

Des Moines Historical Society

Collecting Plan and Policy

Adopted January 8, 2013

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Des Moines Historical Society is to promote the preservation and study of the history and heritage of Des Moines, Iowa.

At the time of the adoption of this plan, the Des Moines Historical Society (DMHS) has no paid staff to oversee or space available to house a collection and funds for collecting are limited. DMHS cannot collect everything, nor should everything be collected. By articulating the following recommendations, assumptions, guidelines, and areas of special emphasis, this collecting plan provides the framework within which DMHS can make collecting decisions on an individual or organizational level. The intent of this plan is not to dictate, but to guide collecting decisions so that collections development of DMHS will benefit from coordinated and integrated collecting objectives.

HISTORICAL COLLECTION STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Des Moines Historical Society of Des Moines, Iowa, is committed to assisting the citizens of Des Moines in identifying themselves individually and collectively in place and time, and in understanding how they have become who they are and how they can shape who they are yet to become.

To accomplish this, DMHS is empowered to identify, record, collect, catalog, archive, preserve, manage, and interpret the manifestations of Des Moines' history. Every aspect of the collections--including but not limited to; natural specimens, artifacts, printed materials, archives, manuscripts, photographs, machine-readable data, and works of art--helps document the lives of the people who have lived and worked here and the substantial impact of agriculture, industry, transportation, government, military life, education, religion, social life, and the arts in Des Moines, Iowa.

This Collecting Plan and Policy was created and approved by the DMHS Board of Directors. As a general outline, the plan defines, coordinates, and integrates the collecting efforts of the Des Moines Historical Society. DMHS and its Board reserve the right to broaden and extend past the language of the plan in unique situations to conserve, preserve and sustain historically significant artifacts, items or property.

The purpose of the collections should promote the preservation and study of the history and heritage of Des Moines, Iowa. Decisions concerning the acquisitions must address the appropriateness of adding or deleting items from the collection by virtue of its historical value, research importance, or its exhibition and display worthiness.

ASSUMPTIONS AND GUIDELINES

Materials will be collected according to the following assumptions and guidelines.

Assumptions

- DMHS serves a public that comprises several audiences, including membership, researchers, genealogists, government agencies, and historic preservationists—as well as future

generations of Iowans. DMHS will collect materials to serve the audiences of today and of the future.

- This collecting plan will be reviewed at the discretion of the DMHS Board of Directors for possible revision.
- This collecting plan and policy concerns primarily the historically significant artifacts, items or property that will comprise a portion in part or whole of a collection(s) for research, preservation or display. The collecting plan and policy does not include items by purchase, gift, or bequeath to and for the DMHS and its Board to be used for the general operation of the organization. Nor does it include items donated or obtained for the purpose of fund raising, promotion, or education.

Guidelines

Materials collected will meet some or all of the following guidelines:

1. The human experience in Des Moines will be documented. DMHS is interested in collecting materials that reflect how the citizens of Des Moines have lived.
2. Materials will be collected to support DMHS programs and services.
3. The material will fill gaps or build on strengths in current collections or establish new collections.
4. Material collected will reflect all time periods of Des Moines history. While the time period interpreted generally starts with the creation of Fort Des Moines II (1843), artifacts predating the Fort's establishment may be appropriate to "set the stage" or simply because they would have existed prior to, and during, Des Moines interpreted time period.
5. The collections will reflect Des Moines' diverse socio-economic, ethnic, cultural, age, and racial groups. While our intent is to be inclusive, we acknowledge that the categories are an intellectual construct; individuals do not live their lives within a single category or under a single label, but as participants in various facets of society. By specifying certain groups of Des Moines' population, our goal is to draw attention to the need to identify and document their participation in local history. DMHS will place special emphasis on materials that illuminate and document the roles of previously overlooked or narrowly defined populations (for example, children, low-income, African-Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans and women).
6. The collections will reflect all geographical areas within the boundaries of the city of Des Moines. Additionally, DMHS will seek significantly historic material relative to the human experience in Des Moines from outside of its boundaries.
7. Within any one category, materials will be sought that illustrate continuity and change, and reveal how these changes affect the lives of Des Moines residents.
8. Every effort must be made to gather as much information about the acquisition as possible.

