

Policy Title:	Museum Collections Management
Policy Type:	Administration
Policy #:	ADM 08
Policy Authority:	Board
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POLICY STATEMENT & DEFINITIONS

The Clarington Public Library, Museums & Archives (CPLMA) museum collections management policy sets forth the goals with respect to managing its collections. The policy outlines responsibilities and sets standards for all collection related activities as it pertains to museum collections.

The term “collection” as used in this policy is understood to mean the historically significant artifacts, archival materials and other artifacts of cultural property acquired and preserved by CPLMA to support its mandate.

The term “artifact(s)” is understood to mean object(s) currently within the collection or being considered for potential acquisition.

LEGAL AUTHORITY

The CPLMA is the repository for a collection that is representative of Clarington's history, under the governance of the Clarington Public Library Board. The CPLMA collection is held and managed in the public trust.

EXCLUSIONS

This policy does not apply to Library collections. Library collections are addressed in a separate Collections and Material Selection Policy.

ETHICS

CPLMA acquires artifacts and collections only if it has adequate resources (human, financial, temporal, spatial) to document, preserve, store, research, exhibit, and interpret the artifact being considered.

CPLMA does not acquire material:

- which has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any provincial or national statute;
- which has questionable, undetermined or unethical history of ownership;
- which has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (or any similar statutes) as ratified by Canada on June 28, 1978;

- if there is any reason to believe that the object's recovery involved recent unscientific handling and/or intentional destruction or damage of archaeological/historical sites or illegal/clandestine excavations;
- which may constitute a conflict of interest related to the issue of personal collecting. Personal collecting is defined as the acquisition by CPLMA employees and/or Library Board members of an object similar to or related to that which CPLMA collects or intends to acquire. All staff and trustees are required to declare a conflict of interest when such a situation arises.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

- The development of the museum and archival collection follows the focus established by the mission statement.
- Development of the collection will meet both the immediate and long-term objectives of CPLMA.
- Development will build on the strengths and address identified weaknesses in the collection.
- The resources required for the long-term preservation of potential artifacts will be carefully considered prior to acquisition.
- It is recognized the priorities will change over time and according to storage capabilities, future exhibitions and the recognition of deficiencies in the collection. The purchase and/or conservation of objects acquired to address gaps in the collection will be financially supported by annual operating funds and/or a special CPLMA Reserve Fund created for this purpose.
- The responsibility for the development of the permanent collection resides with the Curator and the CEO. Each assumes an active role in the community with regard to maintaining contacts with potential donors, an awareness of auction contents, the closure of businesses and institutions, etc. Members of the Clarington Museum and Archives Advisory Committee who become aware of potential collection artifacts are encouraged to forward that information on to the Curator and/or CEO.
- The responsibility for the development of an Education Collection resides with the Curator or other designated staff person.

ACQUISITION

CPLMA collects objects, photographs, written, printed, and audio-visual material pertaining to the history of Clarington, in accordance with its mission statement. The collection is for the purpose of documentation, preservation, research, exhibition and interpretation for all generations. The annual operating budget will include funding for the care, cataloguing, storage, and acquisition of artifacts relevant to the CPLMA's mandate.

CPLMA will strive to acquire artifacts that generally are complete and in good condition and for which provenance is well documented. The decision to acquire an artifact will be based upon the following considerations:

- Constitute an exemplary sample of an aspect of Clarington history currently not represented in the collection;
- Are in danger of loss or destruction;
- Are directly relevant to current research, exhibit or interpretation programs;
- Are well documented;
- Are in good to excellent condition.

Acquisitions are ultimately the responsibility of the CEO or designate. The Library Board will be advised, via a formal report process, of any artifacts accessioned into the collection.

When potential acquisition artifacts have been left with CPLMA staff for review, the prospective donor or vendor must be issued a Temporary Custody Receipt.

If the artifact is rejected, the owner will be notified and given thirty days to retrieve the object. If the owner does not retrieve the object within thirty days, it will be disposed of in accordance with CPLMA guidelines and procedures. Donors will be advised of the rejection process and any other relevant procedures when they leave artifact(s) for review.

