**

Objects considered for acquisition must:

1. Further the MARC’s purpose as outlined in the Mission Statement and Scope of Collections (see Sections I and II).
2. Be transferred with clear title, in writing.
3. Be free of any restrictions that might hamper its use or disposition. Exceptions may be made by the Executive Director in consultation with the President of the Board of Directors, and with legal counsel, as necessary.
4. Be transferred to the MARC with all, or as many as feasible, pertinent literary rights, property rights, copyrights, patents, or trademarks.
5. Be accepted with the understanding that the museum will assume the expense of purchasing, transporting, cataloging, conserving, and preserving (including long-term storage of) the object.
6. Not duplicate objects already in the collection, unless there is a specific reason to do so.
7. Not be illegally imported into the United States or illegally collected within the United States.
8. Archaeological resources must have clear documentation that they were collected to the standards and ethic of the Registry of Professional Archaeologist, Society of American Archaeologist, Society for Historical Archaeology, or other professional archaeological organizations.

9. Adheres to the provisions of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 and is watchful for objects in its collections that could be connected to a change in ownership during the Nazi-Era (1932-1946).

It is recommended that the Collections Committee consult with independent experts when objects of significant monetary value, or objects with high attendant costs (i.e., conservation or unusual storage requirements), are considered for acquisition.

It is the responsibility of the Collections Committee to adhere to these criteria when proposing objects for the collection.

#### C. Authority to Acquire Objects

Staff and Volunteers should, and are encourage to, propose objects for the collections. The decision to acquire an object, rests with the Collections Committee and the Executive Director.

The Executive Director can accept unrestricted gifts. The purchasing of any object needs the approval of the Board of Directors.

#### D. Establishing Value of Accessioned Objects

1. To meet the requirements of financial audits, the insurance value at the time of acquisition of each accessioned object is added.
2. If a purchase, the insurance value is determined by the purchase price plus related fees as recorded on a bill of sale and attendant invoices, such as the costs incurred by a fine arts shipper.
3. Per IRS regulations, appraisals of gifts for tax purposes may not be made by the MARC's staff, board members, or volunteers.
4. If a gift, the insurance value may be determined either by an outside appraiser or by the Executive Director within one year. Appraisals made on behalf of the MARC for insurance purposes are for internal museum use only.

#### E. Objects Accepted for Resale

1. Objects may be accepted for resale to benefit the mission of the MARC (Section I). The donor must indicate, in writing, his or her understanding that these objects will not be accessioned and indicate whether the funds from its resale should be applied to a specific aspect of the museum's operations.
2. The procedures outlined in Section IV, Deaccessions, will be followed.

## **IV. Deaccessions**

### **A. Definition**

Deaccessioning is the process of removing an object from the permanent collections.

### **B. General**

The MARC undertakes an active deaccessioning review in order to refine and strengthen its permanent collections. Deaccessions are made only after the most careful consideration.

### **C. Authority**

1. Objects are proposed for deaccession by the staff and volunteers. They are reviewed and voted on by the Collections Committee and the Executive Director. The list of objects shall be ratified by the Executive Committee.
2. Staff and volunteers may use previously obtained information from consultants to evaluate an object or collection when considering objects for deaccession.

### **D. Criteria**

1. Any object(s) proposed for deaccession must meet at least one of the following criteria:
  - a. Falls outside the Scope of the Collections (see Section II).
  - b. Is in irreparable condition, including deterioration, unintentional destruction, or pose health or safety concerns for the staff or public.
  - c. Is missing from the Museum and Archives of Rockingham County's property with little hope of recovery.
  - d. Is represented by a better example in the permanent collections.
2. The object must be free of restrictions imposed by its donor.
3. An object accessioned by the MARC cannot be deaccessioned for at least three years after its acceptance into the collections.
4. The object should not be held by the museum when it falls under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 or was seized by Nazi soldiers during the World War II era (1932-1946).

