

Acquisitions Policy for the Pittsylvania County History Research Center & Library

History Research Center and Library Mission Statement

The mission of the Pittsylvania County History Research Center and Library [“The Center”] is to preserve the history of Pittsylvania County and that of the towns and communities in the region. The Center will develop and maintain collections for future generations by using accepted preservation methods, and provide access to the collections under safe and secure conditions. The Center will work in conjunction with other local history entities to educate the public on the holdings of the collection and on the history of the County and the region.

Scope of the History Research Center and Library Collection

The focus of the collection will include items and materials about the history and culture of Pittsylvania County and the geographic areas served by the Pittsylvania County Public Library System within their historical context. These shall encompass especially the area, its families, railroad history, and veterans’ history.

Collecting Policy

The Pittsylvania History Resource Center seeks and will consider additions to the collections that further the History Center’s purpose of acquiring, arranging, cataloging, preserving, exhibiting, maintaining, and storing items (for purposes of this policy, the word “items” will include documentary materials and museum objects) of lasting value concerning Pittsylvania County history and culture. This includes items made in, used in, or materials that reflect present day or historic Pittsylvania County. Items concerning or associated with, though not made or used in Pittsylvania County may be eligible for inclusion in the Center’s collection.

Items specifically donated to the Pittsylvania Historical Society will belong to them; items donated to the Center will belong to the Pittsylvania County Public Library.

Decisions to accept items for the Center will be made by the Collections Committee, composed of the Library Director, the staff of the Center, and members appointed by the Library Director. The Committee shall have no more than six members. In the case of books and other library materials, the decision will be made as part of the library’s regular decision-making process for these items.

Categories of Collections

The Pittsylvania History Resource Center maintains two categories of collections:

Permanent collections: Only collections relating directly to the Center’s stated purpose, subject to the concerns and protections and collections care regulated by policy and law shall be designated as permanent collections. Designation of permanent collection status denotes the intent to thoroughly document, protect, and preserve the item for future generations. Public access to the permanent collection is primarily through exhibits, programs, or research.

Educational collections: Items are recommended for the educational collections by the collections committee. These items include accessioned materials transferred from the permanent collection, artifact reproductions, and items purchased for the expressed interest of inclusion in the educational collection. Educational collections are maintained in order to support the research and educational functions of the Center and do not become part of the permanent collections. These items may be utilized with minimal supervision but must still be maintained with appropriate recordkeeping. Two subcategories are study and demonstration collections.

- a. *Study collection:* The study collection is of significant interest for genealogical research, in accordance with the stated purpose of the Center.
- b. *Demonstration “prop” collection:* Items in this collection are inauthentic support material that is clearly distinguishable from an authentic item and are considered expendable. They typically are contemporary in nature or a contemporary reproduction of an authentic item. These items may be used and handled by patrons in the interpretive programs of the Center.

Criteria for Acquisitions: Collections Parameters: General

Items may be acquired by the Center through donation, bequest, exchange, or, rarely, purchase provided they meet one or more of the criteria listed below. Acquisition of an item that does not meet the following criteria but that presents an exceptional opportunity for the Center is subject to approval of the collections committee.

No materials or objects shall be willfully accepted or acquired when known to have been illegally collected contrary to state and/or federal law, regulations, treaty and/or conventions.

Item(s) must be relevant to, and consistent with, the stated purposes and activities of the Center.

1. The Center will accept or acquire only those items for which it can provide storage, protection, and preservation. In the interest of preservation, the Center rotates items on exhibition. For this reason, no acquisition shall be considered with any stipulation of exhibition, unless determined otherwise by the Collections Committee.
2. Item(s) will have permanency in the collection as long as they retain their physical integrity, their identity, their authenticity, and/or as long as they remain useful for the purposes of the Center. Items that do not retain such attributes may be removed from the collection in accordance with the deaccession policy.
3. The Center will only accept or acquire items after all moral, legal, and ethical implications of the acquisition have been considered. Valid and legal title must be established and transferred to the Center. In doubtful cases, the Center may request the assistance of legal counsel.
4. All donations to the Historical Center are considered outright, unconditional gifts to the people of the Pittsylvania County region, unless determined otherwise by the Collections Committee at the time of accessioning.
5. Items must be transferred to the Center with secure copyright, patent, and/or trademark rights in order to have full use of the acquisition, in accordance with existing copyright law.

6. Items will not be acquired if they are encumbered with conditions, including those relating to exhibition, by the donor, except in rare, special cases approved by the Board of Trustees.
7. There must be no legally binding restrictions contained in the terms of the gift or purchase.
8. The Center shall not knowingly accept items that are hazardous to people or property and fall under any of the following hazardous categories: explosive, carcinogenic, flammable, corrosive, teratogenic [harmful to a fetus].
9. The Center does not appraise or authenticate objects offered as donations.
10. Charitable contribution deduction for donors: Donations with a value of \$500.00 or more require that an Internal Revenue Service Form 8283 be completed. In order to trigger the requirements, the contribution must be valued in excess of \$500.00 or contributions by the taxpayer of similar objects in the taxable year to all charities must total a value in excess of \$5000.00.
 - a. The taxpayer must obtain a “qualified appraisal” of the property contributed
 - b. An appraisal summary must be attached to the return on which such deduction is first claimed.
 - c. The appraisal summary must be in such form as the Internal Revenue Service prescribes, it must be signed by the appraiser and carry the tax identification number of the appraiser.
 - d. The appraisal summary must be acknowledged by the Center in such a manner as the IRS prescribes; (see note below) and
 - e. The appraiser must be a qualified appraiser.
 - f.

