Carlton County Historical Society

Collection Management Policy

Drafted December 1984; revised March 1986; revised February 2023; Revised April 2026.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this statement is to define policies and procedures for the accessioning, care, and de-accession of items in the collection of the CCHS.

Objectives of the Carlton County Historical Society

The objectives of the Carlton County Historical Society were defined in the constitution of the Society adopted in 1949 upon its formation. These were reaffirmed in the article of incorporation approved by the Secretary of State in Minnesota in 1965 and the bylaws adopted in December 1984.

The objectives of the Society include a) the discovery and collection of material illustrating the history of the county; b) the provision for the preservation of such material; c) the dissemination of historical information.

Statement of Purpose and Mission

The Carlton County Historical Society (CCHS) collects, preserves, and disseminates the history of Carlton County Minnesota from the arrival of the first Native Americans in this region to the present day, with emphases on Ojibwe culture, the logging of the forests that covered our region, the rise and fall of railroads in our region, the Great Fires of 1918, and of the development of agriculture. CCHS disseminates the history of Carlton County through exhibits, educational programs, publications, research, and participation in community events such as the County Fair.

CCHS collects and preserves only artifacts created or used by residents or organizations in Carlton County. We collect historical records, books, oral histories, maps, and publications related to Carlton County to the extent that we can preserve them under standards set forth as best practices by museum experts.

Scope of Collection

The collection of the Carlton County Historical Society should document the lives and culture of all people who have inhabited the land included in the county. Sioux Nation and Anishinaabe culture and traditions, the fur trade, the Fond du Lac reservation, the logging and wood products industries, agricultural dairy production, and the ethnic identities of European emigrants are significant aspects of Carlton County history.

The artifacts, documents, and photographs associated with businesses, cooperatives, churches, schools, and community organizations are important to the collection because they provide evidence of daily life in Carlton County.

Definitions

For the purpose of this document, the terms used here have the following meanings:

Accession – the acquisition of items by the CCHS through gifts, purchases, or other methods of transfer of title.

Deaccession – any method by which title to any item in the Society's collections is transferred to another individual or organization.

Historical Significance – "A historically significant object which contributes to a clearer understanding and interpretation of some former custom, activity, episode or personality. The extent of this contribution depends upon 1) its documented individual history; 2) its physical character and contribution; 3) the nature of the historic period or episode with which it is associated."[1]

Local history – "belonging to a town or some comparatively small district as distinct from the state . . . as a whole."[2]

Accession

When donations are accessioned, they become the legal property of CCHS. Accessioned items become part of the museum's collection and are managed according to the Collection Management Policy.

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[1]Guthe, Carl E. The Management of Small History Museums, p. 27

[2]Olson, James. The Role of Local History, p. 2

Collecting Guidelines

The artifacts in the collection of the Carlton County Historical Society are primarily historical in nature or are likely to become historically significant in the future. The following points will be followed in continuing to add to these collections.

Relevance to Carlton County

The item(s) was actively used, displayed, or worn by individuals, businesses, or organizations in Carlton County, and should clearly represent the way of life in the county.

Documentation and Provenance

Items should have documentation that shows relevance to Carlton County

- Documentation for objects should include
    a. Circumstances surrounding its early discovery or acquisition (i.e: where, when, and by whom);
    b. Original owner and manufacturer;
    c. Object's original use;
    d. Chronological history of the object; and
    e. Other pertinent facts.
- The documentation for photographs should include
    a. Date of the item;
    b. Subject or location;
    c. Author or photographer;
    d. Circumstances surrounding its early discovery or acquisition;
    e. Original owner; and
    f. Chronological history.

<u>Scrapbook Acceptance</u>

We will accept scrapbooks if these conditions are met:

- They are in excellent condition;
- They are organized around a theme;
- People, events, and locations are to be identified and linked to Carlton County; and
- They include items that are unique and difficult to find from other sources.

