



COLLECTIONS POLICY

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ORIGIN

The Arizona Historical Society (AHS), founded in the 19th century, is the state’s oldest cultural organization and is widely held to be the most comprehensive resource for studying Arizona’s past. AHS owns and operates multiple sites across the State, including museums, libraries and archival collections. It also owns and/or manages additional historic properties and satellite branch museums. (Enabling Legislation Arizona Revised Statutes § 41-823)

MISSION

Connecting people through the power of Arizona’s history.

VISION

To be the driving force strengthening Arizona’s communities by promoting history through leadership, partnership, and scholarship.

GUIDELINE STATEMENT

Create transformative experiences through history.

FEDERAL LAW AND REGULATION

AHS complies with all state and laws and regulations governing its collections. This includes guidelines regarding the acquisition, treatment, and disposition of human remains and objects governed by federal law including the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA).

GOVERNANCE

(ARS CHAPTER 4.1, ARTICLE 1, 41-821)

The board of directors is established consisting of the following members who are appointed as follows:

1. One member from each county.
2. One member who is recommended by each of the designated historical organizations as prescribed by subsection I of this section.
3. Five members of the public.

The board of directors may employ an executive director and may employ or authorize the employment of other employees it considers appropriate to carry out the functions of the society. The executive director and all other employees shall have duties and exercise authority as may be prescribed by the board of directors or by the executive director acting under the direction of the board of directors.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

Under the authority as prescribed by the AHS board of directors, the executive director, with input from staff, will create and implement policies and procedures that ensure best practices to collect, preserve, and interpret all collections material both archival and three-dimensional; here- after "collections" refers to both. These policies shall be ratified by the state board of directors.

The executive director will designate senior level staff to monitor compliance with the Collections Management Policy. These designated staff persons will periodically review and update the policy. Policy changes shall be recommended to the executive director and sent to the State Board of Directors for approval. The Collections Committee (see below) is responsible for reporting annual activities covered in the policy to the executive director each fiscal year.

COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE(S)

There will be a State Governing Board Collections Committee (SGBCC). Members of this committee will be appointed by the state board president. The SGBCC is responsible for:

1. Approving or denying all deaccessioning of collections items.
2. Reporting their deaccessioning decisions to the state governing board for final ratification.
3. Approving or denying the acquisition of any collection with an estimated value in excess of \$20,000, or requiring more than 10,000 square feet of space.
4. Reviewing proposed changes to the Collections Management Policy and making recommendations to the state governing board for final ratification.

In addition, there will be a Statewide Staff Collections Committee (SSCC). The staff collections committee will consist of representatives from the collections staff as well as other staff members as needed. The executive director will appoint members of the SSCC with input from collections staff based on factors including but not limited to: experience, expertise, academic qualifications, and geographic area of responsibility. A collections committee chair will be appointed by the executive director. Minutes from collection meetings will be kept and made publicly accessible. Meetings will be open to all interested staff and board members.

The SSCC will determine the appropriate AHS repository for new and existing acquisitions. All items that are accepted for the Permanent Collections will be accessioned by the AHS registrar(s) or surrogate. Records of the donation and its provenance will be kept in the permanent digital database, currently Past Perfect.

Non-accessioned items that are designated Special Use will not be formally accessioned but a record of their donation and disposition will be kept with the files for non-accessioned items.

The SSCC will meet at regular intervals as needed at least quarterly. All committee members are eligible to present items for consideration and a majority vote of the committee members present is required for a collection or collection item to be accepted into the AHS permanent collection. A quorum of at least half of the voting members of the committee must be present for a vote to occur. Meetings are not required to be in person.

Using these procedures, the SSCC shall make recommendations regarding:

1. New acquisitions (donations and purchases) of collection items.
2. Placement within the collections (Permanent Collections or Special Use).
3. Approve use of funds raised from deaccessioning for "Direct Care" of collections, under the guidelines of the American Alliance for Museums, 2016.
4. Review of loans to and from AHS.
5. Deaccessions from the permanent collections and disposal methods.
6. Actions to ensure the proper care and documentation of collections at AHS.

These issues will be considered based on the needs outlined in the AHS Collecting Plan as well as the answers to the following:

1. Does it support the AHS mission?
2. Does it have multiple potential uses for our staff and audiences?
3. Is AHS the most appropriate place for it?
4. Can AHS adequately care for it?
5. Does it duplicate something AHS already has?

Actions of the SSCC, including recommendations regarding acquisition, loans, deaccession, and disposal, will be recorded in official minutes and made available to the executive director and the state board of directors. Items recommended by the SSCC for deaccession must be approved by the executive director, the SGBCC and ratified by the entire state board of directors.

