



Mennonite Life

Collections Management Policy 2025-2028

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I. Introduction

A. Statement of Purpose

This Collections Management Policy governs all aspects related to the development, management, preservation, use, and accessibility of Mennonite Life's collections. The policy provides a framework of professional standards to establish guidelines for managing the collections.

The Collections Management Policy is a comprehensive written statement that:

- Sets forth the mission of Mennonite Life
- Explains how this mission is pursued through collection activity
- Articulates the organization's professional standards regarding objects in its care
- Serves as a guide to staff and volunteers in carrying out their collections-related responsibilities
- Provides the public with information about what objects and archival materials the organization collects and preserves and how the organization performs these functions

This policy was developed and drafted by the staff of Mennonite Life with the assistance of the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts (CCAHA) as part of an initiative funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences.

B. Process of Establishing Policy

This Collections Management Policy is a working document. Any errors, omissions, or other necessary changes will be identified and updated by Mennonite Life's staff in a timely manner.

All keystone policies are approved by the Board of Directors. The final draft was submitted to the Board of Directors for comment and approval.

The policy was written by the Collections Curator, Emily Immel, and the Archivist/Librarian, Julia Wiker, with input from the Executive Director, Jean Kilheffer Hess.

C. Statement of Authority

Mennonite Life is organized as a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation and is

overseen by a Board of Directors. The collection is owned by Mennonite Life.

The Board of Directors' role in managing the collection is to approve policies and to ensure that the organization's functioning, with regard to collections management, aligns with professional standards and the strategic goals and mission of the organization. The day-to-day management of Mennonite Life is delegated to the Executive Director, who bears the ultimate responsibility for implementation of this Collections Management Policy.

D. Permanent Collections Charge

The primary focus of the Collections Department at Mennonite Life is to care for and exhibit its collections in order to fulfill the educational mission of the organization. With the support of the Board and other organizational departments, the Collections Department is dedicated to enhancing and maintaining stable storage and exhibit environments. This ensures longevity of all objects and archival materials while maintaining an accessible, comprehensive collection that reflects the diverse history of Mennonites. Above all, the Collections Department advocates for the proper stewardship of the collection and its historic properties so that they may continue in perpetuity.

Mennonite Life's permanent collections are overseen by the Collections Curator and the Archivist/Librarian.

The **Collections Curator** has primary responsibility for the care and management of the object collection, exhibit development, and object conservation. This includes new acquisition processing, and generating and maintaining systematic records and documentation of the usage, location, condition, and disposition of objects in the collection. The Collections Curator is responsible for temporary and long-term exhibit development and installation, object collection-focused public programming, objects research, environmental management, pest management, and artifact preservation and housing.

The **Archivist/Librarian** has primary responsibility for the care and management of the archival and library collections. This includes new acquisition processing, and generating and maintaining systematic records and documentations of the usage, location, condition, and disposition of archival and library materials in the collection. The Archivist/Librarian is responsible for assisting with exhibit development and installation, archival and library-focused public programming, archival research, environmental management, pest management, and archival preservation and housing.

The **1719 Museum Administrator** has responsibility for the use and interpretation of the Education Collection objects at the 1719 Museum site, as well as assisting in responsible preservation and management of the 1719 Herr House, a building on the National Register of Historic Places.

The **Educator** will be involved with the development and strategic use of the Education Collection, ensuring it aligns with Mennonite Life's mission and educational goals. The Educator will actively participate in museum exhibit development by collaborating to shape the themes and narratives presented.

E. Code of Ethics

Mennonite Life recognizes the codes of ethics of the following organizations:

- American Association for State and Local History (AASLH)
- American Alliance of Museums (AAM)
- Code of Ethics and Professional Practices for Collections Professionals (CS-AAM/ARCS)
- Society of American Archivists (SAA)
- American Library Association (ALA)

In general principle, Mennonite Life affirms and supports the contents of these codes. Mennonite Life also has its own Code of Ethics.

F. Review and Revision

This policy shall be reviewed by the Collections Curator, the Archivist/Librarian, and the Executive Director every three years with any changes reported to the Board of Directors at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Any major changes regarding the collections and/or their management may necessitate more frequent revisions.

The policy will be reviewed outside of the regularly scheduled reviews as deemed necessary by the Collections Committee or when there is an organizational change that necessitates a review.

G. Public Disclosure

Once approved by the Board of Directors, copies of this Collection Management Policy will be provided to the Board of Directors and appropriate staff of Mennonite Life. The policy will be made public.

II. Mission and Collections

A. Institutional Mission

Mennonite Life's mission is to hold, honor, and share items and stories featuring the lived experiences and faith values of Lancaster Mennonites and interrelated communities.

B. Description and Scope of Collection

Mennonite Life seeks to preserve, interpret, and share the rich history, cultural, and faith traditions of Lancaster, Pennsylvania area Mennonite and Amish communities. With a focus on the history, beliefs, practices, and contributions of Mennonites and Amish, the museums aim to engage visitors in meaningful exploration and dialogue about their experiences in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and relationships with interrelated communities. Mennonite Life also delves into the history of Mennonites and their interactions with Indigenous cultures to commemorate complex relationships and foster understanding, reconciliation, and dialogue on colonialism, cultural exchange, and social justice through preserving and interpreting relevant artifacts.

The Lancaster County area serves as the focal point of Mennonite Life's geographic breadth. Because of Mennonite Life's connections to LMC: A Fellowship of Anabaptist Churches (LMC), formerly Lancaster Mennonite Conference, and the Atlantic Coast Conference of Mennonite Church USA (ACC), the geographic scope can extend into neighboring Pennsylvania regions including: York, Lebanon, Dauphin, Cumberland, Adams, and Juniata Counties, as well as other states such as New York and Florida. All potential acquisitions are considered and compared for overlap with other collecting institutions in Lancaster, other Mennonite historical societies, and organizations with connections to LMC or ACC.

Mennonite Life's collection scope encompasses artifacts, documents, artworks, and ephemera that represent the following thematic areas:

- Early Mennonite Settlement and Migration
- Religious Beliefs and Practices
- Community Life and Social Practices
- Material Culture and Traditions
- Anabaptist History and Martyrdom
- Mennonite and Amish Contributions and Influences
- Indigenous Cultures and Mennonite Relations

Mennonite Life's collection scope excludes items unrelated to Anabaptist history, artifacts lacking provenance or significance to the Mennonite and Amish communities, items with undue restrictions, materials that are physically and/or informationally duplicative to current holdings, items in poor condition, and objects that do not align with the museum's mission and interpretive goals. It also excludes items that perpetuate stereotypes, misrepresentations, or cultural appropriation of Indigenous peoples, as well as objects lacking provenance or significance to Mennonite history and its interactions with Indigenous cultures.

