



Prospective Donor Collections Guidelines

Donating to the WCHSM

Thank you for your interest in preserving history through a donation to the collections of the Waukesha County Historical Society & Museum (WCHSM). Donations are considered by a standing Collections Committee that evaluate based our collections guidelines, summarized here.

Please know that not all materials can be accepted into the collection. Condition, conservation needs, historic relevance, and provenance are all considered by the committee before accepting an item into the collection.

The WCHSM is recognized as a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization¹ and your donation may be tax deductible. Professional and ethical guidelines prevent us from providing appraisal information to donors for tax purposes. Please consult with your tax preparer for guidance.

Purpose of Collections Guidelines

The purpose of the WCHSM's collections guidelines are to give focus to collections-related activities; ensure high professional standards when acquiring and preserving artifacts and archival materials; develop and improve an information resource library; and to promote education through hands-on experience which can serve as a resource for the study, interpretation, and enjoyment of its visitors.

Mission Statement:

To foster an exploration of the American experience, through the stories of Waukesha county.

Overview of Types of Collections

The types of collections in the WCHSM include permanent, study and teaching.

- A. Archives – Permanent Collection. Manuscripts, organizational records, visual images, and historically significant maps, which clearly and directly adhere to WCHSM collection criteria.
- B. Artifact/Object – Permanent Collection. Significant objects which clearly and directly adhere to WCHSM collection criteria.
- C. Education– Study & Teaching Collection. Objects that contribute to education programs that are developed and supported by the WCHSM. These objects/items are not accessioned² into the permanent collections.
- D. Library– Study & Teaching Collection. The library collection is to be used for study and research as directed by the mission of the WCHSM. With the exception of rare books, these items are not accessioned into the permanent collections.

¹ The Waukesha County Historical Society and Museum is a private entity, and is not affiliated with or a part of the government entity of Waukesha County; the City of Waukesha; or any other municipality there in.

² Accession is the formal process of accepting items into museum collections.

Collection Criteria

Criteria – Permanent Collection

Artifacts and archives (including visual images) in the Waukesha County Historical Society's collection shall meet one or all of the following criteria:

1. All items must be considered suitable to the collection and meet the WCHSM's stated mission.
2. They must be documented as having been created or used in Waukesha County or have a significant impact on Waukesha County history.
3. They must significantly document or illustrate the history of Waukesha County or Waukesha County's role in Wisconsin and United States history.
4. All items accepted into the collection must be in good and original condition to permit their use for research or exhibition purposes, or be sufficiently important to warrant the cost of conservation. The Curator of Collections and Archivist/Research Librarian will limit collecting to items that the Society can reasonably preserve, care for, store, and make accessible.
5. All items must have provenance identified, must be accompanied by clear title, and must comply with all local, state, federal laws and regulations governing possession, ownership of cultural, historical and archaeological artifacts.

Criteria – Study & Teaching Collection

Education and Library Collection materials in the Waukesha County Historical Society's collection shall meet one or all of the following criteria:

1. All items must be considered suitable to the collection and meet the Museum's stated mission.
2. Authentic or reproduced objects in this collection must represent activities in Waukesha County or represent a significant impact on Waukesha County history.
3. Object(s) must be educational tool(s) used to significantly illustrate or narrate the history of Waukesha County or Waukesha County's role in Wisconsin and United States history.
4. All objects accepted into the collection must be in good condition to permit their use for demonstration purposes or hands-on experiences. Objects in this collection may be damaged, lack provenance, are duplicated in the permanent collection, or may be reproductions.
5. All objects must be accompanied by clear title, and must comply with all local, state, federal laws and regulations governing possession, ownership of cultural, historical and archaeological artifacts.