

Log Cabin Village

COLLECTIONS AND ACCESS POLICY

Established October 1, 1998

Revised February 3, 2000

July, 2004

January 21, 2008

Public Disclosure:

Upon request, this policy will be made public to any individual, group, or institution.

The Log Cabin Village will also make public any available information regarding objects in the collection and deaccessioned objects.

I. PERSONNEL AND PROCEDURES

All activity relating to the collections will follow the guidelines stated in the *Code of Ethics for Museums* by the American Association of Museums (AAM), and the *Log Cabin Village Code of Ethics*.

The curatorial staff consists of the director and curator of LCV. The size and personnel of the curatorial staff may change according to the size of the professional staff at LCV.

LCV's curatorial staff will review this policy at least once a year.

All decisions regarding and affecting collection management must be authorized and approved by the curatorial staff.

A Procedures Manual, which contains all procedures regarding the collections' acquisition, management, storage, care, and disposition will be kept and maintained. All objects must be processed following the procedures established in this manual.

The curator is responsible for maintaining and updating The Collections and Access Policy and the Collections Procedures regarding and/or pertaining to the collections.

II. SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS

LCV will collect historical structures, objects, photographs, and documents from, relating, or pertaining to Texas' pioneer era (1840s-180s). The collections will consist of authentic objects as well as reproductions, as long as the items are relevant to LCV's mission and may be used to attain LCV's vision and goals.

Mission statement:

To educate the public through the collection, preservation, and interpretation of artifacts, representative structures, and other objects of social and cultural significance to the Texas pioneer era (1840 – 1890).

Vision statement:

Log Cabin Village aspires to build connections to 19th century Texans by providing educational opportunities and sensory experiences that are engaging, accurate, and as authentic as possible.

Goals:

To **educate** the public, through LCV's historical interpreters, programs, exhibits, and publications about pioneer objects and structures, and Texas pioneer history.

To **preserve** history through the care and conservation of pioneer structures and artifacts.

To **interpret** in an appropriate setting and through permanent and temporary exhibits, structures, objects, demonstrations, and programs the history of Texas as set forth by the mission and vision statements.

Ownership:

The collections at LCV are owned outright by the City of Fort Worth and are held in trust by LCV. With custody, LCV commits in good faith to the responsibility of their care and conservation as well as their management, storage, exhibition, cataloguing, and possible disposition. The care of all collection objects is subject to available resources.

**III.
TYPES OF COLLECTIONS**

The Log Cabin Village has three types of collections. They are divided into the following categories in order to provide guidelines about their level of

accessibility by the professional staff, other museum staff and interns, volunteers and the public.

The curatorial staff will be responsible for assigning each object into a specific category.

1) EDUCATIONAL, REFERENCE (**ER**):

Because it contains valuable and authentic artifacts, this collection is of **limited access**. Only authorized individuals (mainly staff and volunteers) are allowed to handle and utilize objects in this collection. Only LCV's professional staff can authorize access to this type of collection.

This collection consists of objects that are or can be displayed and utilized primarily for educational purposes and reference. These objects may be unique artifacts and / or reproductions that have been accessioned. Some objects, deemed to be irreplaceable or of a very fragile nature, may be stored or displayed for educational purposes, but only handled by the curatorial staff or trained professionals.

Objects in this collection are generally approved for proper exhibition, but may not be touched or handled by anyone but approved staff and volunteers.

2) PUBLIC USE (**PU**):

The objects in this collection are primarily reproductions and artifacts that are deemed appropriate for the purpose of **public access**. This collection is for the sole use of hands-on programs. The public is allowed to use and handle these objects. Because the objects in this collection may be handled and eventually destroyed by the public, they do not have to be accessioned, but they must be catalogued.

This collection includes objects from LCV's collection that have been deaccessioned (see section VI), objects that were never accessioned, as well as reproductions.

3) RESEARCH (RS):

This collection consists of photographs, books, archival documents, and other artifacts kept in storage for conservation purposes and requires **restricted access**. This collection is available to students, researchers, genealogists and other interested parties for research purposes and only upon the authorization by LCV's curatorial staff. When any item in this collection is in use by anyone outside the LCV staff, a member of the LCV professional staff must be present during use or viewing of object (see section X).

This collection includes the most unique and valuable artifacts that are too sensitive for exhibition and/or constant handling.

IV. ACQUISITIONS

Acquisition is the acceptance of a donated object by LCV.

