

Brockville Museum Collection Policy & Procedures

Objective

The Brockville Museum is committed to preserving and promoting the history of Brockville through exhibitions and public programming; these activities are based on a growing collection of relevant, well-documented, and accessible artifacts and archival material.

The artifacts in the Brockville Museum collection are the irreplaceable tangible representation of this community's heritage. To retain their information and historical value they are acquired, documented, conserved, exhibited, used, and handled according to the policies and procedures outlined in this document.

Governance

The primary responsibility for the acquisition of artifacts rests with the Curator/Director (or designate) with the assistance of the Collections Committee. When necessary the Curator/Director may consult experts regarding specific acquisitions.

The authority to acquire, accept or reject artifacts rests with the Collections Committee established by the Board of Management of the Brockville Museum, (herein after called the Board). The Collections Committee is a sub-committee of the Board and is accountable to it.

Table 1. Policies guiding the make-up of the Collection Committee

- The Collection Committee is composed of a minimum of four and maximum of six volunteers appointed by the Board in addition to a representative from the Board and a museum staff member (the Curator/Director or designate). Collection Committee membership is reviewed annually by the Board of Management (in January). Board and staff members may participate in meeting discussions but will not vote.
- In order to constructively contribute to discussions, committee members should bring either: 1. a knowledge of Brockville history; OR 2. a familiarity with the museum's collection; OR 3. experience working in museum collection development.
- Prior to serving as a volunteer committee member, committee members are required to register as a Brockville Museum volunteer, including completing all necessary paperwork, signing the museum's "Confidentiality Form", and obtaining a satisfactory Criminal Record Check.
- A committee member is required to abstain from any discussion and/or vote related to artifact(s) that he/she has offered or previously donated to the Brockville Museum.

Members of the Collection Committee, of the Board, and the Staff, will in no case advise, counsel, or offer opinions to individuals, or groups, regarding purchases or other acquisitions of artifacts, nor will they assist or actively participate in the development of personal (or otherwise) collections of materials comparable to those being acquired by the Brockville Museum.

The Brockville Museum does not undertake paid or unpaid third-party appraisals. Museum staff will not recommend to the public a specific dealer, appraiser, or auctioneer, but may provide a list of such people with the understanding that this does not constitute an endorsement.

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The Board, museum staff, and Collection Committee members will adhere to municipal, provincial, federal and international legislation that impacts collecting and collections management, particularly those pertaining to: firearms, hazardous materials, copyright, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Cultural Property Export and Import Act, and Income Tax Act.

Acquisition

Conditions of Acquisitions

The Brockville Museum will consider the acquisition of artifacts based on the following conditions:

- The artifacts must be consistent with, and relevant to, the Brockville Museum's Mission and Statement of Purpose; and will preferably reflect the museum's collecting priorities.
- The artifacts must be accompanied by a good record of provenance and a relevant history.
- Donations are accepted only as unconditional gifts, free and clear of any conditions and/or restrictions.
- The Brockville Museum must be able to provide proper care and storage for the artifacts. No artifact should be considered for acquisition if its physical condition exceeds the museum's financial, human, or physical ability for its proper care and preservation.
- The artifacts must be accompanied by warranties of good legal title.
- All donations to the museum's collections are irrevocable upon the formal transfer of title to the Brockville Museum.
- The Brockville Museum is satisfied that any artifact to be acquired, whether by donation, exchange, or purchase, is not stolen or otherwise illegally acquired or collected.

Methods of Acquisition

Artifacts that meet the above outlined conditions may be acquired through gift or bequest, purchase, exchange, transfer, and/or in rare cases through archaeological field work; some are also acquired in-house, and found in the collection.

