

ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Natural History Collection Donation Guide

The AHS Natural History Collection acquires items in a number of ways, including selected donations from members of the public. Before an item is acquired for our collections, it undergoes a rigorous review process. Not all items are accepted, because not everything is appropriate for our collections, and because it is expensive to care for and provide access to collection items.

We Collect:

- Mineral, Rock, and Ore Specimens
- Fossils
- Meteorite
- Loose Gems, Mounted Gems, Jewelry
- Lapidary Items
- Objects d'art or d'virtu
- Mining Memorabilia and Artifacts
- Scientific Instruments
- Mineral and Mining Related Books and Journals
- Mineral Club Newsletters
- Materials in Various Stages of Refinement

We do NOT Collect:

- Mineral, Rock, or Ore specimens where the location of origin is unknown
- Any material that violates the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

How do I donate an item to the Natural History Collection?

The first step in the donation process is filling out the Individual Donor Questionnaire available at <http://www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/naturalhistory>. The more information you provide about your item(s), the more easily we'll be able to make a decision about whether or not to add it to our collections.

Can I send or bring my item to a Society museum immediately?

Unfortunately, we do not have staff available to handle unsolicited donations. If you'd like to donate something, the first step is to fill out the Individual Donor Questionnaire available at <http://www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/naturalhistory>. A staff member or curator will follow up with you. If the Society is interested in learning more about the item, then an appointment with the Curator can be arranged.

Please note: the Society reserves the right to dispose of any unsolicited materials delivered to one of its sites.

Q. How is the decision to take or decline an item made?

Each item is different, but factors we consider include the item's historical or research significance for Arizona, physical condition, whether or not the Society already owns a similar

item, and the item's ownership and use history. Potential additions to the collection go through a rigorous review process and are also subject to review by the Society's Staff Collections Committee.

Q. Can the Society appraise my item?

Because of its standing with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as an interested party, the Society cannot appraise or assign a monetary value to items. Those looking for appraisal services may wish to consult their local yellow pages.

Q. Do donated items go on exhibit?

Some do, although only a small percentage of the Society's collections are on exhibit at any one time. That's because we have limited gallery space and because long-term display can have negative effects on preservation. Items in the Society's collections that are not on exhibit are kept in secure, climate-controlled holding areas for optimal preservation.

Q. Are items not on exhibit accessible to the public?

Access to Natural History Collection items not on display is generally limited to those conducting scientific research and/or publications using the collections. However, other access requests can be considered. To request access, fill out the Collection Access Request form available at <http://www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/naturalhistory>.

Q. Can I get a tax deduction for my donation?

Donations to the Society are generally tax deductible. Consult with a tax specialist to determine your eligibility. In most cases an appraisal of the donated item will be necessary to receive a tax deduction.

Q. Can an item donated by me or my ancestors be returned to me?

Items that have been formally accessioned into the collections cannot be returned to the donor or their descendants. At the end of the donation process, donors are asked to sign a Deed of Gift which legally transfers ownership of the materials, as well as all associated rights and interests, to the Society.

Q. Does the Society accept loans?

The Society only accepts loans for specific short-term exhibit purposes. We do not accept long-term loans.