

CCHS Deaccession Policy

Statement of Purpose

Just as selectively acquiring new materials is essential to build and strengthen the CCHS collections, it is also important to periodically reevaluate the existing holdings and to remove materials from the permanent collections through the deaccessioning process. Items accessioned into the CCHS permanent collections may not be considered for deaccessioning within three years of their acquisition.

Definition

Deaccessioning is the process of removing accessioned material from the permanent collections of the CCHS. The deaccession process must be cautious, deliberate and ethical.

Deaccession Criteria

In all instances of potential deaccessioning, the historical significance of an object shall be considered of primary importance and will override any of the other criteria. Material from the CCHS collections to be considered for deaccessioning must meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. The material is outside the scope of, or is irrelevant to the mission of the Cass County Historical Society and its acquisition policies.
2. The material lacks physical integrity (it is incomplete, broken, or in poor and unsalvageable condition) or it has deteriorated to the degree that it cannot be used for exhibit or research purposes.
3. The historical evidence that led the CCHS to accept an object has been proven false.
4. The material has been unaccounted for or stolen and remains lost for at least five years.
5. The material is duplicate in that the CCHS collections contain other examples of the same type of material that are sufficient or better-suited to the needs of the Society.
6. The Cass County Historical Society is unable to preserve the material properly.
7. The material constitutes a physical hazard or health risk to staff, the public, or other collections.
8. There exists a more appropriate repository for the material.
9. It is discovered that the material has an unethical or illegal provenance.
10. The material must be removed from the collection to comply with national and/or state legislation.
11. The material will be destroyed for the purpose of scientific study.

Application of Criteria and Procedure

The Curator(s) may recommend deaccessioning of material from the CCHS collection if, in their judgment, one or more of the deaccessioning criteria have been met. Deaccessioning recommendations must be reviewed and approved by the collections committee, the executive director, and the CCHS Board of Directors before any actions are taken.

Restrictions

1. Before any material from the Society's collections are recommended for deaccessioning, reasonable efforts shall be made to determine whether the Cass County Historical Society has the legal authority to do so.
2. No item(s) will be deaccessioned or recommended for deaccessioning because of, or with any consideration given to, monetary value(s). Appraisals of collections items may not be done before or during the deaccession process. Appraisals may be done, however, before CCHS disposes of items the organization already formally deaccessioned.

Disposition

Material or objects approved for deaccessioning from the Society's collections will be handled or disposed of in one of the following methods:

1. Transferred to another museum, library, archives or public educational institution, with preference to area and/or state institutions.
2. Exchanged with individuals, organizations, institutions or other sources for objects appropriate to the CCHS collections.
3. Donated to a charitable institution (e.g., a thrift store or local theater company) if its intrinsic or monetary value is so low as to make burdensome the effort of finding an institutional home for it or offering it for sale.
4. Sold at public auction or sale. (Archeological materials will not be sold)
5. Destroyed.

Conflict of Interest

Items from the Cass County Historical Society collections shall not be given, sold, or otherwise transferred, publicly or privately, to employees past or present or their immediate families or representatives. Items from the Cass County Historical Society collections shall not be given, sold, or otherwise transferred, publicly or privately, to sitting or former member of the CCHS Board of Trustees or their immediate families or representatives under any terms different from those extended to the general public.

Proceeds

When it is determined that deaccessioned material from the CCHS collections will be sold, it will be done so publicly. The CCHS may contract with a qualified appraiser to assure the best price. All proceeds resulting from the sale of deaccessioned material from the collections of the Cass County Historical Society shall be deposited to a reserved account of the Cass County Historical Society to be used solely for the acquisition, conservation, or preservation of the Society's collections.

Documentation of Deaccessioning

A record of all materials which have been deaccessioned from the collections shall be kept current and may be distributed in response to any responsible inquiry.

Culling Materials from Archival Collections

In some cases, individual archival collections may be culled of superfluous materials contained therein as part of the practice of archival processing. While the disposition of such culled materials are not subject to the same formal process of deaccessioning as other collection items, the same deaccessioning criteria and methods of disposition are employed.