A Deed of Gift or invoice must be signed to prove the transfer of ownership if the artifact is accepted. The owner has six months to return the signed Deed of Gift to CPLMA. If the owner does not return the signed Deed of Gift in that time period, the artifact will be returned. Once the Deed of Gift has been signed, items become the outright and unconditional property of CPLMA.

METHODS OF ACQUISITION

Objects are acquired through gift or bequest, purchase, exchange and transfer; some are also found in the collection.

- Gift or Bequest - A gift or bequest may be accepted from any source, including a staff member.
- Purchase - Artifacts may be purchased by the Curator from any source. However, all purchases must be approved by the CEO.
- Exchange - The exchange of artifacts between institutions is an established and useful means of developing and improving a collection. Exchanges may be arranged by the Curator with approval of the CEO. Exchanges may be made provided that:
 - Both parties are in full agreement with the terms and conditions;
 - Both the acquisition and the disposal of artifacts are documented for the permanent records;
 - The removal will be approved through the deaccessioning process.
- Transfer - CPLMA may acquire artifacts from other institutions. The transfer must be supported with documentation.
- Found in the Collection - Unaccessioned objects that have been treated as artifacts over time, but for which acquisition documentation cannot be found, are designated "found in the collection." These objects will be accessioned and documented if they meet the current mandate of the CPLMA.

- In the event of a refusal of a donation, the donor will be notified and have a period of 30 days, or such time as may be mutually agreed, to retrieve the artifact. CPLMA will not accept any responsibility for any artifact left at the Museum for a period longer than the mutually agreed upon time. Following the elapse of the time period after the notification of refusal, the artifact may be disposed of in any manner deemed suitable by the Curator.

INCOME TAX RECEIPTS AND APPRAISALS

Income tax receipts may be made available for cash and other types of donations, upon request, by the donor.

- For objects with a fair market value of less than \$1,000, the written opinion of a person deemed by the Curator or CEO to be an expert with sufficient knowledge, will be an acceptable basis for determining the value.
- Objects estimated to be worth more than \$1,000 must be independently appraised. The cost of the appraisal will be at the expense of the donor.
- The donor may not be the appraiser.
- CPLMA will not issue a tax receipt until an appraisal has been undertaken and a Deed of Gift agreement has been signed.
- Generally speaking, tax receipts are not issued for artifacts donated to the Education Collection, unless the artifact is deemed of utmost importance by the Curator.

DOCUMENTATION

CPLMA must accurately and thoroughly document the museum and archival collection to realize its value and significance. Documentation is essential for collection development, research, preservation and interpretation. Documentation is the responsibility of the Curator and other staff as appropriate.

- Documentation will include information in written, electronic, audio visual or graphic form pertaining to the identity, locality, provenance, and transfer of legal title of artifacts in the collection and other related information regarding significance, function, description and condition.

When being integrated into the collection, each artifact must be described in sufficient detail to enable the detection of any deterioration. Any change in condition or treatment to an artifact will also be documented.

- Temporary or permanent change in the status of an artifact such as an outgoing loan, on exhibit, or deaccessioned must be thoroughly documented.
- CPLMA will use accepted and consistent standards, methods, and procedures to document the collection. Documentation must be maintained as a permanent record. Normally documentation itself is not considered part of the collection.

- Legal documents dealing with acquisitions must be kept in hard-copy form. Copies of electronic records must be maintained and stored off-site. All documentation should be maintained in a secure and stable environment.

PRESERVATION

CPLMA has a responsibility to preserve its collection in perpetuity. This includes artifacts in storage, on exhibit, used for research, on loan, and in transit. The only exception is for objects designated as part of the Education Collection (outlined in paragraph 13 below).

- All staff and volunteers will be trained in proper and current methods of care and handling of the collection, as it pertains to their area of work.
- The preservation of the collection is the direct responsibility of the Curator and other staff as appropriate. However, all staff and volunteers must share in the responsibility.