In addition, geographic divisions may have separate collections work groups in order to: make recommendations to the statewide committee for accessioning and deaccessioning, facilitate routine decisions on potential donations and manage artifact loans. These work groups may, in addition to staff, include local board members, volunteers and other community members.

TYPES OF COLLECTIONS

The Society's collection shall be divided into the following sub-collections:

- 1. Permanent Collection:** Historically significant objects and archival materials that help the Society preserve Arizona's diverse heritage. Items acquired for the permanent collection are intended to be in AHS's care and held in the public trust for future generations. The permanent collection is subject to special procedures for handling, storage, recordkeeping, and exhibition.
- 2. Special Use Collection:** These are donated items that may include: three-dimensional objects, books, maps, art or other materials that are not subject to accessioning and deaccessioning policies. These items have alternate procedures for handling, storage, record-keeping and are not subject to the Collections Policy. These items may be: discarded, loaned, used as reference, serve as props or parts, or sold to benefit museum collections.

CARE, PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION

All AHS staff, boards and volunteers are responsible for and contribute to the stewardship of collections. Collections staff, in particular, follow accepted professional practices concerning care, preservation, storage, security, and use of all items in the AHS collection. Collections staff also understand and follow accepted professional archival practices with regards to the migration and transfer of recorded and digital information to an accessible media. Strenuous efforts will be made to monitor and protect all items in the AHS collections from careless handling, vandalism, theft, fire, water, infestation, exposure to environmental hazards (including excessive light, pollution, humidity, etc.), and natural disasters.

RECORDS

AHS will maintain records on all items accepted into the permanent collections. These records are maintained to establish clear title, provide accountability, and provide access to information for staff, researchers, and the general public. AHS strives to maintain these records according to current accepted professional practices. These records may be kept in both electronic and/or paper format. Each discrete collection—artifact, archive, oral history, and library collections— will use the appropriate electronic format and accepted professional organizational guidelines to maintain these records. All records pertaining to legal ownership of collection items will be maintained by the registrar(s) or surrogate.

The records of the AHS institutional archives are maintained by the AHS archives staff in accordance with state and agency records retention policies.

FINANCIAL APPRAISALS

All AHS staff members will adhere to the AHS Code of Ethics.

No staff member of AHS may provide financial appraisals of items brought into the Society for any reason, including tax deductions for donation. Donors or their agents are solely responsible for obtaining appraisals for tax deductions or other purposes. AHS will provide appropriate access to facilitate the appraisals of donations for tax deduction purposes and will comply with all current Internal Revenue Service rules and reporting regulations for charitable contributions.

AHS's staff may not recommend the use of specific appraisers; however, staff may assist donors to identify appropriate appraisers. This assistance may include providing a list of potential appraisers that might be helpful.

ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

AHS supports and encourages research and the scholarly use of its collections. AHS seeks to provide maximum access to its collections through various means and media. This access may include exhibitions, examination, loans, education and interpretive programs, institutional or other scholarly research publications, websites, and other media.

Reasonable access will be provided to collections provided the patron follows relevant procedures to ensure the safety of the items. Anyone using the collections for publication, broadcast or exhibition must sign an agreement to acknowledge AHS by footnote, credit line, or other appropriate citation and may be required to pay reproduction and/or use fees.

INVENTORY

Each collections-holding unit shall complete at least one baseline comprehensive inventory of its holdings. Comprehensive inventories should then be instituted every ten years thereafter.

Collections shall also be inventoried annually on a rolling basis, with approximately 10% of the collections inventoried each year. Items valued at \$10,000 or more shall be inventoried annually through a spot check. The remainder to be inventoried in a year may be generated randomly or be part of a re-housing or other planned collections management project.

RECONCILIATION

The annual inventory shall include a reconciliation of material to its control numbering system, and a location record update. Items may be discovered with only partial documentation, missing, inconsistent or duplicate numbering, or other issues requiring prompt resolution. Further re-cataloging, photography, other documentation upgrade, or deaccession proposal shall be identified and completed as staffing permits.

LOANS

OUTGOING

AHS encourages loans to provide maximum public accessibility to all its collections. This loan program will strive to be consistent with the needs of the Society's education, research, and exhibition programs while serving the need of long-term collections preservation. Loans will be governed by the following regulations:

