



# Collections Management Policy

Adopted by the Culture and Heritage Commission  
June 23, 2014

Revised and Approved by the Culture and Heritage Commission  
November 28, 2017

Revised and Approved by the Culture and Heritage Commission  
May 24, 2022

Revised and Approve by the Culture and Heritage Commission  
April 23, 2024

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# **Culture & Heritage Museums Collections Management Policy**

## **I. Introduction**

Culture & Heritage Museums is a family of museums in York County, SC, which includes Historic Brattonsville, Historical Center of York County, McCelvey Center, Museum of York County, and Main Street Children's Museum. Culture & Heritage Museums (referenced as CHM throughout this document) work together to create a comprehensive system of linked cultural, historical, and natural heritage attractions to serve the citizens of the county and the general public. <sup>1</sup>

This Collections Management Policy establishes the professional and ethical practices that guide the acquisition, preservation, use, disposition, and over-all management of CHM's collection. Responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the Executive Director, Curator(s), Historian, Director of Archives, and Director of Collections.

Future revisions to this policy are the responsibility of the Director of Collections with proposed changes to the policy requiring review by the Collections Committee and submission by the Executive Director to the York County Culture and Heritage Commission for final approval. This document will be formally reviewed at least once every five years to ensure that it remains consistent with the goals of the Commission and CHM.

*Documented agreements not in conformity with this policy that were made before the institution of this policy are binding and will be honored.*

## **II. Mission**

The mission of Culture & Heritage Museums is to communicate and preserve the natural and cultural histories of the Carolina Piedmont, inspiring a lifetime of learning.

## **III. Governance**

### **A. York County Culture and Heritage Commission**

The York County Culture and Heritage Commission (referenced as the Commission throughout this document), formed by county Ordinance 6797 in 1997 and restructured in Ordinance 611 in 2011, governs CHM. The Commission comprises seven Commissioners who are appointed by the York County Council and who

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<sup>1</sup>York County Ordinance 611. Code 32.40, Section I.

volunteer their time, expertise, and energy to guide this organization. The Commission carries out its governance responsibilities through an Executive Director, hired to manage the operations of CHM and its professional staff. The Commission holds legal and fiduciary responsibility for the protection and enrichment of CHM's collections and related documentation, and is the authority to approve permanent accessions and deaccessions for CHM.

#### **B. Collections Committee**

As stated in the Collections Committee Charter passed in April 30, 2012 by the Commission, the Museum Collections Committee is an advisory committee, appointed to assist CHM in decision making regarding acquisition, access, conservation, deaccession and preservation. The Committee is intended to bring broader input and oversight to the process of building and maintaining Culture & Heritage Museums' unique collection. The Committee is also encouraged to explore ways the collection can further CHM's commitment to research, public outreach, and education in York County's diverse and vibrant communities.

#### **C. Collections Task Force**

The Collections Task Force is the internal museum team charged with recommending policies and developing procedures for managing and preserving CHM's varied collections and ensuring their implementation at all CHM sites. Members of the Collections Task Force are involved with collections research, curatorial duties, preservation, and over-all management of CHM's collection. The Task Force members include the Executive Director, Curator(s), Historian, Director of Collections, and Director of Archives, and other staff as designated by the Executive Director.

### **IV. Scope of Collection**

Culture & Heritage Museums collects and preserves objects and archival materials that are pertinent for communicating the natural and cultural histories of York County and the Carolina Piedmont. Materials from outside this regional area may be collected if useful in interpreting broader ideas relevant to the organization's mission and if they show a relationship to the natural and cultural development of the region.

#### **A. Natural History**

The natural history collection at CHM represents the areas of geology, space, paleontology, botany, and vertebrate and invertebrate zoology. It comprises voucher images and nonliving natural history specimens occurring in York County, the Carolina Piedmont and the southeastern United States. The collection also

includes select specimens from the continent of Africa whose ancient relatives once inhabited southeastern North America.

## **B. Cultural History**

The cultural history collection consists of non-archival materials, both archaeological and non-archaeological, altered and/or used by people living in the Carolina Piedmont during prehistoric and historic periods of occupation. The collection is broad and consists of, but not limited to, textiles, pottery, glassware, portraiture, transportation, lithics, and metals. Particular emphasis is placed on collecting items associated with York County and the surrounding area.

## **C. Art**

The collection includes visual arts in all media, with particular emphasis on York County and the Carolina Piedmont; and works useful in interpreting or establishing a context for such material. The predominant artwork in this collection is by Vernon Grant, an illustrator and civic leader who lived in York County.

## **D. Archives**

The materials in this collection include maps, books, ledgers, manuscripts, newspapers, other paper-based media; ephemera; photographs and related materials; audio/video, microfilm, digital, and other media for recording information. Materials collected originate in or pertain to the history, culture, and heritage of the region and people of the Carolina Piedmont, with particular emphasis on York County and the surrounding area.

## **E. Structures and Sites**

This collection comprises buildings and other properties significant to the history of the region. Decisions regarding the management and care of these properties will be guided by the standards established by the Secretary of Interior and will be established in a separate policy from CHM's Collections Management Policy.

## **F. Non-mission related items**

Prior to the formation of the York County Culture and Heritage Commission, the Museum of York County began as the Children's Nature Museum. The Children's Nature Museum was established with a wide collection of African natural history and ethnographic materials and grew to include a number of objects from other areas of the world. With the merger and the change in mission, many objects within these collections no longer fit the focus of the institution. As these items are a part of the permanent collection, CHM continues to follow professional standards in the

care of these objects. However, CHM also recognizes its responsibility to the community at large to ensure these items are utilized in such a way to further our knowledge of world cultures and will work towards finding a more relevant home at other non-profit institutions that will ensure the long-term preservation of these items.