- Gift or Bequest: A gift or bequest may be accepted from any source, including a staff member.
- Purchase: If deemed necessary and when funds are available, artifacts may be purchased as a last resort with approval by the Curator/Director in consultation with the Board.
 - Purchases from a member of the Board, volunteer, member of the Friends of the Brockville Museum, or City of Brockville employee (including elected officials), their family members or friends, or an organization in which the individual has an interest, requires the approval of the Board (passed by motion and recorded in the official meeting minutes).
- Exchange: The exchange of artifacts between institutions is an established and useful means of developing and improving a collection. Exchanges may be arranged by the Curator/Director.
 - Exchanges may be made provided that:
 - both parties are in full agreement with the terms and conditions

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- both the acquisition and the disposal of artifacts are documented for the permanent records
- the removal of the artifact would not impair the collection in any functional way
- the removal will be approved through the deaccessioning process
- Transfer: The Brockville Museum may acquire artifacts from other museums, galleries and public institutions. The transfer must be supported by documentation.
- Archaeological Field Work: Artifacts may be collected by museum staff, or by others acting on behalf of the museum, directly from their context in the field.
- In-house: Artifacts created or used within the Brockville Museum may be subsequently accessioned into the collection.
- Found in the Collection: Unaccessioned artifacts that have been treated as artifacts over time but for which acquisition documentation cannot be found are designated 'found in the collection.' These artifacts will be accessioned if approved through the acquisition process.

Collecting Priorities

The Brockville Museum is committed to a planned, systematic approach to collecting that is based on an active search for appropriate material, and which results in a well-researched and documented collection that accurately and fully reflects the museum's mandate and statement of purpose and which adheres to the conditions and methods outlined previously in this document.

To this end, the collecting activities of the Brockville Museum will focus on improving the existing collections by selective additions according to the following collecting priorities (which are reviewed annually by the Board in January) and subject to the conditions of acquisitions detailed in this policy :

1. Those items that tell a uniquely Brockville story
 - For example, items that represent something that either happened or was made nowhere else and which sets Brockville apart from other communities
2. Those items that tell the Brockville-related story of under-represented groups (e.g LGBTQ2+, minorities, immigrants, etc.)
3. Those items that represent the manufacturing, industrial, and/or commercial history of Brockville when no other examples exist in the collection
 - Especially for the period of 1970-present
4. Those items deemed useful for telling a specific story in an immediate exhibit
5. Those items that tell a significant Brockville story not otherwise told by existing artifacts
6. Those items that represent Brockville's changing landscape(s)
 - For example, photographs and/or postcards of identifiable street, park, and waterfront scenes
7. Those items which represent the lived experience of Brockville residents in a unique way
 - For example, items relating to Brockville clubs and organizations

The museum may acquire items not reflected by these priorities when offered by means of donation so long as they meet the acquisition guidelines set out in this document.

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Documentation

The Brockville Museum will accurately and thoroughly document every new artifact as it enters its permanent collection in order to realize its value and significance, and to fulfill the museum's stewardship role. This includes the artifact's provenance, history, condition and size, as well as documentation relating to its transfer of ownership. This information is recorded on an electronic database (MINISIS MINT).

Table II. Acquisition Procedure

1. When a donor brings an item into the museum, or otherwise contacts the museum about a potential donation, they will complete a "Temporary Receipt Form". This form includes information on the artifact's provenance and history as well as the donor's information.
2. Prior to the scheduled Collection Committee meeting the Administrative Assistant/Registrar (or designate) reviews the provenance and history provided by the donor, carries out additional research on the item, examines the item's condition, and reviews the museum's current collection for duplication in order to make a recommendation to the committee.
3. A Collection Committee Meeting is called (usually bi-monthly). The Administrative Assistant/Registrar leads the discussion and chairs the Collection Committee Meeting. Each item on offer is reviewed and the Administrative Assistant/Registrar shares the available information, with committee members sharing any additional information or knowledge they may have. A discussion around the above mentioned conditions and priorities is undertaken followed by a recommendation and a vote. The Collection Committee Secretary records the committee's decision.
4. Following the meeting the Administrative Assistant/Registrar contacts donors and relays the committee's decision.
 - If an artifact is being accepted into the collection the donor is sent a "Gift Form" which, once signed by the donor, transfers legal ownership of the artifact to the Brockville Museum.
 - If an artifact is declined, the donor is notified and given 30 days to retrieve the artifact. If the owner does not retrieve the artifact within 30 days, the artifact will be disposed of at the discretion of the Curator/Director.
5. Once a signed "Gift Form" is returned, the Administrative Assistant/Registrar will catalogue the artifact, including assigning the artifact an accession number, taking measurements, recording condition, taking digital photographs and transferring this information along with provenance and history onto the museum's web-based catalogue database (MINISIS MINT).
 - At this stage, a physical description of the artifact is composed in sufficient detail to enable the detection of any deterioration and to identify the artifact in the event the accession number is lost. Any change in condition or treatment to an artifact will also be documented over time.
 - Temporary or permanent change in the status of an artifact, such as an outgoing loan, deaccessioning, or transfer, will be similarly recorded.