Collection Development Guidelines:

- **Acquisition Criteria:** Acquisitions must align with the museum's mission, interpretive objectives, and collection scope. Preference is given to items with provenance, historical significance, and relevance to the Mennonite experience.
- **Documentation and Provenance:** Acquired items should be accompanied by clear documentation, provenance information, and contextual details to facilitate research, interpretation, and ethical stewardship.
- **Preservation and Care:** Mennonite Life is committed to preserving and caring for its collection through proper storage, handling, conservation, and maintenance practices in accordance with professional standards and best practices.
- **Accessibility and Interpretation:** The museum strives to make its collection accessible to diverse audiences through exhibitions, educational programs, digital initiatives, and community outreach efforts that promote understanding and appreciation of Mennonite history and culture.
- **Community Engagement:** The museum is committed to meaningful collaboration with both Mennonite and Indigenous communities, as well as other descendant groups and stakeholders. Engaging directly with Anabaptist communities is a central aspect of our approach, allowing us to gather insights and perspectives that inform our collections, exhibit development, and interpretive practices. We recognize the importance of fostering dialogue around collections within congregations and community organizations to ensure that we are authentically representing and preserving Anabaptist traditions and histories.

Additionally, we seek the input, collaboration, and consent of Indigenous communities when acquiring, interpreting, and exhibiting materials related to Indigenous experiences and histories. Through active engagement and respectful partnerships, the museum strives to ensure that all represented communities are honored, and their cultural narratives are responsibly and accurately conveyed.

- **Ethical Stewardship:** Mennonite Life is committed to the ethical stewardship

that respects the values and cultural traditions of the Mennonite, Anabaptist, and Indigenous communities it serves. Acquisitions and collections practices are guided by principles of cultural sensitivity and community consultation, ensuring that materials are preserved and interpreted with integrity and respect. The museum also prioritizes the respectful treatment, repatriation, and restitution of cultural items, including Indigenous ancestral remains, in alignment with Indigenous protocols and rights.

Collecting Strengths and Priorities: Archives and Library

The Mennonite Life Library and Archives has a wealth of materials related to Lancaster Mennonite history and beyond. The archives houses a wide array of personal papers collections of individuals and families, genealogical research papers, and church and organizational records, and is also home to a wide variety of individual documents that do not belong to any one collection. Highlights include twentieth-century photographs, diaries, letters, deeds, audiovisual materials, and even some born-digital materials. Of particular note in the library collection are rare items such as books published by Lancaster Mennonites, Froschauer Bibles, Martyrs Mirrors, and hymnals, contributing to a comprehensive repository of Mennonite heritage and history. The library houses an extensive array of resources focusing on Lancaster-area history, Lancaster Mennonite history, and general Mennonite history, including numerous publications from Herald Press and other Mennonite publishers, alongside Mennonite and Amish periodicals.

Library collecting priorities include books that focus on Lancaster Mennonite history, including Old Order Mennonites and splinter groups like the Reidenbach Mennonites or Reformed Mennonites. Additionally, resources concerning related Lancaster County Anabaptist groups such as the Amish, the Church of the Brethren, River Brethren, and Brethren in Christ are sought after. Genealogy research books with connections to Lancaster Mennonite history, as well as biographies, particularly of Lancaster Mennonites or other Anabaptists are considered essential additions. Books offering overviews, statistics, and cultural insights into Amish, Mennonites, and other Anabaptist groups in general are also given priority, reflecting a commitment to preserving and sharing the diverse narratives of these communities. Rare items like Froschauer Bibles, early New Testaments, and other rare imprints related to Lancaster Mennonites and Mennonite history not already owned by Mennonite Life or related institutions are actively sought to enhance the depth and uniqueness of the collection.

In the archives, one priority is building a more comprehensive collection of church records. A great number of newer congregations, or those that have more recently joined LMC, are not yet represented, and should potentially be encouraged to donate

their records. There is a distinct need for acquiring archival materials related to underrepresented topics in the Mennonite faith, including but not limited to gender, race, and sexuality.

Collecting Strengths and Priorities: Artifact Collection

Mennonite Life prioritizes acquiring artifacts that reflect the diversity, faith values, and depth of Mennonite and Amish culture, with particular strengths in decorative arts, household objects, furniture, Fraktur, and textiles such as quilts, show towels, coverlets, and samplers. These items represent the artistic, cultural, and faith-centered expressions that have historically shaped and continue to influence Mennonite and Amish communities.

Current collecting priorities focus on unique and historically significant items, including Lancaster County Fraktur predating 1850, redware, fine arts, historical glassware, exceptional textiles, and contemporary artifacts that embody both traditional and evolving aspects of Mennonite and Amish life. In line with our mission, we actively seek objects that address underrepresented perspectives on gender, race, and sexuality, thereby enriching our collection with artifacts that reflect the breadth of experiences within these faith communities.

Mennonite Life limits its collection of Indigenous artifacts to items of direct, documented relevance to Native American activity within Lancaster County. When considering items with potential ceremonial or cultural significance, the museum adheres to the latest NAGPRA regulations, ensuring respectful handling, repatriation, and consultation processes. We prioritize transparent and collaborative relationships with Indigenous communities, in alignment with federal guidelines on the stewardship of culturally sensitive items.

This framework guides acquisitions while remaining flexible, allowing for future discussions that ensure our collections reflect the museum's commitment to preserving culture and faith-centered narratives.

Consideration of Other Organizations

In all collecting efforts, the Archivist/Librarian and Collections Curator must take care not to overlap with the missions of similar institutions actively collecting archival materials and objects.

Institutions whose missions may be considered include:

- LancasterHistory, Lancaster, PA: General Lancaster County history.
- Eastern Mennonite Missions, Lancaster, PA: LMC missions history.
- Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee history.

- Muddy Creek Farm Library, Denver, PA: Old Order Mennonite history; rare, early Anabaptist imprints.
- Mennonite Heritage Center, Harleysville, PA: Franconia Conference and Eastern District Conference histories (now combined as Mosaic Mennonite Conference).
- Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA: Church of the Brethren and broader Anabaptist studies. Scholarship on Amish.
- Pequea Bruderschaft Library, Quarryville, PA: Lancaster County Amish history.
- Juniata Mennonite Historical Society: Juniata-area Mennonite history. Some congregations in Juniata County historically belonged to LMC, and many still do.
- Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, Goshen, IN: General Mennonite history; rare and early Anabaptist imprints; Goshen College history.
- Sadie Hartzler Library, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA: General Mennonite history; EMU history; Virginia Mennonite history.

This collection scope statement serves as a guiding framework for the museum's acquisition, interpretation, and stewardship activities, ensuring coherence and relevance in its collection development efforts. By broadening our collection, we will enrich the narrative and ensure a more inclusive representation of Mennonite history and culture.

C. Purpose of Collection

Mennonite Life began in 1958 as the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Society, initially focusing on preserving and collecting archival and library materials related to the Lancaster Mennonite Conference and its congregations. Its mission expanded to include Lancaster-area Mennonites, their geographic spread, and the Atlantic Coast Conference of the Mennonite Church. To reflect that change, the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Society was shortened to "Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society" (LMHS).

LMHS further expanded its mission in 1969 when the organization purchased the historic property containing what was then known as the Hans Herr House. In 1971, the house was added to the National Register of Historic Places. To reflect the ambiguity of who lived in the house, the name was officially changed to the "1719 Herr House." While the Herr House was always under the legal management of LMHS, in practical terms it operated somewhat separately until 2018 when the LMHS Board of Directors clarified its status and encouraged all parts of the organization to operate as one team. In 2013, the Lancaster Longhouse was built. The name of the

museum changed several times, concluding with the 2021 change to 1719 Museum.