## **V. Accession**

### **A. Acquisition Policy**

When acquiring new items for the permanent, library, or education and living history collections, CHM will adhere to professional and legal guidelines regarding the protection of natural and cultural properties as recommended by American Alliance of Museums and the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections, and will abide by the regulations set forth in applicable laws. (*See Appendix III for applicable laws*)

Members of CHM's Collections Task Force may submit recommendations for the accessioning of objects into the permanent collection to the Commission for consideration. Recommendations should also be sent to the Collections Committee for review, when feasible, so that they may advise the staff or Commission on any possible concerns. The Executive Director or Collections Committee Chairperson will recommend potential permanent accessions to the Commission for final approval.

Once an object is accessioned into the collection, it becomes the exclusive property of CHM and may be exhibited, loaned, retained, or disposed of in the best interest of the organization and the public it serves. All CHM sites are subject to the same policies and procedures for acquiring objects into the collection.

The following criteria are paramount in the decision-making process when considering an object for the permanent collection as they necessitate ongoing expenses to ensure their long-term preservation.

Acquisitions being considered for the permanent collection should:

1. Be relevant to CHM's mission and scope of collecting with significant historic, scientific, or artistic merit.
2. Ideally be of the highest physical quality
3. Must not pose a hazard to the staff, the public, or the rest of the collection.
4. CHM must be capable of caring for the objects according to AAM standards.
5. Be able to ensure legal transfer of title of all acquisitions to CHM and avoid acquiring objects that may have an unethical history of ownership. *CHM will determine the provenance for potential acquisitions by requesting information from donors or vendors concerning the item(s) history of ownership.*

6. Be able to acquire full copyright for appropriate items.

## **B. Methods of Acquisition**

Objects may be acquired for the permanent, education, or library collections through several means.

### **i. Donation and Bequest**

CHM will not accept donated or bequeathed materials with restrictions that would prevent effective research, normal exhibition use, loan, or disposal in accordance with this document. Nor will potential acquisitions that require items be on permanent or long-term exhibition be accepted. Objects will not be accepted for exclusive use at any CHM site. Offered gifts will be declined from artists, dealers, or related parties to the gift if it is deemed the intention of the donation is to foster an individual's career or increase the value of similar works.

Bequests to CHM may be accepted in whole or in part. Donors considering the bequest of objects to CHM should discuss the intended gift in advance with the appropriate staff member. If accepted, items bequeathed to the organization may become a part of the organization's permanent collection or may be considered for use in its education and living history collection. The use of the bequest will be determined by an appropriate staff member.

Any exception to this policy requires review of the terms by the Collections Committee and submission by the Executive Director for final approval by the Commission. Any accepted restrictions must be clearly specified and documented on the Gift Agreement and signed by the appropriate representatives of CHM and the donor.

*Gifts to CHM are tax deductible in accordance with state and federal tax laws.*

### **ii. Purchases**

When possible, CHM will allocate funds in its operating budget for purchasing new acquisitions. Purchases must be preapproved by the Executive Director and once acquired, items will be submitted by the Executive Director to the Commission for final approval. Purchases not approved for the permanent collection will become a part of the education collection.



iii. Field Collecting

Field collections include activities by the curator of natural history and any persons working with the curator for the express purpose of collecting specimens from a specific area within a specific period to add to CHM's natural history collection. Field collections also include the opportunistic acquisition of specimens found dead, including, but not limited to, mammals killed by motor vehicles, birds that fly into windows or other structures, small animals killed by pets, or other salvaged specimens. In all cases, CHM will maintain up-to-date permits from local, state, and federal authorities as required by law to conduct all field collecting and salvage activities in a legal and ethical manner

iv. Archaeological Excavation

Archaeological activity of any kind, including metal detecting, by the public is prohibited at all CHM properties. Archaeological excavations on CHM property will be approved by staff and directed by a professional archaeologist with all work being conducted in accordance with applicable laws and guidelines for protecting material culture. Any artifacts unearthed on CHM property are the property of CHM and will become part of its permanent collection. Detailed records on provenance and excavation findings will be maintained as part of the collection records.

v. Transfers and Exchanges

CHM may obtain objects through transfer or exchange with another institution. An exchange takes place when two organizations agree to trade materials of equal value. Exchanges are recorded with appropriate documentation recording the transaction and transfer of legal title.

When an exchange takes place, the object(s) being considered for exchange from CHM's collection must follow the deaccession process. All incoming exchanges should follow the same procedures for accession as donations and bequests and must be submitted by the Executive Director to the Commission for final approval. All transferred items to CHM should be without restriction and the copyright transferred when applicable.

vi. Abandoned Property

Abandoned property, as defined by the South Carolina Abandoned Cultural Property Law, is "property deposited with a nonprofit organization" which "the original lender or his heirs or assigns have not contacted the nonprofit organization for at least ten years after the date of acquisition, if the loan was

for an indefinite or indeterminate period, and for at least ten years after the date upon which a loan for a definite duration expired.”

Objects meeting this definition are considered abandoned property and in order for CHM to gain legal title to this property they must follow the procedures set for in the South Carolina Abandoned Cultural Property Law. *(See Appendix III)*

Additionally, any items left on CHM properties without proper documentation signed by the donor and approved CHM staff will be considered abandoned and will become property of Culture & Heritage Museums, giving CHM full discretion to use the items as deemed appropriate. If the items are wanted for the collection, in accordance with the Acquisition Policy (as stated on page 6), staff will accession the items as appropriate for their collection type (permanent, education, exhibit support, or library). If the items are not wanted for the collection, Collections staff will work with other CHM departments to identify other potential uses for the abandoned items. Should a non-collections use be identified, the items will be transferred to the appropriate department and documented accordingly. In the event that the items are not wanted by any CHM department, the items may be disposed of and documented accordingly.

*Any items documented as abandoned prior to May 24, 2022 must still adhere to the State of South Carolina’s Abandoned Cultural Property Law to claim ownership.*

### **C. Documentation**

Responsible management of CHM’s collection requires the timely creation and maintenance of detailed documentation related to all collection objects. This includes but is not limited to current inventories, records related to the acquisition and accession of objects, provenance information, and deaccessions.

