

Cass County, North Dakota, Historical Society, Inc. Collection Policy

1. Statement of Purpose and Collecting Objectives:

Cass County, North Dakota, Historical Society, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization located at 1351 West Main Ave, West Fargo, North Dakota 58078. The organization includes a Pioneer Village known as **Bonanzaville USA** and a permanent collection of artifacts. Cass County, North Dakota, Historical Society Inc. [hereafter “BONANZAVILLE, USA”] acquires, preserves, and manages these collections to educate the public about the history of Cass County, the Red River Valley, and North Dakota. The collection has two parts: a permanent artifact collection and an education collection.

Our mission....

Bonanzaville, USA, where we are dedicated to the Education, Enlightenment and Enrichment of the lives of our guests through the use of History; by preserving, sharing and connecting the past with the present.

a. Vision:

A place of interactive unique experiences that inspires people of all ages to learn about early pioneers, their descendants and their impact; a place called **Bonanzaville, USA**.

b. History of Collection:

BONANZAVILLE, USA exists thanks to the women of the Daughters of Dakota Pioneers, which was organized and presided over by Alice Minard. The Fargo chapter was formed in 1934 and one of their first tasks was to create a museum in Fargo. The Daughters of Dakota Pioneers wanted to expand the museum to include the rest of the county outside of Fargo. BONANZAVILLE, USA was formed by them as a non-profit organization in 1954. A few years after the formation of the historical society, the Red River Valley Fair moved from its location north of Fargo to West Fargo. Royal Berstler, the executive secretary for the fair, suggested a pioneer village also be created at the site as a year round attraction. They gifted the historical society land upon which they could build a museum and pioneer village.

c. Collecting Goals and Objectives:

The BONANZAVILLE, USA seeks to maintain, research, and continually develop collections of the highest aesthetic, cultural, and historical significance. In particular, the museum focuses its collecting activities on:

- A **Permanent Collection** of historical objects pertaining to the history of Cass County, the Red River Valley, and North Dakota for the purpose of exhibitions and research. This includes objects, archives (photographs, manuscript collections, and related ephemera), a non-circulating library collection, and art. CCHS-Bonanzaville, USA follows legal and ethical protocols when collecting. Objects in the Permanent Collection may only be removed through the deaccession process outlined in this policy.
- A hands-on **Education Collection** that is separate from the Permanent Collection. The Education Collection will not be accessioned as part of the Permanent Collection, and items may be removed by staff when no longer needed, after first notifying the Executive Director. Items not familiar to staff will be reviewed by other authorities familiar with those types of artifacts before being discarded.
- The care and preservation of several buildings including the main museum building and the Pioneer village.

d. Scope of Collections:

The three primary collections areas of interest to the museum can be broken into the following broad categories:

- History of Cass County, Red River Valley, and North Dakota
- Native American history and culture of the region
- The contemporary era of the region dating from first European contact to today.

The museum will only take items for which a clear title and *provenance* (a clear history of ownership) can be established. BONANZAVILLE, USA has the right of refusal of parts or all of a potential acquisition. All gifts and donations to the museum should be free of any restrictions. To accept gifts or donations with restrictions imposes obligations and encumbrances that conflict with the nature of holding material in trust on the public's behalf. The mission of BONANZAVILLE, USA allows for flexibility in accepting material from a broad timeline, but largely restricts it specifically to the boundaries of Cass County and adjoining counties of the Red River Valley. Potential collections to be acquired could include the history and natural history of Cass County and the Red River Valley; the history of early peoples in the region; and the history of the modern era dating from first European contact to today and into the future. Due to the wide chronological scope supported by the mission, great care will need to be given to the logistics of caring for all of the collections and focusing specifically on the geographic boundaries of the county.

2. Statement of Authority (Governance):

BONANZAVILLE, USA's intent is that the collections are carefully preserved, protected, and cared for; and properly and effectively used for educational purposes. This collection management policy, as adopted by Cass County, North Dakota, Historical Society, Inc. Board of Directors [hereafter "Board"] establishes general policies governing the acquisition, ownership, and use of collections. The Board will ensure that both acquisition and disposal of collections are carried out openly and with transparency, and that the collections will not be capitalized or otherwise encumbered. The Board will review this collections policy at least once every five years.