9. Special considerations will be given to rapidly vanishing or endangered materials that are historically significant.
10. Emphasis will be given, but not limited to the following areas:
 - a. Architecture
 - b. Fort Des Moines II & Fort Des Moines III
 - c. Business and Industry
 - d. Domestic Life
 - e. Native Americans
 - f. Religion
 - g. Social Issues and Responses
 - h. Transportation
 - i. Women (See **Appendix B**)
11. Nevertheless, DMHS stresses that other areas not listed here are also important to Des Moines history and deserve attention. This list does not preclude collecting efforts in other areas. Materials relating to any other theme, time period, or geographical area will be considered. Board members should not feel restricted to the areas listed here, nor should they be discouraged from making contacts and soliciting quality materials in any area of Des Moines history. The purpose of the list is not to limit collecting, but to focus and coordinate.
12. DMHS acknowledges that other institutions that collect Iowa history have various strengths within their collections. Recognizing those strengths will help further define and focus collecting efforts. While not ruling out duplication or overlap, DMHS encourages collecting in ways that complement the strong collections of others. DMHS also encourages itself and other institutions to develop ways of sharing information about collections' strengths with each other and with the public.

HISTORICAL COLLECTION DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

The Des Moines Historical Society Board of Directors has responsibility for the collection. Consistent with the Collecting Plan and Policy as set forth in this document, the Board shall have oversight of the collection and the DMHS President or DMHS Vice President shall authorize Board members, staff members and selected volunteers to accept new materials and be responsible for the care of the collections in accordance with the Collecting Plan and Policy and the DMHS bylaws.

SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS

The Des Moines Historical Society will collect artifacts, items or property of historical value to Des Moines, including: structures, objects, photographs, and documents from, or relating to, or pertaining to Des Moines pioneer era (1840s) to the present. The collections will consist of authentic objects that are relevant to DMHS's purpose and may used to attain Des Moines Historical Society goals.

SCOPE OF TIME PERIOD

Generally, the collection's period of interpretation will begin in the 1840s. Artifacts predating these years may be appropriate to "set the stage" or simply because they would have continued to exist after 1840 and during the accepted interpreted time period of Des Moines.

MATERIAL OWNERSHIP

Gifts, donations and bequeaths require transfer of private property to the DMHS. These gifts shall be documented and in writing. This documentation serves several purposes:

- First, it begins the process of expressing the Des Moines Historical Society's gratitude for the donation and demonstrates to the donor DMHS's commitment to provide appropriate care and management for the materials received.
- Second, the written documentation records the particulars of the transaction by including the date of the gift and the donor's address for future reference.
- Finally, the documentation establishes that DMHS is the legal owner of the materials it accepts.

LEGAL TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP

There are three common instruments of gift: exchange of letters, wills, and deeds. Correspondence and wills can be adequate, but where possible, DMHS requires receipt of a standard Deed of Gift form to cover legal ground that is often left out of a letter or a will, including:

- Date of transfer;
- Name of donor (and contact information);
- Signed statement that the property is his/hers to donate in the first place;
- Description of the materials being offered (a brief but important record);
- Name of new owner (Des Moines Historical Society);
- Signed statement acknowledging that DMHS will be the sole owner, and therefore can sell, donate, or discard unwanted items in the future;

ACQUISITION

Acquisition is the process of evaluating, obtaining custody and acknowledging receipt of materials and objects.

Acquisition Criteria and Procedure

1. The materials collected and retained must be relevant to, and consistent with, the core purpose of the Des Moines Historical Society and the DMHS Historical Collection Statement of Purpose.

2. DMHS must be able to provide for the storage, protection and preservation of the materials under conditions that assure their availability for use in accordance with the DMHS Historical Collection Statement of Purpose.
3. Items will be retained so long as they remain useful to the purposes of the Des Moines Historical Society.
4. All donations of materials are considered outright and unconditional gifts to be used at the discretion of DMHS. Title to all objects acquired shall be free and clear, without restriction as to use or future disposition.
5. Appropriate documents of title and transfer must be obtained at the time of acquisition. Minimum requirement: Deed of Gift (*see Appendix C*)
6. Consideration in regard to duplicate or essentially similar objects already in the collections and foreseeable use are factors in the acquisition decision.
7. No DMHS Board member, staff member or volunteer may obligate DMHS to accept an object not aligned with the intent or spirit of the Acquisition Criteria.

ACCESSIONING PROCEDURES

Accessioning is the process of accepting items into the collection(s) of the Des Moines Historical Society.

