



## ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

*(NOTE: this should be part of a larger Collections Management Policy)*

### A. POLICY

It is the policy of the Gregg County Historical Museum (GCHM) to make its collections available for scholarly research to credentialed researchers upon approval by the Director and/or Head of Collections. Head of Collections will provide approved users with timely access to collections. The nature and conditions of such use must be consistent with GCHM's responsibility for care and preservation of its collections. Access to human remains and associated objects requires prior written permission from the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma in accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).

### B. PROCEDURES

The Director and Heads of Collections are responsible for providing and arranging access to the collections. In particular, first-time users of GCHM collections should contact the Director or Head of Collections to introduce themselves and arrange for their visit; references and a curriculum vitae will be required to obtain access to the collections, so sufficient advance notice is necessary for the Director or Head of Collections to determine if access will be given. As a rule, returning users of GCHM records and artifact collections are also expected to contact the Head of Collections in advance before making additional visits. Users conducting routine file searches in the course of cultural resource management work must also give advance notice. They may access GCHM Records without making arrangements in advance if there is already an established relationship, but to be better served advance notice is in order.

Those wishing to conduct lengthy or detailed examinations of either records or objects will be asked to provide a proposal defining the scope and purpose of their research.

A **Work/Activities Record** form will be completed during the visit for documentation purposes. This will detail the materials being accessed, and the work being done. All users of collections must complete a **Request for Access to Collections** form a minimum of two weeks prior to the visit date. All forms mentioned henceforth are available on the GCHM website or by contacting GCHM directly ([director@gregghistorical.org](mailto:director@gregghistorical.org)/903-753-5840). The applicant will be notified within one week whether their request has been approved.

Users will be advised on the proper use and handling of materials and Head of Collections will exercise caution when determining the level of user access and supervision. Head of Collections will advise all users of collections of special security and safety policies and procedures. Head of Collections may revoke access to collections if materials in the collection appear to be in danger of damage or any other misuse. Users may be liable for any damage they cause to collections.

Access to culturally sensitive NAGPRA materials such as human remains and funerary objects is restricted. Requests for access to these materials are reviewed individually (see **Request for Access to Human Remains** agreement). Collection users will be responsible for securing appropriate permissions from affiliated Native American tribes before access to these materials will be considered by the Head of Collections and GCHM Executive Committee.

The Museum should be acknowledged in the final publication (the term publications heretofore includes online publications, websites, blogs, articles, newsletters, etc.) as follows:

[Name of specific collection, i.e., Buddy Calvin Jones Caddo Collection, Gregg County Historical Museum, Longview, Texas.

Access to collections requires adherence to all applicable procedures listed and described herein, including:

1. Conformance to GCHM security policy and procedures.
2. Observance of object handling procedures and restrictions.
3. No alterations, repairs, or cleaning of any kind may be attempted without permission of the Museum.
4. No artifacts, collection rooms, or photographic areas shall be left unattended.
5. No objects or samples may be removed from the building except through a formal loan. Archives and record image reproductions are available upon request and subject to fees (see **Standard Fees for the Reproduction of Images** form available on the GCHM website)
6. One copy of paper analysis notes whether paper or electronic, must be made prior to departure of the researcher. If samples are collected for analysis elsewhere, the raw data must be provided to GCHM within 6 months of receipt of those completed analyses by the researcher; GCHM will observe the professional rights to data and will not release these data to others until such time as the researcher publishes results or gives written permission for release.
7. Two printed and bound copies of each publication that draws on data collected on objects or samples in GCHM collections shall be provided to GCHM within three months of publication.

Sampling and analysis of objects from the GCHM collection is restricted and must adhere to the aforementioned policies and procedures as well as the following:

1. Anyone who wants to carry out scientific analysis of objects in the GCHM collection should complete the **Request to Access Collections**
2. Researchers requesting sampling and analysis of human remains should also complete the **Request for Access to Human Remains** agreement.
3. Before any sampling or analysis may occur, all appropriate forms must be completed, submitted to the Head of Collections, and approved by the Head of Collections. Researchers should allow at least 4 weeks from submission of the application for the Museum to reach a decision.
4. If the object(s) leave the Museum for analysis, a **Loan Agreement** must also be in place.
5. Analytical techniques and the collection and preparation of samples must minimize the level of risk to objects.
6. Wherever possible, samples should be taken at GCHM and in the presence of Museum staff.
7. Samples and any remains from analysis must be returned to GCHM within 6 months of the procedure being carried out.
8. The Head of Collections will record the sampling of specimens as an Event in the Museum's collections management system (PastPerfect). Once final results are available, whether as a publication or in some other form set out in the application, the Head of Collections will write a short summary of the project, its aims, results and outcomes, based on the application and on results produced, This will be entered as a Narrative on PastPerfect, which will be publicly available via the Museum's website, promoting an understanding of how the Museum's collection serves to further knowledge and understanding.
9. All reports, theses, and publications must acknowledge the assistance of GCHM (as stated above). Permission to reproduce images of Museum objects must be sought separately and a reproduction fee may apply.

Access to collections for purposes of photography carries more specific policies and procedures:

1. All photographic projects will require the presence of a staff member and photography will need to be done at the convenience of GCHM staff. Therefore, it will be necessary to schedule access with the Head of Collections *at least two weeks in advance*.
2. Users must submit a completed **Request to Photograph Collection Items**.
3. The photographer/researcher must make initial artifact selection from collections by contacting the Head of Collections. Selections by the photographer must be approved by the Head of Collections and a staff member will accompany the photographer during the selection. For some short-term or very specific projects.

4. All photographers must read and comply with the following procedures and conditions for photography:
  - a. All photographers must be prepared to bring their own equipment, including lights, backdrops, extension cords, special props, and scales. Photographers are warned that, due to crowded conditions, there is little room for elaborate photographic set-ups.
  - b. GCHM assumes no responsibility for photographic equipment and will not be able to store it at the museum.
  - c. Artifacts should be photographed with a minimal amount of handling.
  - d. Artifacts are not to be arranged in any manner detrimental to them: no stacking or precarious balancing. They may not be suspended without the approval of the Head of Collections.
  - e. No adhesives, including tape or labels, may be used on artifacts.
  - f. No nails, wires, or pins may be used in or on artifacts. No sewing on artifacts is permitted.
  - g. No waxy or oily substance may be used to prop artifacts.
  - h. No alterations, repairs, or cleaning of any kind may be attempted.
  - i. Floodlights, etc., should be on only during the initial set-up, reading of light meters, and actual photography. Unnecessary and prolonged exposure to the intense heat and rays of such lamps can cause serious drying, shrinkage, or other damage to artifacts.
  - j. If the photographic session requires more than one day, all artifacts will be returned to locked areas. No materials will be left in set-ups overnight.
5. Written permission to reproduce or publish existing GCHM photographs must be secured from GCHM and/or the copyright owner if other than GCHM. Researchers and photographers are responsible for payment and compliance with all applicable fees and conditions for reproduction/publication, which are outlined on the **Standard Fees for the Reproduction of Images** form.
6. The citation for any GCHM photograph published must credit the specific collection and GCHM (see above). If there is a GCHM accession number, it must be part of any citation.

Visitors must leave their extraneous possessions in their cars (large purses, backpacks, briefcases, etc.) Large items will not be allowed in collections storage. Visitors may bring in only maps, notepads, project paperwork, pencils (no pens), etc.

Please do NOT re-shelve objects. Before visitors leave, they must sign and return completed **Work/Activities Record** form.