## E. Disposition

1. Deaccessioned objects shall be sold at public auction after proposals have been received from two or more auction houses. In no case will objects be given or sold privately to an individual. No staff member, trustee, officer, or his / her agent may knowingly acquire a deaccessioned item.
2. The MARC may exchange a deaccessioned object with or sell it to another museum, library, or educational institution, provided an independent, written appraisal has been made and the recipient intends to use the object to further its mission.
3. The MARC may exchange a deaccessioned object with a private individual provided an independent, written appraisal has been made and the exchange results in a significant upgrade to the collection.
4. When an object has deteriorated beyond repair, is infested beyond the control of an exterminator, or contains harmful materials, the item may be deaccessioned and destroyed.

## F. Public Disclosure

1. When individual objects or groups of objects are deaccessioned, they should be identified as the property of the MARC. However, if there are compelling reasons, they may be disposed of anonymously.
2. For deaccessioned objects which were donated as gifts within the past ten years a reasonable effort will be made to notify the donor or, in case of death, the donor's family.

## G. Record Keeping

A permanent record of all deaccessioned objects will be maintained, including photographs, catalog records, and the date and nature of the disposition.

## H. Objects Without Clear Title

If an object proposed for deaccession is found to have been given or sold to the MARC by a person or persons without clear title, the staff or volunteer will present all information to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will present this information to the Collections Committee and, on a case-by-case basis, will resolve the issue.



## I. Funds Realized from Deaccessions

Funds realized by deaccessioning from the MARC shall be placed in the restricted account line itemed as General Restricted: Acquisitions or Archives. In the future a line item may be created for these funds. These funds are to be exclusively used for the conservation, maintenance, and new acquisitions for the collections.

## V. Loans

The MARC may lend or borrow objects for study, exhibition, conservation, or reproduction.

### A. General Guidelines

1. Loans must be formalized by written agreement between the MARC and the borrower or lender.
2. The Executive Director is responsible for carrying out procedures and maintaining records.

### B. Outgoing Loans

1. The Executive Director has primary responsibility for the safety of objects lent from the collections.
2. Outgoing loans are made only to non-profit, educational organizations for educational purposes, to professional conservators for conservation, or to reputable companies for reproductions. Loans to individuals are not considered.
3. Outgoing loans for exhibition are approved by the Executive Director and the Collections Committee. Outgoing loan requests for exhibition must be made in writing, accompanied by a standard AAM Facilities Report, preferably at least six months before the exhibition date. The MARC may charge a loan fee of for all objects on outgoing loan for exhibitions, subject to the approval of the Executive Director.
4. Loans for conservation need only be approved by the Executive Director. Loans for reproduction are approved by the Executive Director.
5. The requesting institution must agree to observe the MARC's requirements and regulations governing outgoing loans, which include copyright, insurance, safety, and transportation. The MARC may require the lender to cover the costs associated with one of its curatorial staff members couriering an object to the borrowing institution and/or overseeing the installation and deinstallation of museum object(s) into the loan exhibition.

6. Objects lent must be returned to the MARC in the same condition as they were lent, by the stated termination date of the loan agreement. If the MARC judges an object has suffered damage on the part of the borrower, the museum will request the borrower to pay for conservation expenses.

### C. Incoming Loans

1. The Executive Director or the Collections Committee, must approve all incoming loans.
2. The MARC will give the object(s) borrowed the same care it does to comparable objects of its own.
3. The MARC retains the right to determine when, if, and for how long, objects borrowed will be exhibited. The MARC will not accept indefinite loans.
4. The lender must certify that the object(s) lent are in such condition as to withstand ordinary strains of packing, transportation, and handling. For the purposes of exhibition, the condition of the object(s) may also be a factor in the acceptance of a loan. A condition report will be completed upon the arrival of a loaned object.
5. Loans will be insured by the MARC for all risk, wall-to-wall, for the full value as agreed between the lender and the MARC, except where insurance is expressly waived by the lender or other conditions as imposed by the lender. Should the lender wish to insure the loaned object(s) while at the MARC, the museum must be supplied with a certificate of insurance naming the MARC as an additional insured or waiving rights of subrogation.
6. No loan will be accepted unless it is fully insured by the lender, the MARC, or the lender waives all rights for any damage or loss whatsoever to the object.
7. Unless otherwise notified in writing by the lender, the MARC may photograph, telecast, or reproduce the object lent for educational, research, catalogue, or publicity purposes, related to the purpose of the loan.
8. The object lent will be returned only to the lender of record. In case of uncertainty, a claimant will be required to establish legal authority by proof satisfactory to the MARC. Upon termination of an incoming loan, the MARC will require the lender to sign a loan release form, acknowledging that the object was returned to the legal owner in the same condition as it was lent to the MARC.
9. If a lender cannot be located and the object remains unclaimed, the staff will inform the Board of Directors. The board, after consulting legal counsel, will resolve the situation on a case-by-case basis.