For years, LMHS worked alongside the Mennonite Information Center, a ministry to tourists under the supervision of Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM). The Mennonite Information Center, also founded in 1958, initially shared a building with LMHS before moving to its own building next door on adjacent property. In 1975, the Information Center acquired the Biblical Tabernacle replica, and it became part of the Information Center's programming.

In 2016 a special committee was formed to explore common missions, purposes, and governance of LMHS, the 1719 Herr House and Museum, and the Mennonite Information Center. In 2018, the Mennonite Information Center transferred from EMM to LMHS.

In October 2021, the organization rebranded as Mennonite Life. The building formerly known as the Historical Society came to be known as the Collections Building, the Mennonite Information Center became the Mennonite Life Visitors Center, and the 1719 Herr House and Museum became the 1719 Museum.

Today, Mennonite Life focuses on preserving, interpreting, and sharing the rich cultural traditions from Lancaster Mennonite communities through its object, archival, and library collections. Objects and archival materials have primarily been acquired for preservation and interpretation, although some may be designated for interpretive operation and hands-on use. There have been a small number of exhibits, as well as many events, featuring items from the collections. Collection materials have been invaluable resources for research and have been cited in numerous publications, further highlighting their significance in documenting and understanding Mennonite history and culture.

The collections should be utilized both presently and in the future to align with Mennonite Life's mission and core values. This involves continuing to exhibit and interpret the collections to serve the mission effectively. Prioritizing the development of permanent and temporary exhibits, along with online exhibits, ensures that these items remain accessible to the public. Additionally, efforts should be directed towards digitization, facilitating broader sharing of Mennonite Life's holdings. By integrating these strategies, the collections can effectively contribute to the organization's mission and remain relevant for generations to come.

III. Acquisitions and Accessions

A. Methods of Acquisition

Mennonite Life is empowered by its governing authority, the Board of Directors, to acquire items for the collections by gift, bequest, transfer, and purchase.

"Acquisition" is the procurement of an object for the collection by Mennonite Life. "Accessioning" is the process by which the title to an object passes to Mennonite Life, establishing legal custody and ownership and providing information on how Mennonite Life acquired the object.

B. Authority

The Collections Curator and Archivist/Librarian are responsible for initiating the acquisition process in accordance with the criteria established in this document.

The Collections Curator and Archivist/Librarian compile a Quarterly Gift List that summarizes potential acquisitions considered over the past calendar quarter. This list is presented to the Collections Committee for review on the first Tuesday of the month following the end of each quarter. The Collections Committee is given a two-week period to review and vote to accept, decline, or partially accept the potential acquisitions based on the provided recommendations. The Collections Committee must return their completed sheets by the end of the two-week period. While voting is typically done electronically, there may occasionally be in-person meetings on the due dates for the voting sheets, and any such expectation that the meeting will be held in-person will be communicated to the Committee in advance.

Donations to Mennonite Life are accepted upon the approval of the Collections Committee.

Books purchased for, or donated to, the circulating library collection are not required to be presented to the Collections Committee.

Once the voting is received and tallied, a Deed of Gift is sent to the donors for the approved items, formally transferring ownership of these donations to Mennonite Life.

All purchased additions to Mennonite Life with a monetary value of \$1,000 or more must be approved by the Collections Committee prior to purchase. The Mennonite Life Code of Ethics addresses limits and considerations for purchases.

The Board Chair must approve any acquisition (by purchase or donation) that will involve significant staff time for processing, storage space, physical storage conditions, restoration, or financial stress. Approval is specifically required for any acquisitions involving oversized objects, extremely fragile objects, and obsolete analog and digital formats.

C. Criteria for Collection Acquisition

Mennonite Life only acquires an object for the collection with the intention of retaining it for the long term. No objects or documents shall be accepted into the permanent collection of Mennonite Life with the sole purpose of being deaccessioned and sold.

Before any object is acquired by any means, the following criteria must be met:

- **Collections Scope**
Mennonite Life will only accept acquisitions that fall within the scope of its collections (as defined in this policy in [*Section II.B. Description and Scope of Collection*](#)) and collection criteria as defined in additional organizational policies.
- **Format**
Mennonite Life primarily collects items fitting these formats and type categories: fine arts (e.g. paintings, works on paper, sculptures, etc.), decorative arts (e.g. dishware, textiles, jewelry, furnishings, etc.), books, anthropological artifacts, historical artifacts, archival collections, photographs, and digital material.
- **Title**
All acquisitions must be accompanied by clear legal title presented by the donor, seller, or the donor's authorized agent. Once donated, all objects become the exclusive property of Mennonite Life. As unrestricted gifts, the donor relinquishes all claims to the donated items, allowing Mennonite Life to manage, care for, and dispose of these objects and archival materials in accordance with ethical and legal best practices in museum and archival fields.

When proposing an object for acquisition, clear title must be established through a donor-signed Temporary Custody Form where the donor acknowledges the intent to make a gift of the object and/or archival material and affirms that they have free and clear title to it. A Deed of Gift, signed by both the donor and Mennonite Life, completes the transfer of ownership and acknowledges the acceptance and receipt of gift.

Donors may specify on the reverse of the Deed of Gift that not all copyright is transferred. This is most commonly done with published materials, such as books.

Information about provenance is requested upon potential acquisition. If the object's provenance is questionable or there is reason to doubt its provenance, Mennonite Life may request additional documentation. The provenance of the artifacts or archival materials must be sufficiently documented. Mennonite Life shall refuse to acquire objects or archival materials if there is cause to believe that their acquisition involves the destruction of historic sites, buildings, structures, habitats, districts, or objects.

- **Condition**

The object is in good condition (or can be stabilized or conserved or, in the case of born-digital materials, transferred to another medium or converted to another format).

The object is in condition to be exhibited or, if for study, sufficiently stable to permit that activity. The object is not immediately hazardous to people or property.

Exceptionally large or damaged objects, or any object that cannot immediately be made available for research due to its size, poor state of preservation, physical instability, risk to staff or other objects, etc., will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and provisions required for the care and conservation of the object will be considered before accepting the object(s).

- **Mennonite Life's Resources**

Mennonite Life has the resources necessary to acquire and care for the object. Mennonite Life can afford to transport, describe, and conserve the object. If an object is not offered as a gift or bequest, Mennonite Life must be able to afford to purchase the object using the annual budget and designated acquisition funds.

Mennonite Life has the capacity to secure, store, and/or exhibit the object safely.

- **Duplicates**

In general, Mennonite Life will not acquire duplicates of objects or materials already in the collection.

Exceptions to this may be considered on a case-by-case basis under the following circumstances:

- Objects that are duplicates of items already in the collection may be accepted if they are in better condition, have a particular historical significance or association, or are planned to be used for loans.
- **Legal and Ethical Considerations**
The object has not been illegally imported into the United States or illegally collected within the United States. Mennonite Life has done due diligence to confirm the object's legal status to the best of its ability prior to acquisition.
- **Conditional Acquisitions**
Gifts and bequests should be accepted only if they conform to the stated policies of Mennonite Life. Objects that are subject to the imposition of special and restricting conditions may not be accepted if the conditions are contrary to the interests of Mennonite Life.

All gifts should be unrestricted, with no commitment made to the donor to retain them in perpetuity or to exhibit them, unless agreed upon by Mennonite Life and the donor.

