

If you are thinking about donating an object, books, or archival materials to Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum:

Vesterheim considers gifts of objects related to Norwegian and Norwegian-American culture or immigrant history. This includes:

- Objects brought by Norwegian immigrants.
- Objects made or used by Norwegian immigrants in the United States.
- Other objects made or used in the United States which represent the Norwegian-American experience.

Vesterheim considers gifts of library books and materials related to Norwegian and Norwegian-American culture or immigrant history. This includes:

- Books and periodicals that were brought by or read by Norwegian immigrants.
- Books and periodicals that were printed in Norwegian and published in the U.S.
- Books and periodicals that relate directly to subjects represented by Vesterheim's object collection, i.e. folk art, Norwegian-American history.

In addition, Vesterheim has an archives collection which documents the museum's history, its collection, and the photographic legacy of Norwegian Americans. The Museum considers gifts to its archives which include:

- Historic photographs related directly to Norwegian-American immigrant history.
- Archival material related directly to the history and operation of Vesterheim Museum.
- Archival material related directly to artifacts in Vesterheim's collection.

Vesterheim staff cannot appraise any objects or materials donated to the museum's collection. The donor is responsible for getting objects or materials appraised before the donation is made.

The best way to find out if Vesterheim would accept your object or materials for its collection is to send:

- A photograph of the object. Please do not send or drop off your object without first contacting the museum's collections staff—see list below.
- A description of the object, including dimensions.
- Information about the history of the object—who made it or used it, approximately when and where it was made or used, what it was used for.
- Background information of the family to whom the object belonged, i.e. family names and relationships, especially to you, the donor, where the family came from in Norway (what district, if you know it), when the family immigrated to the United States, where the family settled in this country.
- For library materials, a list of titles with publishers and dates for review by staff prior to sending any materials.

Questions and inquiries regarding the donation of objects and other materials for Vesterheim's collection should be directed to collections staff. Please contact the following staff at 563-382-9681 or via the e-mail addresses listed after their names.

Objects: Laurann Gilbertson, Chief Curator. lgilbertson@vesterheim.org

Archives and Library: Jennifer Kovarik, Registrar. jkovarik@vesterheim.org

Accepting an item into the collection is a serious responsibility. Once an item is accepted into the collection, Vesterheim Museum is responsible for its care and interpretation in perpetuity. Vesterheim is subject to all state, national, and international laws and regulations governing museum collections.

Other considerations of acceptance include:

- Condition of the object or material, and possible cost of conservation and repair.
- Duplication of objects and materials already held in Vesterheim's collection.
- Storage requirements appropriate to the continued preservation of the object or material.

Vesterheim Museum's collections staff and collections committee reviews all objects and other materials offered for donation and recommend if an item should be accepted into the collection. The President/CEO makes the final decision of acceptance, and the Vesterheim Board of Trustees participates in decisions related to the acquisition of major objects.

Please note that Vesterheim Museum staff members are *not* allowed by the IRS to appraise objects received as gifts to the museum. If you think that the object which you are giving to Vesterheim has significant monetary value, please contact a dealer or other person qualified to appraise historical objects and obtain an appraisal before you donate the object to Vesterheim.

After an object or other material is accepted for inclusion in Vesterheim's collection, it is accessioned and cataloged. This process includes assigning the object or material a permanent identification number, generating formal donor acknowledgement documents, and creating an informational file about the object or material which includes a detailed description, condition report, photograph, and other relevant documentation. Both hard copy and computer files are generated. Each item is labeled or tagged with its permanent identification number and taken to one of the museum's climate controlled storage areas or rotated into exhibits. All objects and materials are routinely monitored and inventoried.

Thank you for your interest and support. Your gifts help Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum share the living history and culture of Norwegian immigrants to America.