

WCHS Acquisitions & Accessioning

WCHS Policy on Acquisitions & Accessioning

ACQUISITIONS & ACCESSIONING

DEFINITION: *“Accessioning” is the process of creating a permanent record of an object, assemblage, or lot received from one source at one time for which the Society has custody, right, or title, and assigning a unique control number to said object, assembly, or lot.*

Accessioned objects are held in perpetuity as long as:

- They support the Museum mission statement
- They retain physical integrity, their identity, and their authenticity.
- They can be properly stored, preserved, and used.

A. PURPOSE OF COLLECTIONS

Objects are collected by the Society to physically document the history of Whitman County. These objects form the basis of original research, exhibition, and interpretation.

B. RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Approval to accept and accession an object into a collection can only be granted by the Archive manager and the Director.
2. Archive manager, in consultation with the director, are responsible for creating and maintaining, within a reasonable length of time, complete and written documentation of the process for each acquisition.
3. Volunteers at each location can accept donated items as long as they fit the criteria below and feel that it is a good fit for their location or another location owned by the WCHS. It is always best to take the item and thank the donor.

C. ACQUISITION CRITERIA

Objects accepted and accessioned into the collections must support the mission of the Society. Objects will be accepted and accessioned into the Society collections when the following conditions are met:

1. Objects are acquired if they are from Whitman County and can help tell the story of the history of the County.
2. The Society can provide proper care, conservation, storage, and security under conditions ensuring their preservation and availability, in keeping with professional standards.
3. Objects would be from the era and can be used as an example of what would have been in one of the locations during that time period.
4. The object does not represent an unacceptable hazard to personnel, or to other collections.
5. Objects must be adequately labeled and include complete collection data.
6. Objects shall be accepted only when the Archive manager or Director has determined

to the best of his/her ability that they have been collected and received, exported/imported, in full compliance with all laws and regulations of the country of origin, as well as those of individual states and the federal government of the United States.

7. Objects for which the Archive manager or Director anticipates no foreseeable use for exhibition, research, education, or exchange, will not be accepted.

8. Owners of copyright will be asked to transfer such rights upon conveyance of title. Fine Arts objects and literary works (e.g. field notes) created on or after January 1, 1978 that are subject to the Copyright Act of 1976 (17 U.S.C. »» 101-702) will be considered only after a thorough review of copyright restrictions.

9. The Society will not accept any donations believed to be improperly represented as to legality, authenticity, condition, or value until such time as the original claim has been substantiated by a competent, independent authority or until the attribution or value has been changed to reflect the true character of the items offered for donation.

D. ACQUISITION METHODS

The Society may acquire objects by purchase, contract, gift, bequest, exchange, field collecting, or other appropriate means subject to restrictions outlined in individual collections plans.

E. ACCESSION PROCEDURES

1. The Archive Manager or Director will identify proposed additions, following any legal or ethical procedures listed below.
2. A receipt will be issued by the Director to serve as evidence of physical transfer of the object, when appropriate.
3. Archive will permanently maintain accession paperwork as evidence for the legal title.

F. ESTABLISHING TITLE

Objects acquired for the collections should be obtained free and clear, without restrictions as to use, exhibition, loan, or future disposition.

1. If, under special circumstances, an object is accepted with restrictions or limitations, such conditions must:
 - a. be approved by the Archive manager and the director and,
 - b. be stated clearly in the instrument of conveyance and made part of the accession records for the object.
2. When title is uncertain, the Director shall make a well documented effort to ascertain the history and sources of the object and to determine that acquiring it will not contribute to illicit trade.

G. ACQUISITIONS FOR NON-PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

The Society acquires objects for various collections, not only the permanent collections. If donations are made to the Society that do not meet the criteria established by the Archive Manager or Director, they may be dealt with in a number of ways, if the donor is first informed of and approves such action:

1. They may be offered to a location or used in the locations hands-on collection.

2. They may be offered to a location as exhibit props.
3. They may be used as Society furnishing items for volunteers or staff office use.

H. UNSOLICITED DONATIONS

In general, the Society will accept unsolicited donations through the mail or in person at one of our locations.

* Volunteers can accept small items and photos.

* Volunteers can access the items to see if any of the items would fit their location following the acquisition criteria above.

*If the location would like to host the items, the volunteer can fill out an acquisition form, then forward the form to the Archive Manager.

*If the items would be a better fit at the Archive or another location, the volunteer can contact the Director or Archive Lead for further action.

*All items need to receive an intake number even if they are staying at the location received at.