



Beverly Heritage Center Museum Collections Policy

PREAMBLE

The following Museum Collections Policy is to serve as a guideline for the Beverly Heritage Center (BHC) staff and all affiliates who are involved with the objects, artifacts, and specimens in possession of the BHC.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Beverly Heritage Center collections is to acquire, preserve, maintain, store, and make available to the public such documents, photos, objects, and artifacts pertaining to the history of the town of Beverly, to the First Campaign of the Civil War, and to the related missions of the Beverly Heritage Center and affiliated partner organizations; Historic Beverly Preservation (HBP) and Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation (RMBF).

SCOPE OF COLLECTION

It is the policy of the BHC to collect only those objects which are known to have been made, used, or collected or are directly associated with a person, place, or event:

- a. In Beverly, West Virginia (Beverly), and to a lesser extent Randolph County,
- b. In the Battle of Rich Mountain or other sites or events of the Civil War First Campaign, or the Civil War in Randolph and surrounding counties, or
- c. Related to the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike (SPT), to transportation history in Randolph County, or otherwise connected to an intrinsic resource along the SPT.

To a limited extent, objects that *could have* been made or used in, or are typical or representative of, or may have a less than certain attribution or provenance to the above listed items, may be collected when deemed appropriate. Such objects are used for filling in period settings, for study collections, for exhibition, and/or in place of authentic objects that may not be available.

Acceptable objects may include, but are not limited to, objects of value to the BHC collections that follow the MISSION STATEMENT and/or relate to current or planned exhibits in the BHC. All said objects should be historical, cultural, or aesthetic in nature and may include objects used for comparative study, or artistic or scientific objects of such value that they would significantly add to the strength of the collections.

Unacceptable objects are objects without known attribution to Beverly and do not comply with the mission of the BHC and its affiliated partners, and have no foreseeable connection with, or projected use by, the BHC.

ACQUISITION

The BHC Collections Committee will review and evaluate all objects offered for accession, whether by gift, purchase, bequest, exchange, or archaeological excavation, and will accept or reject the objects offered. All accessions must be accompanied by a signed and approved Deed of Gift.

All acquisitions require the approval of the Committee and, under normal circumstances, no staff member or volunteer shall make any decision whatsoever regarding the acquisition of an object without authorization by the Committee. Staff and volunteer members may not accept objects, even on a temporary basis for review without the approval of the Committee.

In the event that a Governing Authority is not present at the time of gift AND 'immediate action' must be taken to ensure acquisition of said gift, the object may be temporarily accepted by a staff member or volunteer acting as surrogate to the Governing Authority. The responsible staff and potential donor must fill out a Temporary Custody Receipt as proof of consent to the temporary possession of property by the BHC with the potential donor's understanding that such acceptance is under review and the final decision will be made by the Committee. Circumstances of 'immediate action' include, but are not limited to, time constraints of donation stipulated by donor, or impending competition for purchase or gift of rare and/or valuable object(s) by other entities, whether scholarly or commercial.

All Temporary Custody Receipts must have a receipt number, and all Deeds of Gift must have the object accession number(s) written in the top right corner before being stored and maintained in the BHC files. The receipt number and/or accession number must correlate with the object's assigned number as entered into the PastPerfect Museum Software database.

To be added to the collection an object **MUST**:

1. Be appropriate to the SCOPE OF COLLECTION and MISSION, as defined in this Policy,
2. Have potential for exhibition and/or study, and for which the museum has an ultimate use,
3. Fit into the existing storage space, and be properly cared for under acceptable museum standards, and within the means of the BHC as defined by availability of resources,
4. Be in good present condition. *If the object is in very poor condition beyond the BHC's means of conservation, or there exists within the collection a duplicate or similar object in better condition, and the donor has no means of providing for the object's conservation, then it will not be accepted. The donor has the right to be informed of the lack of resources and given the opportunity to provide for such conservation as a condition of donation if they wish the object to be in the museum's collections,*
5. NOT include accompanying stipulations, restrictions, and/or conditions of

donation including *copyright, patent, trademark or trade names, conditions of permanent display, or deaccession limitations*, unless circumstantially determined acceptable by the Committee,

6. Have a clearly established proof of ownership/title as stated on the Deed of Gift.

The BHC should NOT accept donations of objects whose origins/ownership may be in question until clear proof of ownership can be provided or established,

7. Be acquired in the most advantageous way possible with the interests of the BHC

in mind. If an object is offered for sale and a comparable object can be gotten by gift or request, then the object for sale may be declined.

Exceptions to these conditions may be deemed appropriate by the Committee in the interest of the BHC and its collections. When the probable fate of an object, if rejected, is unfavorable to the mission of the BHC and to the interest of the public, an exception may be made. Regardless, it is unethical to accept objects into the collection for which the BHC has no plausible means of storing and conserving, as this breaks the public (fiduciary) trust. Every effort should be made to refer unaccepted objects to an institution to whose collection they would be relevant.

The BHC will NOT make any formal appraisal of an object at the request of the donor. In the event of rejection of an object into the collections, the owner of the object may be provided a copy of this Collections Policy to help them understand the reason for the decision.

LOANS

Outgoing Loans

An item or collection in possession of the BHC shall be loaned only for the purpose of historical, cultural, aesthetic, or scholarly pursuits that are clearly defined by the borrower and approved by the Committee. All outgoing loans require the approval of the Committee, and under no circumstances shall any other staff member or volunteer make any decision whatsoever regarding the loan of an object.

