

Douglas Henry State Museum Commission (DHSMC)
Tennessee State Museum Foundation (TSMF)
Joint Collections Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2013

DHSMC Collections Committee (The Committee): Committee Chairman Charlie Cook, Deborah DiPietro, Mary Ann Clark, Lois Riggins-Ezzell (Ex-officio), Dr. Paul McCombs (Ex-officio)

TSMF Collections Committee (The Committee): Committee Chairman Dr. Paul McCombs, Trudy Byrd, Milah Lynn, Henry Walker, Charlie Cook (Ex-officio)

Tennessee State Museum Staff: Sharon Dennis, Leigh Hendry, Dan Pomeroy, Lori Thurston-Smith

Guests: Bobby Thomas, TSMF Chairman

Not Present: DHSMC: Deborah DiPietro, Mary Ann Clark

TSMF: Dr. Paul McCombs, Trudy Byrd, Milah Lynn

Call to Order: DHSMC Collections Committee Chairman Charlie Cook called the meeting to order at 4:20 p.m. without quorum at 4525 Harding Road, Suite 300, Nashville, Tennessee 37205. The purpose was to review the Tennessee State Museum's (TSM) standards and work related to its artifacts for new collections sub-committee members. Committee Chairman Cook opened the floor to TSM Director of Collections Dan Pomeroy to present the Collections report:

Director of Collections Dan Pomeroy provided agenda materials to all committee members which included:

- (1) a one-page essay on the collection at the State Museum (up-dated in 2011)
- (2) a half-page report on the "Save America's Treasures" (SAT) grant program
- (3) an up-dated report on objects purchased this fiscal year with state funds [fourteen pages]
- (4) a one-page list of dedicated funds in the Museum Foundation used to purchase objects, 1994 to the present
- (5) a list of two objects purchased with Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund support in 2012
- (6) a list of three objects purchased with Bell South Sculpture fund support in 2012
- (7) a one-page list of five objects purchased with "Tennessee Waltz" fund support in 2012 (NOTE: there were no "Waltz" purchases in 2011 and one in 2010)
- (8) a six-page report on TSM artifact acquisition priorities for the future (requested by Ms. Trudy Byrd)
- (9) a one-page listing of examples of artifacts that the museum has not been able to acquire due to a shortage of funds.

Save Americas Treasures Grant: Mr. Pomeroy presented a report on the status of the museum's Save America's Treasures grant. The museum received a federal allocation of \$400,000 through a grant program operated by the National Park Service through the Department

Douglas Henry State Museum Commission and Tennessee State Museum Foundation Joint Collections Committee Meeting Minutes, March 12, 2013 continued

of the Interior. The purpose of the grant is for rehousing the museum's collection into more stable storage conditions. Due to the recession, the museum has been able to purchase additional cabinets as the costs have been reduced from the quotes obtained for the original application. The museum has \$100,000 remaining in its account, which will be used for compact storage. The grant contract is scheduled to close in July 2014. The museum's staff hours committed toward the project serves as grant match for the re-housing project.

Manager of Curatorial Planning Miranda Fraley was primarily responsible for organizing the application and has continued managing the grant by preparing the monitoring reports which are submitted on a scheduled basis to the Department of the Interior. Mr. Pomeroy also credited TSM Executive Director Lois Riggins-Ezzell for her assistance in making U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander aware of the application.

Traveling Exhibitions: Mr. Pomeroy noted that the museum provides touring exhibitions to statewide museums for the purpose of making the museum's collections more accessible to all Tennesseans. The following exhibitions are currently on tour through the TSM's travelling exhibition program:

- *Bagels and Barbeque: The Jewish Experience in Tennessee* (in negotiation)
- *Becoming the Volunteer State: Tennessee in the War of 1812* (currently at the Museum of East Tennessee History, Knoxville)
- *Common People in Uncommon Times* (Giles County Historical Society, Pulaski)
- *Hoofbeats in the Heartland: Civil War Cavalry in Tennessee* (opening at the Slater Community Center, Bristol in May)
- *Japan 1945: Images by U.S. Marine Photographer Joe O'Donnell* (currently at the American Museum of Science and Energy, Oak Ridge)
- *We Shall Not Be Moved: The 50th Anniversary of Tennessee's Civil Rights Sit-Ins* (currently at Bessie Smith Cultural Center, Chattanooga)

Field Service: The museum curators continue their collaboration with the Library and Archives for the "Looking Back" program to document civil war objects in various private collections throughout the state.

Office Art: The museum has an agreement program to provide temporary loans to local state offices, including members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, which are displayed for visiting constituents. The registrar and other curatorial staff conduct a routine inventory of all office art loans.