1. At the time of acquisition, items will be identified, marked, labeled, recorded and catalogued in accordance with standard museum or collection practices. Any binding or non-binding requests of the donor will be noted on the record.
2. Condition of all items will be noted during the accessioning process.
3. Records of all accessioned items will be kept as part of the Des Moines Historical Society's permanent records.
4. Items that are badly worn, deteriorated, or in significant disrepair will not be accessioned into a collection unless its extreme rarity or significant historical association warrants accession.

CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF COLLECTIONS

1. Only those materials that can be properly cared for and maintained, given Des Moines Historical Society resources, will be retained in the collection.
2. All materials shall be stored in a manner to provide optimal accessibility and preservation.
3. Materials will be assessed for condition and stabilized for storage as soon as possible. Materials requiring further conservation or restoration work will be handled on an as-needed and as-funded basis.
4. Materials, whether in use or in storage, shall be protected from –deterioration caused by excessive heat, cold, humidity, dryness, dust, ultraviolet light, insects, vermin or improper handling.

DEACCESSIONING

Deaccessioning is the process of removing permanently from the collection(s) accessioned materials.

In order to deaccession an item from the DMHS Collection, the item must meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. The item is not relevant or is otherwise inappropriate to the purpose of the collection.
2. The item lacks physical integrity.
3. The item is a duplicate in the Des Moines Historical Society Collection or is easily found in one or more other collections.
4. The DMHS is unable to care for it properly.
5. The item has doubtful potential use in the collection in the foreseeable future.

Deaccession Procedure

1. Written documentation describing the item and the pertinent criteria shall accompany the proposal for deaccession.
2. Proposals for deaccession shall be submitted to the Des Moines Historical Society Board for review and approval.
3. Items approved for deaccession may be sold, auctioned, traded, given outright or discarded as appropriate. Written documentation of the disposition, including the name of the recipient, date of transfer, method of sale (if any), sale price (if any) and in the case the item was gifted or otherwise disposed, the reason for such action. [If the item was donated to DMHS, first consideration will be given to placing the item through gift or exchange in another tax exempt educational entity.]
4. Deaccessioned items may not be sold or gifted to staff, officers or members of the Board of Directors or their representatives without specific written authority from the Executive Officers (3/4 approval) or with a fifty-one percent (51%) or better vote by the full Board. Provisions of this section are not considered in effect when the aforementioned individual(s) participates in an open auction or high bidder in an advertised sealed bids process for item(s) or property, or if the item(s) are available for sale at public events such as; garage sale, benefit sales, or other public events where an established price already exists for the item.
5. Funds received from the sale of deaccessioned items will be deposited in the DMHS Preservation of Artifacts Fund.
6. Records of all deaccessioned items will be kept with the DMHS's permanent records.

LOANS

A loan is a temporary transfer of material from the Des Moines Historical Society Collection to another institution, entity or individual without transfer of ownership.

1. DMHS lends items from its collection only for purposes of exhibition, research and education.

2. The Des Moines Historical Society only lends items from its collection pursuant to the terms of a loan agreement approved by DMHS Board and signed by an authorized representative of the DMHS and the other party.
3. Each loan agreement shall specify the purpose of the loan, how the item will be used, the duration of the loan and the security provided for the loaned item (e.g. insurance).
4. The maximum loan duration shall be for a period of two (2) years. Any renewal of a loan shall require a formal loan renewal request and approval.
5. The Des Moines Historical Society shall only lend items from its collection to institutions, organizations and individuals that, in the DMHS's judgment, are able to properly care for the item(s) at the level required to preserve its value and worth.

ACCESS

1. Documents, recordings and images are not available for loan except at the discretion of the DMHS board. [Copies of documents, recordings and images may be loaned.]
2. Physical access to [original] documents, recordings and images is limited to designated staff members and approved researchers. Access by researchers is permitted pursuant to an agreement signed by the requestor specifying the terms and conditions of access and usage of the collection materials.
3. Copying of collection materials is not permitted unless the user first signs a usage agreement specifically describing the limits of use, including full attribution to the Des Moines Historical Society and the Collection.
4. Forms providing access to the collection, reproduction of collection documents, recordings or images must be approved by the Board of Des Moines Historical Society.

POLICY REVIEW

The Des Moines Historical Society Board will review its Collecting Plan and Policy once every two years between the second (2nd) and third (3rd) General Quarterly Meetings of the membership, to insure it is current and reflects the needs of the organization. In addition to this review, the Board reserves the right to review the Collecting Plan and Policy and make appropriate changes, corrections, additions, deletions, to insure it is in compliance with the spirit and goals of the Des Moines Historical Society.

