

HISTORY AND NATURAL SCIENCE COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

Description of the History Collection

The History Collection has intrinsic value to the study and interpretation of regional history in support of MOSH's mission. The collection is held and curated on a permanent basis and consists of approximately 21,000 objects. The collection contains authentic exhibit quality objects that relate to, and can be used to interpret, the peoples, cultures, and important events of Northeast Florida, dating from pre-history to the present. Also contained in the History Collection are objects of a more global focus. Some of these non-regional items are held for comparative purposes, others may be eligible for deaccession.

While the majority of the Museum's History Collection was built through small individual donations, the archaeology and anthropology sub collections were expanded greatly with several large donations. In 1966, the Museum acquired the Whitman P. Garrett Collection of Pre-Columbian artifacts. In 1968, the Museum was gifted a collection of South American artifacts by Mr. T. S. Baker. In 1976, the Museum purchased the collection of local amateur archaeologist Bunnie Hall. In 1988, the Museum received a donation from the Northeast Florida Anthropological Society of their Dent Mound holdings. The final large addition to the Museum's archaeology holdings was the donation in 1994 of the Thomas H. Gouchnour (Mayport Mound) Collection. These additions have helped to greatly enhance the collection while furthering the Museum's mission to bring local history to life.

Description of the Natural Science Collection

The Natural Science Collection has intrinsic value to the study and interpretation of science, which supports MOSH's mission. The collection consists of over 10,300 non-living zoological, botanical, paleontological and geological specimens indigenous to Northeast Florida. The specimens are of exhibit quality and typically prepared according to standard museum preservation practices. The Collection may also include non-regional specimens of exhibit quality for the purpose of comparative study and display.

Acquisition Policy

The Museum seeks acquisitions to strengthen and broaden its existing Collections through gift, bequest, purchase, exchange or any other transaction by which title to an object passes to the Museum. All objects accepted into the History and Natural Science

Collections become the Museum's exclusive property and may be displayed, loaned, retained, or disposed of in the best interests of the Museum and the public it serves.

Objects are accepted into the permanent collection in accordance with the following criteria:

- There will be a clear relationship between the object and the overall mission of the Museum.
- The object will not be an unnecessary duplicate of objects already in the Collection.
- The object will be of such size and condition that the Museum can provide it with proper care and handling without undue expense or drain of the Museum's resources while on display or in storage.
- The objects will only be accepted on an unrestricted basis in terms of ownership or with an explanation of the status of any potential use restrictions (such as copyrights, patents and trademarks).
- The Museum will not accept Native American human remains or grave goods subject to repatriation.
- There will be no question as to the origin or legal status of the object.

The Curator will accession objects that meet the above criteria and guidelines into the collection in accordance with the following procedures:

- Approval from the Executive Director will be sought for accessions that require a large or unusual expense for care and storage.
- A Record of Accession (Appendix B) will be created.
- A Deed of Gift record (Appendix A) will accompany the accession record for any object acquired through gift, bequest, or exchange.
- A Bill of Sale will accompany the Record of Accession for objects or specimens acquired through purchase.
- All Collection accession records will be stored in the registration cabinet located in the History Collection storage room and filed in order of accession number.
- A digital record will be created in the Collection database.

Deaccession Policy

The decision to deaccession an object in the Museum's History Collection will be made with great care, taking into consideration the interests of the Museum and the public it serves. The process of deaccessioning is designed to keep the Museum's identity clear, focused, and consistent with its mission. To prevent legal and ethical issues no object that has been in the collections less than three years is eligible for deaccession.

An object must meet one or more of the following criteria before being considered for deaccession:

- The object has no clear relationship with the overall mission of the Museum.
- The object is an unnecessary duplicate of objects already in the Collection.

- The object is of such size or condition that the Museum cannot provide it with proper care or storage.
- The opportunity exists to acquire a more relevant object of a similar nature through gift, exchange or purchase.
- The object has been stolen.

The Curator is responsible for determining when deaccession is necessary and will adhere to the following procedures:

- The Curator, through the Director, will recommend to the Board of Trustees the removal of an object from the Collection and the preferred method of disposition (transfer to teaching collection, scholarly exchange, donation, sale, or permanent destruction). All methods of disposition will comply with applicable laws and permits for the objects. Methods of disposal that do not meet the Museum's ethical standards, such as transfer of items to employees or board members, yard sales, etc., will not be considered.
- A Deaccession and Disposal Record (Appendix C) will be filed with the corresponding accession record in the registration cabinet.
- Digital collection records will be updated in the Collection database.
- Funds realized from the sale of deaccessioned objects will be used for one purpose only: to acquire other objects for the Collection.