## **VI. Temporary Custody of Objects**

1. If not already covered by an incoming loan agreement or a transfer of title instrument, any object coming into the custody of the museum must be immediately registered on a receipt of object form. Objects are only accepted into this category for the purposes of study or research, or while the museum considers the acquisition of the objects into the collections.
2. Objects in the temporary custody of the MARC will not be exhibited to the general public. The Executive Director may consult with outside experts in researching objects in this category.
3. Custody will be limited to ninety days unless otherwise noted.
4. The owner, or authorized agent, must sign the form before the object is left. If an owner cannot be located and the object remains unclaimed, the staff will inform the Board of Directors. The board, after consulting legal counsel, will resolve the situation on a case-by-case basis.
5. In the event the object arrives by means other than in the custody of the owner, only the Executive Director will complete the receipt and forward it for signature to the owner, if known.
6. If the owner is unknown, the object will be treated as a potential gift.
7. The Executive Director and Administrative Assistant will monitor objects in temporary custody in the same manner as loans. They will ensure that the owner reclaims the object, or that the object is returned to the owner, or that the object is considered for a proposed donation or purchase.
8. Objects in temporary custody may be photographed or otherwise reproduced by the Museum and Archives of Rockingham County for the purposes of research, unless notified by the owner in writing.

## **VII. Care of the Collections**

### **A. General**

1. The MARC is responsible for providing reasonable care for the objects entrusted to it.
2. The Executive Director shall maintain accurate, up-to-date records on the identification, location, and condition of all objects in the collection. The Executive Director shall lead periodic, comprehensive inventories of the permanent collections and loaned objects as well as regular spot-check inventories for location confirmation and to monitor object condition. The collections

database (PastPerfect) is regularly updated as object locations or conditions change.

3. The MARC takes all reasonable precautions to prevent theft, vandalism, fire, flood, and other loss or damage to museum property. The museum will maintain a disaster preparedness plan in the event of such a catastrophe.

4. Each staff member and volunteer take responsibility for monitoring the collections for damage following security and handling procedures developed by the Executive Committee.

## B. Security

1. The MARC recognizes that the safety of the staff and the public takes precedent over the museums' properties, including the collections.

2. Staff and volunteers take responsibility for protecting and monitoring the collection from theft through proper security procedures.

3. Access to collection storage spaces is only granted to staff and volunteer personnel who work directly with the objects.

4. Staff who have access to alarmed, secured object spaces must never leave those spaces unalarmed or unlocked.

5. Whenever possible, an effort must be made during the design concept of an exhibition in either the Wright Tavern, Post Office, or the 1907 Courthouse to take into account security needs, the propensity of the public to want to touch objects, and the ability of the guides and museum attendants to effectively monitor the spaces. Exhibition installation must allow for sufficient time for security review by the Executive Director during the planning process and prior to opening to the public.

6. Those wishing to do research in the collections of the MARC should submit a request specifying the objects and/or records to be examined, the purpose of the examination, the preferred date of examination, and the researcher's current address and daytime phone number to staff no less than one week prior to the proposed date of examination.

## C. Environmental Monitoring and Control

1. The MARC recognizes that antique objects must be exhibited and stored in an environment that will preserve them for future generations.

2. The museum takes every step to maintain the collections in an environment with proper temperature, relative humidity, light levels, and air quality.