Objects acquired for strictly auxiliary uses (programming, costume, etc.) are exempt from this process and this policy.

All new acquisitions are assigned a standard accession number that follows the "year.donor.item" sequence when catalogued.

Standard nomenclature is used to classify all new acquisitions.

The Brockville Museum observes a number of back-up procedures to ensure the safe-keeping of catalogue documentation:

- Legal documents dealing with acquisitions (Gift Form) are kept in hard-copy form, with a duplicate set stored at an off-site location.

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- Digital photographs of artifacts are stored on the City of Brockville's network, and are securely backed-up regularly.
- The Brockville Museum's web-based catalogue database (MINISIS MINT) is stored on a remote server and is backed-up regularly by the service provider.

Appraisals and Receipts for Income Tax Purposes

Given the human and financial resources involved, the Brockville Museum does not provide an appraisal for every artifact in its collection, however, if requested by the donor, charitable tax receipts for income tax purposes may be issued by the City of Brockville subject to the following conditions and procedures:

- The receipt will reflect fair market value at the time of acquisition, determined by appraisal.
- A tax receipt will not be issued before a Gift Form is signed and returned.
- An appraisal for a gift with a fair market value of \$2,000 or less can be provided by the Curator/Director. When the value exceeds that amount (up to \$10,000), or the Curator/Director feels unqualified to appraise a particular gift below that amount, the services of a qualified appraiser will be sought, appraisal fee to be paid by the donor.
- For a gift with a fair market value exceeding \$10,000 two professional appraisals will be required with the costs being divided in half between the donor and the museum.
- All available appraisal documentation shall be forwarded to the City Treasurer with a request for a receipt for income tax purposes to be sent to the donor.

Deaccessioning

The Brockville Museum acquires artifacts with the intention of permanence and with a strong presumption against the removal of accessioned artifacts from the collection. However, the Brockville Museum recognizes that there are circumstances when deaccessioning can refine the quality and improve the relevance of a museum's collection.

Deaccessioning must be undertaken in accordance with the highest professional standards and ethics, and must not be influenced by arbitrary taste or individual preference. Reasons must be ethical, defensible, and objective and a concerted and documented effort must be made to keep deaccessioned artifacts in the public domain.

Criteria for Deaccessioning

The Brockville Museum reserves the right to deaccession any artifact under any of the following criteria:

- An artifact does not fall within the Brockville Museum's mandate or collection development objectives; and/or a more appropriate location at another public museum has been identified that would better serve the artifact and the public.
- An artifact has failed to retain its physical integrity or authenticity and cannot be properly preserved, stored, and used.
- An artifact constitutes a physical hazard or health risk to staff or the public, or to the collection at large.
- An artifact is a duplicate having no definable purpose.

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- An artifact (and/or the story it tells) is over-represented in the collection.
- An artifact has been misidentified, or is found to be a fake, forgery, or copy (including photocopy or facsimile) with no definable purpose.
- An artifact is deemed to have been acquired illegally or unethically.

The deaccessioned artifacts will be thoroughly documented along with the reasons for their deaccession and the processes involved. These records are retained by the Brockville Museum.

The Brockville Museum will not deaccession an artifact at the request of the donor.

Table III. Process for Deaccessioning

- Recommendations to deaccession artifacts are initiated by the Registrar and discussed with the Curator/Director.
- With the agreement of the Curator/Director, a recommendation to deaccession is made to the Collection Committee.
- The Collection Committee may agree or disagree with the recommendation to deaccession. If agreed, the Registrar will begin the deaccessioning process.
- Deaccessioned artifacts that are not transferred to another public institution or destroyed are held for a minimum of a six month waiting period in a storage location before being sold as per the disposal process detailed in this document.

Disposal Methods for Deaccessioned Artifacts

A demonstrated effort must be made to keep a deaccessioned artifact in the public domain by offering it to other museums or public institutions (as a gift or for exchange or sale) before sale to others.

