



## **Mennonite Heritage Village (Canada) Inc.**

231 PTH 12N. Steinbach, Manitoba, Canada R5G 1T8

Phone 204-326-9661 Email info@mhv.ca

www.mhv.ca

# **Donating Artefacts to the Collection Frequently Asked Questions**

## **1. What happens when I offer something to Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV)?**

When you contact MHV about donating an item to the artefact collection, you will be directed to curatorial staff who will discuss your potential donation with you. Please make an appointment before bringing your object to the museum so we can ensure curatorial staff are available.

We will ask you about the object's history and how it came to be in your possession. The object will be compared to other similar items in MHV's collection. A visual assessment will be made to determine its condition and any unique features. This initial appointment can be done in-person, over the phone, or by submitting photos via email. Based on the information gathered, curators will accept or reject an item and will inform you of the decision.

## **2. I have something I'd like to donate. Can I drop it off at MHV?**

No. Please do not drop off your item at MHV. We are interested in hearing about your object, but donations must be made by appointment to ensure that curatorial staff are available to discuss the history of the item with you, gather relevant information, and, if the donation is accepted, sign the paperwork that transfers ownership from you to MHV. If you visit the museum without an appointment and curatorial staff are not available, you will be asked to make an appointment and return later.

Since Reception staff are not authorized by MHV's Collections Policy to accept donations, drop-offs at the front desk or through the mail are also not permitted. Donations made anonymously via drop-offs or through the mail will also not be accepted. Objects can only be accepted through an Official Donation Receipt signed by both the curator and the donor. This paperwork is what makes the donation legal and is a requirement for all artefact donations.

## **3. How do I prepare for my appointment with the curator to assess my object?**

The value of an artefact often rests most heavily on what stories it can tell, so curators try to gather as much information at the time of donation as possible. Being prepared with some basic information about the object you would like to donate will be very helpful.

Curators will ask you about your object's history and its provenance (how it came to be in your possession). We will ask you about the biographical information related to the original owner of the object, including details like when the individual came to Canada, where he or she originally came from, where he or she settled in Canada, what denominational affiliation the person might have had, and information about the person's family including birth and death dates, marriage



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dates, parents and children, etc. We will also ask you about specific stories or unique features related to the item. This information is important in making our decision to accept or reject artefacts, so the more you can give us, the better. We encourage you to come prepared with as much information as you have.

#### **4. What are the criteria upon which an item is accepted or rejected?**

Curators assess your object with a variety of criteria in mind, including:

- *History*: What is the history of this object? Does it tell us something unique about Mennonite history?
- *Relevance*: Does it fit MHV's mission, vision, and mandate? Does it fit within the Collections Policy? Do we have items like this in the collection already or does it fill a gap in the collection? Does it bring a new perspective to the existing collection?
- *Condition*: What condition is it in? Does MHV have the means to properly care for the item?

#### **5. How long will it take for curators to decide on the item I'd like to donate?**

Artefact donations take time. It is highly unlikely that we will be able to make a decision about your item on the spot. Curators will make every effort to deliver a decision within a reasonable timeframe, however, it is hard to say how long this will take as each item is different and some items require more research than others. Timeframes also depend on how busy the curatorial department is with donations, exhibits, restorations, and other projects at a specific time.

#### **6. What happens if my donation is not accepted?**

MHV is unable to accept all offers of donation to the collection. Staff may recommend another museum or archive whose collecting mandate might be a better fit for your object. Items not accepted into the collection are not permitted to remain at the museum. If your item is rejected and is already at the museum, you will be asked to pick it up. MHV will not dispose of the item on your behalf.

#### **7. If my donation is accepted, how is ownership transferred to the museum?**

When an item is accepted into the collection, you and an MHV curator will both sign an Official Donation Receipt. This document confirms you have legal ownership of the object and that you have agreed to transfer your ownership of the item to MHV. This transfer of ownership is made without conditions or strings attached. You will receive a copy of the signed form for your records.

