



National Watch & Clock
MUSEUM

Collection Plan

A. PREAMBLE

The Collections Plan is a guideline for thoughtful and systematic collections growth for the National Watch and Clock Museum. It is based on an examination of the objects we have, identifies existing collecting gaps and identifies deaccession candidates. The plan articulates how the objects should serve the National Watch and Clock Museum's mission by meeting the needs of our members, the community, and visitors; creating an intellectual framework and vision for collecting in the future. This document will guide the Museum Director, Curator of Collections, and Museum Collections Committee.

The National Watch and Clock Museum has many constituencies, the most important of which is the NAWCC itself. The museum reflects the desire of the NAWCC membership to be informed on the history of horology and the technical changes which fostered that history. A visit to the museum must reward both the in depth interest of the serious collector and the casual curiosity of the ordinary visitor and school children who visit our facilities with little or no horological background. The museum's exhibits, educational programs and collecting plan support these diverse purposes. The goal of the museum and its collections is to make the materials we collect available to the widest possible distribution of scholars, collectors, members of the general public and school children as is consistent with their preservation and accountability.

The act of collecting, preserving, and presenting objects is the cornerstone of all museums. Museums answer a basic human need to collect, identify, and understand patterns in our world. Collections serve our exhibits, educational programs, and research. The National Watch and Clock Museum's areas of emphasis for acquisition and exhibition are on the collection of 3-dimensional timekeeping devices, watch and clock making tools and equipment, and other objects of horological significance.

The initial Guidelines for Collections Development were developed as part of the National Watch and Clock Museum's Collection Management Policies in December 2005.

As is typical of National Watch and Clock Museum initiatives, development of the current Collections Plan was an organizational effort that took place in 2008. Input into the development of this plan was provided by the NAWCC Executive Director, Museum Director, Curator of Collections, Museum Collections Committee, and the Museum Advisory Panel.

Partnerships have become essential to the way museums do business. As we embark on new subject matters, more complex interpretations, and shared authority, it is clear that we cannot do it alone or in isolation. Partnerships and collaborations have become an important working strategy. One of the most difficult issues for many museums looking to foster community partnerships is what and how to collect. This is at the very heart of any institution.

The Collections Plan is complementary to the National Watch and Clock Museum's Collection Management Policies and Procedures and the Long-range Plan for Collections Management and Conservation developed by the Curator of Collections and approved by the Museum Collections Committee and Board of Directors in 2006. The purpose of these guidelines is to allow staff to review and recommend collections transactions to the Museum Collections Committee which has been delegated authority by the BOD to accept collections and to refer deaccession transactions to the Board with both staff and committee recommendations. In this way no single individual speaks for the NAWCC in regard to items recommended for accessions to or deletion from the collections, those decisions being made by the Museum Collections Committee or the BOD acting upon staff recommendation. With regard to items being offered to the permanent collections as a gift but in the opinion of staff not worthy of inclusion, such matters are not referred to the Committee but are rejected at the staff level. Loans-in for routine exhibit transactions are likewise made on by staff but loans-out to outside institutions are referred to the committee for approval. It is assumed that the Museum has the storage facilities, expertise, time, documentation, and funds to curate the acquisitions and that these analyses are considered as part of the staff recommendation.

B. MUSEUM MISSION STATEMENT

The National Watch and Clock Museum, in support of the overall mission of the NAWCC, interprets the history of time and timekeeping devices through educational programs, exhibits and special events. The goals of the museum are to depict the importance of the measurement time within human society, reveal the artistry and science of time keeping mechanisms, preserve and collect objects related to time and time keeping and explore their development from the earliest societies to the present day.

C. OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. The National Watch and Clock Museum's objective is to (1) engage, educate and inspire NAWCC members, scholars in the field, museum visitors and the community through the wide scope and diversity of its holdings reflecting the art, history and science of horology; (2) build, preserve, and promote the nation's foremost collection of objects representing the art and history of horology, and the library of record on those subjects for a broad range of current and new Museum visitors; (3) display the best of the collection in a permanent exhibition and arrange temporary exhibitions illustrating particular aspects of the art and history of horology, and in so doing maintain an international reputation for scholarship and research on horology; (4) present exhibitions of horological science and technology that educate and involve visitors of all ages in historic innovations and future applications of horology and horology-related materials and provide visitors with a unique opportunity to view and experience horology. The achievement of these objectives is accomplished through the combined efforts of museum staff and NAWCC members.

2. The collections of the National Watch and Clock Museum fall within the mission of the Museum and the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors, Inc., as stated above and in 1977, to (1) preserve the horological history of the world; (2) enhance the enjoyment and education of the public in horology through study, exhibition and interpretation of its collections; (3) support and encourage scholarly research and publication in fields relevant to the horological history and the science thereof; and (4) interpret the role of horology in the development of society.

3. Policies regarding the scope and use of the collections, including new acquisitions, deaccession and disposal, loans, exhibits, and collections use, are established and overseen by the Museum Collections Committee, working in conjunction with NAWCC staff and are subject to the approval of the Board of Directors of the NAWCC, Inc. Details of these policies can be found in the Museum's Collection Management Policy (1998) and in the Standing Rules of the NAWCC, Inc. (2004).

