



FAQ: Donating an Object

The Mariners' Museum is a collecting institution. We rely on the generous donation of artifacts from public and private sources as a way of expanding or filling gaps in the collection.

How do I donate an object to The Mariners' Museum?

To discuss a donation please contact the Collections Department by telephone at (757) 591-7764, through email at collections@MarinersMuseum.org, or by letter (Collections Department, The Mariners' Museum, 100 Museum Drive, Newport News, VA 23606). When contacting the Museum please include a full description of your object, its history, and several detailed photographs.

After we receive your initial inquiry you will be contacted by a staff member who will gather additional information about the object and present your donation to the Museum's Collections Committee. The Collections Committee is the Museum body responsible for the oversight of the collection and is composed of staff from several different departments. The committee, which meets once a month, will evaluate your object and determine whether to accept it into the Museums collections.

If the Committee accepts your donation you will be contacted by the Office of Collections Management to complete the donation process. You will be asked to sign a Deed of Gift, which is the document that officially transfers the ownership of the object to The Mariners' Museum. On that document you will be asked to assign a value to the object and record how you wish the donation to be recognized. Once the paperwork is completed, the Office of Collections Management will make arrangements to have the object brought to the Museum.

What if I do not know the value of the object I have donated?

If you are unsure of how to place a value on your object there are several methods you might find helpful in locating the fair market value of your item. The easiest method is to research your object on the Internet to see how dealers or other sellers are listing similar items. Catalogues of auction houses like Christie's or Sotheby's may also be useful in determining an appropriate value. If you are still unsure, please contact the Office of Collections Management or the attending curator for additional assistance.

How do I locate an appraiser?

If you wish to have a certified appraisal completed for your object, the following websites may provide information on appraisers in your area:

- International Society of Appraisers
- American Society of Appraisers
- Appraisers Association of America, Inc.
- American Association of Independent Appraisers

Each of these organizations offers a directory of appraisers by specialty and some directories allow you to search for specific specialties by location.

While the Museum can provide assistance in locating an appropriate appraiser(s) it cannot commission the work to be completed on the donors behalf.

When is an appraisal required?

If you intend to take a tax deduction and your object is valued at or over \$5,000.00 the Internal Revenue Service requires that a certified appraisal be performed within a period of sixty days of the donation.

Who is responsible for the cost of the appraisal?

The cost of having an appraisal completed on a donated item(s) is the responsibility of the donor. If necessary, the Museum will facilitate the process by provided access to or photographs of the object.

When will my donated object be displayed?

Only a small portion of the Museum's extensive collections are displayed within the galleries at any one time. In an effort to display as much of the collection as possible the Museum maintains an active exhibition program and a changing gallery devoted to themed displays of typically unseen segments of the collection. Uses of the collection include loans to appropriate institutions; as illustrations in publications, films, and on the Internet; in educational and public programs; and objects always available for research purposes. Unfortunately, the Museum cannot guarantee that a donated object will be placed on display and cannot acquire objects with restrictions regarding usage and display.

To donate an object to the Museum, please contact:

Collections Department
(757) 591-7764
collections@MarinersMuseum.org