Disposal of deaccessioned artifacts will be made by one of the following means (listed in order of preference):

- Transfer to the education or costume collection.
- Donation or transfer to another museum or charitable institution.
- Sale to another museum or charitable institution.
- Sale at public auction outside the Brockville Museum's immediate location without listing of the Brockville Museum's name or accession number.
 - Funds raised from a sale will be used solely for the enhancement of the collection, either through improved care or for the purchase of new acquisitions.

A member of the Board, staff, or volunteer of the Brockville Museum, their family members or business associates, and organizations associated with financial or in-kind support (including the City of Brockville and members of the Friends of the Brockville Museum) may not acquire, through any means, any artifact deaccessioned by the Brockville Museum.

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A deaccessioned artifact may be destroyed if it is not salvageable or no longer of interest to any party. The Curator/Director has the authority to waive the waiting period and have a deaccessioned artifact destroyed based on the following criteria:

- if the artifact is hazardous or poses a danger to staff, public, or the collection
- the artifact has deteriorated or is damaged to a point where it does not serve a definable purpose
- all reasonable efforts have been made to dispose of the artifact through other methods

Two witnesses must be present to observe the destruction.

Returns

The Brockville Museum is under no obligation to notify the donor that an artifact has been deaccessioned.

Artifacts will not be returned to donors.

An artifact may be returned to the rightful owner only when it is determined that the Brockville Museum does not have legitimate ownership, or as a result of a formal repatriation process.

Use

The Brockville Museum is committed to the long-term preservation of artifacts in the collection. However, a balance must be struck between the preservation of the collection and its use for research, exhibition, and educational purposes. The Brockville Museum acknowledges that access to and use of the collection, by staff and the public, increases risk to artifacts and requires appropriate controls.

Access to the collection is provided through exhibitions, programs, events, publications, collection records, research files, visual resources, and consultation with curatorial staff.

The Brockville Museum aims to provide access to the collection through the use of a web-based catalogue database that provides a user-friendly public interface that allows searching and browsing. The online database and digital access to the collection will be promoted through the museum's use of social media. This should be the primary means of personal public access to the collection not on exhibition.

Staff Access to the Collection

The level of staff and volunteer access to the collection is determined by the Curator/Director (or designate). Staff and volunteers who handle artifacts must be appropriately trained and supervised.

Public Use of the Collection

The Brockville Museum allows limited use of its collection by the public for commercial and non-commercial purposes. This may involve physical or intellectual access to the collection.

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Physical access to artifacts is provided through exhibitions, programs, events, and tours. Other requests for physical access will be considered individually (e.g. loans, individual requests, and fee-for-use situations).

Intellectual access to the collection through records, images, and other information may be requested for publication, research, web sites, electronic media, display, promotional materials, personal use, media, films, and advertising.

Access to and use of the collection is at the discretion of the Curator/Director, based on an assessment of the following factors:

- condition of the artifact
- risk to the artifact
- location
- security
- health and safety risks
- copyright
- intended use
- expertise of the enquirer
- human and financial resources available

Access and fee structure for use of the collection for commercial purposes are governed by specific policies and fee schedules.

In keeping with its educational mandate, the Brockville Museum supports use for non-commercial purposes with a discounted fee structure.

Any agreement involving the use of the collection must be documented in writing, signed by both parties, and approved by the Curator/Director (or designate). The Brockville Museum must be credited for any use of its collection.

Loans

The Brockville Museum may borrow artifacts from other museums, galleries, and private sources for the purposes of exhibition, research, public programming and/or education.

The Brockville Museum may also lend artifacts from its collections to responsible public institutions for the purposes of exhibition, research, public programming and/or education.

Loans are subject to the conditions outlined in “Public Use of the Collection” above and will:

- Include a formal written agreement between the lender and the borrower, which ensures appropriate coverage of all insurance obligations. The borrower will comply with all restrictions and conditions imposed on borrowed artifacts.
 - Loan agreements will specify the purpose and time period of the loan
 - Loan agreements will address copyright and reproduction rights

The Brockville Museum does not provide loans to private organizations or individuals.

The Curator/Director shall have the authority to authorize both incoming and outgoing loans.