Objects shall be loaned only to those institutions maintaining insurance upon the collection, or otherwise accepting full responsibility for the items during its stay, and for duration of no more than one year. A loan agreement must be reached and signed by both parties before any transaction may occur. *All loans must be accompanied by a signed and approved Outgoing Loan Agreement.* After one year, the loan agreement may be re-visited and resigned by both organizations for an additional year.

Each object being loaned to another institution must first be inspected, and Condition Reports given by a staff member of the BHC prior to leaving, and again after its possession is returned to the BHC. Objects on loan should be packed for transit to the borrower by a staff member of the BHC under supervision of the Committee. Any damage to an object on loan should be reported to the Committee as soon as possible after the damage has been discovered.

All Outgoing Loan Agreements must have the accession number(s) listed on the form before being stored and maintained along with the corresponding Deeds of Gift in the BHC files.

In addition to the conditions above, to be loaned from the collection, an object **Must**:

1. Be in good condition to withstand packing and transit. *If an item is so fragile, delicate, or deteriorating that it may not withstand travel, extra handling, or climate change, it will not be lent to the borrower,*
2. Have a clearly established proof of ownership/title as stated on the Deed of Gift,
3. Be clearly marked or tagged with its identifying object number, and entered into the PastPerfect Museum Software database,
4. Be protected by the borrowing institution's or BHC's insurance policy, as per the loan agreement. *This insurance should include coverage for fire, theft, vandalism, natural disaster, harmful light, temperature extremes, humidity, and dirt,*
5. Have a safe facility in which it will be kept by the borrower, as recorded and monitored by the Committee.

Incoming Loans

An item or collection loaned from an institution shall be borrowed by the BHC solely for the purpose of historical, cultural, aesthetic, or scholarly pursuits that are clearly defined and approved by the Committee, and agreed upon by the lending institution. All incoming loans require the approval of the Committee, and under no circumstances shall any other staff member or volunteer make any decision whatsoever regarding the borrowing of an object.

Acceptable reasons for borrowing an object or collection include, but are not limited to:

1. Its use in supplementing an exhibit or display for which an object of no equal counterpart is within possession of the BHC.
2. Its use in furthering research of a subject for which the BHC does not have sufficient sources, primary or otherwise.
3. Its use in educational programming that would not otherwise be complete without the help of such object or collection.

Loans of an object or collection from other institutions must be insured by the BHC or the lending institution, as per the loan agreement. *This insurance should include coverage for fire, theft, vandalism, natural disaster, harmful light, temperature extremes, humidity, and dirt.*

A loan agreement must be reached and signed by both parties before any transaction may be made. All loans must be accompanied by a signed and approved Loan Agreement. If the loan is with an individual or private party, the *BHC Incoming Loan Agreement* must be used. If the loan is with a museum or other institution with their own forms and procedures, their loan form must be used, and a copy provided for

the BHC records. Objects on loan should be borrowed for a specific period of time as agreed upon by both parties, with an option for renewal after the specified period of time concludes, unless a Permanent Loan situation has been agreed upon.

Each object being loaned by another institution must first be inspected, and Condition Reports given by a BHC staff member prior to entering the BHC, and again prior to its return to the Lender.

Each object returning to the lending institution, if possible, should be packed by staff members of that institution. If this is not plausible, or if the agreement says otherwise, the object or collection shall be packed by BHC staff under the supervision of the Committee. Any damage to an object must be reported to the lending institution as soon as possible after damage has been discovered.

In addition to the conditions above, to be borrowed from a lending institution, an object **MUST**:

1. Have a clearly establish proof of ownership/title as stated by the records of the institution. *If the provenance of an item or collection is in question, the BHC WILL NOT consider that item for loan unless the lending institution clears up any discrepancies,*
2. Not be accompanied by unusual restrictions, unless the Committee approves such restrictions or deems them to be legitimate.
3. Have a clearly designated purpose as well as a safe facility as provided by the BHC. *It is unethical for the BHC to borrow any object or collection from a lending institution if it cannot provide adequate security within its facility. This includes the prearranged location of the object's exhibit, display, or storage.*

The Committee has the responsibility to oversee and monitor each incoming and outgoing loan, and the authority to delegate tasks to the BHC staff and volunteers with proper oversight, unless future funding provides a permanent staff member to oversee the collections of the BHC. These responsibilities include all previously mentioned, as well as following up on expiring/overdue outgoing loans, and making sure incoming loan agreements are up to date.

RECORDS

Any action taken on an object or collection in possession of the BHC should be documented and recorded in the BHC files. This includes accessions, loans, removal of objects from storage for exhibit, replacement of exhibited objects into storage, changes in storage location, conservation/repair of an object, and deaccessions. *No collection item should ever leave its assigned exhibition or storage spot without written record.*

All Deeds of Gift, Temporary Custody Receipts, Outgoing Loan Agreements, Incoming Loan Agreements, Deaccession records, conservation/preservation documentation, and any form produced by actions taken within or upon the holdings of the BHC should be properly documented with a copy filed in the appropriate BHC file.

Computerization of the BHC's collections is in progress, with data entry into PastPerfect Museum Software, a database management program. This database will be the central location for the BHC's digital records as it provides digital documentation of

all actions mentioned above. *The digital records should clearly match the paper records produced.*

Once the PastPerfect software becomes fully utilized, it will be the primary data recording system. The written records, with some exceptions, will be replaced with generated reports from PastPerfect that will be printed as a hardcopy and stored in the BHC files.