



## Collection Plan

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## **Purpose, Audience and Development Process**

The collections plan is a guide for clear and systematic collections growth for the Museum of Anthropology at Wake Forest University. The plan is based upon an in-depth examination of the objects currently held in the museum's permanent collection to identify collection gaps and candidates for deaccession in accordance with the intellectual framework. The plan articulates how objects should serve the museum's mission and meet the needs of the community and creates a vision for collecting in the future. The plan will guide the Museum Director, the Registrar and Collections Manager and the Collections Committee in all collecting activities. The plan will remain flexible to allow appropriate consideration of unforeseen collecting opportunities. Donations of objects to the Museum of Anthropology help to fill gaps in the collections, make it possible to improve or change exhibits, and provide additional research resources for students and scholars.

The collections plan was written in 2010 by the Museum Registrar and Collections Manager after a series of inventories, collection evaluations, and rehousing projects. This process allowed a deeper understanding of collections strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. The plan builds upon the Intellectual Framework completed in 2007 by the Museum Director and the Advisory Board, the Long Range Conservation Plan completed in 2006, and the Collections Policy completed in 2005. This document also refers to the Emergency and Disaster Plan and the Code of Ethics.

## **Museum Mission Statement**

The Museum of Anthropology at Wake Forest University creates awareness of global cultures by collecting, protecting, managing, and exhibiting archaeological artifacts, ethnographic objects, and visual arts of past and present peoples, and providing opportunities for intercultural learning.

To fulfill this mission the museum must collect high quality objects from numerous cultures and regions of the world and research, exhibit, and preserve those objects for the public.

## **Intellectual Framework**

The collection carries out the Museum of Anthropology's mission by being the only material culture collection in the Piedmont Triad that shows the diversity of approaches to life taken by non-Western peoples. The collections promote learning about important aspects of human cultural experiences, especially:

- Subsistence activities
- Household architecture
- Family and social groups
- Political systems
- Ritual behavior
- Religion

We seek high-quality objects that are original, in good condition, accompanied by information on cultural context, and related to the diverse cultures of past and current residents of the Piedmont Triad.

Our permanent collection centers on the Wachovia Historical Society/Rights Collection, which offers a unique perspective on collecting North American archaeological and ethnological artifacts during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by citizens of Winston-Salem, many of them associated with the Moravian church. The comprehensive archaeological Rights Collection is an important resource for understanding the prehistory of Central and Western North Carolina.

The African ethnographic collections include both small assemblages providing broad coverage of the material culture of the continent's peoples and larger assemblages providing depth in strategic areas. Examples of the latter are Kuba objects from the royal treasury and beadwork from South Africa.

Areas of excellence and depth within the collection that demonstrate the diversity of the world outside of the Triad include ethnographic objects from Papua New Guinea. In addition, the large West Mexican archaeological collection and 20<sup>th</sup> century Maya textile collection form a core upon which a significant collection of artifacts from past and current inhabitants of Mexico and Central America can be built. These are the primary areas targeted for improvement in quality and breadth through acquisitions.

The Museum of Anthropology will also seek to acquire objects from the Middle East, South America, the Indian subcontinent and Asia, currently weak areas of the collection that, nonetheless, are important for presenting a more complete picture of the cultural experiences of residents of our region. Strategic acquisitions will allow these collections to become increasingly significant resources.

### **Existing Collection -Scope**

The museum's permanent collection consists of objects from the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Oceania, including household and ceremonial items, textiles, hunting and fishing gear, and objects of personal adornment. Materials collected by Moravian missionaries can be found here, as well as prehistoric artifacts from North Carolina's Yadkin River Valley.

The largest portion of the present collection is the Rights' Collection of North Carolina archeological objects. Over 20,000 objects are represented in the single collection ranging from flakes and river cobbles to very fine axes and celts. The pieces range in age from early Archaic to the Woodland period. The objects are an invaluable resource for researchers interested in the native cultures of the Piedmont of North Carolina. Associated documents such as the Rights' Ledger and the additional of the Joffrey Coe research enhance the importance and research value of this large collection.

The next largest collection of associated objects is the collection purchased from the New Hanover Museum in the 1980s. This collection encompasses a wide range of places, cultures, and object types but lacks the quality necessary to fully interpret the pieces. Objects in this accession have been or are currently considered for deaccession. Some of the objects not considered appropriate for the permanent collection have been transferred to the education collection. Other items such as the papers and photographs of Marion Dudley are categorized as important documentary records and have been moved to the museum's archives.

