



## Donating an Artifact to the WDM: Frequently Asked Questions

- **What kind of artifacts does the WDM collect?**

The WDM has evolved to become much more than an agricultural implement museum. We collect artifacts that show the diversity of the Saskatchewan spirit. We are interested in artifacts that represent who we are, tell a Saskatchewan-inspired story, depict a historic event or illustrate our skills and innovation.

Our [Collections Development Plan](#) further prioritizes collecting artifacts from unrepresented, underrepresented, misrepresented and erased people and groups in Saskatchewan's history and the WDM collections. These groups have been identified as Indigenous, diverse settlers, and 2SLGBTQ+ people, communities and organizations. We continue to also collect artifacts that tell stories of exceptional Saskatchewan innovation.

- **How does the WDM decide what it will accept for its collection?**

We are guided by our Collections Development Plan that defines our collection priorities in accordance with the WDM's vision, mission, mandate, and other guiding plans and priorities.

All new offers to the WDM are reviewed by a WDM staff member. They make an initial assessment of the artifact and ask questions about its history, how it was used, its condition and if there are supporting materials such as photos of the artifact in use. If the artifact meets basic requirements set out in our *Collection Development Plan*, it will be put on the agenda for our next Curatorial Committee meeting.

- **How long will it take the WDM to review my artifact offer?**

Offers that meet our criteria and collection priorities will be reviewed at our next Curatorial Committee meeting which is scheduled quarterly. Sometimes we need more information from you, or we must conduct outside research. This can take several months to complete.

- **Why does the WDM decline some artifact offers?**

We appreciate all offers, but after more than 75 years of collecting, we cannot accept everything. Storage space is limited, as are resources to care for and monitor artifacts. We usually gratefully decline offers of artifacts that are well-represented in our collection, objects without a known history, objects without a connection to Saskatchewan and objects in poor physical condition. We also do not have the resources to collect artifacts to represent every type or time period of any particular object (i.e. encyclopedic collecting).

There are some items that we are regularly offered and would only accept if there was a truly exceptional story connected to it.

If we decline, we will do our best to recommend alternate museums and organizations that might be interested. The [Museums Association of Saskatchewan](#) has a “Find a Museum” function that may be helpful for identifying other museums near you.

- **What is the WDM collection?**

The WDM collection consists of several sub-collections, each with a specific purpose:

**1) *Permanent Collection***

These are the artifacts you see on exhibit in our galleries. They are significant to the history of Saskatchewan. Their long-term preservation, documentation and care is the utmost priority of the WDM’s Curatorial Department. These artifacts are usually preserved in the same state we received them and are not operated or modified for exhibit or demonstration purposes. About 50% of the WDM permanent collection is on display at our four exhibit locations at any given time. The other 50% remains in storage for safe-keeping and preservation.

**2) *Operating Collection***

This collection includes steam and gas tractors, stationary and portable engines, animal-powered transportation, automobiles and trade-specific tools that are restored and used for demonstration, training and other WDM events.

We rarely accept new artifacts into this collection as we already have a significant number of operating machines.

**3) *George Shepherd Library Collection***

The George Shepherd library is a non-circulating reference library that supports the work of the Curatorial Department. This collection includes pamphlets, catalogues, manuals and photographs (printed and digital) related to objects in our collection and to Saskatchewan and Western Canadian History.

This collection is largely closed, and the WDM does not actively collect new materials for the George Shepherd Library.

**4) *Hands-on Collection***

This collection includes personal objects such as clothing and small household objects that are used by WDM staff for hands-on public programs. These objects can be touched and used by staff, volunteers and/or the public and are subject to wear and tear. Although we take care to maintain them, hands-on collection objects are considered expendable and are disposed of when no longer needed.

## **5) Parts Collection**

The WDM collects machinery parts for maintenance and repair of our operating collection artifacts.

- **How old does the artifact have to be?**

There is no age limit on how old an artifact must be. The WDM collects artifacts from the settlement period (c.1870s) all the way up to the present day.

- **Will my artifact go on display?**

When an artifact is accepted into the collection, we cannot guarantee that it will go on display, where, and for how long. Most artifacts go into storage where they can be preserved for many years to come.