Scrapbooks that partially meet these conditions may be disassembled, with photos removed and stored in the photo files. News clippings may be photocopied and stored in the subject or biographic files. Other documents and ephemera may be removed and stored in subject files. Scrapbooks having primarily news clippings of weddings and obituaries will not be accepted as this information can be found in other sources, such as our Obituary Index and Ancestry.com.

<u>Photographs</u>

Photos of known individuals, locations, or events in Carlton County are preferred. Photographers' formal photographs of unidentified individuals or places may be accepted into the Education Collection, where they can be used to illustrate hair and clothing styles of the time.

CCHS will generally not accept photos of high school seniors, as these can be easily found in high school yearbooks. We do not have the space to accept large, framed photographs from weddings, engagements, or graduation. Photographs will be removed from frames unless the frame is a significant part of the history or aesthetics of an image.

Photo albums will be accepted if photos are organized and labeled, and the albums are in good condition. The pages of "magnetic" photo albums of the 1970s and 1980s will be photocopied, and the copies kept unless the photos can be removed without damage.

Informal, loose snapshot prints should be labeled and depict events of everyday life in Carlton County. We will keep only the best or most unique snapshots.

Yearbooks

We will accept school yearbooks from schools in Carlton County. We will add to our collection if we don't own that year. If we already have one from the same year, we will compare the condition and keep the best copy. If we deaccession a duplicate copy, we may advertise it on online media or donate it to a charity or other institution that would use it.

Time period

Historical: the historical limits cover primitive times to the present. The collecting of contemporary material should not be overlooked.

Geography and Location

Geographical: the primary area of concern will be Carlton County and its immediate area.

Condition

- Items must be in good and stable condition and have value in display, research, and/or interpretive activities. However, the display of particular objects is not guaranteed.

Uniqueness and Quality

- Items must be historically significant and have significance to local history. CCHS will not collect curiosities or relics.
- The artifact is not already overrepresented in the collection.
- Items of exceptional quality but having poor provenance will be accessioned into the Display Collection.
- The museum will not collect duplicate artifacts unless they serve a useful purpose, such as exhibit items, traveling educational kits, and the like.
- The museum will collect duplicates of photographs and written material (published and unpublished) as deemed necessary.

The acceptability of objects for the Society's collections will be determined by the Director with the help of the Collection Committee, as needed.

Other Conditions

- The artifact must be acquired without restriction. The decision to accept an item for accession is made by the Director, with input from the Collections Committee.
- If an item is deemed to have a value of $500 or more, the Board of Directors must approve the accession to ensure CCHS is willing to take responsibility for the safety and security of the item.

Transferral of Ownership

Acquisition of items to the Society's collections may be made through purchase or gift. Donations will constitute a complete transfer of ownership, without restrictions, from previous owners to the Society. No donations with restrictions will be accepted.

No items will be accepted on loan unless specifically for a single current exhibit.

The Society will follow a general policy of not purchasing items, with the purchase of published histories to be the exception to this statement. Consideration of any other purchases should follow the following guidelines:

1. The items should be of historical significance and should fall within the Collecting Guidelines defined above.
2. Funds must be available for the purchase
3. The Carlton County Historical Society Collections Committee and the Director must approve the purchase.

Refusal of items

It may be necessary for the Carlton County Historical Society Director and Collections Committee to determine the basis for the refusal of specific items.

Deaccession

Deaccession is the removal of accessioned items from the collection and occurs only after careful consideration of the Collections Committee, Executive Director and, if necessary, the Executive Board. Items are deaccessioned if they no longer fulfill the mission of CCHS or if the costs of caring for the item exceed the benefit of retaining the item.