Another important group of objects in the permanent collections are the numerous pieces of West Mexican ceramics. Nearly all of the pieces are complete with very little damage but until dedicated research can be completed on the collection we can do very little interpretation of the objects.

Thanks to the "MAW" group the museum has a large and expanding collection of tools, weapons, and personal adornment from Papua New Guinea. This collection builds upon smaller numbers of objects held by the museum from this region of the world. While there is no population of Papua New Guineans in the Piedmont of North Carolina, it is important to collect, preserve, and exhibit these objects as examples of a quickly vanishing native material culture.

The museum also has growing strength in the collection of central Asian objects. Multiple gifts have expanded our collection of items from areas such as Uzbekistan, which exemplify the multicultural influences of the region.

The African collections are by far the museum's best developed set of objects. The museum holds a wide variety of objects from Zulu beadwork to Kuba royal objects to Senufo ceremonial pieces. Some gaps remain in the African collection, as most of the objects are from sub-Saharan Africa. The museum has numerous examples of Tuareg/Berber material culture but very few quality pieces from other cultures in North Africa.

### **Existing Collection – Synopsis**

The following is a numerical analysis of numbers of objects in the permanent collection by region.

Africa	1203
Asia	710
Oceania	230
Australia	6
Europe	25
North America	22899
South America	290
Unknown	83

## **Existing Collection – Evaluation**

The existing permanent collection is well developed and reflects the museum's mission statement and strategic goals. The strengths of the North Carolina archaeological collection, the African collections, the west Mexican ceramics and Maya textiles, and the Papua New Guinea objects provide a solid core for the growth and improvement of the current collections. Unfortunately, prior to 2005 the museum had no full-time employee solely dedicated to the care of collections. This lack of staff expertise shows in cataloging errors, oversights in record keeping, and inclusion of inappropriate objects in the permanent collection. Nearly all of the errors have been addressed and ameliorated since the museum hired a full time Registrar and Collections Manager in 2005. Numerous objects which are not of exhibitable, research, or permanent collection quality were transferred to the education collection or deaccessioned.

### **Collection Strengths:**

- North Carolina Archeology Collection
- Wachovia Historical Society ethnographic collections
- Maya textiles
- West Mexican ceramics
- African collections
- Oceania collections, specifically Papua New Guinea
- Mexican folk art collections, including Day of the Dead objects
- Japanese kimonos
- Panama Nuchu carvings and Kuna molas
- Yup'ik collections
- Tarahumara and Huichol collections
- Amazonian basketry

### **Collection Weaknesses:**

- Most of the Chinese collections are of poor to fair quality and need improvement.
- Lack of quality objects from many Asian regions such as Korea, Indonesia, the Indian-subcontinent, and Southeast Asia.
- Need to expand collection of South American objects including Amazonia.
- Lack of representation of quality objects from the Middle East.
- Lack of quality objects from Australia and New Zealand.
- Need more representative objects from cultures in North Africa.

## **Collection Development Plan**

### **Deaccession**

Continue to evaluate the entire permanent collection and education collection on a yearly basis to identify areas of improvement and objects which need to be removed from

the collection due to poor condition, lack of information, or inappropriateness for collection. Any profit earned from selling objects as a means of deaccession will go to collections development and preservation.

## **Acquisitions**

The museum's permanent collection has been steadily growing with numerous gifts both large and small every year. The museum has created strong relationships with avid collectors who regularly donate to the museum to increase the collections. Further expansion of the collections will require a serious commitment of museum resources for research, documentation, conservation, management, and storage.

Future acquisitions to the permanent collection will follow the needs set forth by the description of collections weaknesses in this plan. It is appropriate that the museum also plan for unforeseen opportunities to acquire collections not prioritized under collection weaknesses but which fit the mission and reflect the goals of the institution. The approved acquisitions methods for the museum are gifts, bequests, transfers from other institutions, and purchases. On occasion objects may be purchased specifically for the education collection and funds are set aside for this type of acquisition activity.

