

Swedish American Museum Association of Chicago Collections Policy
(Adopted November 12, 1986, Amended 2002, Amended May 2012)

Mission:

Through its arts and educational programs and its Permanent Collection, the Swedish American Museum interprets the immigrant experience for children and adults and promotes an appreciation of contemporary Swedish-American culture.

Vision:

To be the preeminent Swedish American immigration museum in the greater Chicago area and a unifying force within the Midwestern Scandinavian Community.

Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures and criteria for the acquisition, preservation and management of the collections of the Swedish American Museum Association of Chicago (Museum.) The collections policy will identify the duties and responsibilities of collections volunteers, Museum staff, and the Museum's governing bodies.

The Museum seeks to balance preservation and conservation needs of the collection with the educational and interpretive use of the collections. This policy's function is to outline set criteria by which the staff and volunteers can determine how best to meet those needs.

Collecting Principals

All objects and material proposed for acquisition should be relevant to the Museum's stated mission and should be in, or capable of being returned to, acceptable condition for research and/or display. The Museum must be able to house and care for the proposed acquisition according to generally accepted Museum practices. Any item in need of conservation or maintenance at the time of acquisition should be considered in terms of future expenses.

Only objects for which legal title can be firmly established should be considered for acquisition.

If an object is not appropriate for accession into the Permanent Collection, it may be acquired for the Library Collection, Education Collection or Furnishings and Properties Collection. In such cases, the donor should be notified that the item(s) will be acquired for that specific collection.

As a general rule, the Museum does not accept gifts that carry restrictions.

The same criteria that are used for accepting gifts should be used for making purchases.

Scope of Collections and Collecting Objectives

I. Permanent Collection

To build upon the strengths of the collection in the following areas:

- a. Personal artifacts and material that illuminate the lives and stories of Chicago's Swedish and Swedish-American residents
- b. Swedish and Swedish-American decorative arts of the 19th and 20th centuries with particular emphasis upon clothing, furniture, textiles furnishings, glass, ceramics and base metals
- c. Farming and agricultural implements, machinery and tools from the late 19th and early 20th centuries as brought here from Sweden or made by the immigrants and their descendants
- d. Folk art which reflects the lives and perspectives of traditional Swedish artists and craftsmen in a variety of media from the first immigrants to present
- e. Fine art comprised of landscapes, portraits and genre paintings relevant to the Swedish experience, particularly works of Chicago Swedish-American artists.
- f. Artifacts showing the life and work of Chicago-area based Swedish organizations which have become defunct

II. Library Collection

To maintain existing and further collect manuscripts, iconographic and published items pertinent to the interests of the Museum thereby advancing the Museum's commitment to promote the study of regional Swedish immigration history and encourage original research.

- a. Published works in English and Swedish that reveal the history of the Swedish immigration, immigrants and their descendants to the greater Chicago area
- b. Published works in English and Swedish on Swedish culture, history, government and economics
- c. Published works in English and Swedish on genealogy pertinent to the Swedish American Experience
- d. Textbooks and other related materials for the teaching of the Swedish Language
- e. Records of the history of the Museum including all significant related materials

Library Collection material is not subject to the policies laid out in this document unless specifically stated. Library Collection material is intended for regular use by the public and therefore will be subject to more handling and deterioration than Permanent Collection material. See Library Collection Policy.

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III. Education Collection

To provide objects as educational tools. These objects are duplicative, abundant and/or replaceable items as well as items of lesser condition that have a definite teaching quality and are mainly used in the Children's Museum, for "hands-on" programs and exhibitions, comparative study and loans. This collection includes only authentic artifacts and excludes props and other modern items used in the Children's Museum.

- a. Includes original material and artifacts from disciplines that mirror the Permanent Collection

Education Collection material is not subject to the policies laid out in this document unless specifically stated. Education Collection material is intended for regular use by the public and therefore will be subject to more handling and deterioration than Permanent Collection material. See Education Collection Policy.