The Board has a fiduciary responsibility for the protection of assets belonging to the museum, including the buildings, the Permanent Collection, and the Education Collection. The collections are held and maintained for the purposes of public exhibition, education, and research in furtherance of public service, rather than individual or collective financial gain. BONANZAVILLE, USA does not treat its collections as assets for the purposes of reporting on its financial statements. The Board recognizes the long-term obligation and responsibility of caring for the collections, and by definition of its 501(c)3 status, holds these collections in trust for the benefit of the public.

The Board delegates authority for the implementation of this policy to the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall, in turn, delegate various authorities and responsibilities to senior leadership as available and appropriate. This includes developing and maintaining various procedural manuals as needed to meet the standards and best practices generally accepted by the museum community at large.

3. Code of Ethics

This code of ethics pertains to all staff, board members, volunteers, and any other official representatives of BONANZAVILLE, USA. Individuals having an affiliation with BONANZAVILLE, USA are expected to be familiar with, and abide by, the code of ethics adopted by the Board.

a. Responsibility to the Collection:

The Permanent Collection is a fundamental element of BONANZAVILLE, USA's programs and functions. The possession of these materials incurs legal, social, and ethical obligations to provide storage, management, and care for the collections and associated documentation. For these reasons, BONANZAVILLE, USA is responsible for assuring that the collections are aligned with the mission; that its growth is balanced with available resources; and that the appropriate allocation is made of personnel, facilities, equipment, services, and support to address the on-going needs of the collections.

b. Discretion and Confidentiality:

Individuals associated with BONANZAVILLE, USA have unique responsibilities related to maintain the organization's image, trust, and credibility to the public. For this reason,

affiliated individuals must properly represent BONANZAVILLE, USA and their position when interacting with others; exercise professional discretion about activities and concerns of BONANZAVILLE, USA; and hold in confidence relevant information concerning matters such as the collections, financial information, personnel, and security per state statutes.

c. Conflict of Interest:

Individuals having an affiliation with BONANZAVILLE, USA must avoid situations that may be construed as conflicts of interest. Concerns about potential conflicts of interest should be conveyed either to the Executive Director or the Board President. The purpose is to prevent the actual or perceived conflict between interested parties and the objectives of BONANZAVILLE, USA's collection; using museum affiliation, resources, or the influence of one's position for personal benefit, or solely to serve the interests of persons outside the museum; placing the museum in a situation that compromises its mission, policies, functions, practices, or philosophies; and placing the museum in a situation where it competes unduly with outside parties.

4. Acquisitions and Accessions:

BONANZAVILLE, USA's collections are central to its mission, and the Permanent Collection makes up the greatest portion of its holdings. Selectively acquiring new materials is essential to build and strengthen these collections. Collection objects are acquired for exhibition, educational programming, and research. Objects in the Permanent Collection receive the highest standard of care and fullest documentation. BONANZAVILLE, USA is committed to acquiring only materials for which it can provide storage and care. The museum will make efforts to obtain information about the history and ownership of all objects in the Permanent Collection.

Items acquired for the Education Collection are used in hands-on educational programs, for demonstration purposes, and for loans to education groups such as schools (including homeschools), and similar organizations with an educational mission (4-H, Boy/Girl Scouts, nursing homes, etc...). Items for the Education Collection will be designated at the time a donation is received, and these objects will not be accessioned into the permanent collection. Through the *deaccession* process (removing items from a permanent collection), staff may transfer an object from the Permanent Collection to the Education Collection.

Objects acquired by BONANZAVILLE, USA must complement the existing collections; fill presently existing gaps; and be relevant to, and consistent with, purposes and programs of the organization. Collection items may be acquired by transfer, purchase, commission, bequest, gift, donation, field collection, excavation, abandonment, or any other method which transfers legal title to BONANZAVILLE, USA from any individual, corporation, government entity, or other group that holds legal title. Collection items may be acquired only in accordance with this policy, and only when consistent with applicable law and professional ethics. The transfer of title is considered complete when a deed of gift form has been signed by both the donor and an authorized BONANZAVILLE, USA representative. Records of accession will be made and retained

for all materials in the collections, and be consistent with professionally accepted standards. Abandoned property, unclaimed property, and items found in collections (FIC) will be cleared up following the North Dakota Century Code section related to abandoned property [Chapter 55-12]. Drop-offs are gifts, not abandoned property. Collections will not be listed as assets, used as collateral for loans, or sold to pay operating expenses.