Proactive collecting of objects for the permanent collection will provide only for the acquisition of good quality objects which have strong provenience, are in good condition or can easily have funding obtained to conserve them, fill the gaps in the current permanent collection, anticipate future institutional needs, and may be properly stored and maintained. An example of this type of activity is the collection of saddle rugs from the Nicolas M. Salgo Collection which is destined to enter the museum's permanent collection in 2010. The Lankton Collection of Ex Votos is currently a permanent loan and will convert to a gift in December of 2010.

All donors are required to sign a deed of gift and receive a thank you letter to complete the donation process. All objects are given a value in the museum and this value is only shared with the Wake Forest University Development and Donor Services Office for recording purposes and added to our internal database for insurance records. New acquisitions to the collections will be advertised to members and audiences through exhibitions, the website and online database, and the museum newsletter.

## **Collection Preservation and Conservation Plan**

The museum has the responsibility to provide the appropriate care for the collections and be an excellent steward for the public trust. Therefore:

- Certain collection objects deemed fragile and sensitive to light and the environment may not be exhibited or will only be exhibited under very strict conditions.
- Collection objects on exhibit will be checked once in the morning before the museum opens and once in the evening after the museum closes.

- Temperature and relative humidity will be regularly monitored in all galleries and storage areas and augmented as necessary. Dataloggers will be downloaded weekly and data evaluated.
- All collection items not on display will be clearly labeled and properly stored in the museum's designated storage spaces.
- Archival collections will be together in appropriate conditions.
- Sensitive objects will be given due diligence by being stored in specific boxes to create stable storage environments.
- The museum will continue to seek funding from members and granting agencies to conserve high priority objects on a yearly basis. Since 2008 one object per year has been chosen for this conservation goal.
- Integrated pest management policies will be followed and traps checked weekly for indications of pest activity.
- Native American consultation for appropriate storage of objects will be completed as necessary.

### **Storage, Access and Use of Collections**

As explained in the museum's 2006 Long Range Conservation Plan the museum faced many challenges concerning storage space, environmental control and appropriateness of storage materials. Many of the suggestions of the conservation plan have been addressed, such as rehousing collections and replacing inappropriate materials in storage.

Late in 2010 a new storage space will be provided by Wake Forest University to house all of the museum's permanent collections. Compact storage paired with custom textile racks and stable shelving will allow all of the permanent collections to be housed together for the first time. The space will provide controlled light, relative humidity and temperature levels for the long-term preservation of the collections. Object storage will be decompressed preventing further damage from inappropriate storage conditions. The space will provide a high level of security with card reader access and keyed entry to the room. The museum will have complete intellectual and physical control of the entire permanent collection. The new space will allow for ease of inventory and staff access, appropriate storage, and optimum safety for the collections. Access to the collections will be limited to select, trained staff. Permanent collection objects may be available for study and research to WFU faculty and students and outside researchers on a case by case basis, with advance notice and appointments if staff is available to supervise.

### **Exhibition of Collections**

The museum exhibits collections on a regular basis both in permanent and temporary exhibits on site. The museum also loans objects to other Wake Forest University entities for educational exhibits in their University spaces. Objects are also loaned to other institutions for exhibits and educational purposes. The museum plans to be able to travel some of its exhibits in the future pending demand and availability of

funds for such an endeavor. No objects should be placed on exhibit longer than they can sustain the compound damage of light and environment. Objects will be checked daily on site for deterioration or other problems and removed from exhibit if necessary. Off site objects in University spaces will be checked monthly.

### **Record Keeping and Inventory**

The museum must maintain up to date and accurate records of the collection in electronic and hard format. The Re:discovery database contains all catalog records of objects including exhibition history, insurance information, conservation history, research references, storage history, and accession data. Paper records maintained by the museum include donor files, object research files, loan files, conservation records, accession ledgers, and catalog cards. All paper records aside from catalog cards are stored in a fireproof file cabinet in the Registrar's office. Collection research is an ongoing project and all accumulated data are added to the database and stored in the Curator's office.

Periodic inventories of the permanent collection will occur each year by checking a location and stored objects against the database. A full inventory of the entire permanent collection will take place every five years. One full inventory was conducted and finished in 2005 and another is due in 2010. The 2010 inventory will take place when the objects are rehoused in the new storage facility.

### **Insurance**

Insurance for the museum collection is provided by Wake Forest University through Aon Risk Insurance under Hartford Fire Insurance Company. The loss limit is \$500,000,000 with a deductible of \$25,000. The museum needs to evaluate whether its own, specialized museum insurance would be appropriate for its collections since the University deductible is so high.