

What to Know About Donating an Artifact...

We thank you for your interest in donating an artifact to Oconee History Museum for future generations to enjoy. While we wish that we could accept all items, Oconee History Museum faces storage, funding, and staffing limitations that prevent us from doing so. Therefore, we appreciate your understanding and willingness to work with us.

Frequently Asked Questions

What kind of things do you accept?

We accept items directly related to Oconee County history/heritage into the Permanent Collection. We accept minimal archival materials (papers, ledgers, documents, etc). Other items may be considered for the Education Collection or as exhibit props. We do not accept items that may have been stolen; Native American funerary items; items found in a National Forest, State Park, or National Park; or items that may be dangerous/volatile/toxic.

Will it be on display?

We do not promise that any item will be displayed, nor do we promise to display items for any particular amount of time. Exhibits are chosen by the Oconee History Museum Curator(s). An artifact is chosen for display based on its relevance to the exhibit, its condition, and the item's space/display/security needs. Our collection is too large to display everything at once.

Can I have it back later on?

We do not accept permanent loans. When an item is donated, Oconee History Museum receives full title and copyright. If Oconee History Museum decides to forgo its ownership of the item later on, Oconee History Museum Curator and Board of Directors will try to find another museum or cultural institution that can care for the item. Because the original donor is entitled to a tax deduction relative to the value of the artifact donated, we cannot return the item to the original donor so that neither Oconee History Museum nor the donor will be in danger of participating in tax fraud.

You won't sell it, right?

Because Oconee History Museum has full title to the donated item, we reserve the option of selling the item. Because our collection is always growing, Oconee History Museum may need to remove items from time to time. Our Collections Management Policy states that items may be removed if they are determined to be unnecessary duplicates, irrelevant to our mission, excessively deteriorated or broken, dangerous/volatile/toxic, determined to be of questionable origin, or if the artifact's preservation needs exceed our resources. Our policy states that we have the right to dispose of artifacts via gift, sale, exchange, or destruction. Because you have surrendered your title to the object, we are not obligated to inform you of these decisions. HOWEVER, if the item is in good condition and would be suitable to another museum's collection and mission, we would first offer it to them for its long term care and use.

Will you put my name on it recognizing me as the donor?

No, Oconee History Museum has a strict policy against recognizing artifact donors. This policy is an issue of fairness and also protects a donor's privacy and security. Likewise, our mission is to recognize and interpret the artifact as a piece of history, not the generosity of the donor.

Is this type of donation tax deductible?

It is possible. We recommend that you consult with a tax professional. Oconee History Museum is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and most types of donations are tax deductible. Oconee History Museum legally CANNOT provide valuations or appraisals to determine the value of an artifact.

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How will my item be used or stored?

As owner of the donated artifact, Oconee History Museum reserves the right to use an artifact in any manner that it sees fit. The artifact may be used for exhibit display, hands-on educational activities, or kept in storage for use by visiting researchers. At the discretion of the Curator, the artifact may be photographed or copied for research or promotional purposes.

When not on display, can I request to see my items?

Yes. If given 10 days advance notice either in writing or by phone/e-mail, Oconee History Museum staff will be happy to remove an item from storage for you to view.

What will be said or written about my item?

Oconee History Museum strives to be historically accurate and unbiased in regards to our historic interpretation. Items of controversial or culturally sensitive nature will be treated with due care. We will NOT add or omit facts about an item based purely on a donor's request. Additional historic research may be performed by staff that may verify or invalidate accounts given about an item. New information about an item's history will be added to the item's permanent documentation and to any exhibit interpretation at the Curator's discretion.

What next?

- 1) Read this form, request a copy of our Collections Management Policy if desired, and consult staff with additional questions.
- 2) Complete *Proposed Artifact Donation Form* and submit with any supporting documentation.
- 3) Oconee History Museum will review your application and contact you with our decision within 60 days.
- 4) If accepted, Oconee History Museum will make arrangements to retrieve item.
- 5) If not accepted, Oconee History Museum will suggest alternatives for you to pursue.

PLEASE NOTE:

The cost of preserving artifacts for perpetuity can be costly. If an item is of interest to the Oconee History Museum, but its care is anticipated to be quite costly, Oconee History Museum may issue the prospective donor a cost estimate for the artifact's care and suggest that a financial donation in that amount accompany the donation of the artifact. Some examples of costs associated with preservation are listed below:

- ✓ Acid-free boxes, tissue paper, paper, plastic sleeves, etc for long-term storage
- ✓ Display forms/supports for storage or display of textiles, hats, and other items of loose shape
- ✓ Restoration costs for artwork or severely damaged items
- ✓ Pest treatments for wooden artifacts
- ✓ Appraisal & insurance fees for items of high value