This Policy was voted on and approved by the Des Moines Historical Society Board of Directors at its meeting held on the 8th day of January, 2013.

Appendix A

GLOSSARY

Archival Appraisal

Appraisal is the process of determining the value and thus the disposition of records based upon the degree to which they fit into an institution's collecting policy. Appraisal also takes into account records' administrative, legal, and fiscal use; their informational and artifactual value; their arrangement and condition; and their relationship to other records.

Archives

The term *archives* is sometimes used to refer to a *collection* of materials (such as the written records of an organization) but it is most often used to describe the *repository* that houses such collections.

Accession

The term *accession* is used in two ways, as a verb and also a noun. As a verb *accession* refers to the formal acceptance into custody of an acquired collection, both physically and intellectually, and the recording of such act. As a noun *accession* refers to an acquisition so recorded.

Collection policy

A collection policy is an official statement issued by an archives repository which identifies the kinds of materials it accepts and the conditions or terms which affect their acquisition. It serves as a basic document for the guidance of archival staff and organizations and persons interested in depositing their records or papers.

Collections

The term *collection* is used very broadly. *Collections* include individual manuscripts, archival or manuscript collections, public records series, or other groups of historical documents found in repositories in any format. In addition, for this document, the term Collection(s) may mean the compilation of artifacts, items or property which Des Moines Historical Society owns, controls, or is in care of.

Deaccession

Deaccession refers to the process by which an archives repository formally removes material from its custody. An archival institution may deaccession material because the material has been reappraised and found to be unsuitable for its holdings, the legal owner has requested permanent return of the materials, or the institution has agreed to transfer the materials to another repository.

Deed of Gift

A *Deed of Gift* is a signed, written document containing the voluntary transfer of title to real or personal property without monetary consideration. Deeds of gift frequently take the format of a contract establishing conditions governing the transfer of title to documents and specifying any restrictions on access or use. A deed of gift is also known as an instrument of gift.

Donor

A *donor* is person or organization that has given documents to an archive.

Reappraisal

Reappraisal is the process of reevaluating the holdings of an archive to determine which holdings should be retained and which should be deaccessioned. Reappraisal should be based on how the collection fits into the collecting policy and DMHS mission.

Record / Historical Record

A *record* can be any type of recorded information in any format. A record can be created or received by an individual or a group. Many types of historical records are created in our society: genealogical or family history records, business records, and government records. Records also come in a variety of formats including documents, photographs, films, audio tapes, and maps. Some examples of documents are letters, diaries, manuscripts, and meeting minutes.

Note: *Given the above definition, just about any item can be labeled an historical record. In real life, however, the term is most often used in a narrow sense to describe original, unpublished items with historical value. A Civil War diary is an historical record. Last week's bestseller is not. The minutes of the first meeting of the City Council is an historical record. The note the City Council sent utility customers with their water bill is not.*

Appendix B

Des Moines Historical Society

Emphasis Areas for Historically Significant Collections

Architecture

Specific areas of interest include: residential and commercial growth of Des Moines; architectural style; demographic changes; trends in residential and commercial design; preservation; reminiscences, diaries, photographs and oral histories. In particular, DMHS needs objects that demonstrate the significance of architecture in everyday life. Commercial signs, cemetery-related items and bridges and other architectural structures would qualify under this category as well.

Business and Industry

Business and Industry is an extremely broad area. Collections should be developed that document overall change and reflect workers, their working environments and management.

Domestic Life

The Des Moines Historical Society will seek out manuscript collections of ordinary individuals; correspondence collections, for instance, often give detailed information about daily life. Likewise, DMHS will also seek to acquire large groupings of objects from one household that are interrelated and thus create their own context.

Fort Des Moines II and Fort Des Moines III

Specific areas of interest include: Any artifact confirmed by authority to be associated with Fort Des Moines II and Fort Des Moines III, photographs, drawings, maps and other ephemera created during the time period the Forts were active.

Military Affairs

National media will continue to document wars overseas; to avoid overlap and to control growth, DMHS collections should focus on defining the Des Moines experience in wars, especially on the home front. And to complement official records held elsewhere, DMHS should seek the typical soldier's personal and everyday materials (such as photographs; letters and diaries; field uniforms, gear, and typical weapons).

Active collecting and oral history interviews should be launched as soon as possible as potential interviewees of that generation continue to age and die.

