

Statement of Purpose

In 2002 the statement of purpose was amended to read:

“The Tallahassee Museum promotes knowledge and understanding of the Big Bend’s cultural history and natural environment, inspiring people to enrich their lives and build a better community.” (See **Appendix I** for past statement of purposes)

A program of collecting and preserving objects in social, cultural, and natural history is one of the ways the Museum has developed to fulfill its mission.

The Collections of the Tallahassee Museum of History & Natural Science

The Museum collects to support its educational purposes, providing collections as a resource for exhibit development and educational programming. The educational role of the Museum as defined in the statement of purpose centers on the natural environment and regional history of the Big Bend area. For the purpose of collecting, the Big Bend is defined as the area of North Florida between the Apalachicola River and the Suwannee River from the Gulf north, including adjacent South Georgia counties.

The Museum’s collections are divided into four areas: the Permanent Collection, the Living Collection, the Teaching Collection, and the Foreign Cultural Collection. Within these areas the Museum collects in several specific categories:

1. The Permanent Collection

a. Historical Collection: Items from social and cultural history, limited to objects/specimens related to or typical and representative of the inhabitants of the region.

1. Historical buildings: vernacular of the region, with associated furnishings, tools, equipment, records, and immediate surroundings, including objects and records once used at the site and/or belonging to the associated families.

2. Objects from the 19th century into the early 20th century not directly associated with one of the historical buildings, but suitable as substitutes for associate furnishings, tools, and equipment. The emphasis is on rural life of the region and collecting is limited to the themes and time periods represented by the historical structures and other permanent exhibits current or planned. Objects from earlier or later periods may be included if directly related to the period objects - for example, as a contrast or a later development.

3. Artifacts of Florida Native Americans: including prehistoric archaeological materials from the Museum property and adjacent properties and traditional cultural materials of historic peoples of the region.
4. Gundrum Collection: Reproductions of pre-Columbian Gulf Coast Indian pottery made by Ivan Gundrum, and associated materials.
5. Objects from the 20th century.

b. Natural History Collection: Natural history items, limited to those currently or historically native to the region defined by the purpose, and those in support of educational programming and permanent exhibits current or planned.

1. Biological specimens.
2. Cultural items related to specific exhibited animals, plants, their use by people or beliefs about them.

c. Museum Archives: Papers, photographs, and slides concerning the Museum’s own history, its policies and programs. These records include but are not limited to board minutes, annual reports, final reports of grant projects, Museum publications, and financial records that need to be retained beyond 7 years.

2. The Live Animal Collection

a. Wild Animal Collection: Native Florida animals; mammals, birds, reptiles. The scope

and purpose of the wild animal collection at the Museum is limited to the collection, exhibition, and interpretation of live animal specimens native to but not necessarily endemic to the Big Bend region of Florida. The collection is not limited to animals that are currently extant to this region, but includes animals that have been documented as surviving into historical times.

b. Domestic Animal Collection: Farm animals. The domestic animal collection consists exclusively of species that would have been utilized as beasts of burden, food sources or companion animals on a rural North Florida farm of modest means at the turn of the century. These animals serve to illustrate the daily operation of a typical family farm in a historical setting and context.

3. Teaching Collection: Items which may have active use and as such are considered repairable and/or replaceable. Items which are to be used as they were originally intended, in a demonstration or living history activity, and items of natural history which are considered expendable and may be damaged through educational use, must be in the teaching collections.

It is recommended that as much as possible the items in the teaching collection be replicas or reproductions.

Live animals used in the Museum's education programs also constitute a Living Teaching Collection. This collection consists of small animals that do not pose a threat to the handler or the public. The use of these animals is regulated by state license (see **Appendix E & G**). Animal department staff care for the live animals in the teaching collection.

4. Foreign Cultural Collection: Representative selection of items that document the early collecting history of the Museum. (The Museum no longer collects in this area.)

Additionally, as the Museum is the only broadly focused collecting organization in the region, it has a responsibility to the community to preserve items of special value to the Big Bend

area that do not fall within the parameters of more specialized local collections, and may not be specifically included by the above areas.