Publications: The museum has produced the four recently released publications which include:

- *Civil War in Tennessee* (6,000 copies were printed with money raised through the Foundation)
- *Images of America: Tennessee's Cavalrymen*
- *Images of America: Tennessee's Union Cavalrymen* (both books from the Images of America series were written by TSM curator Myers Brown. The museum receives any proceeds from books sales.)

**Douglas Henry State Museum Commission and Tennessee State Museum Foundation
Joint Collections Committee Meeting Minutes, March 12, 2013 continued**

- ***Nathan Bedford Forrest and the Confederate Cavalry in West Tennessee***-A book developed by the Tennessee Historical Society and edited by Myers Brown was released off the press the day prior to the meeting.

Permanent Exhibitions: The museum collections staff recently upgraded five of its cases in the permanent history galleries to refurbish the appearance of the museums during the 6-month exhibition of the National Archives exhibition, ***Discovering the Civil War***. Cases were upgraded in the museum's Exploration, Civil War, New South and Early 20th Century Sections.

Temporary Exhibitions: The museum has presented 10 temporary exhibitions during the last 12 months, which included ***Guitars: An American Love Story*** and ***Discovering the Civil War*** with the museum's accompanying ***Civil War in Tennessee*** exhibit.

Collections Manual: Mr. Pomeroy facilitated an overview of the Collections Manual, which included the museum's policies and procedures including: the committee of record; procedures for procurement of acquisitions, justification, accession of objects, de-accession of objects, and security; as well as professional responsibilities and ethical conduct routinely expected for care of the collection within the museum field. The manual was originally developed by the museum in adherence to standards set by the American Association of Museums (currently the American Alliance of Museums). When the museum transitioned its governance to the DHSMC, the Commission formally adopted the guidance as part of its promulgation process.

Committee discussion focused on the museum's acquisition process which stipulates that there must be an agreement of three museum staff to acquire an object into the collection. A form must be completed with an adequate justification, approved by the Director of Collections, in order for the object to be considered for purchase. The museum curators are weighted with the responsibility of locating objects within their field of specialty which reflect a weakness in the museum's collection. Regardless of whether purchase funds are provided by the state or the foundation, all acquisitions must follow the same approval process and provide a clear justification with substantial rationale in the event the purchase is questioned.

Mr. Walker asked for a comparison of acquisitions funds available through the state and funds available through the Foundation for the past fiscal year. Mr. Pomeroy explained that an exact comparison cannot be made. The museum receives a range of support of \$50,000 to \$200,000 from year-to-year depending on the budget reversion requirements for any given year while Waltz net proceeds fluctuate from year to year. When cuts are made by the museum, funds are pulled from conservation funds and acquisition funds first.

Mr. Cook inquired how often the museum's collection was audited. Mr. Pomeroy noted that objects purchased through state dollars are subject to random audit by the state auditors. Mr. Walker inquired if objects purchased through the Foundation were also subject to audit. Both TSMF Chairman Bobby Thomas and TSM Director of External Affairs Leigh Hendry responded that the Foundation's third-party auditor, McKerley & Noonan, conducts an audit of items purchased through TSMF assistance when conducting the Foundation's annual financial statement.

**Douglas Henry State Museum Commission and Tennessee State Museum Foundation
Joint Collections Committee Meeting Minutes, March 12, 2013 continued**

Other restricted funds include gifts like the recent \$50,000 bequest from the estate of Nashville ceramic artist Sylvia Hyman. The money has been designated for the repair, restoration, and interpretation of contemporary ceramic art. Further discussion may continue with regard to whether the fund should serve as an endowment (which would provide \$2,000 per year for restricted use) or whether it should be a restricted fund.

Per Foundation member Trudy Byrd's request, Mr. Pomeroy compiled a wish list of collections from the TSM curators. The list was not thorough, but reflected the current concerns for the collection at this time. Mr. Pomeroy also provided a prospectus for a headboard and dresser handcrafted by an 18th century African-American slave from East Tennessee.

Mr. Pomeroy closed the Collections report by stating that the TSM collection has grown exponentially within the museum during the past 30 years with great credit to the museum's executive director, Ms. Riggins-Ezzell. The museum does practice accepted methods of collections care, which includes proper oversight of the storage environments of the collection.

The Committee members noted that they were pleased with Mr. Pomeroy's report and asked that he provide similar quarterly reports at all Commission and Foundation meetings. It was also recommended that the DHSMC and TSMF Collections Subcommittees meet jointly in the future to ensure the needs of the museum are met.

There being no further business, Chairman Cook adjourned the meeting at 5:38 p.m.

Charles W. Cook, Jr.
Chairman, Douglas Henry State Museum Commission Collections Committee
Approved and signed June 17, 2013