



Lafayette Miners Museum

108 East Simpson St.

Lafayette, CO 80026

(303) 665-7030

DONATION SCREENING FORM

This is a pre-donation form for potential donors. Please do not leave your artifact at this time.

Thank you for considering the Lafayette Miners Museum for your potential donation. Please attached additional pages as needed. Pictures are appreciated.

Name:	Date:
Street address:	City:
State:	ZIP:
Telephone #:	Email:

Object Description:

Lafayette Miners Museum Mission Statement:

The mission of the Lafayette Miners Museum is to showcase the history of Lafayette, Colorado.

How does this artifact relate to our mission?

Please give a detailed ownership history:

Due to the Museum’s limited resources to conserve damaged artifacts, please include a description of the condition (mold, rust, cracks, cleaned with what solution, etc.):

We will contact you as soon as possible regarding your potential donation.

Museum use only

Received by staff member: _____

Collections Committee (Date): _____

Accepted Declined

Donor contacted

Deed of Gift signed

Potential Donation Information

The Process

While we greatly appreciate your interest in donating to the Miners Museum, we must be very conscious about what items we accept for the collections. Further, as the Miners Museum is working hard to become accredited, we must follow the guidelines set out by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). Both institutions focus heavily on mission-driven collecting.

--

Our Mission

The mission of the Lafayette Miners Museum is to showcase the history of Lafayette, Colorado.

Our Vision

The vision of the Lafayette Historical Society is to be a vibrant center that identifies, preserves, protects, and honors the heritage of Lafayette while inspiring curiosity to shape the future.

--

Thank you very much for your generosity and understanding. We rely greatly on contributions from our community. Below is all of the information you need to know about donating to the Miners Museum, including frequently asked questions.

How to Make an Object Donation

See below for frequently asked questions about the donating process.

1. When someone is interested in donating an object to the museum, the potential donor will give the Collections Manager all of the information they have about the object, including any supplemental materials.

An object becomes an artifact when it has a story to tell. We want to collect the story as well as the object. There are two ways to submit this information:

- a. Submit a picture of the item(s) with a completed Donation Screening Form. *The object(s) should not be left with the museum at this time—only the reference pictures and the form.*
 - b. In special cases, where the object must be left with the museum before being formally accepted, then you can sign a Temporary Custody Receipt with the Donation Screening Form. This allows us to temporarily hold onto the item(s) at the museum. You will need to indicate whether you want the object returned, or whether you authorize the museum to dispose of the item(s) if they are not accepted into the collections. *Temporary custody must be approved by the Collections Manager.*
2. Each potential artifact will be reviewed by our 5-member collections committee, and the committee will make the final decision whether to accept the object(s) for the collections. This decision process can take anywhere from 2 weeks to 3 months, depending on our backlog.
3. If the artifact(s) are accepted by the collections committee, then we will notify the donor. **To complete the donation process, the donor must**
 - a. sign a Deed of Gift, which is the legal transfer of ownership to the museum,
 - b. and deliver the physical item(s) to the Museum.
4. If the item(s) are not accepted by the collections committee, then we will notify you of their decision. If the items are at the museum, then you must pick them up within 30 days of being notified.

The Forms

There are three forms the potential donor may use during the donation process:

Donation Screening Form - This form is more of a questionnaire about the object(s) and gives our collections committee the information they need to evaluate the potential donation. Questions focus on what the donor knows about the item(s), whether the object(s) fit within the museum's mission, and if we can physically care for them.

DO NOT LEAVE THE ARTIFACT AT THE MUSEUM. This form is a questionnaire, it does not donate the item to the museum, nor does it protect the museum against liability. Please instead leave reference pictures and/or measurements.

Deed of Gift - This form is the legal transfer of ownership from the donor to the museum. Once this form is signed by both parties, the donation is complete and the artifact becomes museum property. This form is required for all artifact donations.

Please physically transfer the artifact to the museum only when the Deed of Gift is signed. Do not drop off donations without signing this form! They are abandoned property and can cause us years of hardship to legally resolve.