BONANZAVILLE, USA will only take items for which a clear title and provenance can be established through paperwork as part of the permanent accession records including: a deed of gift, bill of sale, or other documentation of acquisition. Potential acquisitions will be reviewed on a case by case basis, and all approved in-coming collections will be presented to the Board, at least annually, by the Collections Chair or Museum Staff. The decision to accept collections will be the responsibility of the Collections committee that meets quarterly. No Bonanzaville, USA representative may obligate the museum to accept any material or object inconsistent with this policy.

All gifts and donations to BONANZAVILLE, USA should be free of any restrictions. Exceptions to this rule should be kept to a minimum. Donors are required to transfer all intellectual property rights, copyright, and rights of reproduction when applicable, unless the donor does not own such rights. For example, some donors may only have partial rights—everything but the copyright in the case of a photograph. Another example is in a commissioned artwork, if the donation is made by a living artist of the artist's own work. Living artists retain reproduction rights. In such cases, BONANZAVILLE, USA could seek a nonexclusive right of reproduction from the artist. Only original material will be accepted into the collection. At the discretion of staff, copyrighted material useful for research may be placed in a study collection, dependent on space and significance. Donors should be given credit to the extent feasible, if so requested by the donor.

If a bequest is made, BONANZAVILLE, USA should obtain a copy of the will, or a copy of the section that applies to the museum, along with pictures of the objects, if possible. Should a bequest not possess sufficient merit for inclusion in the collection, the museum may request that the bequest be made with full understanding that the object(s) can be sold and the proceeds used to the benefit of the museum as determined by the Board. In the case of a group of objects, the museum may accept some and refuse, sell, or trade others.

BONANZAVILLE, USA is dedicated to determining the provenance of objects under its care, and will be open and transparent in the way it reviews potential acquisitions. Potential acquisitions must comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws. BONANZAVILLE, USA will not knowingly acquire for its collection any object that has been stolen, illegally exported from its country of origin, or illegally removed from a historic or archaeological site. BONANZAVILLE, USA will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any biological or geological specimen that has been collected, sold, or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United States and any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

BONANZAVILLE, USA representatives will not offer appraisals or estimate the monetary value of objects offered by potential donors, or reveal the insurance value of comparable objects in the collections, to establish a fair market value of gifts. Donors who wish to claim an income tax

deduction for a gift or donation must obtain an independent appraisal. BONANZAVILLE, USA representatives asked to provide appraisals for any purpose whatsoever, outside of internal museum documentation, will direct the public and potential donors to professional associations such as the American Society of Appraisers, Appraisers Association of America, or the International Society of Appraisers. For information regarding tax deductions, donors should consult Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Publication 561, "Valuation of Donated Property," and Publication 526, "Income Tax Deduction for Contributions," or contact their own tax specialist.

5. Deaccession and Disposal:

Just as selectively acquiring new materials is essential to build and strengthen BONANZAVILLE, USA's collections, it is also important to periodically reevaluate the existing holdings and to remove materials from the Permanent Collection through the deaccessioning process. The deaccession process for BONANZAVILLE, USA will be cautious, deliberate, and scrupulous. Reasons that an object may be considered for deaccession can include: condition (damaged, deteriorated, lacks physical integrity); no longer fits the mission; space or other logistics (museum can no longer care for an item); the item is hazardous, illegal, or unsafe to people or other collection objects; duplication; or it is discovered the provenance is not accurate. A decision to dispose of materials from the Permanent Collection will be the responsibility of the Board acting on the advice of the Collections Committee. The Board will review and approve deaccessions at the earliest opportunity. Full and complete records will be permanently retained by BONANZAVILLE, USA regarding the deaccession and disposition of collection items.

Prior to deaccessioning and disposition, BONANZAVILLE, USA will confirm it is legally free to dispose of an item, and any agreements on disposal made with donors will be considered. The museum should not typically accept donations that require donor input prior to deaccession. Donors who do wish to have materials returned from BONANZAVILLE, USA upon deaccessioning must provide copies of all relevant donation paperwork, if available. Heirs seeking a return of a donation must provide estate paperwork, such as a will, establishing inheritance rights. No donated object shall be deaccessioned for any reason within three years of the date of its acquisition (see U.S. Tax Reform Act of 1984 and IRS regulations for further clarification). Requests for the return of materials previously donated to the society must be received by the Board in writing. The letter must contain such information that makes clear the reason for the request; circumstances surrounding the donation; and contain photocopies of all pertinent documents, if any. The Board will determine the course of action for handling the request, and will communicate in writing with the individual making the request.