1. The SSCC will be notified of all incoming or outgoing loans of collections materials. The SSCC may, at the discretion, of the chair, exercise authority to overrule collection work group decisions regarding loans.
2. All loans, whether incoming or outgoing, will be for specified periods of time agreed to in advance. With the agreement of both parties, loans may be renewed or extended for additional specified periods of time.
3. AHS will not establish loans of material on a "long-term" (i.e. loan over two years) without prior approval from the SSCC
4. All incoming and outgoing loans must be accompanied by a formal, written agreement specifying both the beginning and end date for the loan.
5. No materials from the AHS permanent collection will be loaned for use in theatrical or film productions. Loans for promotions, advertising and other commercial ventures will only be allowed within the strictest constraints of best conservation practice and without violating principles of stewardship.
6. With the exception of interlibrary loans and Special Use materials, the registrar or surrogate is responsible for the documentation of all incoming and outgoing loans. The registrar surrogate will monitor all loan agreements to ensure that the conditions of the loan are met and that loan items are returned in a timely manner.
7. The AHS loan agreement will be the primary legal document of record for all outgoing loans. All loans are subject to the conditions as stated on the reverse of the agreement. Other restrictions may be added on a case-by-case basis.
8. Outgoing loans may be made to other non-profit (501c3) institutions for exhibition, educational or scholarly purposes, providing the borrowing institution can provide adequate care for the object to prevent loss, damage, or deterioration.
9. The borrowing institution will be required to insure all items loaned at the value assessed by AHS. A copy of the certificate of insurance will be requested and secured before the beginning date of the loan. Loaned materials must be able to withstand the rigors of travel, climate changes, and handling. The registrar's office will make sure all loan materials are appropriately packaged for transportation.
10. Loaned artifacts must be properly numbered and registered by accession or catalog number prior to shipment.
11. Items which are unavailable for loan due to condition or other factors may be provided through facsimile reproduction, at the expense of the requesting organization.

Occasionally AHS may be asked to bring objects from the collections to specific brief events in the community, i.e. a "pop up" exhibit. Such requests should be made at least six weeks in advance of the event. In such cases, a decision to do so shall be made by the collections staff with approval from his/her supervisor. AHS's participation shall be considered in light of staff availability in addition to the item(s) condition, value and availability and needs for environmental control, security, etc. in the same manner that an outgoing loan proposal would be evaluated.

The purpose of the pop-up exhibit or community event should be in keeping with AHS's mission and should further its outreach goals. If approved, the loaned item(s) must be accompanied by at least one designated AHS staff member, who is responsible for acting as courier, exhibit installer, and security guard.

INCOMING

The collecting units of AHS may borrow objects from each other, and from other institutions or individuals for the purpose of exhibition. Incoming loans will be recorded on an incoming loan agreement and loaned objects shall be stored and handled in the same manner as AHS collection objects. Loans shall be made for no more than one year at a time, but renewable, if both parties agree. AHS shall be responsible for packing, shipping and transportation costs and shall insure the objects, if the lender specifies that option on the incoming loan agreement. AHS shall work with Risk Management when certificates of insurance are required. If no insurance value is specified by the lender, AHS will insure the work at its own estimated valuation.

Lenders must establish any special conditions for the loan material in writing in advance, to which AHS must agree in writing. Unless permission is denied in writing, it is understood that all items in the loan may be photographed and reproduced in exhibit advertising and in publicity material. Any proposed use in an exhibit catalog or as a sale item will be negotiated in advance.

Upon the expiration of a loan and subsequent notification to the lender, any unclaimed loans will be claimed by AHS as its property, pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes, Chapter 3.1, Article 1, Section 44-351 to 44-356, commonly referred to as the Arizona abandoned property law.

RIGHTS AND REPRODUCTIONS

AHS follows all federal copyright laws and guidelines.

The collections of AHS contain materials for which AHS does not possess copyright. These items include, but are not limited to, books, pamphlets, films, oral histories, manuscripts, photographs, works of art, and various digital media. These items are provided for educational and research purposes as provided for under the fair use section of the United States copyright law. AHS staff will provide information regarding the status of its collections; however, it is the responsibility of researchers/users to determine the copyright status of materials and to comply with all copyright laws.

AHS maintains and publishes electronic databases which contain digital collections content and collections meta data. Use of these materials must be consistent with the policies and procedures of the AHS and the State of Arizona.

The Society also licenses the non-commercial use of proprietary, electronic databases for the use of staff and researchers for educational and research purposes only. Anyone wanting to publish, copy, redistribute, sell or alter the information contained within these databases should contact the appropriate vendor or publisher.

USE OF REPRODUCTIONS

AHS reserves the right to limit use, reproduction, or publication of all materials regardless of copyright status.

1. Researchers may be charged a fee for the reproduction of collections. Fee schedules will be made available by collection staff. All reproductions must be fully credited when used. Reproduced materials may be subject to copyright.
2. Staff will not reproduce an item if it could be damaged in the process.
3. This section does not cover the physical reproduction of three-dimensional artifacts. Anyone wishing to reproduce an artifact should contact the appropriate staff for more information.

4. Artwork in the collection may be reproduced, however, it is the responsibility of the patron to research and receive permission from any artists that may still have the divisible rights of reproduction for their artwork under the copyright law and the Visual Artists Rights Act.