Conditions regarding exhibiting objects should be avoided except under the most unusual circumstances. If such conditions are accepted, these conditions should apply only to a limited, specified period of time.

Mennonite Life will not accept collections donated with the condition that the entire collection be accessioned. Mennonite Life has the right to choose, within a proposed donation, which objects it wishes to keep. For manuscript and archival collections, the standard practice of accepting an entire collection and selecting materials for disposal as the collection is processed will be followed.

Mennonite Life will not accept materials that are restricted from public access in perpetuity.

- **The Education Collection**
Mennonite Life may accept donations of non-collection reference materials, equipment, supplies, and objects given to support and further its educational objectives. The Education Collection contains objects designated for hands-on, interactive use in educational programs and activities. These items may include authentic deaccessioned artifacts, replicas, reproductions, and contemporary pieces that illustrate historical techniques, tools, and practices. The collection includes deaccessioned museum collection items, purchased items, donated objects, or objects transferred to Mennonite Life from other institutions, with the agreed-upon knowledge that they will be non-accessioned, disposable Education Collection pieces.

Because these items are not formally accessioned, they do not have to be reviewed by the Collections Committee or Board of Directors prior to their placement into the Education Collection or to their disposal.

A numbering system following the convention EC.(four-digit year).(next sequential number) will be prominently marked on Education Collection items. Example: EC.2024.001, EC.2024.002, EC.2024.003, etc. Education Collection objects should be kept together in an organized manner and periodically inventoried by those utilizing the collection. Such parties that utilize the Education Collection will be responsible for the maintenance of the collection and for notifying Collections Department staff should an object need to be added to the Education Collection or disposed of.

Refer to the Education Collection Scope document for objectives, criteria, acquisition processes, and details about the use and management of the Education Collection.

- **The Use Collection**

The Use Collection contains objects intended to be used as exhibition props or to be used for their specific purpose (such as non-historic furniture). The collection is composed of non-historically relevant items; some of them may be deaccessioned museum collection items that have been given to the Collections Department as exhibit props. Because these items are no longer part of the collections, or were never part of the collections, they do not have to be reviewed by the Collections Committee or Board of Directors prior to their placement into the Use Collection or to their disposal. A numbering system will not be utilized for this collection, though each object must be prominently marked "USE ITEM" or "EXHIBIT PROP," so as to not confuse them with the Museum Collection, should they still have accession numbers on them.

D. Acquisition Terms and Restrictions

Mennonite Life will not pay for a monetary appraisal of the proposed gift for a donor, nor recommend an individual appraiser. A board member, employee, or any consultant or volunteer employed by or associated with Mennonite Life may not appraise a potential gift for a donor.

Objects that the donor intends Mennonite Life to sell, or that Mennonite Life intends to sell, will not be accepted and formally accessioned.

No person who is a staff member, board member, or volunteer, or who is involved in the policy or management of Mennonite Life, may compete with Mennonite Life for objects or take advantage of privileged information which has been received. Should a conflict of interest develop between the needs of the individual and Mennonite Life, the needs of Mennonite Life will prevail. This is addressed in Mennonite Life's Code of Ethics.

Donations with undue restrictions on access are not accepted, as well as donations that Mennonite Life is unable to take care of due to condition issues or storage constraints.

Fakes and forgeries are not accepted.

Donations must be approved by the Collections Committee.

Mennonite Life is under no obligation to accept every gift that is bequeathed to it and will only accept bequests that further the mission and meet all criteria for acceptance. Bequests must be approved by the Collections Committee.

Transfers refer to the movement of objects between institutions, typically as a means of aligning collections with mission and scope. Transfers may occur when Mennonite Life determines that an object no longer fits its collections scope but may be better stewarded by another institution. Transfers should only occur between Mennonite Life and other nonprofit educational institutions, such as museums, archives, or libraries.

Any object considered for transfer must first be formally deaccessioned, following the procedures outlined in this policy. Proper documentation, including a signed Transfer of Ownership form, is required for all outgoing or incoming transfers. Incoming objects received through transfer are treated as new acquisitions and must meet all standard criteria for acceptance and review.

The Collections Curator or Archivist/Librarian may spend up to \$1,000 to purchase objects, archival materials, or rare books that meet accession criteria without prior Collections Committee approval, and with executive director approval. Purchases above \$1,000, but below \$10,000, must be approved by the Collections Committee. Purchases in excess of \$10,000 must be approved by the Board of Directors. Purchases of circulating library books are not included in this policy.

Gifts are acknowledged in catalog records, public events, and exhibit labels using a standard credit line, "Gift of (Donor), (Year of Acquisition)," unless the donor specifies

a different credit line on the Deed of Gift. Purchases are credited as "Mennonite Life Purchase, (Year of Purchase)." Found in Collection items are credited as "Permanent Collection."

E. Documentation of Acquisitions and Accessions

The complete procedure of acquiring and accessioning any object will be recorded. All documents relating to the object, including the signed Deed of Gift, will be deposited in the relevant collection files.

Upon receipt of the acquisition, the donor completes a Temporary Custody Form. The potential acquisition is then added to the Acquisition Number Log and tracked using a number based on the quarter: (1-4)Q(last two numbers of the acquisition year).(numbering beginning at 1). Example: 1Q24.1, 1Q24.2, 1Q24.3, and so on.

When donations are accessioned, a unique number is assigned based on the standard two- part numbering system: (year).(number with 2 leading zeroes).(number with two leading zeroes). Example: 2024.001, 2024.002, 2024.003, and so on. These numbers are then recorded in the Acquisition Number Log and added to that year's Accession Log. The first accession number of each year is reserved for books purchased by the Archivist/Librarian.

IV. Deaccessions and Disposals

Deaccessioning is the process of permanently removing accessioned collection objects and materials from Mennonite Life's permanent collections. The sole purpose of deaccessioning any object or archival collection owned by Mennonite Life is to refine and strengthen the overall collections, in line with the organization's educational mission. This objective should be achieved either by using designated disposal proceeds to acquire objects of better quality and significance or by deaccessioning an object of no appreciable monetary value in order to give appropriate space and care to the remaining objects.

Deaccessioning is an important collections management tool employed by collecting institutions around the world for a variety of reasons. As Mennonite Life's collections grow, objects that no longer fit the mission or parameters of the collection, or that cannot be properly housed, conserved, and/or exhibited, may be considered for deaccession.

Because deaccessioning can adversely affect an institution's collection, reputation, and ability to fundraise, all objects proposed for deaccessioning from Mennonite Life must be subjected to a thorough review. Procedures for the deaccession or disposal of materials should be at least as rigorous as those for accessioning and will be governed by the same basic principles. The decision to dispose of materials must be made only after scrupulous consideration of the public interest and the needs of researchers; the process of deaccessioning and disposal must be carried out in as open and public a manner as possible.

Mennonite Life will carefully assess all materials before accepting them in order to lessen the likelihood of deaccessioning. Nevertheless, there are valid reasons why materials in collections may be deaccessioned.

Partial deaccessioning, where only part of an accession is removed from the collection, is considered when an object or archival material is no longer suitable for the collection but the accession still has components that hold value. This approach helps in maintaining the integrity and focus of the collection while optimizing space and resources.

Archival processing includes selection and disposal of material on a regular basis. Material discarded as a part of this normal process is not subject to the same rigor of deaccession procedures as accessioned collection objects and materials.