Upon the acceptance or denial of a new acquisition into CHM collections, the donor will be contacted by letter to inform them of the Commission’s decision. Letters of acceptance will clearly indicate which part of CHM’s collection the donation will be designated to (permanent, education, or library) and will include a donor acknowledgement form and questionnaire.

A signed gift agreement must be completed to conclude the legal transfer of title for a donation to CHM. The agreement should clearly state which collection the donation will be designated to and include the signature of the donor or donor’s representative. The completed agreement requires two distinct signatures by

authorized CHM staff to finalize the title transfer. Once approved and all signatures have been added to the gift agreement, a copy will then be sent to the donor for their records.

Items purchased for the collection must include an invoice or bill of sale marked as “PAID” to serve as transfer of ownership for purchased items.

All accessioned objects will be assigned a distinctive accession number to include the year of accession and a number designating the acquisition’s order of acceptance, be identified, catalogued, and preserved according to AAM standards. All correspondence, documentation of title transfer, research reports, donor or vendor information, a signed Recommendation for Accession form showing approval by the Commission, and other documents relating to an acquisition will be filed as part of the collection’s records. Collections records shall be filed in a secure location and will be maintained by the appropriate staff members.

The collections management database system, which contains donor information, photographic records, and other pertinent information for cataloging objects in CHM’s collection, will be maintained along with the paper records. The database is backed up daily by York County IT Department and stored off-site. Removable drive back-ups are done monthly by the Director of Collections.

#### **D. Undocumented Objects and FIC<sup>2</sup>**

Objects discovered in CHM’s collection without clear identification to document where the item came from may occasionally be discovered, these items are called **undocumented objects**. When such items are discovered, collections staff will make every effort to reconcile undocumented objects with the appropriate paperwork linking them to the permanent collection or objects on loan with CHM. If such objects cannot be reconciled, they will be documented as **found-in collection (FIC)**.

Undocumented and found-in-collection objects are considered the property of CHM. Upon discovery, undocumented objects will be tracked and documented, and may be used in the same manner as objects in the permanent collection. If documentation is discovered for the undocumented object, it will revert to its original accession number or, if determined to be a loan or temporary custody item returned to the original owner.

If no documentation is found, the FIC may be accessioned into the permanent collection in accordance with CHM accession policy and procedures, and must

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<sup>2</sup> Rebecca A. Buck and Jean Allman Gilmore, *Collection Conundrums: Solving Collections Management Mysteries* (American Association of Museums, 2007), 44-45.

remain in CHM's possession for a minimum of two years before it may be considered for deaccessioning. Accessioned FIC objects will be given accession numbers that include the year of accession followed by a 500 number to distinguish the object's status from other acquisitions (i.e. 2013.501).

An FIC that is not accessioned into the permanent collection must also be retained for two years before it may be disposed of by following the deaccession policy, set forth in this document. Proof that an object has been in CHM's possession for a minimum of two years may be established through an object's recorded presence in inventories or other dated documentation that clearly identifies the object in question.

If, at any time, the original documentation for an accessioned FIC is found, the object will revert to its original accession number and the FIC number will be retired and noted in the accession file.

Should a claim be made on an undocumented object or FIC object, either accessioned into the collection or disposed of, the Commission will decide if the claim should be accepted or if the claim should be fought upon recommendation of the professional staff and review by the committee. Legal advice should be sought where appropriate.

## **E. Appraisals**

Representatives of CHM and the Commission will not appraise or estimate the value of objects for donors, institutions, or members of the public. Upon request, CHM will provide the names of at least three appraisal services but does not endorse the service providers. Furthermore, CHM staff and the Commission will not provide public statements about the monetary value of any object in the permanent collection.

It is the responsibility of the donor to acquire an appraisal of offered gifts for tax deduction purposes. Donors are encouraged to acquire an appraisal of gifts prior to donation. However, donated objects will be made available for examination by the donor's appraiser through an arranged appointment when necessary. Copies of completed appraisals should be given to CHM for its records.

Members of the Collections Task Force may assign estimated values for objects in the collection for internal purposes, loan agreements, or insurance coverage. In-house valuations by staff must be disclosed as such and should not be considered an appraisal of the item.

## **VI. Deaccession**

It is the intent of CHM that objects in the permanent collections be retained as long as they are known to be authentic, relevant to the mission and programs of CHM, and are not broken, damaged, or deteriorated beyond repair; and as long as they can be properly and safely stored, preserved, and used.

However, change in CHM's mission and the organization's collecting needs may require that inappropriate items be removed in order to improve the quality of care and quality of the objects that support the mission. Recommendations for deaccession should be made only after deliberate and scrupulous examination of the object's condition, history, and application to the mission.

The Recommendation for Deaccession form will be completed for all permanent collection objects slated for deaccession and must include the means of disposition. The form must be filled out by a member of the Collections Task Force and it should be supported by the Executive Director when submitted for consideration. Proposed deaccessions will be presented to the Collections Committee for their input on possible public reaction and Committee support. Final approval for all deaccessions is made by the Commission upon support and submission by the Executive Director, with the recommendation of CHM Collections staff and the advisement of the Collections Committee during a public meeting. The approval or support of the Collections Committee while desirable is not required to present potential items for deaccession to the Commission for consideration.

Exceptions may be made to this policy in emergency situations in which the safety of the collections, staff, or public is at risk. In such cases, the appropriate staff member is expected to act quickly to eliminate the risk, and submit a deaccessioning request and report documenting the need for such action to be submitted by the Executive Director to the Commission at its next meeting.