NOTE: Under Section 170 of the U.S. Code, Subsection 8(B), the Center must receive copies of and acknowledge certain appraisal summaries donors are required to file with the IRS. The signature on the summary appraisal solely represents acknowledgement of receipt of the items described in the summary appraisal and in no way is to be construed as indicating the donee's agreement with or acceptance of the amount claimed for the donated property on the appraisal summary.

Criteria for Acquisitions: Collections Parameters: Specific

1. **Non-Pittsylvania County and region items:** May be collected at the discretion of the Collections Committee to fill a gap in an existing collection if it can be ascertained that such an item would have been used or found in the Pittsylvania County region; and also providing that such an item is a viable one that meets the goals of the Center. Such items may be deaccessioned under the provisions set forth in the deaccession policy, as appropriate Pittsylvania County items become available.
2. **Museum Quality/Historic Value:** Items of historic significance will be collected regardless of aesthetic or intrinsic value. Items typical or common in their time will often be of greater historical value in the future than a unique, one-of-a-kind item. Physical condition and the Center's ability to care for items will be strongly considered but may not necessarily preclude the item's acceptance into the collection if they are of exceptional historic importance. Items of a sentimental nature or nostalgic value to the donor should be distinguished from historically significant materials and should not be collected unless they are also of historic value.

3. **Duplication of Collections:** Duplicates, items similar or identical to items held by the Center, may be accepted if they contribute to the quality and scope of an existing collection and/or if they may be used to supplement the Educational Collections. While acquiring duplicates is advisable for purposes of exhibition and research, individual unique items remain the acquisition priority for the Center. Duplicates will not be accepted if they will constitute an excessive burden on the Center's resources, staff, or regular collections.
4. **Integrity of collections:** Collections of related materials consisting of both Pittsylvania and non-Pittsylvania regional items may be accepted upon the recommendation of the Collections Committee. If such a collection is primarily Pittsylvania County region, it may be accepted in its entirety into the Center's collections. If the collection as a whole is more relevant and more valuable in its entirety to another museum, library, archive, or public institution, it may be referred to another institution by the Director.
5. **Appropriateness of provenance:** Items considered for acquisition must be transferred by the owner with clear title or by an executor with proven authority.
 - a. Items must not be illegally imported into the United States or illegally collected within the United States.
 - b. The Center does not condone the destruction of historic sites, buildings, habitats, districts, or objects, and will not accept items collected in a manner to cause such destruction.
 - c. The Center will not accept items that are subject to repatriation under the provisions of Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990.
 - d. The Center may request appropriate documentation of any item(s) and should be reasonably assured that the Center can acquire valid and legal title to the item.

Commencement of Ownership

Items may be accepted by bequest, gift, museum exchange, field collection, excavation, or any other transaction by which title to the item passes to the Center. The authority to formally accept an item in the collections shall be limited to the Collections Committee. A temporary custody form, which does not obligate the Center to formally accept any item, should be used until the Collections Committee has met. Consideration of restricted gifts, short-term loans, indefinite loans, and exchanges shall follow the guidelines set forth in the acquisition policy.

1. **Gifts and bequests:**
 - a. The Center is considered to own the item when a Deed of Gift Agreement has been legally executed and the item physically enters the Center.
2. **Exchanges:**
 - a. Same as 1.) Gifts and Bequests.
 - b. Exchanges may be made only with museums, libraries, archives, or other public institutions whose basic interests parallel those of the Center. Exchanges will not be conducted with individuals.
3. **Purchases**
 - a. The Center is considered to own the item when it has rendered payment for the item, subject to any conditions of delivery.
4. **Abandonment**
 - a. If a lender cannot be located or identified, the Center will be guided by the advice and recommendations of legal counsel.

5. Field Collection:

- a. Items collected in the field by staff members during Center-financed trips are the property of the Center. Ownership commences following the conclusion of the expedition/field trip and collections committee approval.

Acquisition Procedures:

Items brought in by a donor or vendor for acquisition consideration may be left in the custody of the Center provided that a temporary custody form has been completed. All collections management forms will be stored in a designated file cabinet.

Once the Collections Committee decides to accept an item, the following steps will be taken:

1. The donor/vendor will deliver the item(s) to the Center. Any other arrangements must be made with the approval of the collections committee. If the Center must pick up the items(s) without the presence of the donor, such arrangements will be in writing from the donor to the Director, along with the name, address, telephone number, complete listing of the item, and date and time of requested pick-up.
2. As the item enters the Center, or is picked up from a potential donor/vendor, a Deed of Gift will be completed. One copy is given to the donor/vendor and one copy is placed in the Deed of Gift file at the Center. The Center staff **will not** appraise the item for the donor's purposes.
3. If the object is received in the mail, the Deed of Gift will be sent for signature to the sender with a return envelope and instructions for return of the Deed of Gift to the Center.
4. New acquisitions will be entered into the accessions register as soon as possible.
5. An initial condition report will be completed by the Center manager.
6. A storage location will be found for the item(s).
7. The Center staff will conduct all necessary research and compile available information. The donor/vendor may be asked to provide information regarding the history of the item(s).
8. New acquisitions will be processed and cataloged as soon as possible.

Deaccessioning Materials

The Center reserves the right to withdraw items from the collections that are no longer of value concerning the history and culture of Pittsylvania County and the region. The decision to deaccession an item or items will be made by the Collections Committee after a reappraisal based on the guidelines of the collection development policy.

Items no longer needed by the Center may be returned to the donor or offered to other repositories as appropriate and determined by the Collections Committee.

Approved September, 2013; re-approved with changes September 2015; approved without change October 2016; approved without change 2018; approved with revisions 2020; approved without change Sept 2025