

ARCHAEOLOGY COLLECTIONS ACQUISITION PROCEDURE

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) acknowledges that policies and procedures related to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act vary by institution. This procedure is meant to clearly define and document the interpretation, responsibility, and intent of MDAH specifically, and applies to all employees of MDAH.

The MDAH Museum Division may acquire objects for the archaeology collection by donation, by bequest, by purchase, or by transfer. Acquisitions are to be assessed on a case by case basis, taking into priority the nature and content of the acquisition. The Archaeology Collections Committee, established in 2017, is comprised of trained collections staff and archaeologists from Administration, Historic Preservation, and Museum Divisions and oversees all acquisitions.

Objects or groups of objects may also be acquired, but not accessioned into the collection, by the request of federally recognized Native American Tribes. In these cases, transfer must be approved by the Archaeology Collections Committee, followed by the preparation of a *Care and Trust Agreement* signed by the director of archaeology collections and the collection owner(s). Repository collections are maintained with the same standards as accessioned objects, except when guidelines agreed upon in advance of transfer by both MDAH and the collection owner(s)—as outlined in a *Care and Trust Agreement*—take precedence.

MDAH has worked to establish and maintain close collaborative relationships with its Tribal partners. Through these relationships, MDAH seeks to facilitate a transparent dialogue of respect and understanding that will allow for the best care of Ancestors and cultural items housed within its archaeology collections.