IV. Furnishings and Properties Collection

To provide objects for use in the public and administrative areas of the museum. This collection includes items such as, paintings, prints, decorative arts and furniture that are used as decoration and furnishings in the museum building and for site use. Their period of use in the Museum may be temporary, depending on their intended use. This collection may include:

- a. Items that have been donated in association with, or may have been created by the Museum for programs, exhibits and Museum functions.
- b. Art objects from gallery exhibits given to the Museum by the artist or collector that do not fall within the scope of the Museum's Permanent Collection.
- c. Items donated to the Museum for use in public or office spaces, such as furniture, instruments, serving and kitchenware and decorative items.

Furnishings and Properties Collection material is not subject to the policies laid out in this document unless specifically stated. Furnishings and Properties Collection material is intended for regular use by staff, volunteers, other organizations and the public and therefore will be subject to more handling and deterioration than Permanent Collection material.

Acquisition policy:

Collection-building is an activity that is fundamental to the mission of the Swedish American Museum. Objects accepted into the collections become the Museum's exclusive property and if

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unrestricted may be displayed, loaned, retained or disposed of in the best interests of the Museum and the public it serves.

Adequate resources to store and care for objects are at a premium at most museums and this is true of the Swedish American Museum. If resources for collections care are inadequate, a decision to curtail or suspend acquisitions is a responsible option.

The Curator, in consultation with Executive Director and other appropriate Staff and Volunteers, by the approval of the Board of Directors/Trustees, has the authority to approve all gifts, and any purchases approved in the annual budget

Definition:

For the purpose of this policy, **acquisition** is defined as the discovery, preliminary evaluation and taking physical and legal custody of and acknowledging receipt of materials and objects. Acquisition involves the legal transfer of ownership of material and objects to the Museum.

Acquisition criteria:

All Collection objects and materials must meet the following tests of acquisition before being acquired by the Museum by any means.

1. The object must be relevant to and consistent with the purposes and activities of the Museum.
2. The Museum can provide for the storage, protection and preservation of the objects under conditions that insure their availability for museum purposes and in keeping with professionally accepted standards
3. Items will have permanency in the collections as long as they retain their physical integrity, their identity and authenticity and/or as long as they remain useful to the purposes of the Museum
4. The materials or objects must, if possible, be documented as to provenance
5. All moral, legal and ethical implications of the acquisition have been considered.
6. All donations of materials are considered outright and unconditional gifts to be used at the discretion of the Museum. Title to all objects acquired will be free and clear without restriction to use or future disposition, unless otherwise stated and agreed to by both parties in writing on the Gift Agreement Form.

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Means of Acquisition:

Materials and objects for all collections may be acquired by purchase, commission, bequest, gift, exchange, field collection, and or abandonment (see Appendix: Illinois Museum Disposition of Property Act, 1999.) No materials will be knowingly or willfully accepted or acquired which are known to have been illegally collected in the United States contrary to state law, federal law, regulation, treaty and/or convention.

The Museum subscribes to the provisions of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) convention of 1970 and will not accept cultural objects which are believed have been stolen and/or illegally exported from their country of origin. The Museum shall refuse to acquire materials or objects where there is cause to believe that the circumstances of their collection involved needless destruction of historic sites, buildings, structures, habitats, districts or objects.

No staff member, Board Member or Volunteer may obligate the Museum to the acceptance of any material or object not consistent with the intent or spirit of the acquisitions policy. No staff member shall offer appraisals of the monetary value of objects, library and archival materials to donors, or reveal the Museum's insurance value for the purpose of establishing a fair market value of gifts offered to the Museum. Donors desiring to take an income tax deduction must obtain an independent appraisal from an authorized appraiser. Records of such appraisals will be kept by the Museum in perpetuity. Staff members will not appraise or otherwise place a monetary value on library or archival material or on objects casually brought to the Museum.

As a public service, staff and volunteers may attempt to attribute, identify, or authenticate items brought to the Museum by the public. Such attributions identifications and or authentications shall be for the sole use of that individual.