Unless the objects or archival materials present an unforeseen detriment to the

environment, staff, and/or other surrounding objects, they shall not be deaccessioned for explicit purpose of raising funds in a way that discourages future gifts before at least three years from the time of acceptance into the collections.

Guidelines and standards have been set by professional organizations to promote clear, consistent, and ethical deaccessioning practices. The following policy for deaccessioning of materials from Mennonite Life is in accordance with the standards established by:

- American Association for State and Local History (AASLH)
- American Alliance of Museums (AAM)
- Society of American Archivists (SAA)

Considerations regarding deaccessioning are subject to the terms of acquisition, local regulations, and state and federal laws.

A. Authority

Deaccessions must be approved in writing by the Executive Director and the Board Chair. Deaccessions that are of considerable value or a sensitive nature must be approved by the Board of Directors.

The books in the circulating library collection do not require approval for deaccessioning. Books may be withdrawn at the Archivist/Librarian's discretion.

The Collections Curator and Archivist/Librarian propose objects for deaccession. An information report of deaccessioned items will be shared with the Collections Committee.

B. Criteria for Deaccessioning

Because Mennonite Life is aware of its role as a steward of the collection for the benefit of the public, it acquires only objects that it intends to retain for the long term and not with the intention of disposal.

To be considered for deaccessioning, an object must fulfill the following requirements:

- Be free from donor-mandated restrictions
- Be fully and legally owned by Mennonite Life
- Meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - The object or material does not meet the current criteria for purpose and scope of collections and hence does not support the organization's

mission.

- The object or material is redundant or is a duplicate, has no value as part of a series, and as such does not enhance teaching, research, or study.
- The object or material is unduly difficult or impossible to care for or store properly.
- The object is in a format that the organization cannot support, and has not been (or cannot be reasonably) converted to another format.
- The object has been extensively damaged or presents a risk to other materials in the collections and/or to the individuals working with the collections and cannot be restored without compromising its integrity.
- The object or material was acquired illegally or unethically, is requested for repatriation, or is shown to be the rightful property of another person or entity.
- The object has been determined not to be authentic.
- The organization is unable to preserve or manage the object or material properly.

C. Restrictions and Conditions for Deaccessioning

When considering deaccessioning, Mennonite Life will carefully weigh the interests of the public for which it holds the collections in trust, the interests of the scholarly and cultural communities, and Mennonite Life's mission.

Mennonite Life prioritizes accepting donations without restrictions. Legal compliance and possession of valid title will be verified for all items in the collection. Mandatory restrictions on disposition which accompanied a donation will be observed only if legally enforceable and not detrimental to Mennonite Life. When statements of donor's preferences accompany an acquisition, any departure from them will be carefully considered and negotiated with the donor or the donor's heirs or settled by appropriate legal procedures.

Under no circumstances will a deaccessioned object be given to, or otherwise placed in, the possession of Mennonite Life's staff, volunteers, board members, or any representative or immediate family member of the aforementioned.

Mennonite Life will not entertain requests to return an object that has been accessioned into the collection to the donor unless a well-documented and valid legal claim establishes that the donor did not have clear title to the object or archival material at the time of donation. Items returned under such circumstances will follow appropriate legal and ethical guidelines to ensure compliance with

institutional and professional standards.

Great care will be taken to avoid accessioning objects or archival material that do not fit the mission and Collection Scope so as to avoid the need to deaccession such materials in the future.

If restrictions on a gift exist, the donor must be contacted prior to deaccessioning, provided the donor is still living.

D. Methods of Disposal

Mennonite Life may dispose of a deaccessioned object by transfer (to a non-profit institution with a similar mission or to a reference collection or other department within Mennonite Life), sale, and witnessed destruction when it is warranted.

When recommending deaccessioning, all acceptable means of disposal must be considered. The method will be determined on a case-by-case basis for each deaccessioned object. Deaccessioned objects are usually disposed of through one of the following means:

- Gift / Transfer: Due consideration should be given to the cultural collecting community in general when disposing of objects. Objects should first be offered to a non-profit institution with a mission similar to that of Mennonite Life, and then to other non-profit institutions. The object's provenance will clearly be indicated. In any instance where title is transferred to another entity, Mennonite Life will disclose to the potential new owner or intermediary agent any action, such as the retention of a photocopy of the material, which may affect the monetary or scholarly value of the material.
 - **In no case shall a private sale, gift, or transfer to a for-profit institution or an individual be acceptable.**
- Sold: Objects should be offered through a public sale by a disinterested, reputable third party to avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest.
 - Any proceeds resulting from the disposal of objects will go to the Collections Care Fund, and be used either for purchase of acquisitions or direct care of the collection. Direct care is defined as investments in existing collections that enhance their life, usefulness, or quality and thereby ensuring they will continue to benefit the public.
- Witnessed Destruction: This option should be considered if the object has deteriorated so severely that it is no longer useful, and/or if it poses a hazard to staff, public, and/or other items in the collection that is not an acceptable risk. If condition of the object is a criterion for deaccessioning, Mennonite Life

may wish to obtain the recommendation of a qualified conservator before making the final decision. Privacy and confidentiality considerations may justify destruction of archival materials. Duplicates and non-museum quality items may also be considered for witnessed destruction.

E. Disposal of Undocumented Objects

If an object is undocumented, Mennonite Life must make a serious, diligent, and documented effort to learn more about it before considering it for disposal. This process may include:

- Determining as much about the object's status as possible – any record whatsoever of its documented history, even if incomplete.
- Consulting institutional records, such as accession records, old inventories, board minutes, old gift and loan agreements, correspondence, newsletters, etc., to attempt to connect the object with some documentation.
- Recording all additional information that is known about the object.

If an undocumented object is to be sold or donated, Mennonite Life can use a quitclaim deed that transfers claim and rights to the object to the new owner, with no guarantee of title transfer. Any risk of holding the undocumented object is therefore transferred to the new owner.

If an undocumented object is shown to have or can be reasonably assumed to have minimal value (intrinsic, monetary, research, etc.) to the organization, Mennonite Life may choose to donate the object to a nonprofit organization. The lack of title transfer will be transparently stated.

If undocumented objects are deemed to have deteriorated beyond repair, if disposal is required to protect the objects themselves or other objects in Mennonite Life collections, and/or if they have become a hazard to health and safety, immediate action as appropriate will be taken. Mennonite Life may wish to obtain the recommendation of a conservator in this event.

If it is discovered during review that an object is an old loan, Mennonite Life will take steps to resolve the loan status as soon as possible. Resolution actions should be in compliance with relevant state and federal laws. Mennonite Life may wish to consult legal counsel to ensure proper action is taken.

All actions to establish ownership will align with Mennonite Life's mission and ethical standards. Mennonite Life will act in the best interests of the public and its stakeholders, ensuring that decisions are free from conflicts of interest or any

actions that could be perceived as self-serving. In situations requiring further clarity, Mennonite Life will consult legal counsel experienced in museum or property law to navigate complex cases and ensure compliance with non-legal and ethical guidelines.

Once custodianship has been established through these practices, Mennonite Life may proceed with deaccessioning the object or archival material. This process will follow the same protocols established for other items in the collection.

