

Simple Steps for Caring for Your Collection

Here is a list of no cost and low cost things you can do today to improve the care of your collections.

- **Glove Up.** Invest in a pair of cotton or nitrile gloves, and use them especially for handling metal or photographs. Look for them in your local drugstore/beauty product store. Cotton gloves shouldn't have any sticky beads or treading and Nitrile gloves should be powder free. If even gloves are out of your price range, make sure to **Wash Your Hands** before and after handling materials.
- **Box It.** Store materials in boxes. This will keep them clean of dust, protected from light, provide a buffer against temperature fluctuations and give easy handles and added protection when moving. If you have a choice, look for Acid Free/Lignin Free materials. Avoid newsprint and bubble wrap as they can discolor and damage fragile materials.
- **Raise It.** Store things 2 inches off the floor. Buys you some time in case of emergency and allows you to clean out under there.
- **Keep Things Where You Are.** What's good for people (stable temperatures) is good for artifacts. Consider keeping most fragile items in the most stable environments. Avoid basements and attics.
- **Monitor.** Set up a schedule to check your collections on a regular basis to look for evidence of deterioration or pest activity.
- **Digitize.** Scan photos and records. This allows you to access and share fragile materials without having to pull them out so often. It will also give you a copy prior to damage that may occur in the future. Scan to an uncompressed file type like .TIF.
- **Record.** Most collections are only as important as their stories. Create a system for keeping records and maintain it.
- **Ban Food** in collections storage and processing areas. Make sure everyone knows where food should and shouldn't be and take out the trash regularly.
- **Freeze It.** Bringing in a new textile? It should go into immediate quarantine until it has been frozen. Put it in double plastic bags and into the freezer. Remember to leave it in the bag until the materials are back to room temperature to prevent condensation getting in places it shouldn't be.

Sample Outline for a Collections Management Policy

1. Statement of Purpose
2. Statment of Authority
3. Definition of Collections
 - a. History of Collections
 - b. Types
 - c. Scope of Collections Statement (SOCS)
4. Collecting Plan
5. Ethics
6. Collections Management Activity
 - a. Documentation
 - b. Acquisition
 - i. Accession
 - c. Deaccession
 - d. Access
 - i. Reference Room Policies
 - ii. Rights & Reproductions Policy
 - iii. Privacy Policy
 - e. Loans
 - i. Temporary Custody
7. Incoming Loans
8. Held in Trust
 - i. Outgoing Loans
 - b. Documentation and Records Keeping
 - i. Institutional Archives
9. Care and Maintenance
 - i. Conservation
 - ii. Storage

- iii. Environment
 - iv. Inventory
 - b. Risk Management
 - i. Insurance
 - ii. Integrated Pest Management System
 - iii. Disaster Planning
 - c. Security
- 10. Monitoring, Revising, Compliance
- 11. Forms Section

Sample Scope of Collections Statement

Willamette Heritage Center Scope of Collections Statement

The Willamette Heritage Center collects unique objects, photographs, archives and library materials with documentary significance to the history, lifeways and culture of the greater Salem area, Marion County, Oregon, and when deemed appropriate, desirable or necessary, the Mid-Willamette Valley region.

Specifically, the Willamette Heritage Center has significant collections of, and will continue to seek and collect materials related to:

- **The Methodist Mission to Oregon (1834-1844)** including materials related to mission operations, missionaries, and the missionaries' contributions to the early establishment of education, government, commerce, religious organizations and American settlement.
- **Oregon Trail and Early Settlement (1841-1869)** including objects and archives of known provenance connected to individuals immigrating to Salem and Marion County.
- **Oregon Textile History and Industry (1856-Present)** including machines, tools, textiles, apparel, images, records and memorabilia of Oregon fiber preparation, cloth making, and cottage industry and industrial textile manufacturing, especially those materials related to the Thomas Kay Woolen Mill (1889-1962).
- **Salem History** includes photographs, archives and memorabilia documenting Salem civic and structural history, with special emphasis on documentation of historic buildings, city layout, prominent citizens and events, and government structures.
- **Agriculture** including objects, records and photographs related to agricultural pursuits in the Mid-Willamette Valley, especially hops, flax, berry, viticulture, orchard, nursery, dairy, and animal husbandry industries and the people working in them.
- **Industry** including tools and records related to significant industries in the Mid-Valley such as fur trade, canning, forestry and milling.
- **Lifeways** including materials related to foodways, clothing, religion, transportation, leisure, entertainment, and cultural and ethnic groups.
- **Education** including photographs, archives and memorabilia documenting education systems and institutions in Salem and Marion County and students, staff and administration.
- **Organizations** including photographs, archives and memorabilia from Salem and Marion County professional organizations, fraternal organizations and clubs.
- **Commercial Activities** including objects, records and archives and photographs of businesses and professions relating to doctors, lawyers, teachers, artists, bankers, mercantilists and state government workers.
- **Photographs** including unique and significant collections of photographs from studios or individuals with high research value.

- **Personal Papers** including manuscripts and rare or hard to find collections of printed materials from a significant citizen or individuals documenting the history of the area.
- **Oral Histories** including written and recorded interviews with local citizens on significant historical topics.
- **Research Library** including reference materials and those that help put historical collections, museum programs and museum services in context.

Recognizing the wide variety of cultural and heritage organizations that exist in the Mid-Willamette Valley, and the importance of keeping materials accessible in and to their communities of origin, the WHC will work with local organizations when determining if materials might be well cared for and better utilized in another institution. When materials related to the Native Peoples of the Mid-Willamette Valley are offered for donation to the Willamette Heritage Center, the Center's staff will make every effort to work with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde's Cultural Resources Department to determine the best and most appropriate place for such items to be located.