All objects or materials deposited with the Museum for research and identification purposes shall have identification as to ownership and be covered by insurance of the owner. Such objects are not to be deposited on Museum premises longer than thirty (30) days. The Museum accepts no responsibility for notification of individuals for the return of such deposits. Items not claimed within sixty (60) days of deposit will be considered abandoned property and as such are subject to state law pertaining to same (see Appendix: Illinois Museum Disposition of Property Act, 1999.) Abandoned property of negligible value may be disposed of at the discretion of the Executive Director. Property of greater than negligible value may be disposed of under law by the Executive Committee.

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Permanent Collection Materials:

Authority to acquire Museum objects is delegated to the Curator and/or Executive Director within the confines of the Collection Policy and annual budget. For the purpose of purchase, authorization to acquire objects with a value of less than \$100 is delegated to the Curator and/or Executive Director. Museum acquisitions through purchase shall be made within annual budgets approved by the Board of Directors.

Library materials:

Authority to acquire Library Collection material rests with the Curator and/or Executive Director within the confines of the Collections Policy. For the purpose of purchase, authorization to acquire objects with a value of less than \$100 is delegated to the Curator and Executive Director. Museum acquisitions through purchase shall be made with annual budgets approved by the Board of Directors.

Education Collection Objects and Materials:

Authority to acquire Education Collection material rests with the Curator and/or Education Manager or the Executive Director within the confines of the Collection Policy. For the purposes of purchase, authorization to acquire objects with a value of less than \$100 is delegated to the Curator and Education Manager. Museum acquisitions through purchase shall be made with annual budgets approved by the Board of Directors.

Accessioning: Museum Permanent Collection

Definition:

Accessioning is defined as the process of accepting objects and material into the Permanent Collection of the Museum and involves both the legal transfer of ownership of material to the Museum and the formal acceptance and documentation of said object into the Permanent Collection, to be governed by the policies outlined in this document.

Only items formally accepted for the Museum's Permanent Collection will be accessioned.

All materials and objects shall be processed under procedures and policies adopted by the Board of Directors. Decisions regarding accessioning of material for the Permanent Collection will be made by the Curator (in consultation with appropriate staff and volunteers.) The Museum shall not be obligated, under any circumstances, to accession any material that does not fit within the scope of the collecting practices of the museum, whether by gift, bequest or purchase.

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Objects and material deemed inappropriate for accession into the Permanent Collection may instead be acquired for the Education, Library or Furnishings and Properties Collections. In such cases, the donor will be notified that the material will be acquired for said collection and will be subject to the policies adopted to govern that collection.

Permanent Collection objects shall be subject to the following:

- a. All Permanent Collection objects shall be assigned accession numbers and shall be appropriately catalogued in the Museum's records.
- b. Collection records, including source, location, and description as well as accession/donor files and an accession register shall be kept in accordance with accepted professional standards. Duplicate copies of records will be kept in a safe place off-site.
- c. Materials shall be stored in a manner to provide optimum security, accessibility and preservation to the best of the Museum's ability.
- d. Materials in need of conservation shall be treated as soon as possible.
- e. Conservation treatment shall be performed by qualified professionals using methods accepted as current best practices.
- f. Materials, whether in use or in storage, shall be protected from life shortening forces such as excessive heat, cold, humidity, dryness, dust, ultra violet light, insects, vermin or improper handling, to the best of the Museum's ability.
- g. Gift agreements shall be made for all property received into the Permanent Collection. A letter of thanks to the donor with a copy of the gift agreement will serve as the official receipt for the donor's purposes. The gift agreement will set forth an adequate description of objects involved, and the conditions of transfer (see Gift Agreement form)

Deaccessioning:

Definition:

Deaccessioning is the process of removing accessioned materials and objects permanently from the Permanent Collection. The deaccession process shall be cautious, deliberate and scrupulous. The Deaccession policy only applies to accessioned objects and materials.

Retention of each and every object in a collection involves an ongoing expense for the Museum. deaccessioning is a way to improve and strengthen collections by refining, upgrading and focusing them.