Acceptable methods of disposal include a move to the Education Collections; a transfer, gift, or exchange to another nonprofit organization; sale through a public auction or marketplace; or destruction. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It is therefore preferred to offer objects by gift, sale, or exchange directly to other museums. Items from the collections shall not be given, sold, or otherwise transferred, publicly or privately, to employees or Board members past or present or their immediate families or representatives under any terms different from those extended to the general public.

Profits from sales of deaccessioned collection items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This may include the purchase of other acquisitions, conservation care

for the Permanent Collections, or, in specific cases, improvements relating to the care of the Permanent Collections. Any money received in compensation for the damage, loss, or destruction of items (via insurance) will be applied in the same way. Accession numbers are part of the permanent record and cannot be reassigned. The accession records from deaccessioned items will continue to remain part of the permanent records, and shall include a description of the circumstances for removal, means of disposal, and photographs, if available.

6. Temporary Loans

Loan requests are approved by the Executive Director upon advice of the curator and an annual report on all in-coming and out-going loan activity will be made to the Board.

a. Incoming Loans for Exhibit:

BONANZAVILLE, USA may, on occasion, borrow objects on a temporary loan for exhibits, programs, or research purposes. The museum will take steps to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest associated with borrowed objects. BONANZAVILLE, USA will not accept any commission or fee from the sale of objects borrowed for exhibition, unless such exhibition was explicitly organized for the sale of those objects (such as in the case of a local art show). The museum will retain full decision-making authority over the content and presentation of exhibitions, but may consult with lenders on the significance of borrowed objects in the exhibition. BONANZAVILLE, USA will afford borrowed objects the same care and security given its own collections. All loans will be for a specified period of time, not to exceed two years without review and renewal. BONANZAVILLE, USA will not retain borrowed objects in long-term storage.

The Executive Director, or staff as delegated, will manage the logistics and care of incoming loans, ensuring that all necessary forms are executed; arrange insurance coverage, if necessary; register all incoming objects; supervise packing and transport of all artifacts; and maintain complete transaction of records. Contracts for borrowed objects will be executed on BONANZAVILLE, USA's incoming loan agreement form, unless the lending institution requires the use of its own form.

b. Outgoing Loans:

BONANZAVILLE, USA may make items from both the Permanent and Education Collections available on loan for legitimate educational purposes. Collections may be loaned only to qualified museums, libraries, or educational institutions; to qualified conservators for contracted evaluation or treatment; or to qualified individuals or organizations engaged by the museum to produce replicas or adaptations of collections objects. Loans will be approved only if arrangements have been made for the safe custody, exhibition, and handling of the collection items(s). Loans may be recalled upon thirty days' written notice to the borrower (or immediately if the museum's review of the borrower discloses unsatisfactory conditions).

The borrower cannot use loaned collection item(s) for anything other than the original, agreed upon purpose, without express, written permission. The borrower must provide proof of insurance coverage; a description of security measures; and related efforts to safeguard loaned items (light levels, cases and barriers, environmental monitoring,

method of transportation, etc....). BONANZAVILLE, USA reserves the right to set conditions or restrictions related to packing, appraisal, shipping, insurance, exhibition installation, environmental controls, general handling, and security of loaned material. Loan requests should be accompanied by a facilities report, condition reports, and loan paperwork. The borrower will bear all costs directly related to the loan agreement, including preparation, shipping, and insurance. Transportation arrangements will be approved by BONANZAVILLE, USA. All out-going loans should be for a specified period of time, not to exceed one year without review and renewal.

c. Temporary Custody

Objects may be placed in the temporary custody of the museum for a period not to exceed ninety days, for the purposes of research, identification, consideration of potential acquisition, or evaluation for loan. Placement of an object in the temporary custody of the museum does not constitute a transfer of legal title. All temporary deposits should be tracked through a Temporary Custody Receipt signed by the owner or appropriate representative. Objects on temporary deposit will be stored and monitored, but will not be provided with storage boxes or other housing. The museum will not insure objects placed in its temporary care. The museum will not store objects belonging to others that are not required for exhibition, study, research, or programs. Objects not retrieved by owners within a reasonable length of time may be subject to abandoned property laws (see North Dakota Century Code, Chapter 55-12).

