

HISTORY OF THE MUSEUM AND COLLECTIONS

The Museum of Science & History's collections initially began in 1941 with the chartering of the Jacksonville Children's Museum. The museum began its collections with the motto "Curiosity is the Beginning of Wisdom," an enthusiasm for the sciences, and a global focus on historical objects, with a secondary interest in ethnographic material for cultural comparisons. Over the course of the Museum's history, the focus of the collections has changed as the Museum has refined its purpose and name.

In 1977, the Museum became the Jacksonville Museum of Arts and Sciences in order to address a wider audience within the community. At this time, objects were accepted into the collections for the purpose of expanding existing categories only. Private donations remained the bulk of acquisitions with some active purchasing in the areas of Americana and local history. In 1986, the Museum updated its statement of purpose to focus the collections growth more heavily on general Americana, local pre-Columbian and historical artifacts, contemporary Florida Native American artifacts, local regional natural science specimens and live animals. At this point, active collecting in other areas was curtailed. In 1988, the Museum's name changed to Museum of Science & History (MOSH). This change reflected a need in the community for local history and left interpretation of the arts to two local art museums as more logical bodies to fill that need in the community. In 1989, a new collections policy was approved by the board in order to bring the collection more in line with MOSH's statement of purpose as a regional museum. At this time, the majority of the Eskimo and African Collections were deaccessioned and transferred to institutions that could better utilize them.

The Museum's current policy reflects a similar push to focus collecting on local history and natural sciences and remove from its collections those more global items that do not serve a comparative study purpose.

SCOPE OF MOSH COLLECTIONS

The Museum currently holds six distinct collections within the institution. These are the Living Collection, History Collection, Natural Science Collection, MOSH Archive Collection, Teaching Collection, and Library Collection.

The Living Collection consists of live specimens that have been acquired by the Museum for study and exhibition purposes in fulfillment of the Museum's mission statement. The highest degree of care and documentation is given to the specimens and the highest degree of accountability is attached to this collection. Only those specimens deemed suitable for acquisition into the Museum's Living Collection are accessioned.

The History Collection consists of objects that have been acquired by the Museum for preservation, study and exhibition purposes in fulfillment of the Museum's mission statement. The highest degree of care and documentation is given to the objects and the highest degree of accountability is attached to this collection. Only those objects deemed suitable for acquisition into the Museum's History Collection are accessioned.

The Natural Science Collection consists of non-living specimens that have been acquired by the Museum for preservation, study and exhibition purposes in fulfillment of the Museum's mission statement. The highest degree of care and documentation is given to the objects and the highest degree of accountability is attached to this collection. Only those objects deemed suitable for acquisition into the Museum's History Collection are accessioned.

The MOSH Archive Collection consists of materials, transferred to the Curatorial department from other departments within the Museum that document the Museum's activities since its opening. A high degree of care and documentation is given to the objects. Only those items deemed suitable are accessioned into the collection.

The Teaching Collection consists of materials that have been acquired for use in the Museum's hands-on educational programming and require limited curation and no documentation. Materials are not accessioned and may be added to or removed from the Teaching Collection at the discretion of the Education Department.

The Library Collection consists of reference materials that have been acquired by the Museum for reference and research purposes. These materials are not accessioned. No documentation and limited curation are required. Materials may be added to and removed from the Library Collection at the discretion of the Curator.