### **A. Criteria for Deaccession**

Before an object can be considered for deaccessioning, it must first have been in the collection for a minimum of two years, have not been exhibit for at least two years, and fit into one or more of the following categories:

1. Objects do not meet the mission of the organization.
2. Objects are improperly accessioned or acquired, such as an item acquired for other purposes and mistakenly accessioned.
3. Items represent an unnecessary duplicate of another item in the collection.
4. Objects have deteriorated to the point that they are useless for exhibit or study and are not cost-effective to restore.
5. Objects are impossible to safely store or exhibit.

6. Forgeries, fakes, and objects acquired on the basis of false information.
7. Replaceable objects are needed for destructive analysis, where such analysis is deemed of greater public benefit than preservation of the objects.
8. Objects pose a hazard to other objects or to human health.

## **B. Means of Disposition**

1. Education or living history collections - Objects that meet the criteria for deaccession may be deaccessioned for in-house use in demonstrations, research, or display. Items utilized in these circumstances will be subject to physical deterioration or destruction over time.
2. Transfer or Exchange - Deaccessioned objects may be transferred or exchanged with other institutions or agencies with a legal change of ownership. Exchanges must support CHM's mission and collecting goals.
3. Repatriation – In accordance with NAGPRA and evolving museum ethics and best practices, objects of religious or cultural sensitivity will be repatriated to the appropriate indigenous population or affiliated organization. *See Appendix III Applicable Legal Regulations*
4. Public Auction - All options for transfer, exchange, or internal use will be exhausted before deaccessions may be disposed of via means of public auction. Deaccessioned objects may not be sold in CHM stores or privately. There may be no direct link between a sale and subsequent purchase; collection objects may not be deaccessioned solely for purchasing other objects.
5. Physical Destruction- Objects in irreparable condition, deemed a physical threat to the collection, or the staff will be destroyed in an appropriate manner.

If there are restrictions on the disposal of an item, CHM will make a good faith effort to comply with the restriction. In cases where restrictions are beyond the scope of CHM compliance, the donor or the donor's heirs should be contacted in order to attempt to modify the restriction. If neither the donor nor heirs can be located or identified, CHM should seek legal advisement on how best to proceed.

York County Council Members, Commissioners, staff of CHM, museum volunteers, the immediate families of any aforementioned people, and any other individuals in a position to influence decisions within the organization are restricted from acquiring any deaccessioned object through trade, transfer or sale.

## **C. Documentation**

All acts of deaccessioning will be recorded in the minutes of the Commission's meetings and kept on file with the permanent collection records. Written records documenting all steps in the deaccession process must be kept by the appropriate Collections staff member and should include a signed Recommendation for

Deaccession form showing approval by the Commission. Written records, photographs, and Past Perfect database files on deaccessioned objects shall be retained and may be distributed in response to an appropriate inquiry.

#### **D. Use of Proceeds**

If deaccessioned objects are sold, the income will be placed in a special account to be used for the purchase of objects for the collection, or for the direct care of the collection.

### **VII. Education and Living History Collections**

Objects that do not meet the collecting needs of CHM or not deemed appropriate for acquisition to the permanent collection may be accepted for use in the education and living history collections. Donors must be advised on the decision to include offered gifts into this collection and must complete a gift agreement to transfer legal title to CHM with the approval of the Executive Director. As education and living history items are not a part of the permanent collection, they do not require approval of the Commission. Upon transfer of title, objects in this collection will be assigned a unique numbering system, beginning with ED, for tracking under the supervision of the Director of Collections.

The education and living history collections are utilized to support CHM programming and may be used both on-site and off-site, and handled by program staff or participants. Given the use of this collection, these objects, though maintained, will be subject to physical deterioration or destruction over time. Objects in this collection are not subject to the deaccession process and may be disposed of as deemed appropriate. Generally, items acquired for education or exhibition purposes will be housed away from the permanent collection.

### **VIII. Loans**

Since the Commission cannot hope to acquire ownership to all the objects it needs to communicate and preserve the natural and cultural histories of the Carolina Piedmont, it will borrow necessary objects from other institutions and from private individuals. In addition, it will accept, for a limited time, custody of objects belonging to others for the purpose of exhibition, examination, authentication and research. The Commission also recognizes that it owns objects that can benefit the programs of other museums. It therefore will lend objects to other museums when the conditions set forth in this policy can be met. The appropriate collections staff member shall keep a complete record of all loan transactions.

## **A. Incoming**

CHM will borrow objects only for specific purposes of exhibition, programming, or research. CHM accepts loans for up to one year, lending terms shall be listed on the loan agreement, with provisions for annual renewals for the length of the intended purpose of the loan. CHM will not accept "permanent" or "indefinite" loans as this obligates CHM to insure and preserve the objects for the owner, duties that do not correlate with the purpose or responsibilities of the organization.

CHM shall not accept on loan any object which it has reason to believe was obtained illegally or unethically by the lender. CHM also shall not accept loans with proposed restrictions that conflict with CHM policies, procedures, and organizational values. Lastly, objects on loan to CHM are given the same care and security as items in its permanent collection. In respect to this, CHM will not borrow objects for which it cannot maintain the same standards afforded to its own collection.

### **i. Documentation**

CHM shall document all borrowed objects fully. This documentation shall include:

- a. A written loan agreement with the lender establishing the conditions of the loan. Any special conditions, requests, or restrictions must be approved by CHM and the lender in advance and documented on the loan agreement.
- b. A thorough description of the object, including the identifying number of its institution and the CHM assigned loan number and a photograph if possible.
- c. A condition report made when the object is accepted and another when it is returned.
- d. Complete contact information for the lender and for any other individuals authorized to reclaim objects.
- e. An insurance value as provided for in the conditions of the loan.

At the termination of a loan, all objects listed on the loan agreement will be returned to the lender unless prior written authorization is received approving delivery to another party. It is the responsibility of the lender to inform CHM of any changes to their address or ownership changes during the period of the loan.