Religion

Des Moines has a rich heritage of religion. It is home to many different religious organizations, home or regional offices, and Churches, Synagogues, Mosques, and houses of worship. Additionally, the formation of many Des Moines schools, colleges and universities are founded in the various religious organizations.

Social Issues and Responses

Conducting oral histories with leaders of various movements is especially critical. Given their ephemeral nature, many materials are in danger of disappearing if a concentrated effort is not made to collect them on a current as well as a retrospective basis. DMHS should be alert to collecting possibilities

regarding timely issues such as (but not limited to) the following: Substance abuse, temperance and prohibition, anti-smoking campaigns, gambling, crime and punishment, poverty and homelessness, welfare and charities, civil rights, race relations, nativism, gay and lesbian rights, rights of persons with disabilities, abortion controversy, child abuse and domestic abuse, and aging/the elderly.

Transportation

Due to space limitations, DMHS will focus on collecting printed and photographic materials, records of smaller transportation companies, and smaller-sized artifacts (such as items associated with roadside diners, early service stations, tourist cabins, and motels and airline travel). Oral history interviews of transportation workers should also be undertaken to illuminate the human dimension of transportation issues.

Women

Women's roles and perspectives need to be identified and further documented. For example, what role have women played in Des Moines business and labor? As with all aspects and populations in Des Moines' past, DMHS will look for materials that document change in women's attitudes and actions (professional and personal); cross-generational ties; social changes that affect women's lives; and changes in how society perceives women. We need to collect personal accounts of Des Moines women that shed light on change and continuity in Iowa. We seek accounts of both prominent women and ordinary women, and manifestations of those lives (such as work clothes and objects used, and personal writings).

Appendix C

Des Moines Historical Society
DEED OF GIFT
(Collections & General Usage)

I own the material(s) described below and voluntarily donate them to the Des Moines Historical Society to become its permanent property and to be administered in accordance with established policies. The purpose and intent of this gift is to transfer and assign all rights, title and interest I possess to these materials to the Des Moines Historical Society, except as specified below. The property can be used, exhibited, loaned, used for research, retained or disposed of at the discretion of the Des Moines Historical Society.

Description of material(s):

Signature of Donor or Agent

DMHS Authorized Representative

Date

Date

Donor Name:

Donor Address:

Donor Phone:

Donor e-Mail:

**The Des Moines Historical Society
TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR DONATIONS**

1. All donations will be outright, unconditional, and irrevocable gifts to the Des Moines Historical Society (DMHS), and will become the complete and total property of DMHS at the time of the Donor's signature on the Deed of Gift.
2. Donations may be tax deductible. However, DMHS will provide no appraisal of the gift. It is the responsibility of the Donor to obtain this.
3. If the Deed of Gift has not been signed by the Donor after 90 days of notification of its acceptance for the DMHS collection, the artifacts listed on the Deed will become the property of DMHS, without any liability accruing to DMHS or its agents or employees.
4. Because interests and objectives change and subsequent acquisitions may be in better condition or more useful for DMHS purposes, no guarantee can be made that the artifacts on the face of this agreement will always remain under ownership of DMHS or in the collection designated herein. If removed from the DMHS collections at any point, these artifacts will not be returned to the original Donor, but will be handled according to the current Collecting Plan & Policy. DMHS is not required to notify the original Donor of an artifact's removal from the collections.
5. The goal of preserving our collections, limited gallery space, and the policy of changing exhibitions do not allow the Museum to permanently exhibit any artifact.
6. The Donor freely consents and grants the Des Moines Historical Society, its assignees, licensees, and successors, the right to record his/her name, contact information, and documentary information and images relating to donated artifacts. The Donor also consents and grants the aforementioned parties the right to use, adapt, publish, print, broadcast, transmit, and distribute worldwide, in whole or in part, in any and all languages, in any and all media and formats now known or hereinafter devised, and the right to sublicense the publication, exhibition, broadcast, transmission, distribution, and translation rights now and in the future, with the exception of private contact information.

The Donor's signature also constitutes free consent and permission to use his/her name and biography, and information and images relating to donated artifacts, including but not limited to, use on the DMHS Web site, exhibitions, promotional brochures, broadcasts, and transmissions. He/She expressly releases DMHS from any and all claims arising out of the use of his/her name and biography, and documentary information and images relating to donated artifacts including but not limited to claims of invasion of privacy, defamation, and infringement of the right of publicity.