D. INSTITUTIONAL PLAN

The National Watch and Clock Museum's planning includes four principal objectives. Three of these objectives are ongoing, and one is time lined for achievement in 2012.

1. The ongoing refinement of the Museum collection through regular inventorying and catalog review and deaccession of unnecessary, redundant or less than museum quality objects according to the NAWCC Collections Policy. Ensure proper and safe storage, cataloging and handling of Museum collections.
2. Ongoing effort to better engage the NAWCC membership, the community and general public. The plans for this include; the development of more engaging and interactive exhibits with broad appeal to the general public; partnering with other museums in the area to create shared marketing and programming opportunities. Our objective is to make the museum artifacts, catalog records and research we hold accessible to our membership and to the public on line as well as through exhibits.
3. The National Watch and Clock Museum must continue to ensure that the museum serves the public and membership of the NAWCC, Inc. effectively. This will be achieved through the development and continued refinement of traveling panels which can be shown in conjunction with locally owned timepieces and a renewed emphasis on member/public access to Museum/Library and collection records through the creation and maintenance of a website geared toward utilization of the Museum/Library holdings.
4. The National Watch and Clock Museum will achieve American Association of Museums Accreditation. This effort will be led by the Museum Director, with assistance of the NAWCC, Inc. Executive Director and staff, and will require improvements in many areas of the institution's operations, management, and governance. Additionally, funding for such improvements must become part of the overall NAWCC, Inc. budget planning.

E. VISION FOR THE COLLECTION

It is the desire of the National Watch and Clock Museum that its collection be representative of horology throughout the world and across several time periods; recognizing that clock and watch production did not occur everywhere at the same time and of the same quality. The collection will include objects that highlight the technological, historical, and artistic development of timekeeping. Objects in the collection should illustrate the lives and stories of significant makers of horological objects. The collection of the National Watch and Clock Museum should be representative of humankind's understanding of time and timekeeping and should address the collection as historical objects as well as decorative arts.

F. COLLECTION ANALYSIS*

The National Watch and Clock Museum's Collection Database contains over 14,000 object entries, dating from the medieval period to current times. These entries are regularly evaluated and reconciled by Museum staff to eliminate records of objects that are no longer on site, either through past deaccession or expired loans.

1. The objects collections are predominately from the United States or from areas influenced by the American tradition. Although watches dominate, there are also substantial holdings of clocks and smaller, though important, holdings of Asian horology, musical objects, and advertising and art objects. We have very few objects from outside North America and Europe (with the exception of the small Asian collection).
2. The National Watch and Clock Museum's greatest strength lies in the holdings of American-made objects made between 1800 and 1950. Our pre-1800, international, and 20th-century holdings are uneven. Considerations of space must always inform acquisition, and it is for this reason that certain types of objects (e.g., tall case clocks, statuary clocks, and furniture) may only be represented by a few examples in the collection.
3. The Museum's collection of horological objects is recognized as the most important in the United States and is also recognized internationally. Unlike most collections in other countries (rich as many are), the National Watch and Clock Museum has historically made the effort to collect items from a wide range of countries and thus offers a unique opportunity for comparative study. The Museum's Asian horology collection is among the best found in museums in the United States. This effort to be internationally inclusive will continue as a cornerstone in the mission of the National Watch and Clock Museum collection practices.
4. The National Watch and Clock Museum's current collection is extensive and does include examples from across the horological spectrum. However, there are definite collection gaps that need to be remedied through targeted acquisition. These figures are based on collection records as of November 30, 2007.

* This collection analysis is based on studies of the National Watch and Clock Museum's Collections Database, which is regularly being refined and may result in slight variations in the analysis.

5. The Museum will continue to review of the collection with the intent of refining the holdings to meet anticipated needs and to reduce superfluity through deaccession.

Collection Points:

- The National Watch and Clock Museum’s collection principally consists of a large collection of American-made objects. The number of European objects in the collection is only about a quarter of the total Museum holdings, Asian objects are less than 1%, and there are no objects of Islamic origin.[†]
- The National Watch and Clock Museum’s collection consists principally of objects dating after 1800. The number of objects dating after 1800 is at least 65% of the total Museum holdings.[‡]
- The National Watch and Clock Museum collection consists of the following percentages: Watches (63%), Clocks (25%), Miscellaneous (7%), and Tools (5%).[§]

G. CONNECTIONS TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND COLLECTIONS

Although the collection is designated as a national collection, we recognize its place in context as part of the wider collection held in museums, houses, churches, and public buildings throughout the United States and the world. The National Watch and Clock Museum has encouraged other institutions in the United States to develop particular collections of horological objects, and the Museum will continue this tradition. We maintain active relationships with staff in regional museums and those working for other organizations that are responsible for other collections of national and international importance.