In this step, the donor relinquishes all of her/his rights to the object by signing a "**Deed of Gift**" form. From that point on, the object is the property of the City of Fort Worth and all decisions regarding the object fall under the jurisdiction of the LCV curatorial staff. When a representative of LCV signs the "Deed of Gift," LCV has accepted and acquired the listed objects.

As of October 1998, LCV will not accept any objects where the donor does not sign the "Deed of Gift" form.

Objects acquired by LCV before October 1998 will be considered the property of the City of Fort Worth unless indicated by specific records. Prior to this date, many objects were not properly accessioned and records on every object may not be available; thus, LCV's curatorial staff must assume ownership of said objects.

All objects will be catalogued, labeled and assigned into a collection regardless of acquisition date (See Section III).

Only a member of the LCV curatorial staff can accept or reject any objects for acquisitions.

Acquiring an object gives LCV the right to utilize the objects as best as it sees fit. It is then the responsibility of LCV to decide whether the objects will be accessioned, stored, displayed, deaccessioned, and/or in what collection the acquired object will best serve the purpose of LCV.

If LCV shall ever dissolve, LCV does not have the responsibility of contacting the donor or any one who ever had an interest in the object.

LCV will support and encourage activities that lead to the growth and development of the collections as long as such activities and growth serve the purpose and goals of LCV, and as long as LCV has the necessary resources to care for the objects in the collections.

Guidelines for acquiring objects:

- Because of legal and ethical responsibility to its collections, **LCV will not accept or acquire objects under the following circumstances:**
 - 1) Objects believed to be imported or acquired illegally or in violation of any other laws.
 - 2) Objects to which the donor does not have free and clear title. Only donations from the legal and rightful owner will be accepted. In cases where the owner does not own the copyright, exceptions will be made as long as permission to copy or publish can be established.
 - 3) Objects for which LCV cannot ensure the resources (i.e. storage space, equipment, and personnel) to properly manage and care for them. LCV must maintain the best standards of preventive care and conservation that it can provide to its objects. When resources are limited, the curatorial staff must be judicious about which objects to acquire.

- 4) Objects that do not serve the purpose and goals of LCV and its collections. Whenever possible, LCV will refer the objects to more appropriate institutions.
 - 5) Restrictive or conditional donations such as exhibiting objects permanently, keeping all objects donated together, or acknowledging publicly donor's name with every object donated. LCV retains the right to display, store, and dispose of donated items as it sees fit without consulting donors about the objects in question.
 - 6) If there is no foreseeable use for the object either as a research, display, or educational tool. This rule applies even if the objects fit within LCV's purpose and goals. The curatorial staff is responsible for evaluating the possible use of the object and deciding whether acquiring the object is for the ultimate benefit of LCV and the object itself.
 - 7) If the object poses a health or environmental hazard. Objects that are potentially harmful either to humans, animals, the collection, or the environment (such as nitrate film) will not be considered for acquisition.
- LCV will not appraise any object to be acquired. If the donor wishes to have objects appraised for any purpose, the donor must seek appraisal elsewhere.
 - LCV will keep and maintain records of all acquisitions.
 - Upon request, LCV will provide the donor with a receipt or letter acknowledging the donation.

V. ACCESSIONING

Accessioning is the second step after acquiring an object. When an object has been acquired, LCV gains legal ownership and the ethical responsibility

to care for the object through the accessioning process. When an object is accessioned, it becomes a permanent part of LCV's collection.

LCV recognizes the need for collection growth and expansion in order to improve in quality and scope in applicability to the statement of purpose. However, for the welfare of the collections, LCV cannot permit unrestricted accessioning. Thus, not all acquired objects will be accessioned.

LCV's curatorial staff will decide what objects will be accessioned.

Guidelines for Accessioning Objects:

- As of October 1998, objects will be accessioned only after the donor and authorized LCV staff member have signed the "Deed of Gift" form.
- Every object accessioned will have a unique number for identification purposes. Each object will also be marked as to what type of collection it belongs (See Section III).
- Records about all accessions will be kept and maintained by LCV. Although LCV will make every effort to gather information about each object, accession records made prior October 1998 are incomplete, vague, or non-existent.
- As of October 1998, accession records will contain information about every aspect of the object as far as it is known. Records will include: donor's information; provenance of object; date or period of manufacture; manufacturer's, artist's or designer's name; full description of object; its use; who owned it and where it was used; and any other relevant information about object.