USE

- CPLMA is committed to long-term preservation of artifacts. A balance must be struck, however, between the preservation of the collection and its use for research, exhibition, and educational, promotional and commercial purpose. CPLMA acknowledges that access to and use of the collection by staff and public increases the risk to artifacts and requires appropriate controls.
- Access to the collection is provided through exhibitions, programs, events, publications, searchable database online, collection records, research files, visual resources, and consultation with curatorial staff. The Freedom of Information pursuant to the Municipal Act and Protection of Privacy and Copyright legislation restricts access to some information.
- The collection must be organized and managed in such a way that it is readily accessible for all purposes consistent with the goals outlined in the CPLMA's Strategic Plan.
- The level of staff interaction with and access to the collection is determined by the Curator. Staff and volunteers who handle artifacts must be appropriately trained and supervised.

PUBLIC USE OF COLLECTION

- CPLMA allows limited use of its collection by the public for commercial and non-commercial purposes. This may involve physical or intellectual access to the collection.
- Physical access to artifacts is provided through exhibitions, programs, events and tours. Other requests for physical access will be considered individually (Loans, individual requests and fee-for-use situations).

- Intellectual access to the collection through records, images, and other information may be requested for publication, research, web sites, electronic media, display, promotional materials, personal use, media, films and advertising.
- Access to and use of the collection is at the discretion of the Curator and is generally provided to any person who can demonstrate a need. Determining factors include:
 - i. Condition of the artifact;
 - ii. Risk to the artifact;
 - iii. Location;
 - iv. Security;
 - v. Health and safety;
 - vi. Copyright;
 - vii. Intended use;
 - viii. Expertise of the researcher;
 - ix. Human and financial resources available.
- Access to use of the collection for commercial purposes or filming will be considered by the CEO and Curator on a case-by-case basis.
- CPLMA must be credited for any use of its collection with “Courtesy of Clarington Public Library, Museums and Archives.”

EDUCATION COLLECTION

- CPLMA recognizes the importance of experiential learning for its visitors. In fulfilment of this need and to ensure the integrity of the permanent collection, CPLMA collects and manages objects separate from the permanent collection to be used for the purpose of enhancing the learning experience during a museum visit, school program, outreach activities, or travelling exhibition. To fulfil this need for public demonstration and intensive use, CPLMA has established an Education Collection.
- To be accepted into the Education Collection the artifacts should reflect the following:
 - i. be in good to excellent condition;
 - ii. be either original or reproduction;
 - iii. reflect the programming needs of CPLMA; and
 - iv. be safe to use.
- CPLMA may transfer artifacts that are deaccessioned from the permanent collection into the Education Collection for program use. The reason for this change of status must be documented.
- The decision to designate an artifact to the Education Collection will be made by the Curator.
- All material (artifacts, videos, slides, printed materials, etc.) that form the Education Collection will be inventoried and listed with a unique designation but are not subject to the normal cataloguing procedure.

- Tax receipts are not issued for artifacts donated to the Education Collection unless the artifact is deemed of utmost importance for the education purposes by the Curator and CEO.
- When an artifact in the Education Collection is no longer needed, useful or in poor condition it does not undergo a formal deaccession process. Artifacts are disposed of as deemed necessary by the Curator.

LOANS TO CPLMA

- CPLMA may borrow artifacts from other institutions for exhibition, study, or other purposes consistent with the mandate of CPLMA for a specified time period. However, artifacts are not normally borrowed from individuals.
- For loans that are made to CPLMA by other institutions, a loan agreement specifying intended use must be completed for such material and the transaction must be approved by the Curator.
- CPLMA will provide the same standard of care and security for the objects on loan as it does for those in its collection. Treatment will not be undertaken on borrowed objects without prior written consent from the owner. Any treatments must be documented.
- When CPLMA borrows material and exhibits from another institution, it will follow the procedures prescribed by the lending institution. When CPLMA borrows material from institutions with no lending procedures or forms, it will follow the procedures of CPLMA.
- Incoming loans must be fully documented. The documentation will include one copy of the signed loan form and information relating to value and condition. This record becomes a permanent record.