F. Ethical Considerations

Mennonite Life has a public responsibility and is accountable for the decision to deaccession an object, and for the method by which disposal is implemented. The procedure will be documented and there will be no effort to conceal the transaction. Any proceeds resulting from the disposal of objects will go to the Collections Care Fund, and be used either for purchase of acquisitions or direct care of the collection. Direct care is defined as investments in existing collections that enhance their life, usefulness, or quality, thereby ensuring they will continue to benefit the public.

If there are restrictions on the gift, the donor must be contacted prior to deaccessioning, if the donor is still living.

G. Documentation of Deaccession and Disposal

Responsibility to the needs and reputation of Mennonite Life requires that, in preparing for and carrying out deaccession and disposal, Mennonite Life will be willing to publicly explain the purpose of the deaccession and the intended use of monetary or other proceeds of the disposal, to avoid detracting from Mennonite Life's reputation for honesty and responsible conduct, and to carry out the entire process in a way which will uphold public perception of its accountable stewardship.

To that end, the complete procedure followed when deaccessioning and disposing of any object will be documented in collection records.

Deaccessions are documented through the completion of a Deaccession Form which is signed by the Collections Curator or Archivist/Librarian, the Board Chair, and the Executive Director. Deaccession transactions, including the dates of the various required actions and the method and details of disposal, shall be fully documented with a Deaccession Form, in accession logs, in the collections management database, and in object file folders. The Collections Department shall retain all documentation of deaccessioned objects as part of its permanent records.

All documents related to the deaccessioning and disposal process will be deposited in the relevant collection files and retained permanently. Deaccessioning and disposal purposes and dates will be recorded on any object records, physical or electronic. The deaccessioned object's unique accession number will remain permanently in the institution's records, with clear indication that the object is no longer owned.

V. Incoming Loans

Mennonite Life borrows fine arts (e.g. paintings, works on paper, sculptures, etc.), decorative arts (e.g. dishware, textiles, jewelry, furnishings, etc.), books, and historical artifacts for the purpose of exhibition and educational programs as Mennonite Life's needs dictate.

A. Approval Process for Incoming Loans

Requests for objects from other institutions and individuals are to be proposed by the Collections Curator or the Archivist/Librarian. The Collections Curator or Archivist/Librarian is responsible for proposing loans to the Collections Committee.

The Collections Committee is responsible for approving incoming loans. The Collections Curator or Archivist/Librarian submits loans for approval to the Collections Committee. The responsible staff member will make a recommendation on whether the loan should be accepted or declined. The Committee will vote; if the loan is accepted, the loan will then be documented with a loan agreement.

The Collections Curator and Archivist/Librarian are responsible for ensuring appropriate documentation for incoming loans. The Collections Curator or the Archivist/Librarian completes a loan agreement, and the representative from the lending organization signs it. The loan term should be defined in the loan agreement, borrowed for a specific use, for a specific length of time. Long-term and permanent loans are prohibited. Upon return of the loan, both parties fill out a loan return receipt. If legal ownership changes during the loan period, whether by reason of death, sale, bankruptcy, gift, or otherwise, the new owner may, prior to its return, be required to establish the legal right to receive the object.

B. Terms and Conditions of Incoming Loans

Incoming loans will be accepted from individuals or institutions for exhibition and educational programs. Because of the liability and expense, Mennonite Life cannot store and maintain objects belonging to others that are not required for the aforementioned purposes. Mennonite Life's rental locker service will be the only exception.

The following criteria will be met before requesting or approving an incoming loan:

- Mennonite Life has determined that it can afford the estimated cost of exhibition, storage, security, transportation, collection maintenance, and all risk, wall-to-wall insurance for the objects on loan at the value established by

the lender unless the lender waives insurance requirements in writing. The amount payable by such insurance is the sole recovery available to the lender in the event of loss or damage.

- If the lender prefers to provide insurance for the object while it is on loan, the lender shall list Mennonite Life as additional insured on its own policy or will obtain for Mennonite Life a waiver of subrogation.
- Mennonite Life can provide care and protection that meets or exceeds standards required by the lender.
- Only objects that can withstand the normal rigors of packing, transport, handling, and display will be accepted on loan at Mennonite Life. Mennonite Life will conduct a basic condition report upon receipt of a loaned object and prior to the object's return to the lender.
- Mennonite Life will meet any restrictions the lender has placed on the object.
- Mennonite Life will not perform any type of conservation, cleaning, reframing, repair, or other action that alters the physical condition of a borrowed object without written approval from the lender.

If, after ten years, the objects have not been claimed, then, in consideration for their storage and safeguarding during that period, they will become unrestricted gifts to Mennonite Life.

The Collections Curator and/or Archivist/Librarian must complete a condition report documenting any damage, loss, and/or deterioration. They must also immediately notify the lender of any damage to the object.

In addition to the above criteria, Mennonite Life will take into account the mission of the institution it plans to request a loan from and the potential community benefit of the loan. The institution's purposes must align with Mennonite Life's values and not conflict with its mission. Loans will not be approved for institutions whose goals or activities are antithetical to those of Mennonite Life.

C. Long-Term Loans

Mennonite Life does not accept objects on indefinite term loan. A clear loan term with definite beginning and ending dates must be stated on all loan agreements. Term of loan should not exceed one year.

If objects are found in the collection that were previously deposited at Mennonite Life as permanent or indefinite loans, staff will make all possible efforts to contact the lender or immediate heirs of the lender in order to:

- Convert the loan into a gift, if the object is consistent with Mennonite Life's

mission and collecting criteria.

- Negotiate a new loan agreement with the lender.
- Return the object to the lender or the lender's heirs.

If staff are unable to locate and contact an object's lender, they must document all efforts and keep all documentation in the object's file.

If an individual or individual's heir claims ownership of a found-in-collection object and wishes for it to be returned, the burden of proof of ownership is on the claimant. The claimant must produce an original loan certificate in order to reclaim the object, and an heir must also produce proof that they are the legal heir of the donor.

VI. Outgoing Loans

Mennonite Life will loan fine arts (e.g. paintings, works on paper, sculptures, etc.), decorative arts (e.g. dishware, textiles, jewelry, furnishings, etc.), books, archival documents, and historical artifacts for the purpose of exhibition, educational programs, digitization, and conservation.

A. Approval Process for Outgoing Loans

Outgoing loan requests must be reviewed by the Collections Curator or Archivist/Librarian. The Executive Director must be made aware of an outgoing loan request. Final approval for outgoing loans must be obtained from the Collections Committee.

Outgoing loans must be documented by the Collections Curator or Archivist/Librarian.

B. Criteria for Outgoing Loans

Mennonite Life will evaluate requests to borrow objects for the purpose of exhibition and educational programs at other institutions when the policies and facilities of those institutions meet accepted standards of security, climate control, and insurance coverage, and when proper credit is given to Mennonite Life. Institutions wishing to borrow objects should begin the process early (six months or more in advance) and must submit proper documentation before an agreement will be signed.

To request an outgoing loan, the borrower must contact the Collections Curator or Archivist/Librarian. A loan agreement form should accompany the request.