3. Primary responsibility for monitoring and controlling the environment for objects falls to the Executive Director.

#### D. Conservation

1. The MARC recognizes that the permanent collections are at the heart of the museum. The museum is committed to providing significant resources for the conservation of objects in its collection. There is a long-term conservation plan that will be periodically updated.

2. Objects in the permanent collections have integrity in their most original state and should not be altered in any way unless the condition of the object is in jeopardy. Only trained staff and conservators may examine objects and make recommendations for their preservation. Because the MARC does not employ a trained conservation staff, only trained outside conservators may treat objects. Exceptions may only be made with the approval of the Executive Committee

3. Conservators must provide complete records of all conservation work to the Executive Director for the object records.

4. The MARC staff will not alter or clean permanent collections objects in any way without providing written documentation to the Executive Director for the data files. The Executive Director will provide forms to complete when such action is taken.

#### VIII. Records

1. The MARC maintains records pertaining to museum collection objects entering or leaving the museums' permanent or temporary custody. Conservation records, research, and exhibition information must also be maintained.

2. The Executive Director has primary responsibility for these records and provides information to the Board of Directors and other staff members as appropriate.

3. The following records are maintained:

a. Temporary receipt of objects forms

b. Transfer of title instruments including: deeds of gift; bills of sale; negotiations regarding bequests; exchange agreements; records related to deaccessioning.

c. Accession and catalog records

- d. Data files containing research pertaining to collection objects
- e. Source (donor/vendor) files
- f. Incoming and outgoing loan agreements, including condition reports
- g. Insurance records pertaining to objects
- h. Appraisal records
- i. Inventory records
- j. Registration photographs
- k. Conservation treatments

4. Those working with objects marks each object in an appropriate and reversible manner with an accession number that links the object to its records. All records and research materials pertaining to an object are marked with that object's accession number.

5. Objects from the permanent collections are not moved without notifying the Executive Director in a timely manner. Object locations are tracked and recorded in the collections database (PastPerfect) in order to monitor location and condition, which are both security and public trust issues.

## **IX. Insurance**

1. The MARC is committed to limiting risks to the collections through preventive measures such as fire and security systems, as well as effective security procedures. Objects in the permanent collections are insured based on the maximum probable loss of one building. In addition, loans are insured. This includes both incoming loans to the museum as well as permanent collections objects that are out on loan to other institutions.

2. The Executive Director and the Board of Directors, shall periodically review the amount at which the permanent collections and loans are insured.

## **X. Access to the Collections**

### **A. General**

The MARC makes its collections accessible to researchers and the general public. The collections and information pertaining to the objects are made available in a variety of ways, including guided tours, exhibits, educational programming, special events, lectures,

and by appointment. An online database should be created in the future to facilitate access.

## B. Access to Objects

1. Because the safety of the objects is of utmost importance, conservation and security concerns may prohibit access to the collection. The Collections Committee or Executive Director make the final determination about the availability of objects.
2. Information such as an object's value or the identities of anonymous donors or sources is not provided to researchers without prior permission from the Collections Committee or the Executive Director.
3. Objects may be viewed by a non-staff members/volunteers only under supervision. Objects may be handled by a non-staff members/volunteers only if a trained member of the above is present.
4. Visitors and researchers wishing access to non-public storage spaces must make prior arrangements and be accompanied by a staff member or volunteer in such areas at all times.
5. Researchers may take photographs of objects in the collection for study purposes only.
6. The MARC is committed to fulfilling the mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

## C. Access to Documentation

1. The MARC and their volunteers research and catalogue the objects in its collections in a timely fashion. When an object enters the permanent collections, that object's record in both hard copy (the data file) and electronically (PastPerfect database) is created. This record contains basic known information such as title, materials, and measurements.
2. The Executive Director has the primary responsibility to make the information as accessible as possible.
3. Accession, deaccession, insurance, and security information is available for restricted internal use only. The Executive Director has primary responsibility for this information.