LOANS FROM CPLMA

- CPLMA may lend artifacts to other institutions. However, loans are not normally made to individuals. The purpose of the loan must be consistent with the interests of CPLMA and not pose undue risk to the artifact. Loans are made for a specified time period.
- The Curator is responsible for ensuring that those who borrow or otherwise use material for any purpose are able to provide necessary care. Individuals within both the borrowing and lending institutions taking responsibility for the transaction must be authorized to do so. All loans from CPLMA must be approved by the Curator.
- Outgoing loans must be fully documented. The documentation will include one copy of the signed loan form and information relating to value and condition. This record becomes a permanent record.
- CPLMA reserves the right not to lend artifacts or other materials.

DEACCESSIONING

Deaccessioning refers to the permanent removal of an artifact or artifacts from the permanent collection. In order to maintain a growing and relevant collection in accordance with the Mission Statement and current professional standards, it is sometimes necessary to deaccession an artifact. Deaccessioning must be undertaken in accordance with the highest professional standards and ethics. Reasons must be ethical, defensible and objective.

CPLMA may deaccession material if an artifact is deemed to fall under one of the following circumstances:

- Does not fall within the CPLMA mandate and collection development objectives;
- CPLMA is incapable of providing the conditions necessary for minimum curatorial care;
- Is a duplicate;
- Has been misidentified, is unauthentic, or is found to be a fake, forgery, or copy with no definable purpose;
- Has deteriorated or is damaged to a point where it does not serve a useful purpose or poses a preservation threat to other elements of the collection;
- Constitutes a physical hazard or health risk to staff or public;
- Has unethical or illegal provenance;
- Repatriation – a request has been received from its place of origin;
- Is more appropriate to the collection of another museum.

When an artifact is deaccessioned CPLMA must ensure that:

- The reasons for removal of the object from the collection must be thoroughly documented in accordance to professional standards and documentation;
- CPLMA has clear title to the object or in the case of poorly or undocumented material, be able to demonstrate that it has made a serious, diligent and documented investigation to determine ownership;
- There are no legal restrictions that prohibit deaccessioning the artifact.

Records will be maintained for all artifacts deaccessioned and will include the original record, the reason(s) for deaccessioning, and the method of disposition. The CEO and Curator will prepare a Deaccessioning Report for the approval of the Clarington Museums and Archives Advisory Committee.

A demonstrative effort must be made to keep a deaccessioned artifact in the public domain and in Canada by offering it to other museums or public institutions as a gift or for exchange.

Except on the case of accidental loss or destruction, deaccessioned artifacts will be disposed of in the following manner:

- Internal transfer to the Education Collection, Research Collection or non-collection use;
- Gift to another museum or public institution;
- Exchange with another museum or public institution;
- Sale through a public sale process. All monies obtained through the sale of deaccessioned objects will be used only for collection acquisition and care;
- Destruction. A deaccessioned artifact may undergo intentional destruction before witnesses including a designated museum staff member or disposed of in a manner which ensures that it cannot be reconstructed.

Criteria for destruction:

- if the object is hazardous or poses a danger to staff, public or the collection;
- if the object has deteriorated or is damaged to a point where it does not serve a definable purpose;
- if all reasonable efforts have been made to dispose of the object through other methods.

Deaccessioned objects cannot be disposed of by any means to:

- A member of the Clarington Public Library Board;
- Staff or volunteers of CPLMA
- The families or representatives of any of the above;
- The original donor of the item, after ownership has been transferred. The Canada Revenue Agency stipulates that artifacts donated to museums that are registered charities cannot be returned to their original donors, even if a tax receipt has not been issued.

REPATRIATION

CPLMA may repatriate artifacts in accordance with the principles and guidelines stated in the Canadian Museums Association Ethics Guidelines. All requests for repatriation must be approached with respect and sensitivity. CPLMA recognizes that requests for repatriation can only be resolved on a case-by-case basis.

COOPERATION WITH INSTITUTIONS

CPLMA cooperates with other museums, galleries, cultural and educational institutions, organizations, and agencies, to avoid duplication and achieve an integrated plan for documentation, preservation and interpretation of artifacts and local history.