CHM will utilize the South Carolina Abandoned Property Law, as needed, to address abandoned or unclaimed loans. (*See Appendix III*)

## **B. Outgoing**

The Commission will lend objects from its collection for exhibit, educational, conservation, or research purposes to accredited institutions or other education-based institutions to further its mission to preserve and communicate the natural



and cultural histories of the Carolina Piedmont. At no time will any object or item that is part of CHM's collection, or under CHM's guardianship, be loaned for personal or commercial purposes. Outgoing loans may not be lent by borrowers to another individual or institution. If the borrower wishes to transfer loaned materials, CHM must execute a new loan agreement with the third party.

Requests to borrow objects in CHM's collection should be made either to a member of CHM's collections staff or to the Executive Director. Prospective museum borrowers are required to provide an AAM Standard Facility Report to demonstrate their ability to meet CHM's standards of display, security and environments. Non-museum educational or cultural organizations must certify to CHM that they are able to provide professional museum quality care and security for loaned objects before a loan will be approved. The Executive Director may deny a loan based on the best interest of CHM.

Outgoing loans require recommendations by the appropriate collections staff member and final approval of the Executive Director. Requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. If it is determined that an object is too rare, important, or too fragile to be exposed to risk, the loan will not be approved.

CHM lends objects for up to one year; lending terms shall be listed on the loan agreement. Loan extension requests must be received by CHM at least one month prior to the original termination date listed on the signed loan agreement. Renewal will require the recommendation of the appropriate collections staff member and final approval of the Executive Director.

i. Documentation

CHM shall document all outgoing loans by:

- a. Outgoing loans will be documented by a loan agreement, and are subject to the conditions stated on the reverse of the form. Any special conditions, requests, or restrictions must be approved by CHM and the borrower in advance and documented on the loan agreement.
- b. A condition report will be made before the object is loaned and once it is returned.
- c. Complete contact information for the borrower and for any other individuals authorized to reclaim objects must be provided.
- d. A current certificate of insurance must be issued to CHM prior to shipment of the object(s).

## **IX. Temporary Custody**

Objects may be accepted into temporary custody only by the Executive Director and approved staff for a period not to exceed six months, for the purpose of identification, research, or for consideration as an acquisition or loan. Objects placed into temporary custody do not represent a transfer of legal title to or formal loan with CHM.

The only situation that non-approved staff is allowed to accept a donation is if the object in question is a dead animal carcass, in good condition. If a donor brings in a dead animal carcass to donate and the Curator of Natural History is unavailable, the specimen should be accepted and immediately placed in one of the Natural History freezers until staff is able to review the specimen. It is important to note that if a specimen is brought in, it will be recorded as Field Collection due to the lack of ownership any person has over a wild animal. CHM maintains the proper permits in order to have possession of such animals.

The deposit will be recorded on a form in which the object is described and in which the contact information for the depositor appears and requires that an authorized CHM representative and the owner or owner's representative sign the receipt in agreement to the terms of the temporary custody. CHM does not insure objects it holds in temporary custody and is not liable for loss or damage to objects while on deposit with the organization.

If at the end of the six months the object(s) has/have not been claimed, CHM will attempt to notify the owner. If after ninety days from the six-month deadline the object(s) has/have not been claimed, then CHM may dispose, transfer, or keep the deposited materials, as it deems appropriate. York County Council Members, Commissioners, staff of CHM, museum volunteers, the immediate families of any aforementioned people, and any other individuals in a position to influence decisions within the organization are restricted from acquiring any disposed object.

## **X. Care**

Culture & Heritage Museums ensures the long-term preservation of its permanent collections by following, as consistently as possible, the best professional standards of care and treatment of objects regardless of individual significance. It is the responsibility of the Commission to ensure the guidelines in this section are carried out.

## **A. Environment**

Environmental conditions play one of the biggest roles in extending the preservation rate of any object in the collection, be it during exhibition or in storage. Ideally, CHM would not expose, store, or display objects to less than standard preservation conditions and will make every effort possible to preserve items appropriately. Collections staff, working with all CHM staff, will monitor all areas that affect the environmental conditions in which objects are kept. This includes lighting levels, temperature, relative humidity, cleanliness, pests, and security.

As many of CHM's buildings are older or historic structures, there are challenges in monitoring the varying environments within its facilities. CHM will work diligently to prevent any issues from arising and strive, to the best of its ability, to mitigate any potential issues should they arise. Collections staff will clean collections storage and exhibition locations on a scheduled rotation. In addition, these areas will be monitored to track the temperature and relative humidity levels as well as pest activities.

## **B. Handling**

Collections should be handled as little as possible, using accepted museum procedures as established for each collection. CHM's Director of Collections, Director of Archives, and curator(s) will ensure all other staff, interns, volunteers, and temporary personnel are trained in the proper techniques to handle an object. Only trained personnel will be allowed to handle objects in the permanent collection.

## **C. Inventory**

Inventories allow staff to ensure accurate recordkeeping of storage locations, identify conservation and storage needs, note any lost or missing objects, and better document objects as needed. Any changes or inaccuracies discovered during inventory should be noted and stated in the records and further investigation of the issue should take place as needed.

Collections staff will conduct a full inventory of each permanent collection every 7-10 years. The inventory will include objects in storage, on display, and objects on loan. Spot-check inventories will be carried out on a monthly basis, rotating storage locations and collections areas throughout all CHM sites. During a spot-check inventory, a percentage of the collection in the rotation areas will be randomly selected for examination.

#### **D. Exhibition**

Exhibition spaces will be maintained to the best preservation standards possible for each facility. Exhibits and collections staff will regularly examine museum displays to ensure exhibits are clean, orderly, and properly lighted.

Objects considered for exhibition should be evaluated for any conservation issues, which combined with exposure to the agents of deterioration, may negatively affect their preservation rate. Once an object is removed from exhibition it should be given a minimum of three years of “rest” within secure and environmentally controlled collections storage.