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Deaccession Criteria

1. The material or object is outside the scope of the Mission of the Museum and its Collection Policy
2. The material or object is irrelevant to the purposes of the Museum and has doubtful future potential for use in the foreseeable future.
3. The material or object lacks physical integrity
4. The material or object has failed to retain its identity or authenticity, or has been lost or stolen and remains lost for longer than 2 years.
5. The material or object is duplicate and/or without intrinsic value
6. The Museum is unable to preserve the material or object properly
7. The material or object has deteriorated beyond usefulness
8. The material or object is subject to international, federal, state or local law which dictates that the Museum deaccession and/or surrender the object.
9. The material or object has accidentally been accessioned twice and/or other records error.

Material shall be deaccessioned only upon the recommendation in writing by the Executive Director and/or Curator to the Board of Directors and upon approval of the Board of Directors as specified in the Museum's bylaws. The minutes shall reflect that decision.

Once approved for deaccession, consideration will first be given to placing the object in other collections held by the Museum (Education, Furnishings, Library etc.)

Secondly, the object will be considered for transfer, through gift, exchange or sale, to another tax-exempt educational institution. Deaccessioned objects not disposed of in this manner will be sold at advertised public sale and only in a manner that will protect the interests, objectives and legal status of the Museum. If the object is subject to repatriation or other applicable law, the Museum shall dispose of the object as directed by that law.

The Museum does not sanction the sale or gift of deaccessioned objects to its employees, officers, trustees, their immediate family or their representatives.

Funds received from the sale of deaccessioned objects from the collection will be used only to directly benefit the collections. Proceeds may not be used for general operating expenses.

Disposition of Non-Accessioned materials

Definition:

Non-accessioned materials are those items donated to the Museum which (1) do not fall within the collection policy guidelines unless specified, (2) are part of an acquired collection but fall outside the scope of the Permanent Collection (3) are not worthy either by their physical state or nature to be accessioned as part of the Permanent Collection.

- a. Disposal of non-accessioned materials may be (1) given by gift or exchange to another tax-exempt educational institution, (2) put out for public sale or auction (3) used for the Education, Properties and Furnishings, or Library Collection, (4) destroyed.
- b. The Museum does not sanction the sale or gift of non-accessioned items to its employees, officers or trustees or to their representatives

Loans

Objects on loan to the Museum will not be accessioned as no transfer of ownership has taken place. Loans will be assigned a tracking number for registration purposes and will be cared for in the same manner as the Permanent Collection, but will not be considered part of the Museum's collections.

Loans from the Museum

Objects and material owned by the Museum may not be taken from the premises for any reason, except with approval by the Executive Director or Board of Directors.

Collection material and other property of the Museum may be loaned to a museum, educational or other not for profit institution or individuals under either two plans:

1. The Executive Director may approve an exhibit or temporary loan of property for a period not to exceed Sixty (60) days. At the end of Sixty (60) days, a privilege of renewal shall be executed if the director so recommends.
2. The Board of Directors may approve a loan of Museum property on such terms as determined by the Board. Insurance provisions shall be determined by the Board.

The Executive Director or Curator shall maintain a record and systematic follow-up of all Museum property on loan and suitable notation shall be made on the inventory of holdings. A "Museum Loan Agreement" must be signed by the borrower and the Museum.

Loans to the Museum

The Museum will accept loan items usually for a period of no more than six (6) months. Special arrangements may be made for long-term loan with written consent of the owner who will carry sufficient insurance on the item(s). Such loans will be renewed in writing annually. Loan items

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left with the Museum for more than sixty (60) days after the expiration of the loan period will be considered unclaimed loans and the Museum will follow Illinois legal procedure according to (765 ILCS 1033/) Museum Disposition of Property Act (see appendix: Illinois Museum Disposition of Property Act, 1999.)

No items or materials may be accepted by the Museum staff or volunteers as a loan without the Museum's acknowledgement of and prior agreement to the terms of the loan in writing, signed by the Curator or Executive Director as empowered by the Board of Directors.

Research Access to the Collection

The Museum holds the Collections in the public trust for educational purposes. The Museum believes the Collections should be used to advance knowledge and therefore will make them accessible to serious students and scholars for research. A primary consideration of availability of items for examination and research will be based upon the condition of the item(s) and availability of other sources, copies or information.

