

Policy #: 752
Title: MSA MUSEUMS COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT
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Reviewers: MSA Superintendent; MSA Museum Steering Committee

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear statement of the purpose and responsibilities of the Minnesota State Academies (MSA) Museums (one for each academy).

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE MUSEUMS' MISSION.

The Minnesota State Academies believes that historical artifacts, stories, and research information that is compiled in our museums serve a vital role in supporting the mission of the academies. In support of ensuring access to historical information about our academies, the mission of our museums is to:

1. Collect and preserve historical materials, including artifacts, documents, books, manuscripts, paintings, photos, video and audio recordings, DVDs, CDs, digital media, and materials pertaining to MSA and its students and staff.
2. Interpret these materials and make them accessible for the education, programming, outreach, and enjoyment of the MSA students, staff, and general public through exhibitions and programs.
3. Provide for the dissemination of information pertaining to deaf education, blind/visually impaired education and local historical topics directly impacting the Minnesota State Academies.
4. Maintain and operate the MSAB/MSAD museums and their collections as well as supervise archived collections.
5. Encourage inquiry into areas of local and regional historical significance and the history of education for deaf/hard-of-hearing; deafblind; and blind/visually impaired students.
6. Emphasize materials related to the schools' rich history.

III. DEFINITIONS

Museum Steering Committee: This committee oversees policies, broad decision making, and guidelines for both museums. This committee is also responsible for reports to the MSA Board. (See Section IV below for the composition of this committee.)

Site-Specific Committees: Each museum will have a site-specific committee responsible for the daily operations of the museum (i.e., displays, tours, scanning/uploading documents & photographs, inventory updates, and so forth).

Currently, the MSAB museum utilizes a History Committee for this purpose while the MSAD museum is operated by the MSAD Alumni Association Bahl Museum Committee.

IV. MUSEUM STEERING COMMITTEE

The museums will be overseen by the museum steering committee composed of at least 5 individuals appointed by the superintendent. The committee shall have at least one

employee representative from each campus, one alumni member designated by each campus' alumni association, and one employee representative from Student Support Services/Shared Services. The steering committee will elect a chair annually. The superintendent shall be an ex-officio member of this committee and tasked with the responsibility of sharing information with the MSA Board.

The steering committee shall meet at least quarterly. At the end of each school year, the committee shall meet to elect a chair, compile an annual report for the board, and develop goals for the following school year. The steering committee is also responsible for development of procedures to ensure the smooth operation of the museums, including acquisitions, archives, digitalization of our resources, and so forth. The steering committee is responsible for sharing information, resources, and support across campuses for both museums.

The Museum Steering Committee will utilize site-specific committees for each campus' museum to complete tasks and goals specific to that campus' museum. Involvement of staff members, alumni, and/or students is strongly encouraged.

V. COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

The Museums' collections are organized and managed as follows:

Permanent Collection

The Museums' Permanent Collection is composed of material relating to the social, cultural, and educational history of the Minnesota State Academies. The Permanent Collection consists of three-dimensional objects/artifacts and digital collections (whenever available) of a permanent, on-going value to Minnesota State Academies, Deaf and B/VI education history and those doing research on the same. Historical materials may be utilized for teaching aids and for programming, outreach, and special interpretive events upon approval of the museum steering committee. Whenever possible, reproductions or other substitutes should be used rather than original artifacts.

Digital Collection

The Digital Collection is composed of digital copies of pictures, audio/visual material, brochures, pamphlets, research papers, and various miscellaneous materials that, whenever made available, will be accessible to individuals interested in accessing our materials.

Collections Scope

MSA acknowledges it cannot and should not attempt to collect everything, and will actively collect using the following guidelines and considerations:

Collecting Priorities

MSA will collect items related to the following specific themes and topics:

1. The interpretation of everyday life, from the earliest times to the present, at the Minnesota State Academies and its provision of Deaf Education and Blind/Visually Impaired Education. These might include, but are not limited to:

- household objects, furniture, clothing, tools, written information on individuals, prominent and otherwise.
2. The history on the day-to-day operations of MSA, its educational services, and the lives of students and staff.

Preservation and Conservation Considerations

MSA holds its collections as a public trust and as such has an obligation to maintain the artifacts in its possession according to accepted professional standards. Decisions made by the Museum Steering Committee regarding criteria for collecting/acquiring/accessioning as well as deaccessioning must be made in accordance with the best interest and well-being of the individual artifact. The Museum Steering Committee may designate individuals responsible to complete accessioning and deaccessioning tasks.