Travelling exhibits are managed in accordance with contractual agreements and applicable loan policy. Exhibits staff will coordinate the shipping, packing, and installation of exhibits and will work with collections staff to ensure that the condition of objects in travelling exhibits are documented upon arrival to and before departure from CHM. Exhibits will be monitored and undergo maintenance and environmental monitoring as necessary. Security and environmental monitors will be supplied when required.

#### **E. Conservation**

The Collections staff is responsible for monitoring the conservation needs of the collection. If conservation work is urgently needed, then CHM will arrange to have such work performed on a contractual basis. Minor conservation work may be done by collections staff, within the limits of their knowledge and training. All conservation work should be thoroughly documented on the appropriate forms and, whenever possible, before and after photographs should be taken. Treatments, where possible, should be reversible and distinguishable from the materials of the object. Conservators and designated contractors will never knowingly alter the integrity of the object.

#### **F. Condition Reports**

Condition reports will be completed at the time of an object’s accession into the collection and should include a detailed description of the object, measurements, condition and any recommendations for conservation. Condition reports will also be completed for objects slated for exhibition both before and after display as well as incoming and outgoing loans to monitor for any change in condition. Reports will be generated for an object at any point when a change in condition is noted such as during inventory or handling.

## XI. Insurance

Culture & Heritage Museums, through the York County Risk Management Department, maintains Inland Marine Insurance coverage for its collection in case of possible damage or loss. Collections materials are insured while in storage, in transit, and on exhibition at any CHM site or while on loan to other institutions. The insurance policy is reviewed annually by CHM and the Risk Management Department.

Objects on loan to CHM are covered under CHM's insurance policy as per the terms of the incoming loan agreement. Object lenders may request a Certificate of Insurance from CHM. Objects deposited with CHM for temporary custody will not be insured.

## XII. Collections Access and Security

### A. Staff Access

CHM strives to attain the recommended security measures for protecting collections as established by ASIS International and the American Alliance of Museums.<sup>3 4</sup>

Unrestricted access to the collections and collections records is limited to the Executive Director, Director of Collections, Director of Archives, and Curator(s). All persons listed above, regardless of position or title, must have appropriate training in accessing and proper handling of collections. Other staff members must receive permission from the appropriate collections staff member in order to gain access to the collections and may need to be escorted. Operations staff and contract personnel such as repair crews and pest control technicians must be escorted by appropriate collections, archives, or curatorial staff in secured collections storage areas to ensure the safety and security of the items.

In cases of emergency or imminent danger to the collections, operations staff have the right to access secured collections storage to address the situation. Collections staff should be notified of the event and access **immediately**. Emergencies include, but are not limited to, smoke, fire, flood, theft, and man-made or natural disasters.

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<sup>3</sup> *Suggested Practices for Museum Security*, (The Museum, Library and Cultural Properties Council of ASIS International, The Museum Association Security Committee of the American Alliance of Museums, rev. 2008).

<sup>4</sup> *Suggested Practices for Museum Collections Space Security*, (The Cultural Properties Council of ASIS International and The American Alliance of Museums, 2013).

## **B. Public Access**

Culture & Heritage Museums' primary outlet to provide public access to the collection is through its exhibits and education programs. The collection and corresponding records may also be made available to the public for study by legitimate researchers. CHM reserves the right to limit access to the records and collection to those performing scholarly, journalistic, or legal research; it is under no obligation to use staff time and working space to facilitate casual or random inquiries.

Requests for access to the collection or collection records should be made through the Natural History Curator, Director of Archives, or Director of Collections. Approval of a request will be made on a case-by-case basis and will depend on staff schedules, and object and record restrictions. The Director of Collections or appropriate collections staff member will maintain records of access and requests for access to the collection.

Granted access will be subject to restrictions necessary to protect the collections; to the limitations of open hours, working space, and staff time; and to the needs of exhibition. Researchers will also be supervised and monitored at all times by collections staff. CHM also reserves the right to restrict the use of photography and other means of duplication of an object in the collection. All reproductions for publication are subject to CHM Rights and Reproductions policy.

## Appendix I CHM Code of Ethics (approved February 2015)

Culture & Heritage Museums (CHM) is a family of museums in York County, SC, which includes Historic Brattonsville, Historical Center of York County, McCelvey Center, Museum of York County and Main Street Children's Museum. Culture & Heritage Museums work together to create a comprehensive system of linked cultural, historical, and natural heritage attractions to serve the citizens of the county and the general public.

**Guiding Principles:** CHM's Code of Ethics is guided by its organizational mission, vision, and values. By implementing these principles, our primary goal is to instill and maintain public trust and to ensure that we serve their needs above our own.

**Mission:** To communicate and preserve the natural and cultural histories of the Carolina Piedmont, inspiring a lifetime of learning.

**Vision:** To create a community that greatly values natural, historic, and cultural resources.

### Values:

1. **Authenticity:** We ensure that the knowledge that we share is accurate and supported through credible documentation or eyewitness accounts.
2. **Professionalism:** We adhere to best practices of the museum field in the care of resources under our stewardship.
3. **Meaningful visitor experiences:** We strive to create memorable experiences enabling those we serve to walk away from our museums not only with new information but with inspiration that they will carry with them throughout their lives.
4. **Respect for those we represent:** As a cultural museum we tell the story of people from various backgrounds and life experiences both past and present. We have an obligation to tell their stories in a fair and balanced manner that fosters greater understanding of their unique perspectives.
5. **Respect for our natural world:** As a natural history museum we have a responsibility to show respect for the natural world and to lead by example.
6. **Transparency:** We ensure our organizational meetings, documents, and records beyond those that pertain to our legal requirements or breach the trust of our donors are available to the public.
7. **Stewardship:** We recognize that all of our assets are held on behalf of the public good and that it is our responsibility to ensure that they are used wisely.
8. **Donor Rights:** We believe all donors should be valued and informed. Promises should be delivered and expectations of confidentiality should be met to the fullest extent of the law.