7. Collections Care

a. Records:

The Executive Director, or staff as delegated, will create and maintain documentation for all collections. These accession files and catalog records establish legal title to collections, identify objects and their provenance as fully as possible, and track the location of objects. Records including accessions, deaccessions, loans, and related catalog records are vital records and permanent documents, maintained and managed in perpetuity.

b. Access:

BONANZAVILLE, USA recognizes the need to strike a balance between preservation and access to the collections. Access to the collections storage areas is limited to authorized BONANZAVILLE, USA representatives and is governed by procedures outlined by the Executive Director. In keeping with established security and collections practices, collection storage areas are generally closed to the public. Visitors to non-public areas of the museum should be accompanied by approved BONANZAVILLE, USA representatives at all times. Open storage areas should be carefully monitored by volunteers and cameras, if possible.

BONANZAVILLE, USA supports research using collections and collection documentation, subject to any existing legal limitations and limits on the availability of staff and

resources. All researchers will sign a log, and should not be left unattended with research or collections materials. Collections storage and records will be available to authorized staff, volunteers, and researchers during regular business hours and as staff are available. The museum expects any staff, volunteers, and researchers who make use of the collections to adhere to any legal or ethical restrictions on research imposed by BONANZAVILLE, USA, and that they will operate in accordance with generally accepted ethical standards of the field. The museum will make collections data and images available for research and publication in accordance with procedures established by the Executive Director. Some information typically, or legally, confidential includes (but is not limited to): addresses of donors and lenders; physical location of objects; valuation of objects; identity of donors or lenders if anonymity has been requested; restricted intellectual property, and culturally sensitive items per state statutes.

c. Conservation:

Conservation action may only be taken by trained professionals. Any treatment must respect the integrity of the object. Treatments must also be reversible, following standard conservation practices. Conservation treatment of the fabric of an object must consider earlier repairs and modifications that are found to be historically significant. Any new material added to the object must be minimal and must be compatible with the future welfare of the object. No action may be taken without a thorough technical examination of the object and a written proposal of treatment listing all possible treatment options. Each treatment proposal must be approved by the Executive Director upon documented advice of curator or conservator. Written reports, including condition reports and written conservation treatment reports, will be kept in the permanent accession records. Objects on loan will not be repaired, cleaned, or otherwise treated unless there is prior approval by the lending institution.

d. Restoration:

Restoration for exhibit or research purposes should be conducted only if sufficient data exists about an items original appearance and restoration would not modify the original known character. Restoration will be accomplished using the techniques and materials that least modify the item and so that the materials can be removed at a later time with minimal adverse effect. Restored areas will be documented and distinguishable from original material. Restoration will take into account the possible importance of preserving signs of wear, damage, former maintenance, and other historical and scientific evidence. Restoration of objects will be documented with before, during, and after photos.

Restoration of the Pioneer Village buildings will be conducted as needed. Efforts should be made to use as close to original materials as possible and not stray far from the building's original appearance.

e. Risk Management, Security, Insurance:

It is the responsibility of all BONANZAVILLE, USA representatives to ensure that the collections are protected against fire, theft, vandalism, natural disasters, and environmental degradation to the best of their ability. The Executive Director will establish risk management and security procedures following established standards and best practices in the museum field including: reducing risks to the collections; providing on-site security; and retaining appropriate insurance coverage. Fine arts coverage will be obtained for collections based on current fair market value when necessary. The Executive Director, staff, and appropriate volunteers as delegated, will monitor the exhibit and storage areas, and ensure that BONANZAVILLE, USA's emergency and disaster planning policies and procedures plan for the safety of the collections. A full collection inventory will be completed, with regular spot-checks annually. The Executive Director has the authority to authorize the degree of insurance coverage for the Permanent Collections, as well as objects on loan to the museum. Insurance values will be based on fair market values of objects as determined by staff and approved by the Executive Director. If staff cannot provide an accurate insurance value, a professional outside appraisal may be required. For outgoing loans, the borrower may be charged for an outside appraisal.

Adopted this 28 day of November, 2018 by Motion of the Board of Directors.