

Meeteetse Museums' Collections Criteria

Excerpts from the Collections Management Policy (2019)

Scope of Collection:

MMD houses and maintains materials that are significant to the natural, artistic, and cultural heritage of Meeteetse and its geographical surroundings. The geographic area within its scope roughly extends north from Meeteetse to the Halfway Stage Stop and Oregon Basin Oil Field; south to Legend Rock State Archaeological Site (incorporating Grass Creek Oil Field); east to the Badlands between Meeteetse and Worland (incorporating Gooseberry Creek); and west into the Absaroka Range of the Shoshone National Forest (incorporating the former town of Kirwin, the proposed cabin site of Amelia Earhart, the former Double Dee Guest Ranch, and Anderson Lodge). The entire Greybull and Wood River Valleys and their tributaries are included within its scope.

These objects are used for exhibit, educational, informational, and research purposes following MMD's mission statement and collection policies.

MMD is working to focus its collections by verifying that current objects meet this policy and deaccessioning (or returning in the case of old loans) those that do not. The goal is to better exhibit, store and care for its collections. MMD will continue to collect objects that assist the museum in its mission; objects not meeting these criteria will not be accepted for accession.

Acquisition of Collection

Permanent Collection and Sub-Collections

Materials can be ethically added to the collection by means of gifts, bequests, purchases, exchanges, commissions, field collecting, transfer and abandonment, or by any other transaction by which title to the object passes to MMD. Documentation of transfer of title must be obtained including, at a minimum, a Deed of Gift for donations, a receipt for purchases, and a copy of the will for bequests.

Purchases require a receipt of ownership. Collections purchases may be made at the discretion of the Collections Manager and/or Director if such funds for said purchases are available within the collections budget, usually under \$500. Purchases beyond what is available in the collections budget must be approved by the Board.

Bequests will be evaluated to determine if some or the entire anticipated donation will be added to any MMD collection. MMD reserves the right to refuse any portion or all of a bequest made to MMD.

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An object, archival collection, or photograph will be accepted into the Permanent Collection or any sub-collections if the object:

- is relevant to and consistent with the mission of MMD;
- is in a condition whereby MMD is able to provide proper storage and preservation, suitable for display, and does not require a large conservation effort or storage expense;
- enhances and strengthens the existing collections;
- has satisfactory provenance, is given unconditionally, and with a clear and sound title;
- has no legal or ethical issues associated with the object;
- is not hazardous to staff, visitors, or the collections;
- and is not a duplicate of an object currently in the collection.

Education Collection

Items may be ethically added to the Education/Property Collection by means of gifts, bequests, purchases, exchanges, transfers and abandonment, or any other transaction wherein MMD receives the title. Documentation and records maintenance is the same as for the Permanent Collection with the substitution of a Deed of Non-Accessioned Gift in place of the Deed of Gift.

An item may be accepted into the Education/Property Collection if the object:

- is not connected to Meeteetse but is in the spirit of and relevant to the mission of MMD;
- OR is connected to Meeteetse but is not in a condition to be on exhibit, is redundant with other items in the permanent collection, or the donor stipulated it should be used for education;
- is in a condition suitable for display, storage, and handling, and does not require large conservation or storage efforts or expenses;
- enhances and strengthens the collections and exhibits;
- has no legal or ethical issues associated with the object and has a satisfactory provenance and title;
- and is not hazardous to staff, visitors, or the collections.

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Reference Collection

Items may be ethically added to the Reference Collection by the same means as the Permanent Collection and the Education/Property Collection. Items may also be collected and copied from newspapers or online. ...

Other Acquisition Considerations

MMD holds the right to accept objects with restrictions or limitations. However, such cases require careful consideration and cannot impose an excessive restriction upon MMD. Authority to accept restriction or limitations resides with the Collections Committee. The Board of

Directors may be consulted as requested by the Collections Committee and for objects with a high value.

MMD complies with standards for acquisition as expressed in U.S. laws, including the National Stolen Property Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA). Furthermore, MMD complies with the ethical standards of collecting as put forth by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and the recommendations of the UNESCO Conventions Concerning the Protection of Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 1970). Per these laws and standards, MMD will not display human remains and will acquire the correct permits as needed for special objects, particularly taxidermy specimens.

MMD collections staff will attempt to find all proper documentation for undocumented objects. If, after a reasonable but unsuccessful attempt to pair undocumented objects with its proper documentation, MMD holds the right to accession said objects into any of its collections as Found in Collection (FIC) objects. MMD holds all FIC objects as unrestricted objects and will apply all policies regarding the use, storage, exhibit, and disposal of its Permanent Collection to all FIC objects. FIC objects are approved by the Collections Manager but may be put before the Collections Committee for final approval.

Because Wyoming does not address Found-in-Collections objects specifically in its statutes, MMD will after record reconciliation (if possible) follow the general timeline and attempted notification of the Wyoming Statute on Loaned Property in Museums (34-23), discussed more in the Objects in Custody section of this policy.

For objects claimed by others, the burden of ownership falls on the individual(s) making the claim. These claims will be evaluated by the Collections Committee (and the Board if necessary) on a case-by-case basis with all paperwork retained.