**Ethical Duties:** The following set of ethical guidelines is tailored to the museum field in general and to CHM specifically. Please take the time to review this document. Upon completion of this process you will be asked to give your signature attesting to the fact that you have read, understand, and subscribe to this ethics policy and will incorporate its principles into all aspects of your professional life with CHM.

**Governance:** The York County Culture and Heritage Commission comprises of seven Commissioners who are appointed by York County Council and who volunteer their time, expertise and energy to

guide this organization. The Commission carries out its governance responsibilities through an Executive Director, hired to manage the operations of CHM and its professional staff. The Commission holds legal and fiduciary responsibility for the protection and enrichment of CHM's collection and related documentation and is the authority to approve acquisitions and deaccessions for CHM. As appointees of elected officials, the Commissioners are required to comply with all state laws applicable to appointed officials including filing an annual report with the State Ethics Commission.

**Conflict of Interest:** In accordance with County policy, employees are required by state law to remove themselves from possible conflict of interest actions or decisions (YC Policy p. 18). It is the policy of York County that outside employment may not conflict or adversely affect an employee's work with the County. An employee currently engaged in or considering outside employment must report such activity or interest in writing to their department head and may not continue or begin such employment without the department head's approval (YC Policy p. 18). In addition to their Annual Report to the State Ethics Commission, Commissioners are required to disclose any potential conflict of interest to the Commission as a whole. If the Commission determines a conflict exists, that commissioner may not participate in action or discussion of matters directly related to the conflict.

**Gifts and Gratuities:** The acceptance of money, gifts, favors or other items of value by an employee from any citizen, personnel, or firm engaged either directly or indirectly in business with the county/museum is strictly forbidden (YC Policy p. 17).

**Use of CHM/County Property:** Staff members are prohibited from using any collections, resources, property, or materials of CHM or York County for any use other than that of official business (YC Policy, Rules of Conduct, p. 12).

**Collections:** Culture & Heritage Museums collects and preserves objects and archival materials that are pertinent for communicating the natural and cultural histories of York County and the Carolina Piedmont so that it may serve the citizens of the county and the public.

CHM's Collections Management Policy establishes the professional and ethical practices that guide how the organization acquires, preserves, uses, deaccessions, and manages the Museums' collection. When acquiring new items for the permanent, library, or education and living history collections, CHM adheres to this policy and legal regulations regarding the protection of natural and cultural properties as recommended by AAM and the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections.

Acquisitions considered for the permanent collections must be relevant to CHM's mission, be of stable physical quality, be free of any unethical history of ownership, and must not pose a hazard to the staff, the public, or the rest of the collection. Additionally, CHM must be capable of professionally caring for the objects, be able to ensure legal transfer of title of all acquisitions to CHM, and where applicable, be able to acquire full copyright for appropriate items. It is the intent of CHM that objects in the permanent collection be retained as long as they are known to be authentic, relevant to the mission and programs of CHM, and are not broken, damaged, or deteriorated beyond repair, and as long as they can be properly and safely stored, preserved, and used. However, should these circumstances change; an item may be recommended for deaccession



after deliberate and scrupulous examination of the object's condition, history, and application to the mission.

Commissioners and staff of CHM, museum volunteers, and their immediate families are restricted from acquiring any deaccessioned object through trade, transfer, or sale. If deaccessioned objects are sold, the income will be placed in a special account to be used for the purchase of objects for the collections, or for the direct care of the collections.

Representatives of CHM and the Commission will not appraise or estimate the value of objects for donors, institutions, or members of the public. Furthermore, CHM staff and the Commission will not provide public statements about the monetary value of any object in the permanent collection. No CHM staff member, Commission member, or volunteer may directly compete with the institution in any personal collecting activity. Additionally, none of the above-mentioned individuals may use his/her museum affiliation to promote personal gain through the buying and selling of objects similar to or related to objects collected by CHM for profit.

**Museum Management Practices:** The York County Culture and Heritage Commission and CHM staff will follow professional standards, ethics, York County policies and procedures, and applicable laws in the management of CHM resources, which include but are not limited to fundraising, commercial enterprises, the creation of scholarly material, professional relationships, and personnel practices.

York County is an Equal Opportunity Employer; all employment policies and practices are carried out without regard to race, sex, religion, color, political affiliation, national origin, age or physical disability, or on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions (YC Handbook, p. 27). Each museum employee has been hired by CHM due to his/her ability to carry out duties deemed necessary for the fulfillment of the organization's mission. They are chosen over other candidates because they possess a set of professional as well as personal traits that set them apart.

CHM staff and Commissioners will perform their duties professionally with coworkers, management, volunteers, Commission members, and visitors. In addition, while outside of the museum environment, all agents of CHM are held accountable for the ways they represent, whether officially or not, the organization and the County within the larger community.

Commissioners, staff, and volunteers involved in the soliciting of funds, gifts-in-kind, or other contributions on behalf of CHM must do so with honesty as to the need for such donations and in turn once received only use them for the donor's intended purpose(s). Gifts should be solicited without the promise of opportunities or advantages not offered to all donors by previously defined guidelines. Commissioners, staff, and volunteers should hold confidential and leave intact all lists, records, and documents compiled and/or acquired in connection with their fundraising efforts.

CHM gift shops, facility rentals, publishing and all other commercial ventures should be in keeping with the institution's mission. They should be relevant to the collection and to the basic educational purposes of CHM while not compromising the quality of either. In arranging for the manufacture and sale of replicas, reproductions, or other commercial products adapted from a collection piece, all aspects of the venture must be carried out in a manner that will not discredit either the integrity of the organization or the intrinsic value of the original object. Great care must be taken to

permanently identify such items for what they are. Staff must ensure their accuracy and high quality of manufacture and that they comply with all relevant legislation. Finally, these products should represent a good value for the consumer's money.