Temporary Custody Receipt - This form is for special instances where the artifact must be left at the museum during the evaluation process. One example would be if the donor does not live in the state and it would be a hardship to physically transfer it at another time.

NOTE: This form does not donate the item to the museum. It only authorizes our temporary custody of your property, setting the terms and duration. If the items are not accepted by the collections committee, we will try to contact you to return the objects. If the material covered by this receipt is not collected within 30 days of the termination of the deposit period, it will be treated as abandoned property, forfeited to the museum, and the museum has the right to discard the items as they deem fit.

Temporary Custody cases must be approved by the Collections Manager.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) How do I start the artifact donation process?

Contact the Miners Museum at LafayetteMinersMuseum@gmail.com or (303) 665-7030.

Fill out the Donation Screening Form and tell us...

- what it is
- the dimensions of the item
- its history; who owned it in the past?
- what was it used for?
- please include pictures if possible

The Collections Manager will contact you after the donation is reviewed by the collections committee with their decision.

DO NOT LEAVE THE ARTIFACT AT THE MUSEUM UNTIL YOU SIGN THE DEED OF GIFT.

2) What happens after I give the museum the information about my artifact?

The Collections Manager will do any needed research on the item(s) and present all of the information to the collections committee. This committee then decides if the artifact will be declined or accepted by the museum and for which collection.

The Collections Manager will contact you with their decision. If the artifact is accepted, you will receive a Deed of Gift (legal transfer of ownership) to sign and you'll set up a time to drop off the artifact. If the artifact is declined, when applicable, we may give you the contact information for a museum that is a better fit for your artifact. Please plan to pick up any declined donations left at the museum within 30 days.

3) What criteria are used to assess an artifact for acceptance?

First, is it within our scope?

The Museum will maintain and develop historically significant collections consisting of artifacts made or primarily used in Lafayette, CO. When possible, the materials accessioned should tell a story that the public can connect to through its provenance with an individual or group. The Museum seeks to focus its collecting activities primarily on the following:

- mining implements and documents representative of the coal industry of Lafayette, from 1888-1956
- representative of Lafayette family life prior to 1972
- representative of rural life and city business growth in Lafayette
- oral histories and biographies representative of Lafayette immigrant history
- objects, photographs, journals/ diaries, and other reflections of events from 2020-2022 related to the local impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Black Lives Matter demonstrations, and the Marshall Fire.

After looking at the scope, we look at these other factors:

- is it useful to the mission, interests, and goals of the Museum in the areas of research, education, or exhibition
- from the Lafayette, CO area

- shows little signs of damage
- unique (if we already have an abundance of a certain item in our collection, we may not need more)
- authentic (not a reproduction, forgery, photocopy, etc.)
- legality of ownership is clear/appropriately documented
- no known health hazards
- will not knowingly damage surrounding collection objects
- we can care for this object with the current facilities and resources
- strengthens, broadens, or provides a unique perspective on existing collections and/or adds to the documentation of the museum's current holdings
- the price is reasonable, if being offered for sale as opposed to donation
- will not be construed as a commercial endorsement

4) Why can't the museum accept everything?

There are many reasons for this...

- Storage space. We just don't have room for everything. We unfortunately have to turn away some items just because we don't have room for them.
- Staff resources. We have 1 staff member taking care of our thousands of artifacts. To put that into some perspective for you, if she spent only 30mins on each artifact and took no time off, it would take her more than 5 years to get through our current collection.

The staff is trying very hard to solve old problems within the collection, including moving artifacts into archival storage materials, photographing objects, updating inventories, fixing accession records, as well as updating policies, responding to research requests, and working on institutional development, etc... We must be careful with managing our resources, including the size of our collection.

- Artifact Condition. We are not properly equipped to handle severely damaged artifacts that need a conservator. Some artifacts may also require additional care that we just don't have the capabilities for right now.

- Legal and Ethical. Although this is not as widely known, there are things we cannot take legally or ethically. This includes anything that was looted, from a Native American gravesite, considered the spoils of war, or taken from another country without explicit proper documentation, or objects made from the parts of protected wildlife (such as elephant ivory).
- Safety. We are a mining museum, but we do not accept explosive materials, for obvious reasons. We are interested in the containers they came in though, as long as they are empty, and have been proven to be inactive/ safe for storage and handling. The Police and Fire depts may be consulted regarding these types of items.