#### D. Visual Resources and Filming

1. The MARC provides access to the collections and historic building interiors in a variety of visual formats for sale or rental. The Executive Director, in consultation with the Executive Committee, has primary responsibility for providing images, permissions to reproduce or publish, and setting fees and procedures.
2. Three needs are weighed when there is a request for an image of the MARC property:
  - a. The needs to protect and enhance the reputation of the MARC.
  - b. The need to protect the value of images of the collections and building interiors.
  - c. The need to minimize physical risk to the collections and building interiors.
3. The purchase or rental of a MARC image in any form is at the sole discretion of the MARC, which reserves the right to deny access to its images and any permission to reproduce or publish images.
4. The purchase or rental of a MARC image in any form does not confer the right to reproduce or publish that image.
5. Permission for reproduction or publication of any MARC image in any form is granted in writing by the MARC on a one-time basis. Permission can only be granted under certain conditions and policies.
6. Requests to photograph or film on or inside MARC property by an outside contractor are weighed against the risk to the collections and/or historic buildings. All persons requesting to film at the museum must request permission to do so at least thirty days in advance. The Executive Director or Board of Directors, may deny any part of a photographer's/videographer's request deemed to put the collections or historic buildings in jeopardy.

#### XI. Special Events

1. The MARC recognizes the need for special events to occur in certain places in proximity to (but not occupying the same space as) objects in the permanent collections.
2. All staff and volunteers will work together to maintain the security of objects and ensure their safety and preservation during such events.



3. The Executive Director and Board of Directors will work with other MARC staff and volunteers when such events occur to develop guidelines that must be followed to prevent damage or theft to objects in the collections.

## **XII. Code of Ethics**

### **A. General**

Members of the MARC's Board of Directors, staff members, and volunteers should be aware of the broad consensus within the museum field in regard to ethical standards. A succinct statement of this consensus was published in 2000 by the American Association of Museums under the title Museum Ethics. As a matter of policy, the MARC is in accord with that statement and expects employees and volunteers to observe its recommendations. Staff members and volunteers in appropriate positions should adhere to the Codes of Ethics adopted by the Standing Professional Committees of the AAM, the American Library Association, and any other appropriate professional organization. Should a staff member or volunteer feel that he or she is in conflict with any of the policies set forth below, that staff member is encouraged to discuss the matter with the Executive Director.

The MARC's property must be protected and conserved. The museums' funds, facilities, or property, may be used only for MARC-related purposes except as exempted in specific policy statements.

### **B. Use of Collections**

No staff member or board member should use in his or her home or office, for any personal purposes, any object or item that is part of the museums' collections or under the guardianship of the museum.

### **C. Dealing in Historic Objects**

Employees of the MARC may not participate in the regular buying and selling of antiques or works of art for profit. Accepting remuneration from a dealer for time, expertise or other services, or retention of a financial interest in a dealership represents a conflict of interest. Employees are encouraged to provide dealers those services available to the general public at no charge other than reimbursement for reasonable travel or other expenses.

### **D. Public Appraisals and Attributions**

As representatives of the MARC, curatorial staff may identify objects, works of art or collections as a public service. Employees may not provide monetary appraisals or valuations, written or oral.

#### E. Scholarly Activities

As one of its core values, the MARC strongly encourages its employees to engage in scholarly activities, including teaching, lecturing, curating, and writing. The MARC recognizes that honoraria may be offered for these activities and permits employees to accept them. Employees are also encouraged to serve as officers, board members, or committee members of regional or national historical or museum organizations. The MARC recognizes that such activities provide benefits to both employees and the organization as a whole, therefore institutional time and support will be available within reasonable limits and where no conflict of interest exists as determined by the employee's supervisor.

#### F. Copyright and Intellectual Property

Ownership and copyright rests with the MARC for all materials prepared by employees and volunteers as part of their normal duties, unless an exceptional arrangement is made prior to publication. Ownership and copyright for works created on employees' personal time remains their possession.

### **XIII. Public Disclosures**

Acceptance by the MARC Board of Directors of this Collections Management Policy will be announced to the public. Copies will be provided to all board members and staff, and upon request to future donors, and other responsible persons.

### **XIV. Review and Revision**

The MARC Collections Management Policy shall be reviewed every fall by staff with proposed changes being presented at the Third Quarter Board of Directors meeting. The Board of Directors will fully review and vote to change or retain the Collections Management Policy every two years.