Staff is encouraged to write and publish both for the institution and on their own. Any and all materials or items, developed, written, designed, drawn, painted, constructed or installed by staff while carrying out their responsibilities as employees of CHM are considered to belong to the institution with CHM retaining all legal rights. Furthermore, CHM is entitled to receive any and all fees, royalties, or honoraria earned in conjunction with any and all said property.

Employees may not duplicate materials developed at CHM by them or any other staff member, volunteer, contractor, or consultant for the purpose of personal benefit through plagiarism or resale. County policy prohibits the unauthorized or improper use or disclosure of county records (YC Policy, p. 12).

## Appendix II Use and Quotation Policy (revised 7/2023)

Permissions to reproduce materials and distribute reproductions are limited to the uses specified in this Use Agreement and the conditions therein as follows:

1. Permission to reproduce is granted for one time, one publication, one edition and in one language. Authorization must be granted by Culture & Heritage Museums (CHM) to use or publish by any means any material to which CHM holds copyright or non-exclusive license. To obtain authorization, users will submit a completed Use Agreement to CHM's collections or archives department. In order to re-use the same materials, users must re-submit a new Use Agreement. Fees of images used for any personal or commercial use and/or images that are reproduced for public display is \$25.00 per image. Fees subject to change. CHM reserves the right to assess additional reproduction fees for oversized or large materials.

**Number of images requested: \_\_\_\_\_ Total amount due \$\_\_\_\_\_.**

2. Users may not alter, distort, or change in any way the text or the image to be used, unless otherwise authorized by CHM.

3. Researchers are responsible for obtaining permission to publish by any means material held at CHM but to which CHM does not hold copyright or non-exclusive license. CHM is not responsible for any copyright infringement.

4. The user agrees not to further reproduce, sell, share, or give the specified reproduction to another person, company, or institution without written permission from Culture & Heritage Museums. Where the request is for web use or other electronic distribution, the user agrees to a specific method of detering third party misuse of the images.

5. Any unauthorized use by any person or entity, for any reason, will render the user responsible and liable to CHM for appropriate compensation and other costs, regardless of whether the user has profited or is responsible for such unauthorized use. CHM may require user to surrender all material containing unauthorized reproductions and the user agrees to surrender such materials upon request.

6. Users will not quote or otherwise reproduce in part or in whole any material, without citing the "Culture & Heritage Museums, York County, SC" and without giving explicit written acknowledgement of the collection from which it was obtained, as designated by CHM below:

**(Object info and ID). Image courtesy of Culture & Heritage Museums, York County, SC**

7. Users will present to Culture and Heritage Museums one (1) copy of any publication using materials held by CHM at no charge or will provide any other proof of appropriate acknowledgement and citation as CHM will designate.

8. Only material that will not be physically damaged by the process of duplication will be copied. CHM reserves the right to withhold permission for the reproduction of any material involving unusual difficulty or great risk to the original.

9. CHM reserves the right to refuse reproduction if it feels fulfillment of that order would be in violation of copyright law or other law.

## Appendix III Applicable Legal Regulations

- Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940  
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/midwestbird/eaglepermits/bagepa.html>
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)  
<http://www.cites.org/>
- Endangered Species Act of 1973  
<http://www.nwf.org/Wildlife/Wildlife-Conservation/Endangered-Species-Act.aspx>
- International Council of Museums' Code of Ethics for Museums  
<chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf>
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918  
<https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/RegulationsPolicies/mbta/mbtintro.html>
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA),  
<http://www.nps.gov/nagpra/MANDATES/INDEX.HTM>
- North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission  
<http://www.ncwildlife.org/>
- South Carolina Abandoned Cultural Property Law  
[http://www.southcarolinamuseums.org/SC\\_ACP/SC\\_ACP\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.southcarolinamuseums.org/SC_ACP/SC_ACP_Guide.pdf)
- South Carolina Department of Natural Resources  
<http://www.dnr.sc.gov/>
- State Park Service of the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism  
<https://www.scprrt.com/>
- U.S. Copyright Law of title 17 of the *United States Code*  
<http://www.copyright.gov/title17/>
- York County Ordinance 611. Code 32.40, Section I  
<http://docs.chmuseums.org/CHCOrdinance-05-02-11.pdf>

## Appendix IV Glossary

**Accession:** The formal act of approving, documenting, and processing an item into the permanent or education collection. Accessioned items are managed by professional standards in accordance with their collection type.

**Agents of Deterioration:** The primary causes that negatively affect the long-term preservation of an object. The agents include but are not limited to fire, loss, water, physical damage, chemical, biological, light, unsuitable relative humidity, and unsuitable temperature.

**Deaccession:** The formal removal of an object from the museum's permanent collection. Once an object is accessioned into the permanent collection, it can only be removed by following the deaccession process. For an object to be deaccessioned, it must have been formally accessioned into the permanent collection. Education collection items do not need to be deaccessioned before disposal.

**Found in Collection (FIC):** Undocumented objects in which all attempts were made to reconcile the item with existing records for the permanent collection and loaned objects but for which no evidence was found. An undocumented object becomes a found in collection object once sufficient research has been carried out.

**Incoming Loan:** An object legally owned by another organization or individual borrowed for the purpose of exhibition, programming, or study. Borrowed items are afforded the same care and security as items in the museum's permanent collection.

**Outgoing Loan:** An object owned by the museum loaned for exhibit, educational, conservation, or research purposes to another accredited institutions or other education-based institutions for a specified amount of time. Items are loaned to organizations that are able to meet the institution's requirements for care and security.

**Temporary Custody:** Items deposited with the museum for the purpose of identification, research, or for consideration as an acquisition or loan for a short period. Depositing an item into the temporary custody of the museum does not equal a transfer of legal title a formal loan with the museum. Items accepted for temporary custody are not insured and the organization is not liable for loss or damage to objects while on deposit with the organization.

**Undocumented Objects:** Objects discovered in the museum that resemble those in the organization's collection with no identification number or information that may link them to documentation explaining their origin.