Procedure for access to the collections will be:

1. A request by the person(s) stating (a) purpose for access and anticipated use of their research and (b) need for access.
2. Authorization for access will be given or denied by the Curator and/or Executive Director. Denials may be appealed to the Board of Directors.
3. Persons wishing to use objects or archival materials for profit making ventures must (a) accept responsibility for adherence to any and all copyright designations; and (b) enter into a licensing agreement with the Museum.
4. No item from the Permanent Collection may be removed from the premises without permission from the Curator, Executive Director or the Board of Directors, in accordance with the existing Loan Policy. (See Loans)

Professional Access to the Collection

From time to time it will be useful and necessary to bring in outside professionals to advise as to the content and condition of the collection or objects contained within the collection. Professionals who are willing to donate time to examine and interpret the collection or segments of the collection will be welcomed by request of the Curator and upon approval of the Executive Director. A written report shall be submitted to the Executive Director and Curator by the requesting party to inform them of the results of the visit and to mutually educate each other as to the extent, significance and understanding of the holdings.

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Education Collection Policy

These objects are duplicative, abundant and/or replaceable items as well as items of lesser condition that have a definite teaching quality and are mainly used for comparative study, as objects in the Children’s Museum, for “hands-on” programs and exhibitions, and loans. These items will be cataloged as part of the “Education Collection” and assigned a catalogue number or tracking number similar to the accession numbers of the Permanent Collection but differentiated enough to avoid confusion.

- Example: ED2010.1 or ED2010.2a and ED2010.2b etc.

Objects in the Education Collection are non-accessioned and are not part of the Permanent Collection. These objects are not subject to the restrictions of Permanent Collection items. Education Collection items may be repaired using means approved by the Education Manager or Curator, or disposed of when damaged.

Repair and/or disposal of Education Collection items is at the discretion of the Education Manager or Curator and does not require the approval of the Board of Directors.

- Appropriate methods of disposal for Education Collection items are:
 - Donation to another educational institution
 - Destruction

Objects may be removed from the Education Collection if they are damaged, lost, stolen or are no longer relevant to the collection’s purpose. In such cases, the Education Manager and/or Curator shall make the decision and note the reason and date of removal in the collection inventory.

Care will be taken to store and handle Education objects appropriately, but objects in this collection are subject to much harder use than objects in the Permanent Collection and are to be considered consumable.

Items in the Permanent Collection must be deaccessioned in order to become part of the Education Collection, as they will no longer be part of the Permanent Collection. These items will be assigned new numbers and will no longer be subject to the same restrictions as the Permanent Collection.

Objects may become part of the Education Collection as gifts, purchases, bequests, exchange or transfers of deaccessioned items from the Museum’s Permanent Collection.

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Library Collection Policy

The Library Collection includes published and unpublished books, manuscripts, periodicals, original research and other reference materials pertinent to the mission and interests of the Museum. The Library Collection is non-accessioned and therefore items are not subject to the restrictions of Permanent Collection items. Care will be taken to handle Library Collection items with care but they are intended for use by the public and so will be subject to more wear than Permanent Collection items. Items in the Library Collection may be repaired using means approved by the Curator or Executive director and may be disposed of at the discretion of the Curator or Executive Director when damaged beyond repair or if they are no longer relevant to the needs of the Museum.

Library Collection material is intended for use by researchers, students, visitors, Museum staff and volunteers. This collection will be made available for on-site research use to interested parties when possible. Library Collection is non-circulating and may only be taken from the premises with written permission by the Curator and/or Executive Director.

The Library Collection includes:

- Published/Unpublished works in English and Swedish that reveal the history of the Swedish immigration, immigrants and their descendants to the greater Chicago area and the United States.
- Published works in English and Swedish on Swedish culture, history, government and economics
- Published/Unpublished works in English and Swedish on genealogy pertinent to the Swedish American Experience
- Textbooks and other related materials for the teaching of the Swedish Language
- Records pertaining to the history of the Museum.

Objects may become part of the Library Collection through gift, bequest, purchases or transfers from another Museum collection.