1. The National Watch and Clock Museum has several connections to other museums and institutions with similar collecting interests. Relationships currently exist through the establishment of loans of objects to/from the State Museum of Pennsylvania, the Smithsonian Institution, California Academy of Sciences, Willard House and Clock Museum, the American Clock and Watch Museum and others. The National Watch and Clock Museum is a member of The Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC), an organization of science centers and museums dedicated to furthering the public understanding of science among increasingly diverse audiences. The museum also is a

[†] These figures include 515 objects on long-term loan from the California Academy of Sciences.

[‡] These figures are based on objects in the collection database for which a date has been entered.

[§] These are based on 14055 collection records. “Miscellaneous” refers to a number of objects that include advertising mediums, artwork, watch papers, etc.

member of the American Association of Museums (AAM) and the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH).

2. The National Watch and Clock Museum plays an active role in the promotion of museum visitation in the central Pennsylvania region through its membership in the Museum Council of Lancaster County, active participation in the Lancaster-York Heritage Region, Rivertownes PA, three regional tourism organizations and membership in the Pennsylvania Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations (PFMHO).

3. The National Watch and Clock Museum will encourage loans of its collection to institutions capable of caring for and exhibiting objects consistent with the standards maintained by the National Watch and Clock Museum itself.

H. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The National Watch and Clock Museum's aim is to develop and enrich the established areas of the collection of horological objects, covering primarily American-made objects between the 18th-century period and the present day. We will enlarge our holdings of clocks that illustrate the influence of the European, Asian, and Islamic traditions. The collecting of 20th-and 21st-century material will also be a particular priority in the effort to demonstrate the relevance of horology to today's visitors.

1. The National Watch and Clock Museum's Collections Plan is one of collecting based on achieving balance in the collection by identifying needs in the collection, filling those needs, and minimizing redundancy and less than museum quality examples using three criteria:

a. Time Period – collecting objects that are representative of time periods of significance in horology (pre-mechanical, mechanical and post-mechanical) and for which there are needs in the existing collection. Currently, the collection is weighted toward objects after 1800 and before 1970; therefore, the principal collecting efforts in this area should be toward the acquisition of objects before 1800 with an emphasis on ancient (pre-mechanical) objects and the acquisition of modern timepieces.

b. Geographic Area – collecting objects that are representative of the principal manufacturing regions (international, European, Asian, and North American) and

for which there are needs in the existing collection. The current collection is dominated by American-made clocks and is weighted fairly evenly in the area of watch production. Effort in this area should be toward the collection of non-American clocks and the continuation of maintaining balance in the watch collection.

c. Significance – collecting objects that, for reasons other than the above, are significant to the study of horology. These may include objects that demonstrate considerable advances in technology and/or production or have provenances associated with noteworthy personages or events.

2. Justification - The attached Collection Needs outline, Object Accession Questionnaire and the goals of this collection plan will be used in the consideration of all new incoming donations or acquisitions to determine if they fill identified gaps in the collection. In addition to the Object Accession Questionnaire, the Museum Collections Committee, which, acting for the NAWCC Board of Directors, makes a final determination, will be presented the specific need filled by the object and how that object fits within the collection plan.

- *Example:* Object meets Collection Need 1-a-ii (Early Sandglasses) and Collection Plan objective(s) E-2, G-1-a.

3. Loans - While not a large part of the museum collection, loans have been used in the past to ensure the diversity of the museum collection. Loans to the National Watch and Clock Museum consist of regularly renewable loans from institutions and some long-term and short-term loans from private individuals. The museum will, on an ongoing basis, evaluate all loans to the museum and determine if the conversion of those loans to gifts will enhance the Museum's collection. If so, every effort will be made to convert said loans to gifts or to return them as suitable replacement artifacts can be acquired for the permanent holdings.

4. Deaccession - Deaccession of objects from the Museum's collection will be undertaken, according to approved deaccession procedures outlined in the Museum Collection Management Policy (Section IV and V), when an object meets any of the following conditions:

- a. The material or object is outside the scope of the National Watch and Clock Museum's mission or acquisition policy.

- b. The material or object has failed to retain its identity or authenticity, or has been lost or stolen and remains so for more than two years.
- c. The Museum is unable to properly preserve or store the object(s).
- d. The material or object has deteriorated beyond usefulness for study or exhibition.
- e. The material or object is the triplicate of two other exact objects in the collection.
- f. The material or object is damaged beyond repair.

I. REVISION OF PLAN

Collection plans need to remain fluid and responsive to changes in the collection scope, museum mission or leadership initiatives. Therefore a means of revising the Museum's collection plan is necessary to ensure that it can continue to provide guidance for future museum collection. Revision of this plan is to be undertaken at the discretion of the Museum Director or NAWCC Executive Director according to the guidelines set forth in the National Watch and Clock Museum's Collection Management Policy.

Sources consulted in the development of this draft plan include:

Alutiiq Museum (Kodiak, Alaska). *Alutiiq Museum Collection Plan*, 2003.

American Association of Museums. *Information Center Fact Sheet, Collections Planning: Strategies for Planning and Implementation*. 2003.

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South Charleston Museum. *The Collections Management Policy of the South Charleston Museum*, 1999.

Victoria & Albert Museum. *V&A Collecting Plan, Including Acquisition & Disposal Policy*, 2004.