When assured that proper care and protection will be provided, Mennonite Life may lend objects to other institutions provided that the following criteria have been met:

- No loans will be made to private individuals.
- At all times, the preservation of collections objects will take priority.
- Requests for loans should be received within the recommended period in advance of expected delivery date.
- There are no restrictions on the requested object that preclude making the loan.
- The object is in good condition and can withstand the stresses of travel, handling, study, and/or exhibition.
- The loan will not jeopardize the institution's own exhibition, loan, research,

and/or education programs.

- The object is owned by the institution and not on loan to it.
- All objects involved in the loan are accessioned.
- All objects involved in the loan are photographed.
- The borrower agrees to all conditions established by the institution.

In addition to the above criteria, Mennonite Life will take into account the requesting institution's mission and the potential community benefit of the loan. The institution's purposes must align with Mennonite Life's values and not conflict with its mission. Loans will not be approved for institutions whose goals or activities are antithetical to those of Mennonite Life.

C. Duration

Loans from Mennonite Life will generally not exceed the duration of one year. However, in cases where a borrowing institution requests a longer period, the Collections Committee may approve multi-year loans under the following conditions:

- A clear beginning and end date must be specified in the loan agreement, not to exceed five years.
- The borrowing institution must provide an annual condition report and confirmation of insurance coverage for the loaned object(s).
- The Collections Committee retains the authority to request the object's return at any time if conditions warrant.
- Renewal beyond the approved loan period requires a written request from the borrowing institution submitted at least two weeks in advance of the terminations of the loan. Mennonite Life reserves the right to deny an extension of the outgoing loan period for any reason.

D. Requirements and Obligations for Borrows

- **General Facility Report**

In order for Mennonite Life to consider a loan request, it is required that the borrowing institution complete a General Facility Report which documents the conditions under which the object will be displayed.

- **Condition Report**

The borrowing institution must complete a written condition report upon receipt of any loaned object, with an additional condition report completed prior to return of the object to Mennonite Life.

If an object is damaged while on loan, Mennonite Life must be immediately notified, and the damage must be documented in a condition report. The borrower should not attempt to preserve, conserve, or repair the object

without the written permission of Mennonite Life's Collections Curator or Archivist/Librarian.

- **Cost**

The borrower pays costs of insurance, packing, and shipping for all outgoing loan objects and is responsible for any damage to the loaned object during the loan period.

The borrower must provide a certificate of insurance stating that all loaned objects are insured for the amount stated in the loan agreement and that such coverage will be in effect while the object is in transit.

- **Reproductions**

The borrower must obtain prior written permission to photograph loaned objects. If the outgoing loaned object is featured in a publication or exhibit catalog, the borrowing institution should provide a complimentary copy of such materials to Mennonite Life to become part of the permanent record of the object.

- **Additional Requirements and Obligations**

If the object is on exhibit or used as part of public programming, the object must be displayed with the label, or if photographed, accompanied by the credit line, "Part of the permanent collection of Mennonite Life, Lancaster, Pennsylvania."

VII. Documentation

A. Collections Records

Mennonite Life will create and maintain up-to-date records of all objects under its care, including gifts, purchases, loans, or any other type of acquisition, even if temporary. Collection records are maintained by the Collections Curator and Archivist/Librarian. Collection records include, but are not limited to, accession records, catalog records, deeds of gift, loan forms, temporary custody receipts, deaccession records, and accession logs.

Mennonite Life maintains paper-based records and electronic records. Electronic records are managed using PastPerfect Web Edition.

Accession logs for each calendar year are maintained digitally, as there was no formal written accession log prior to 2021.

B. Backup System for Records

Mennonite Life's electronic collections records will be safeguarded from loss, destruction, and degradation.

Catalog records are backed up by PastPerfect Web Edition, hosted on AWS (Amazon Web Services). Some collections documentation is hosted digitally on the local server and is backed up by a contract service. Not all documents contained in individual accession files may be available digitally. As accessions are being processed, relevant documentation may be scanned and uploaded into PastPerfect Web Edition.

C. Inventory

To maintain, manage, and secure its holdings properly, Mennonite Life performs regular inventories.

The Archivist/Librarian conducts inventories of the library collection. This is done every five years. The Collections Curator conducts inventories of the object collection every five years.

Library inventory is done using paper printout records. There is also a spreadsheet to track items that have been marked as "lost" or "on search."

VIII. Collections Care

Mennonite Life is responsible for the care and preservation of all objects in its custody, including all objects in the permanent collection and objects on loan. Collections care and preservation activities are the responsibility of the Collections Curator and the Archivist/Librarian, in coordination with other staff and volunteers, as applicable. In addition to performing the types of care and management described in other sections of the policy, Mennonite Life will:

- Carry out all legal, ethical, and professional responsibilities required to provide the necessary care for all objects acquired, borrowed, or placed in the custody of Mennonite Life
- Take measures to prevent theft, vandalism, destruction or damage by pests, fire, water, or other elements
- Ensure that dedicated funds are available for collections care and conservation through the Collections Care Fund
- Maintain appropriate storage conditions within the constraints of budget and space allocation of Mennonite Life
- Monitor all storage areas to ensure appropriate environmental conditions and employ strategies to remediate any concerns
- Perform in-house assessments of collections as objects are accessioned, in response to problems that are revealed during object use, through regularly conducted inventories, through condition surveys of specific collections, and when objects are chosen for exhibition
- Ensure collections are physically protected through the use of: secured storage areas, appropriate housings, established environmental control, building-wide security systems, and regular collection maintenance
- Address conservation needs concerning damage or stability of collections by contracting with a qualified independent conservator
- Ensure that objects are handled appropriately as described in the Collections Procedures Manual
- Regularly monitor for pests and ensure that an integrated pest management program is in place to prevent or mitigate issues
- Practice regular housekeeping procedures throughout the building in order to maintain proper storage and exhibition conditions for the collections, deter unwanted pests, and expedite salvage procedures in the case of an emergency. An independent contractor cleans public-facing spaces, while the Collections Curator and Archivist/Librarian clean collections spaces. An all-purpose cleaner and microfiber cleaning cloth can be used to clean most flat surfaces. A broom and dustpan, and a vacuum, can be used to clean floors. Collections items should be cleaned with microfiber cloths or a textile vacuum

when appropriate. The Collections Procedures Manual contains more information on the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to use near collections.

- The Collections Procedures Manual also addresses relevant procedures regarding collections care.

IX. Insurance and Risk Management

A. Insurance

Though insurance is not a substitute for safety, security, or professional collections care, it does provide compensation in the event of loss or damage. Mennonite Life will provide insurance coverage for its collections, building, grounds, and general liability.

The Executive Director is responsible for the review and renewal of Mennonite Life's collections insurance policy annually.

B. Risk Management

All collections, buildings, and grounds of Mennonite Life should be secure and protected from vandalism, criminal activity, and accidents, to the extent practicable.

Mennonite Life conducts periodic reviews of potential risks to the collection including fire, natural disasters, vandalism, theft, human error, mechanical or operational system failure, pests, and deterioration. Mennonite Life maintains regular contact with the local fire and police departments. Personnel from these agencies should be aware of the historical value and significance of Mennonite Life's collections. Copies of Mennonite Life's floor plans should be held at the local fire department.

Mennonite Life maintains a security system in the Collections Building at the Millstream campus. The security system consists of a building alarm system. The security system is inspected annually. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring the regular inspection of the security system.