VI. DEACCESSIONING

Deaccessioning is the legal and ethical procedure that must be taken to dispose of an accessioned object that is no longer useful to LCV. By deaccessioning an object, LCV relinquishes formally and permanently ownership and responsibility of said object.

LCV acknowledges its responsibility to care and maintain objects in its collection. However, LCV retains the right to dispose of accessioned objects through deaccessioning when these objects are no longer in the best interest of LCV and the community it serves.

As of October 1, 1998, records will be kept for each deaccessioned object.

Guidelines for deaccessioning objects:

- Decisions and all consideration regarding the deaccessioning of collections will be made by the curatorial staff.
- Objects will be deaccessioned under the following conditions:
 - 1) Object is no longer (or never was) relevant to LCV's purpose and goals.
 - 2) LCV does not have the resources to properly maintain and care for the object.
 - 3) Object has deteriorated beyond any recognizable, usable, or repairable state.
 - 4) Object is hazardous to humans, animals, the environment, or other objects in the collection.
 - 5) Excessive reproductions or copies of an object exist in the current collection.
- Deaccessioned objects will be disposed of in an ethical manner by any of the following means:
 - 1) Trade or donation to an appropriate institution.
 - 2) Auction, or private sale for which revenues will be used entirely for the benefit and improvement of LCV's collections as stated in the AAM's *Code of Ethics for Museums*.

- 3) Disposal, when item is beyond any recognizable condition or beyond repair, or if it has no significant value or purpose.

VII. INCOMING LOANS

Due to the lack of storage space, environmental control, and other legal and ethical considerations, **LCV will not accept any incoming loans** from other institutions, organizations, or individuals.

If in the future, when conditions allow for incoming loans, appropriate policies and procedures for this process must be adopted and integrated into the Collections and Access Policy.

VIII. OUTGOING LOANS

LCV will only lend objects to other museums and educational institutions and organizations. No exceptions will be made for LCV staff members or other employees or volunteers of the City of Fort Worth.

No loans will be made to individuals or any other organization or institutions that will not use objects for educational or research purposes.

The curatorial staff has the authority to decide to which institution to lend to and for what purpose.

The period of the loan shall not exceed 3 months, with option to renew at that time. Upon expiration of the loan period, the borrowing institution must return the objects promptly in accordance with the loan agreement.

LCV may recall objects on loan before the expiration date if conditions of loan are not met by the borrowing institution, or for any other reason LCV sees appropriate.

The borrowing institution must provide adequate care of object, including routine cleaning, storage, and shipping. All objects loaned out must be

insured under the borrowing institution's policy. The City of Fort Worth must be listed as the name of the insured. A copy of the insurance document must be submitted to LCV.

Objects that are deemed irreplaceable by LCV will not be considered for loaning. No object will be loaned where the safety of the object will be compromised.

All transactions where objects are removed from the museum must be covered by a written agreement signed by LCV and the borrowing institution.

Photographs, reproductions, and/or publications of loaned objects will be permitted only upon written authorization by LCV.

The agreement shall contain the following information:

- All relevant information on the borrowing institution, as well as on the person responsible for the loaned object within that institution.
- The period of the loan.
- Notice that the loaned object must be insured against fire, theft, and other casualties.
- Catalog number, full description of objects, photographs if available, and condition report.

IX. CARE, DEVELOPMENT, AND CONSERVATION OF COLLECTIONS

LCV has the responsibility to preserve the objects under its care to the best of its ability. Storage, handling, and care of each object or structure in the collection will be regulated and applied using museum standards and techniques with the given resources.

A Procedures Manual on the handling, care, and preservation of artifacts must be maintained and stored by the curatorial staff but available to all staff and volunteers who come in contact with the collection.

A Collection Strategic Plan shall be maintained, and updated by the curatorial staff. The plan shall outline the needs, goals, and objectives of the collection. It will include sections on the collections' orderly growth and development, care, and conservation.

A Pest Management Policy and an Emergency Salvage Plan shall be maintained by the curatorial staff.

Training:

All staff and volunteers that will be handling objects shall receive adequate training regarding the care and conservation of historical objects.

Training sessions will be held to continually update and remind staff and volunteers of proper museum techniques.

Prior to the actual handling of artifacts, a The Procedures Manual will be given to each individual, as well as a training session with the curatorial staff.

Curatorial staff must stay informed and aware of changing and advancing museum standards, and must strive to meet these standards in the care and preservation of LCV's collections.