5) Why can't I leave my donation now and sign the Temporary Custody Receipt or Deed of Gift later?

We have struggled with this issue in the past. Many times a potential donor has left an artifact at the museum and then never responded to us again. We do not have any details about the artifacts' history, and often times we cannot get the potential donor to sign anything after they dropped their items off. They wrongly assume the donation is complete, but if they don't sign the Deed of Gift, we don't own the object and it can take us years to legally resolve these cases of abandoned property.

Colorado Revised Statute 38-14-101 through 38-14-112 states that if you leave your property with us, but don't transfer the title (aka sign a Deed of Gift) then we must hold onto it for 7 years. If you refuse to sign the papers, or pick up your item, the museum is forced into a state of limbo for 7 years where we can't use, display, or dispose of the item, because we don't own it, but it takes up valuable resources caring for it. Please do not abandon your property at the museum.

6) Why can't I leave my donation with a board member or volunteer?

Our board members and other volunteers are wonderful people willing to donate their time. We appreciate them greatly. However, they cannot accept artifacts on behalf of the museum. When an artifact transfers hands on behalf of the museum without the proper documentation, this is a big problem for us. The reasoning is explained above in FAQ #5. You must work directly with the Collections Manager or collections committee regarding donations.

7) May I donate items by leaving them on the museum porch?

No, if you leave something on our porch we have no obligation to care for or accept any items abandoned on our property.

8) May I have my artifact returned to me?

If your potential donation is not accepted by the collections committee, then of course you may have your items returned to you.

After a Deed of Gift is signed, however, the museum is the legal owner of the artifact. Because we keep artifacts in the public trust, we are under no obligation to return your items after they have been officially accessioned into the collection (i.e. after we acquired legal ownership).

9) Do you keep artifacts forever?

There are cases when we must remove an artifact from our collection. This process is called deaccessioning. We deaccession things when they don't meet the criteria mentioned in FAQ #3. Items that may be deaccessioned are reviewed by the collections committee, and must receive a majority vote.

Once an artifact is deaccessioned from the museum's collection, our first priority is to offer the items to another educational institution, such as another museum, library, or archive. If there are no educational institutions interested in the objects, we may sell them at a public auction. All proceeds from these sales go into a restricted fund for the direct care of our collections. It cannot be used for any other operational purposes.

If we must, then the museum will permanently dispose of the item if we are unable to do either of the first two options. If the artifact is a health hazard, not in good condition, or is revealed to be a forgery, we may skip directly to disposing of the item.

10) May I loan my artifacts to the Museum?

Because of liability and insurance issues, along with past lenders abandoning their property, we try to avoid loans with the public. Both the AAM and AASLH recommend not accepting loans from private individuals for these same reasons.

11) Is my artifact donation tax-deductable?

We are a recognized 501(c)3 charitable organization and therefore the fair market value of an artifact donated here is typically tax-deductable. You should consult an accountant, attorney, or the IRS for more information.

The tax-deductible value of the item(s) must be determined by a third-party appraisal. The museum cannot appraise the market value of donations.

12) I need an artifact appraised; can anyone at the museum do this for me?

The Internal Revenue Service considers museums and libraries as "interested parties" so we are not allowed to appraise artifacts.

13) Can I require that my artifact donation be on display?

No, museums are no longer advised to take restricted donations such as these. Although this is something that used to be done, it is not considered ethical. As an institution we care for artifacts in the public trust and for the good of the public. Nationally about 5% of any given museum's collection is on display at a time. If we only represent certain histories in our exhibits and never change them out, we are doing the public a great disservice.

Additionally exhibiting items makes them age more rapidly and long-term exhibits are not advised for preservation. Artifacts will degrade far more quickly if they are on display for extended periods of time. One of our main considerations when planning exhibitions is the long term safety and preservation of the items we display.

If you still have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out!