The Museum Steering Committee oversees MSA's collections and is responsible for supporting site-specific committees with their day-to-day management, including care, storage, and use. The Museum Steering Committee, site-specific committees, and other MSA staff, including volunteers, will employ the established accepted standards and guidelines regarding collections management.

Acquisitions

Definition: For the purposes of this policy, "acquisition" is hereby defined as the discovery, evaluation, acknowledgement, and receipt of artifacts, as well as securing physical and legal custody of said artifacts.

Mechanism and Criteria

MSA accepts acquisitions to its museum collections through donations, bequests, field collecting, abandonment, or other transactions for which title to the object passes to the museum. MSA-owned artifacts (i.e., Companion/Chronicles Issues, furniture, athletic uniforms, etc.) will follow the same procedures as donated artifacts except for the sections regarding ownership and provenance. Potential acquisitions must meet ALL of the following criteria before being accepted into the MSA's collections after the implementation date of this Collections Management Policy:

- The present owner must have clear title of ownership.
- The provenance and history of the artifact(s) must be determined to the extent possible.
- The artifact's significance and relevance must be determined.
- The artifact(s) must fall within the MSA's collecting scope and objectives.
- MSA must be able to provide for the storage, protection, and preservation of the item(s) to ensure the availability for MSA's collecting scope and objectives.
- The artifact(s) must be in acceptable physical condition.
- All donations will be considered outright and unconditional gifts to be used at the discretion of the MSA.
- Artifacts will remain in the MSA's collections as long as their physical integrity, their identity, and their authenticity is intact, and for as long as they remain useful for the purposes of the museum.

- All legal, moral, and ethical implications of an acquisition must be considered prior to its acceptance into collections.

Donations

All donations accepted will follow the MSA donations procedures (record keeping and acknowledgment of receipt).

All potential donors must hold free and clear title to any materials they wish to donate. Donors pursuing income tax deductions for their donations must obtain an independent authorized appraiser and record of such appraisals will be kept by MSA in accordance with MSA's records retention schedule. MSA museum steering committee members, volunteers and MSA staff members are prohibited from offering appraisals of potential donations.

MSA is under no obligation to accept donations "on the spot." MSA may hold an object or collection (circumstances permitting) temporarily until a decision is made. Such material in the care of the MSA will be temporarily identified and cared for in the same manner as permanent collections. Donors are encouraged to contact the Museum Steering Committee prior to making any donations to assist in streamlining the process, especially if the donation involves larger artifacts that require transportation/storage.

All material not accepted into the MSA collections will be returned, intact, to the donor unless the donor specifically states that they do not want the items back. The MSA will notify the donor utilizing contact information on the donation form, whereupon the donor will have thirty days to reclaim the materials. Items left after thirty days will be disposed of at MSA's discretion.

Potential donations will be considered for the MSA's Permanent Collection or archives first. Material not accepted into the Permanent Collection will then be considered for educational activities related to the museum and/or school history. Items not accepted into our collections or resources may be designated for exchange, loan, or sale to benefit historical collections elsewhere.

Accessions and Deaccessions

Accessions - The formal process of accepting object(s) into the MSA collections is hereby termed "accessioning". The museum steering committee has primary responsibility for completing and maintaining all necessary paperwork and for the care and storage of all accessions.

Deaccessions - The formal process of removing accessioned materials permanently from MSA's collections is termed "deaccessioning" and deaccessioning must be done with extreme care and sensitivity and only under certain limited conditions. The Museum Steering Committee shall establish procedures for deaccessions that are clearly stated and accessible to the public. Such action shall be cautious, deliberate, and scrupulous and considered only for an item that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- It is no longer relevant and useful to the stated purposes of MSA.
- It is void of inherent exhibition, research, or educational value.
- It cannot be properly stored, preserved, or used by MSA.
- It no longer retains its physical integrity, identity, or authenticity.
- It is unnecessarily duplicated in the collection.
- It is non-historical material accessioned in error.
- It was accidentally accessioned twice.
- It has been lost or stolen and remains lost for over a year.
- It presents a threat to the health, safety, or well-being of the MSA staff, volunteers, patrons, or other collections held by the Museum.

Loans, Exhibitions, and Relocations

The MSA museums may occasionally determine that it is appropriate to allow lending of objects from its collections and/or the borrowing of objects from other collections for specific purposes. The basic authority to make loans resides with the Museum Steering Committee. All loan requests (with the exception of those for photographs, see below) are to be submitted for committee approval and a designee will be appointed to be responsible for the negotiation and tracking of all loans, and management of all necessary paperwork. Requests by MSA staff or volunteers for incoming or outgoing loans should be made to the committee. The committee will develop procedures to ensure the preservation of all items within loans or exhibitions as listed below.