#### **8. What happens to my donation once it is accepted?**

Once an item is accepted, it is first accessioned, receiving a unique number that will be used to identify it. Curators create a "Donor File" that contains all the information compiled during the donation process, including the signed Official Donation Receipt and historical information produced by the donor. The object is then catalogued by a curator, who will create a new entry for



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it in MHV's collections management system, containing all the historical information gathered on an object as well as notes on the object's physical appearance, characteristics, condition, and its storage location. This physical and digital data remains linked to the item in perpetuity. After an item is catalogued, curators house the object in a storage location with the rest of the collection in the environmentally controlled artefact vault.

### **9. How will my donation be accessed, used, and cared for?**

MHV holds its collection in trust for the community. The collection serves as a permanent material culture resource that interprets the history of Mennonites in Canada. It is available to MHV's curatorial staff, as well as to external researchers and other museums or similar organizations, for research and exhibit purposes. MHV staff may also use items in the collection for outreach or programming purposes, including publications, lectures, workshops, or social media promotions. Items in the collection may be loaned to other museums or similar organizations for special exhibitions. These loans are governed by MHV's Collections Policy.

Care of the artefact collection is governed by the Collections Policy and the Collections Procedures. MHV is a member of the Association of Manitoba Museums (AMM) and its handling of the collection is in keeping with professional museum standards as outlined by the AMM (<https://www.museumsmanitoba.com/resources/pages/files/amm-standards.pdf>).

### **10. Will my donation be placed on permanent display at the museum?**

Accepting an item into the collection is not a guarantee that it will be placed on display. Although MHV strives to highlight the collection in its annual temporary exhibits or through other initiatives, with a collection of over 17,000 artefacts, the museum is only able to display a small portion of its collection at one time. Additionally, items that are particularly fragile, like textiles or archival documents, may not be considered for long-term exhibit due to their susceptibility to damage.

### **11. Can I place conditions on my donation?**

MHV does not accept artefact donations with conditions, such as insisting a donated object must be put on display or that it cannot be loaned out to another organization, attached to it. Donations become the legal property of MHV at the time of donation, which means MHV is free to make decisions about an artefact's handling, care, display, and management as it sees fit. All MHV's actions relating to the collection are governed by its Collections Policy.

### **12. I'm not ready to donate my item to the museum. Can I just loan it to the museum instead?**

Artefact loans to MHV are governed by the Collections Policy, which allows MHV to accept loans only for specific purposes and for a finite period. Although some exceptions might be made, items are typically accepted on loan for specific exhibits, not for general safekeeping, preservation, or conservation. The maximum loan period is two years, after which the loan agreement will need to be renewed or the loan returned to the lender.



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### **13. Can a donation be returned to me or my family members if I change my mind?**

No, once the donation process has been completed, the object(s) you have donated become the legal property of MHV and cannot be returned. We encourage you to discuss your desire to donate an item with your family or any others with an interest in the object before donating. If you have concerns, please discuss them with curators prior to donation.

### **14. Can I or my family members visit objects I or my ancestors have donated?**

Yes, where possible, MHV is happy to facilitate visits by donors and/or their family members to view objects they or their ancestors have donated. We do ask, however, that you make an appointment with curators prior to your arrival, to allow them enough time to retrieve the item from storage (if it is not already on display) and to ensure they are available to meet with you.

### **15. What recognition will artefact donors receive?**

At the time of donation, each donor is asked to fill out a “Donor Credit Line” on the Official Donation Receipt. The credit line specifies how a donor would like to be publicly acknowledged. A donor may wish to be recognized by name (i.e., “Jim Smith”), by family name (i.e., “The Smith Family”), together with another person (i.e., “Jim and Kathy Smith”), or on behalf of someone else (i.e., “Jim Smith, on behalf of the Smith Family”). A donor may also use the “Donor Credit Line” to indicate that he or she wishes to remain anonymous. This information will be included on a label that accompanies an artefact when it is on display.

### **16. May I obtain a tax receipt for my donation?**

As a registered charity, MHV can issue gift-in-kind income tax receipts for the fair market value of an object, in accordance with Canada Revenue Agency regulations. Appraisals under \$1,000 may be conducted by MHV curators. An independent appraiser is needed to assess values greater than \$1,000. The donor is requested to cover the appraisal costs, which is not a tax receiptable item.

### **17. Who do I contact with more questions?**

For further information, please call 204-326-9661 or send an email to [info@mhv.ca](mailto:info@mhv.ca).