DEACCESSIONS

AHS periodically deaccessions and disposes of collections items. The term "deaccession" refers to the internal procedural steps by which a collections object may be removed from the official inventoried permanent collection of the AHS. Any deaccession of a work should be solely for the advancement of AHS's mission. The term "disposal" refers to the sale, exchange, or other transfer of the item.

AHS may deaccession collections items because:

1. The item is no longer relevant to the mission of AHS.
2. The item is redundant and not necessary for research.
3. The item is in poor physical condition, whether through accidental damage, deterioration, infestation or inherent vice (the quality of a material or an object to self-destruct or to be unusually difficult to maintain) and is beyond restoration to a level suitable for public display, scholarly use or other appropriate AHS purposes.
4. The item is a danger to human health or to other items in the collection.
5. AHS is unable to preserve or store the item in a responsible manner.
6. AHS is ordered to return an object to its original and rightful owner by a court of law; AHS determines that another entity is the rightful owner of the object; or AHS determines that the return of the object is in the best interest of the institution.

No board member, employee, volunteer or their family members may purchase deaccessioned objects directly from AHS or at auction if consigned by AHS. All funds received from the sale of deaccessioned objects shall be used to fund the purchase of other objects or the direct preservation of existing collections.

Funds designated for "direct care of collections" shall be used in ways that will make a physical or immediate impact on an object or objects that increases or restores its cultural value, thus prolonging its life and usefulness. These funds shall be maintained in a separate restricted account. Proposed uses of these funds shall be considered and approved by the SSCC, in accordance with the American Association of Museums "Direct Care of Collections" Ethics, Guidelines, and Recommendations of 2016. (See Appendix III)

PROCESSING DISCARDS

In accordance with professional archival practices, AHS may dispose of materials found within archival collections during processing which are determined not to have historical value or which may present a danger to the long-term preservation to items in the collection. These items may include, but are not limited to: binders, envelopes, fasteners, frames, duplicate materials or materials too badly damaged to be used for research. Removing these materials is considered basic collections maintenance and as such, are not subject to the deaccession policy. Review of processing discards and their disposal shall be governed under the appropriate archival processing procedures.

GUIDELINES FOR DEACCESSIONING GIFTS

AHS shall honor all legal restrictions attached to a gift or bequest of collection pieces. In addition, donor requests, which do not impose any legal obligation accompanying the bequest or gift of collection pieces, will be respected to the extent feasible, unless modified by the donor, or if the donor is not living, the donor's heirs or legal representatives. Before proceeding to recommend that a donated work be deaccessioned, curators will review the records of gift to confirm that the gift is unrestricted.

Potential deaccessions must be proposed to the SSCC. Once approved, the committee will submit the recommendation to the executive director to forward for review by the SGBCC who then presents their recommendations to the State Governing Board for ratification. Detailed procedures for deaccessioning are included in the Collections Procedure Manual.

Special Use pieces are not considered to be accessioned into the AHS collections and are not governed by the deaccessioning policy. Special Use items can be disposed of by vote of the SSCC. The committee may delegate some or all of these decisions to local collections work groups.

PERSONAL COLLECTING

The acquiring, collecting and owning of historic materials is not in itself unethical and can enhance professional knowledge and judgment. However, the acquisition, maintenance and management of a personal collection by an AHS employee or Board member can create ethical questions. Extreme care is required whenever an employee or Board member collects historic materials similar to those collected by the AHS.

No AHS staff member, volunteer, trustee, or member of a governing body may compete with AHS for collections or may take advantage of privileged information received because of his or her position relevant to the AHS's collecting scope. Should a conflict of interest develop between the needs of the individual and AHS, those of AHS will prevail. Special care is also required in considering any offer of an item either for sale or as a tax-benefit from members of the Board of Directors or its committees, members of the staff or the families or close associates of Board and committee members and staff.

No private collecting by staff and other persons employed by or closely connected with AHS can be tolerated if, in fact or appearance, it conflicts with the interests of AHS and its collecting program.

Members of the AHS staff and boards will sign a non-competition ethics statement.

POLICY REVIEW, MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

The Collections Management Policy must be approved by the State Governing Board of AHS. All changes and revisions must also be approved and any changes supersede all previous collection management policies.

This policy will undergo a thorough review every five years through a committee appointed by the executive director. Other revisions may be undertaken through a committee appointed by the executive director to ensure the proper care and maintenance of the collections and their records when deemed necessary.

It is the responsibility of all collections staff to assure compliance to this policy. Questions regarding compliance should be directed to the appropriate the chair of the SSCC and/or the executive director. These staff members will take appropriate action to ensure compliance.

A copy of this policy will be made available to all board, staff, volunteers and the public.



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azhs.org