The WDM understands the importance of physical and intellectual access to its collections. There are many ways that staff, volunteers and the general public can access WDM collections through exhibits, programming, events, tours, publications, social media, the WDM website, and the collections database.

- **I found some old things in my basement - do you want them? How about these antiques I bought from a garage sale?**

Our current collection priorities mean that we rarely collect general antiques where little personal history is known.

An example of a strong Saskatchewan story would be: a Chinese Lion Dance costume that was brought to Canada from China in the 1940s-50s by the owners of a popular Chinese restaurant in Saskatoon. The costume was used at Chinese cultural celebrations in Saskatoon for decades, both in the historic Chinatown district in Riversdale and at Chinese businesses outside of it, helping to maintain Chinese cultural traditions in Saskatoon. The owner of the costume was prominent in the Saskatoon Chinese-Canadian community, leading philanthropic and cultural organizations. He led the Chinese Saskatoon Folk Art Society, which taught lion dancing to members of the community, and in addition to being used in performances, the mask was used to teach the dance to students.

The item is suitable for the collection because it helps us reflect the diversity of Saskatchewan, we have no representation of similar items currently in our collection, and it has a strong connection to Saskatchewan. In addition to this, this one object helps tell a story of a wider community, not just one person.

- **My object has a strong history, but it belonged to my great-aunt in Ontario. Can I still donate it?**

The WDM rarely accepts artifacts with no significant link to Saskatchewan's history. If an object was never used in Saskatchewan, we recommend finding a museum closer to where it was purchased/used.

- **Can I offer my object in person at my nearest WDM?**

Please do not bring artifact offers to any WDM location. The WDM collection is managed centrally at the WDM Corporate Office in Saskatoon. Artifact offers may be submitted using the online submission form or by emailing [acquisitions@wdm.ca](mailto:acquisitions@wdm.ca).

- **I don't want to go through the formal donation process, can I just drop it off anonymously?**

No, any objects dropped off without contact information included are considered abandoned property and are disposed of. We will not accept abandoned property into our collection as we do not know its history and cannot complete a transfer of ownership agreement.

- **Will the Museum purchase an artifact from me?**

Most of our artifacts are obtained through donation. The WDM rarely purchases unsolicited offers of artifacts and will only do so if they meet a specific need in our collection.

- **Can I loan my objects to the WDM?**

The WDM does not accept artifact loans from members of the public.

- **What kind of information will you share about me?**

If you grant us permission, the WDM may use names, personal history, correspondence, transcripts, images and documents collected regarding your donation for purposes including research, publication in print and online, educational programming and exhibition.

You are welcome to restrict sensitive information that you do not want shared with the public. Your personal contact information will remain confidential to the WDM.

- **I've changed my mind. Can I have my donation back?**

No, as a registered charity, the WDM cannot return deaccessioned artifacts to their original donors in compliance with the Canadian *Income Tax Act*.

- **Can I obtain a tax receipt for my donation?**

Yes, the WDM will issue a tax receipt reflecting the fair market value of donated artifacts at the request of the donor.

To issue a tax receipt, a qualified professional must complete an assessment of the gift's fair market value. As the value of the gift is in the donor's interest, the donor will be asked to obtain and pay for the appraisal. Appraisals for income tax purposes should be made by an appraiser not associated with the donor.

- **Will the WDM appraise my object for me?**

We are unable to offer appraisal services.

- **Will the Museum keep my donated artifact forever?**

The WDM accepts objects for its Permanent and George Shepherd Library collections with the goal of keeping them for the foreseeable future. However, some situations arise which may cause us to remove an item from our collection. This is called deaccessioning and is a regular part of a museum's collections duties.

- **Can I donate Indigenous cultural materials?**

The WDM welcomes working with Indigenous individuals, families, organizations, communities and nations to better represent their histories by expanding their collections at their discretion. The WDM affirms the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in its management of the Indigenous artifacts in its care. We do not collect sacred objects.

- **Can I donate sensitive cultural materials?**

The WDM will consult with source community members before making any decisions on accepting an item.