Incoming Exhibitions

From time to time, as determined by the Museum Steering Committee, MSA may accept traveling exhibits. The committee will work with MSA administrators for all arrangements, negotiations, and contracting for such exhibits.

Outgoing Loans

MSA may allow artifacts and material from its collections to be loaned to other museums, historic sites, or historical agencies in good standing for educational, interpretive, exhibit, or scholarly purposes. Non-museum borrowers (government agencies, schools, corporations, or businesses, etc.) may utilize MSA's collections for educational purposes only. Use of borrowed artifacts for private or decorative purposes is prohibited. MSA will not authorize any loans to individuals including employees, volunteers, committee members, or officers of MSA. **Photographs in our archives will not be authorized for loans – only digital copies may be loaned/distributed for use outside of our archives.** Those individuals wishing to view stored pieces in the collections may make an appointment through the steering committee.

Only artifacts and material to which MSA holds clear title and for which there are no special restrictions may be considered for loan.

Temporary Loans of Items from Educational or Research Collections

If a member of the staff, a volunteer, or a committee member is making an educational presentation outside of the museum, that person shall sign a temporary loan agreement for materials borrowed from the MSA museums. Any item(s) to be borrowed from the Permanent Collection require prior approval of their use by the Museum Steering Committee and the execution of a temporary loan agreement for the material(s) borrowed. The loan shall be for a period no longer than 72 hours unless otherwise negotiated.

Temporary Relocation of Collections for Preservation, Conservation or Access Reasons

If an object in the collections must be relocated offsite for preservation, conservation, or access (i.e., digitization) purposes, a written and signed agreement must be made between both parties. This agreement must include a description of the object and the length of time the object will be outside of MSA's control.

VI. CARE AND USE OF COLLECTIONS

MSA is ethically bound to care for and preserve its collections. MSA is committed to providing proper storage areas in which to house collections, maintaining appropriate environmental controls within its facilities, and administering conservation efforts when necessary. The goal is to retard and/or stabilize the inherent aging and deterioration process of collections, and all accepted professional museum standards will be employed to the best of MSA's ability.

The Museum Steering Committee, MSA staff, and volunteers must make every effort to protect collections items to ensure their long-term preservation while making them available for the use and enjoyment of the public. To this end, it should be noted that:

1. Printed, manuscript, photographic, audio, and moving-image items in MSA collections may be reproduced as provided under the fair-use provision of the United States copyright law. MSA may refuse to permit the copying of a collections item if, in its judgement, such reproduction would violate the copyright law, violate the donor agreement, or pose a threat to the physical integrity of the item.
2. Publication, exhibition, or other use of an item from MSA collections requires written permission from the Museum Steering Committee and this permission is required whether or not MSA is the copyright holder. Permission also may be required from the copyright holder. Publication/exhibition of items from MSA museum collections must be accompanied with a statement crediting the ownership to the MSA museums.
3. Any reproduction of a collections item must be approved by the Museum Steering Committee. Any reproduction or replication of an item must be clearly identified as such.

Records

MSA, to the best of its ability, will establish and maintain proper collections records for all artifacts in its collections according to professional museum standards. These include, but are not limited to, accessions, donors, catalogs, provenance, locations, conservation, loans, and exhibit records. The Museum Steering Committee is responsible for all collections records. Access to collections records is strictly limited to MSA staff and the committee members.

Inventory

Under the direction of the Museum Steering Committee, MSA will initiate an inventory of its collections in the museums and will regularly update this inventory for its collections management purposes, security, verification of missing artifacts, and maintenance. The Museum Steering Committee and authorized volunteers may, as needed, conduct a full-scale inventory to verify the contents of the MSA Museum Collections. A master collections inventory will be placed on a computer database and updated as subsequent inventories are conducted. Back-up copies will be stored in separate locations. It is also recommended that the initial inventory and each periodic update be printed and stored in a secure location. Also, it is recommended that a photographic record of all items be made, with one copy to be kept on file.

Security

MSA will take all necessary precautions to ensure the security of its collections and prevent their loss or damage while on exhibit, during research use, or in storage. MSA will examine the security needs and risks for all objects under consideration for accession and make adjustments or accommodations where possible. Artifact use for exhibit, research, education, or loan is contingent upon a thorough evaluation of its security risks and needs, and the ability of MSA to accommodate those needs.

