

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA MUSEUM ARCHIVES

POLICY STATEMENT

2002

I. Mission

The University of Pennsylvania Museum has a responsibility to the academic community and to the public for the orderly retention and disposition of all Museum records, both active and inactive, and for the preservation of historically significant documents and other materials which reflect the Museum's origins and development, and the activities and achievements of its officers, curators, staff, students, and benefactors.

The purpose of the Museum Archives is to collect, preserve, organize, interpret, and make accessible to researchers the administrative and research records of the University of Pennsylvania Museum. Thus it serves scholars interested in the history of the Museum, museums and museology, the history of archaeology and anthropology, Philadelphian and American intellectual life, and the interpretation of ancient and living cultures of the world. Through its records management program, the Archives provides records retention and retrieval services which assist the administrative staff and curators in the ongoing operations of the Museum.

In addition to the Museum's administrative records, the Archives collects records generated from the Museum's anthropological and archaeological expeditions, the personal and professional papers of its curators, staff, students, and benefactors, and the papers of individuals and organizations where the subject matter of the collection is particularly relevant to the Museum's mission and/or history.

The Archives shall provide appropriate facilities for the retention, preservation, and servicing of its holdings. Inactive records remain the property of the office of their origin and are made accessible only to authorized representatives of that office. Historical materials are the property of the Archives and are made accessible to scholars and the community at large in accordance with the Archives access policy.

II. Administrative Mandate

The Board of Overseers of the University of Pennsylvania Museum, recognizing the need for formal archival and records management policy, hereby adopt the following policy procedures for the collection, retention, preservation, and servicing of Museum records:

1) Responsibility for assuring that historically significant materials shall be preserved and permanently retained at the University of Pennsylvania Museum lies with the Museum Archives. The successful collection of all such records requires that one office, with Museum-wide purview, manage their progression through the several stages— active, inactive, and archival— of their life cycle. In general, active records are those in use in the office in which they were created; inactive records are those placed under finite-term retention at a records center facility; and archival records are those of historical significance retained permanently in a repository open to research.

2) Any papers or other records generated or received by the administrative and curatorial offices of the Museum in the conduct of their business are the property of the Museum and may become archival material.

3) The Archives promotes the growth of the research collections while respecting the rights of the creators of the records, namely the curators of the Museum; the professors of the various

departments of the University of Pennsylvania affiliated with the Museum (i.e., Anthropology, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Art and Archaeology of the Mediterranean World, and others); and other principal investigators of Museum-sponsored projects. The Archives encourages the eventual donation of records for permanent safe-keeping and to preserve the institution's scientific legacy. Archives staff will work with individual record creators to determine the best disposition of their records. It is also encouraged that expeditions sponsored jointly with other institutions shall have written agreements as to the ultimate disposition of the project records.

4) Administrative officers and curators of the Museum who possess Museum records relating to their official duties, are to consult with the Museum Archives for the proper transfer of inactive records to the Archives. Retention schedules for active and inactive papers shall be decided upon by the officer in charge of each administrative or curatorial unit in consultation with the Archivist. Inactive records transferred to the Archives shall remain the property of the office of origin and shall be accessible only to authorized representatives of that office. Museum records shall not be destroyed or placed in inactive storage at a site other than the Museum Archives without the joint approval of the Archivist and the officer in charge of each administrative or curatorial unit.

5) The Archivist shall determine which records shall be permanently retained by the Archives, shall grant and limit access to the collections, and shall establish and administer other public service policies and procedures as necessary. Historically significant records transferred to the Archives for permanent retention shall become the property of the Museum and administered by the Archives.

6) The Museum Archives shall be an administrative division reporting to the Director's Office of the Museum, and working in consultation with the Archives Advisory Committee.

7) The Museum Archives, as the official repository for all Museum records, shall provide appropriate facilities for their retention and preservation. The Museum Archives shall be provided financial and personnel resources sufficient to maintain services according to professional standards.

8) An advisory Archives Committee shall be established with the following responsibilities:

- a) to advise the Director and Deputy Director on institutional support and initiatives required to fulfill archival policy;
- b) to advise the Archivist on the implementation of this policy; and
- c) to resolve substantive issues which may arise regarding access and collections policy.

The committee shall be composed of the following members: Museum Librarian, Registrar, one or two Curators, one Keeper of Collections, Conservator, Director of IT, Exhibits Designer, and the Senior Archivist. The committee shall meet at the call of the Director, Deputy Director, the Archivist, or the Chair.

III. Collections Policy

The Archives shall seek, identify, and acquire historically significant materials in the following categories:

- 1) Museum administrative records in all formats.
- 2) Museum expedition records in consultation with Museum curators and faculty from relevant academic departments.
- 3) The personal and professional papers of prominent people associated with the Museum, including Museum officers, faculty, staff, students, and benefactors.
- 4) Other materials which document the activities, history, and collections of the Museum.
- 5) Other materials relating to the history of anthropology and archaeology, as well as records from expeditions not carried out by the Museum when no other institution is available and there is a danger these records will be lost.

The deposit, transfer, or donation of records to the Museum Archives shall follow specific procedures established by the Archivist. Records are not accepted for temporary deposit in the Archives unless circumstances suggest they would otherwise be lost or damaged. Records deposited in the Archives remain under the control of the office or individual of origin. In the case of transfer of Museum records for permanent retention at the Archives, the office or individual of origin relinquishes all rights to the materials. In cases where materials are donated to the Museum, the donor usually relinquishes all rights, including copyright and literary rights. Donor restrictions are acceptable in special cases.

IV. Access Policy

The historical and scientific collections of the University of Pennsylvania Museum Archives are open for research to all members of the University community and the scholarly public. Non-Museum researchers are requested to make an appointment in advance. The Museum encourages the use of these collections through the dissemination of descriptive catalogues and the provision of public services at the Archives.

Access to certain classes of records are restricted. Access to restricted records may be requested by written appeal to the museum Archivist.

The following types of records generally will be closed:

- 1) all administrative records of the Museum for twenty-five years from the date of their creation, with certain exceptions, such as those which must be open in conformance with the law;
- 2) records of a sitting administration;
- 3) records the disclosure of which might expose the Museum to legal liability;
- 4) unpublished scientific records from Museum expeditions for a period of five years after transfer to the Archives, while a Museum-appointed scholar is preparing to publish them;
- 5) records that may fall under the jurisdiction of NAGPRA;

The following types of records will be absolutely closed:

- 1) individual employment records of living current or former curators, administrators, or other staff, unless the curator, administrator or staff member grants access in writing;
- 2) other records where usage might constitute an invasion of privacy;
- 3) records the use of which has been restricted by Deed of Gift.

Appeals to gain access to restricted records shall be made in writing to the Museum Archivist, who will decide to grant or deny in consultation with the Archives Committee. Decisions shall be based on the merits of each case, weighing the needs of scholarship against the privacy rights of individuals and the legal interests of the University. In all cases the decision shall be fair and reasonable, permitting the greatest possible access.

All users of the records must comply with the restrictions, rules, and regulations of the University of Pennsylvania Museum Archives. The Archives reserves the right to deny access to its holdings to any person violating these guidelines.