Mennonite Life ensures that an Emergency Preparedness and Response plan is in place in order to mitigate potential damage in the event of a disaster or emergency. The contents of the plan, particularly procedures, contact lists, and collections priorities for salvage and/or conservation, is reviewed and updated periodically.

The fire detection system consists of fire alarms and smoke detectors. The system is inspected annually. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring the regular inspection of the fire detection system.

The fire suppression system consists of a wet-pipe sprinkler system and fire extinguishers. The system is inspected annually. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring the regular inspection of the fire suppression system.

Staff will be trained in the proper use of fire extinguishers, fire drills, evacuation procedures for members of the public and staff, evacuation procedures for collections, and disaster response and recovery for collections.

X. Access and Use

A. Collections Access

In alignment with Mennonite Life's strategic goal to strengthen collections stewardship and access, this policy prioritizes both the responsible care of the collection and meaningful public engagement with it. As part of our shared emphasis on community access and our role as a dynamic steward of Anabaptist-related histories, Mennonite Life ensures that collections are available for education, research, exhibition, conservation, publication, and reproduction.

This commitment to access is rooted in the belief that stories, objects, and records are most powerful when shared. While ensuring the long-term preservation of our holdings, we intentionally remove barriers to access wherever possible. Policies governing access apply to physical objects, reproductions, and related documentation, with applicable legal privacy protections upheld.

Archives and Library Access

Researchers may visit the research library during operating hours without an appointment. Researchers may view any unrestricted items in the permanent collections. If specific materials require permission to view or are under restrictions, researchers must request permission at least one week in advance of their visit. Staff-only areas are not accessible to the public. Archives and library staff and volunteers are responsible for monitoring and assisting researchers.

Object Collection Access

Access to museum objects requires a scheduled appointment and will be facilitated by a member of Collections Department staff. When possible, items will be made available in the research library. If not, researchers will be permitted to enter museum storage under staff supervision. The Collections Curator will oversee object handling, following procedures outlined in the Collections Procedures Manual.

Collections Documentation

Researchers may receive selected documentation. However, donor information or object monetary values will not be disclosed.

While Mennonite Life strives for accuracy in records, we cannot guarantee completeness or correctness. If inaccuracies are identified, researchers may submit a written statement with citations. The Collections Curator or Archivist/Librarian will verify and update records if appropriate.

Photography and Videography

Non-flash photography of exhibits, collections, and buildings is permitted for personal, non-commercial use. Any photography or videography intended for publication, reproduction, or commercial use, whether conducted by visitors, professional photographers, or researchers, must be approved in advance by the Collections Curator and/or Archivist/Librarian and may be subject to reproduction fees outlined in the Library and Archives Fee Policy.

Special photography involving lighting, rearrangement, or retrieval from storage requires advance approval and must be supervised by the Collections staff. If photography is intended for promotional or media purposes (ex. news features), the Storyteller should be contacted in addition to Collections staff.

Staff Access

Collections Department staff and volunteers are permitted to access secure collections storage areas including: Museum Collection Storage, Archives Storage, Closed Stacks, and the Rare Book Vault. If other staff members need to access collections storage areas, they must acquire permission from the Collections Curator and/or Archivist/Librarian to enter at a scheduled time.

Appropriate Use

Collections are intended for exhibition, education, interpretation, and research. Objects from the permanent collection may not be used for utilitarian purposes, such as furnishing offices or storing other objects or supplies. Objects should not be displayed in non-museum environments, such as building and theater lobbies. Costumes or other items of apparel from the permanent collection should not be worn by live models.

B. Terms and Conditions

Access to Mennonite Life's collections is granted in accordance with institutional policies, security standards, and professional museum practices. All users are required to comply with the following terms:

- Access is contingent on staff availability and the condition and security of materials. Mennonite Life may limit the number of researchers or deny access to certain objects at its discretion.
- Users must comply with Mennonite Life's procedures regarding examination and handling of objects, personal photography, and the use or dissemination of collection-related information.
- Requests to reproduce visual images (photography and video) of the collections must be made in advance. Approval is subject to Mennonite Life's publication guidelines and fee schedule. All image uses must credit

Mennonite Life appropriately. One complimentary copy of any published work must be provided to Mennonite Life.

- Access to sensitive information, such as donor confidentiality, contact information, insurance records, or appraised values, will be restricted. Such information will be withheld unless disclosure is permitted under legal guidelines and institutional policy.
- Mennonite Life reserves the right to restrict access, modify use permissions, or revise policy terms at any time, in service of its mission to preserve the integrity of its collections.

XI. Intellectual Property

A. Photography & Reproduction

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, USC) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions or images of copyrighted material.

Photography of collections is permitted given the photographer is clear about the use of the photographs. If they are for personal use, there is no charge. However, if the photographer plans to reprint the photos, the photographer must pay a fee. Requests are made by contacting the Collections Curator and/or Archivist/Librarian, and informing the relevant staff of the objects and/or archival material to be photographed. Approval must be granted in writing by the Collections Curator and/or Archivist/Librarian prior to any photography taking place.

Filming of collections is permitted with prior written permission from the Collections Curator and/or Archivist/Librarian. If it is a news program or other publicity outlet, the videographer must also contact the Storyteller. All requests must be made in advance and approved in writing by the appropriate staff.

Photocopying or scanning of collections or collection documentation is permitted only when copyright laws are followed, particularly for published material. Entire books may not be copied unless they are in the public domain. Fees associated with photocopying and scanning are outlined in the Library and Archives Fee Policy. Requests must be submitted in advance and approved in writing by the Collections Curator, Archivist/Librarian, or Library Assistant.

Researchers who have paid the image reprint fee must send a complimentary copy of any material that uses reproductions of a Mennonite Life object or archival material were used.

B. Publishing

In granting permission to publish material obtained from Mennonite Life, the organization does not assume responsibility for infringement of copyright or of publication rights of material which may be held by others; the publisher assumes all responsibility for claims under the Copyright Law of the United States or for libel claims which may be made as a result of the publication.

The publisher agrees to credit "Mennonite Life, Lancaster, Pennsylvania" as the source of reproductions in all published works, including exhibits. A dissertation or

thesis is considered to be a published work. The name of the archival collection should also be included in the credit line, such as: "Mennonite Life, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Photograph Collection," or "Mennonite Life, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Carolyn C. Wenger Papers."

It is the responsibility of the Collections Curator, Archivist/Librarian, Library Assistant, or the researcher to determine whether materials in the collections are in the public domain or are protected by copyright. A statement of permission must be obtained from the holder of the rights, and proper credits given, for all reproductions that are not the intellectual property of Mennonite Life and do not fall within the confines of reasonable fair use. Examples of such materials may include images, entire articles, or entire book sections. The responsibility for obtaining additional permission required for the publication of collections remains with the publisher of the material.

Permission to publish reproductions obtained from Mennonite Life must be requested in writing by contacting the Collections Curator and/or Archivist/Librarian. Written approval is required prior to any use or publication. The Collections Curator and/or Archivist/Librarian is responsible for approving requests for publication.

Permission to publish reproductions obtained from Mennonite Life must be requested in writing by contacting the Collections Curator and/or Archivist/Librarian. Written approval is required prior to any use or publication. Permission is granted for one-time publication use only. In granting permission to publish, Mennonite Life retains the right to publish any of the materials in its collection and to grant publication permissions to others.