VII. DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

Definitions

- Born digital materials were originally created in a digital form. These include programs, websites, databases, photographs, videos, audio recordings, records, documents, emails, maps, etc.
- Born analog materials were originally created in a physical or negative form. These include photographs, videos, audio recordings, records, archives, letters, documents, maps, etc.
- Digitized materials are digital copies of analog materials, usually created through scanning or photographing the analog material.
- Migration is the transfer of digital materials from one format to another to prevent obsolescence.

Scope

MSA born digital collections shall include programs, websites, databases, photographs, videos, audio recordings, documents, emails, maps, and other materials that fall within the general scope of collections as listed above. The donor, if not produced at MSA, of the materials must hold the copyright on the born digital materials in question, just as donors of analog materials must have title to them. MSA-produced materials may be transferred to the MSA museums without concerns regarding copyrights.

As a general rule, MSA will not accept digitized copies of analog materials created by external sources (i.e., scanned copies of newspaper articles, copies of photographs taken by individuals outside of MSA) into the Permanent Collection, as copyright remains with the creator of the original analog material. It is preferred that the original analog materials be donated to the museum with the permission of the creator. The Museum Steering

Committee may make an exception to this rule if the analog original image is unlikely to be donated to the museum at a later date (i.e., analog materials developed by individuals who are deceased, or materials developed by unknown individuals) with the understanding that copyright does not lie with MSA.

Copyright Acquisition of born digital materials is dependent on the transfer of copyright to MSA. Donors must transfer nonexclusive rights to reproduce, distribute, display, perform, and prepare derivative works of the born digital work. MSA will not accept donations of born digital materials that do not come with a sharing of copyright.

Digitization

Analog materials that have been temporarily entrusted or donated to MSA may be digitized for MSA's use with permission from the creator. These digitized copies will be treated as part of the Digital Collection, with copyright remaining with the creator of the materials.

Parts of the Permanent, Educational, or Research Collections of MSA that have been digitized will be considered part of the same collection as the original material. Copyright of the digitized materials will remain with MSA if it has title and ownership of the source material.

Storage

Born digital portions of the collections will be stored on MSA servers/hard drives with at least one back-up stored off the premises (i.e., Cloud Storage). Newly acquired collections must be moved into those designated storage sites as soon as time permits. A new back-up will be completed on a semi-annual basis.

VIII. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING MSA MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

As stewards of the material history and culture of MSA, MSA has an obligation and responsibility to maintain the highest ethical standards and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Because of their unique positions with regard to collections, MSA staff, volunteers, and Museum Steering Committee members are especially vulnerable to questions of ethical conduct and/or conflict of interest. Therefore, it is necessary that all of the MSA employees, volunteers, and committee members observe certain restrictions on activities that might compete with or discredit MSA, and it is incumbent upon MSA to inform them of its collecting goals and of the potential for conflict of interest.

The following provisions further list ethical best practices with regards to collections:

1. No MSA staff member, volunteer, or Museum Steering Committee member will engage in appraising objects acquired by the Museum.
2. MSA staff members, volunteers and Museum Steering Committee members may not recommend an appraiser to donors.
3. MSA staff members, volunteers, and Museum Steering Committee members are prohibited from purchasing objects deaccessioned/divested by the Museum except through public auction or MSA-approved procedures.
4. MSA staff members, volunteers, and Museum Steering Committee members are prohibited from borrowing money or collections items from MSA museums, nor shall

- they use its personnel, equipment, supplies, good will, or other resources for their personal purposes, other than as allowed to all members of the MSA community.
5. MSA staff members, volunteers, and Museum Steering Committee members are prohibited from using their MSA affiliation to promote their own or any family member's personal collecting or business activities.
 6. Consistent with its mission, the MSA museums may consider for acquisition any material that has a documented association with the history of MSA and is in such condition that it can be maintained properly. In its collecting activities, the MSA museums shall strive to be inclusive, respectful, transparent, and in keeping with the best professional practices, especially with culturally sensitive and sacred objects, documentation, and religious practices of all cultures. The Collections Management Policy shall govern the acquisition, use, loan, conservation, de-accession, and disposal of all collections.
 7. As steward of MSA's heritage, the MSA museums are committed to making their collections as accessible as possible to all people while ensuring their safekeeping and preservation. In providing access to collections, MSA shall balance the need to respect their continued physical integrity and safety for future use and the current requirements of scholarly, programmatic, or educational uses.
 8. Museum Steering Committee members and staff members considering the acquisition of an historically significant item that may be within MSA's collecting goals should bring the intended purchase to the attention of the Museum Steering Committee in a timely manner to determine whether or not the MSA museums would be interested in acquiring the item for their collections. If the MSA museums do not intend to acquire the item, the individual may then proceed with their individual purchase.