Storage:

To protect the artifacts from harmful elements as much as possible, objects on exhibit must be rotated and put in storage habitually, especially those sensitive to light and handling.

A regular schedule regarding the rotation of artifacts will be maintained.

Storage should be kept as clean as possible with constant monitoring for pests.

Museum quality storage containers must be used. No regular cardboard boxes, plastic bags, or other types of non- archival containers are acceptable.

Cleaning and Handling:

A regular cleaning schedule will be consistently followed to include weekly, monthly, and yearly chores.

Only the curatorial staff can authorize the handling and cleaning of objects.

Objects of a very fragile nature should only be handled by specially trained individuals such as the curator and/or conservator, and should not be handled by other staff or volunteers.

Exhibition:

Lighting, temperature, and relative humidity are the leading causes of deterioration; thus monitoring of these levels in exhibit and storage spaces must be conducted regularly and adjustments made so that collections are affected by these elements as little as possible.

Objects and structures (including cabins) on exhibit must be examined by staff on a monthly basis.

Curatorial staff must continually revise exhibits and exhibit space to maintain changing interpretations, settings, and artifacts.

Artifacts on exhibit, which are sensitive to light and humidity, must be rotated on a regular schedule.

Only museum quality mounts, cases, and exhibit techniques will be used.

Exhibit text and labels must be revised at least annually to ensure accuracy and conciseness.

X. ACCESS

Access to collections must support the availability of collections and dissemination of information to the public while properly maintaining LCV's professional stewardship standards.

LCV strives to make the collections and structures available to the public for academic, scholarly, and educational purposes either through exhibitions, publications, or through special/restricted access. It is the intention of LCV to provide the widest possible access to its structures, buildings, and collections without compromising the safety and/or condition of the public, the staff, the grounds, the collections, and the structures.

Therefore, special access to the collections will be granted when all considerations have been given to the safety and stability of the collections, buildings, structures and to human safety, and when access requests are determined to be appropriate and reasonable.

Special/Restricted access to RS collections:

Access of RS collections must be for legitimate research and education purposes, which include reasonable uses for artistic endeavors, family genealogy, and/or the sheer desire to learn through the viewing of the collections. The public may request to view artifacts in collections (PU and ER). These requests will be treated in the same manner as requests for the RS collections:

Request must be made either in writing, through the telephone, or in person to the museum curator.

The curator evaluates and approves all requests for collection special access.

Special access to collections is by appointment only, through the curator, for a time during normal business hours only. The hours of when collections are available for special viewing are by appointment.

An LCV staff member must be present at all times during the viewing/studying of collections.

The researcher must follow all of LCV's artifact care and handling procedures.

Access is subject to restrictions imposed by limitations of facilities and availability of staff.

Access to structures:

LCV strives to make its structures accessible to the public. In order to maintain historic integrity, sometimes modifications cannot be made to the exhibits and/or structures. In this case, reasonable accommodations are granted either through photographs, exhibit panels, or other means.

Due to the safety of the staff, the public, the collections and structures, there are certain areas of the LCV that are off limits at all times to the public. This includes but is not limited to media (newspaper, television, internet, print and radio) representatives, researchers, and any other persons wishing special access. Only authorized and able staff members should have access to these areas. The director of LCV is the only person who can determine and grant authorization to these individuals.

Public access is prohibited, but not limited to, the following areas:

- 1) **Foster Cabin:** interior stairway and all upstairs rooms in the Foster Cabin.

For code compliance, occupancy is prohibited upstairs due to

- a. the absence of a sprinkler system
- b. the narrow width of the stairway
- c. inadequate lighting
- d. extremely steep stairway

From a preservation standpoint, occupancy is prohibited due to the presence of artifact storage.

- 2) **Howard Cabin:** Due to structural problems, access is prohibited to the Howard Cabin until safety concerns can be completely remedied.

- 3) **Other areas and/or structures** may have limited or prohibited access as determined by the LCV staff. The LCV director may at any time limit or prohibit access when deemed necessary for the safety of the public, staff and/or collections.

Overnight/After hours Access:

Overnight and after hours access requests to all areas and structures at LCV are restricted due to poor lighting throughout the grounds and in structures, security concerns, possible damage to structures and/or artifacts, and for the safety of visitors and staff.

The LCV director may allow access only for city and/or museum related activities and functions (i.e. board meetings, maintenance, Police and Fire access, special events). All other overnight/after hour access requests are prohibited.