Items in the collection may be deaccessioned if one or more of the following criteria apply:

- The item is found to have no clear connection to Carlton County;
- The history and provenance of the item are unknown;
- The item has deteriorated and is no longer usable for display, education, or research purposes;
- The item had been found to be a safety threat to visitors or staff;

- The item is overrepresented in the collection and using space that would be better used for unique artifacts; or
- The Collection Committee identifies artifacts that meet a criterion for deaccession and writes a statement explaining the reason and how the deaccession of the object supports the museum's goals. The decision to deaccession will be made by the Collection Committee.
- If an item is controversial in nature (including, but not limited to, safety, value, or uniqueness), the Collection Committee may feel the need to involve the Board of Directors.
- Any item deaccessioned needs to have a Deaccession Form filled out with pertinent approval and signatures.

Deaccessioned items may be:

- Transferred to another museum or similar agency for accession by them;
- Repatriated to the Fond du Lac Band, another native nation, or place of origin;
- Returned to the donor;
- Returned to the creator of the object;
- Destroyed if irreversibly deteriorated or damaged;
- Sold to a reputable dealer and the proceeds used to care for the museum collection; or
- Donated to a charitable organization, preferably not located in Carlton County.

Artifacts are never sold to provide funds for operational expenses. Proceeds may be used only to help care for the collection, such as to purchase storage furniture or boxes, buy preservation materials, or purchase equipment needed to maintain stable temperature and humidity conditions.

If items are sold, the following restrictions are in place:

- Items may not be sold directly to members of the Board of Directors, museum staff, CCHS members, or volunteers;
- Items are not sold to Carlton County agencies; and
- An effort will be made to get a reasonable price, where appropriate, with an appraisal if needed.

Loans

We are currently not accepting loans from patrons at this time, but this policy may be revisited in the future.

Framing and Storage Guidelines

When donations of framed items are accepted, it may not be necessary to keep it in its frame. Whether or not to keep an item framed can depend on the nature of the work and priorities of the institution. Removing the frame when it is not inherent to the item can make it easier to store and it take up less room.

There are many reasons to keep an item framed, especially if it is a piece of artwork. Frames can help preserve and shield artwork from damaging environmental factors and protect the artwork, especially the edges and back of the item. Frames can also enhance the visual appeal of the piece and maintain its monetary value over time. Paper paintings and prints generally need a frame for hanging and preservation.

The decision to keep the frame with the item can be a very easy decision in many cases, but in some cases, we may want to remove the frame if it isn't necessary to hang/store the item on the wall. The framed item may be a painting, photo, certificate, document, etc.

When tasked with making that decision, here are some guidelines to keep in mind:
– Does the frame complement the item? Typically, if the item is a framed piece of art or a high-quality print, the frame should remain on the item. A modern frame on an antique document or certificate may not complement the item and it may make sense to remove the item from the frame and file it in a box. Period specific frames that are original to the document or certificate should probably remain intact.
– Is the framed item to be used in an exhibit? If so, the frame would be useful in displaying it.
– Is the frame pedestrian? In other words, does the frame add nothing to the piece? If so, it probably could be removed.
– If it's a photo, what is the subject matter? It might make sense to remove the frame from mundane subject matter, such as an insignificant person, a group of (work) people, or a place of employment, for instance.
– Is the frame inherent to the item's purpose? If not, it might be better to remove the frame.

These suggestions are meant to guide the thoughtful reconsideration of whether a frame is needed or not. If you are still having difficulty deciding what to do, perhaps check with another colleague or bring it to the attention of the Collections Committee.

Any frames that are removed will be done carefully so that they can be reused/repurposed.

Adopted 3/18/2025

Photography Guidelines

Museum Visits and Event Photography

As a patron of the Museum, unless a display is marked off-limits to photography, you may use your camera in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Photography with existing light is permitted for personal, noncommercial use only.
- Photographs may not be used commercially without permission and attribution.
- Photography must not disrupt other visitors or block walkways, doors, exits or entrances.

If you share your photograph(s), please tag “Carlton County Historical Society.” The recognition is appreciated!

Photocopying is also available for a nominal fee.

Museum staff and volunteers may take photographs at various events hosted by Carlton County Historical Society. Please be aware that such photos may be used in our print and online promotional materials.

Added 1/21/2026