

So, you're thinking about donating something to the Museum...

Donations to the Smoky Hill Museum

The staff of the Smoky Hill Museum thank you for considering a donation to the collection. It is only through the generosity of people like you that your Museum has such an outstanding collection. It is a legacy that will be enjoyed for many generations from the people of the Smoky Hill Region.

Q: Does the Museum accept everything that is offered?

A: *According to our mission statement, the Museum collects items relating to the history and culture of the Smoky Hill Region. Preference is given to objects pertaining to themes spelled out in the Museum's Master Interpretive Plan, which reflect their context of origin, use by an individual or group for the purpose for which the object was made, are of good quality and repaired, and are characteristic or typical for a given period and tradition.*

If you have paper or photographic materials, or other objects, call the curator of collections to determine if your donation is appropriate for the Museum's collections.

Q: Where do I start?

A: *If the curator decides that your donation might be appropriate for the collections (s)he will accept it on a provisional receipt. The director will make the final decision for acceptance after the donation is reviewed and recommended by the Museum's Collections Committee.*

Q: Why is my donation provisional?

A. *The provisional receipt is for your protection as well as the Museum's. During the review period the Museum will have time to seriously consider your donation, which will be fully protected by our insurance coverage. Your items will be compared to our Master Interpretive Plan, our mission statement, and the permanent collection to determine its suitability for inclusion in the permanent collection. If your donation is turned down or if you change your mind, it will be returned to you during this review period.*

Q: Should I just drop off my donation?

A: *We ask that you call the curator first to discuss your donation and to make an appointment. The curator will make an initial determination of whether or not your donation is appropriate for our collections and interview you for the object's use history. The use history is a very important part of the donation. If (s)he decides that the Museum is not interested, staff can advise you about other museums, which might be.*

Q: What will the Museum do with any donation once it is accepted?

A: *The donation will be assigned to either the permanent collections or education collection. The permanent collections are designated for preservation. These items are handled and processed according to the highest museum standards by trained professionals and are exhibited only under secure and safe conditions. The education collection contains objects, which are designated for programs. They are used for tour groups, student classes and tactile learning experiences. You will be notified as to which category your donation has been assigned.*

Q: When will my donation be on exhibit?

A: *This depends on the item's appropriateness to the Museum's exhibition program. Space limitations and conservation concerns dictate that we cannot exhibit all of our artifacts at any one time. There are many objects that should not be exhibited frequently because they may be damaged by exposure to light and the environment. We cannot guarantee when or if your donation will be exhibited; however, your objects will receive the best of care, insuring that they will be available for the use of future generations. Exhibits are not the only way we use our items. The Museum is a public institution, and collections are available (by appointment) for study by scholars and the interested public.*

Q: If my donation is put on display, will I be credited?

A: *It is not our policy to credit donors in writing within an exhibit. Donors are sometimes credited in a general sponsor panel.*

Q: Will my donation ever be loaned to someone else?

A: *Permanent collection artifacts and archival materials may be loaned to other museums or cultural institutions, but only those which adhere to the same high standards of professional museum practice. Items are not loaned to individuals.*

Q: Do you take permanent or long-term loans?

A: *As a public agency, the Museum does not accept long-termed or so-called “permanent” loans. We have a responsibility to direct our resources*

toward the general community’s benefit, and not to act as caretakers for an individual’s property. In order to give our collections the very best care and storage conditions, all items in the collections must be owned by the Museum and unencumbered by restrictions.

Q: Can I take a tax deduction on my donation?

A: *Certainly. The IRS and Museum policy prohibits us from appraising donations. For your own records and protection, we recommend that you obtain an independent appraisal. The Museum will make your donation available for inspection by the appraiser of your choice.*

Q: How will the Museum acknowledge my donation?

A: *If your donation is accepted for either the permanent or the education collection, you will receive a personal letter of thanks. You will also receive a deed of gift to sign and return to us. The deed of gift makes the original provisional receipt null and void.*

If you have any further questions, please contact the curator of collections at the Smoky Hill Museum, 211 W. Iron, Salina, Kansas 67401, (785) 309-5776.