

Texas City Museum (formerly Museum of the Mainland)

Museum Board: Texas City Historical Preservation Corporation

Museum Mission:

The Texas City Museum is the center of history, culture and heritage for the people of Texas City. We seek to educate and enlighten visitors as we become a premier destination museum by creating an engaging museum experience for all.

History of the Collection:

In 1989 under the leadership of Ken De Maet, The Museum of the Mainland was formed. Previous attempts to begin a museum were made in 1946 and 1980, thus this was the third, and only successful attempt to start a museum in Texas City. Maureen Howard was hired as the first director and Holman Lilienstern acted as president. The first board included Randy Hunter, Pat Habashy, Thad Buster and Charlotte Westerlage. It was decided the Museum would focus on history and industry. In 1990 the Museum approached Texas City industries to solicit exhibits. In a short time, the Museum began accepting loans and donations from the general public as well. The Texas City National Bank gave their meeting building on 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the Museum, and The Museum of the Mainland opened in September of 1991, coinciding with the City's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In 1992 Lola and Moran McDaniel donated the former J.C. Penney building (a 30,000 square foot building, originally built in 1948) to house the Museum. Volunteers from the plants and churches contributed time and money to see that the Museum would be a cornerstone for the rehabilitation of 6<sup>th</sup> Street, the street of memories. The Museum opened in this building in 1994. The Museum joined with the City of Texas City in 2001, and has been managed by the City, through the direction of the Texas City Historical Preservation Corporation, ever since. The Museum's collection has steadily grown since the first donations made in 1990, and the Museum was completely remodeled in 2011. The most recent permanent exhibit, the USS Westfield (with artifacts on extended loan from the US Navy) was completed in 2017.

Audience:

The Museum seeks to collect historical artifacts relevant to the history of Texas City with a focus on the citizens and important historical events for the research, enjoyment and education of the local community and visitors.

Focus of the collection:

The focus of the collection had been the history of Texas City as a broad and all-encompassing topic. In the past any artifact with even the most flimsy association with the City could be accepted into the collection. Moving forward the focus of the collection will shift to the people of Texas City, and significant events within the city's history. For example several notable Texas City citizens are highlight

throughout the permanent exhibition such as James and Mary Campbell, Frank and Florence Davison, the Meyers Brothers, Helen Moore, "Hoopie" Williams, Frank Bell Jr., and Charles Brown, to name a few. Likewise several important events and topics are also highlighted such as the various hurricanes, the history of the area before it was Texas City, the founding of the City, the US Army encampment, the 1947 Disaster, and Texas City schools.

The geographic area of Texas City as it is represented throughout history by material culture will remain the broad focus. However, new accessions to the collection will either need to augment current collections topics or will need to fill gaps within the current collection. A relevant providence must be presented with an artifact for it to be accessioned (meaning we will no longer accept artifacts just because they are something old that belonged to someone who lives in the City).

#### Strengths:

The collection is made up of artifacts that benchmark the history of Texas City. Certain periods are particularly well represented such as the period of the Army Encampment (First Aero Squadron), the 1947 Disaster and the Civil War (thanks to the extended loan from the US Navy of the USS Westfield Artifacts). Additionally there are certain people, for example Charles Brown or Kay Bailey Hutchinson, for whom there are mini collections within the Museum's collection. Finally there are certain topics, for example Texas City schools, that are also thoroughly represented in the collection.

#### Weaknesses:

There is a need to strengthen the representation of minority groups of all varieties, including ethnic, racial, and sexual. Texas City has a full and rich cultural heritage that will be well represented in the collection as a whole.

#### Materials:

The collection is made up of a variety of materials: ceramics, metals, wood, textile, paper, photographs, paintings, and plastics. Although the Museum does accept digital materials it is frequently not accessioned into the collection but rather kept as reference materials or information, formats include: CD, DVD, VHS, USB Drive, Cassette, (certain kinds of) Floppy Disk.

The Museum does not accept Microfilms, and will no longer accept VHS, Cassettes, or Floppy Disks. In general the Museum does not accept the donation of excessively large items. Materials must be of dimensions that fit within the Museum's existing storage and exhibition spaces.

#### Acquisitions:

The Museum accepts donations to the collection. All donations are tax deductible; however, the museum assumes no responsibility to appraise donations. All donations are considered outright and unconditional gifts to be used at the Museum's discretion. The scope of the collections shall be

consistent with the divisions of interest of the Museum and shall be of demonstrable significance and quality.

Donations are brought to the Museum, and the donor is supplied with a Donation Form which allows them to give the Museum a list of artifacts and a detailed provenience of the objects. The donor signs the rights of the objects over to the Museum with the Curator or Assistant Curator as witness. The donor receives a copy of the Donation Form while the Museum retains the original. The artifacts are numbered and the accession is entered in to the PastPerfect (collections management software) database.

Items may be collected with varying intents, for example: for exhibition, for inclusion in an outreach program, or for research purposes. For this reason, and to allow for the proper care of exhibit items, no collection item (donation) is assured (permanent) exhibition.

The Museum does not purchase artifacts for the collection.

#### Deaccessions:

Periodically the collection must be assessed both in terms of condition and relevance to the Museum's mission and the focus of the collection. During this assessment it may become necessary to deaccession certain items in the collection. Reasons for deaccession may include: the objects falls outside of the geographical location of the scope of collection (ex: photos of Galveston, or yearbooks from La Marque), the condition of the object is beyond preservation, or the object is not unique or of museum quality (ex: old sears catalogues), etc. Deaccessioned objects of good quality may be offered to other institutions. Deaccessioned objects in poor condition should be disposed of in accordance with museum standards and best practices. In the case of accessioned replicas (such as photocopies) relevant to the mission and focus of collection, although the items should be deaccessioned, it will be retained as an "information" file.

#### Loans:

The Museum does not accept loans on a regular basis but will in special circumstances. Short term loans for special exhibits (such as the annual Quilt Show) can be accepted by the Curator and Assistant Curator. Any other loans to the Museum must be approved by the Texas City Historical Preservation Corporation.

The Curator may grant short term loans (approximately 1 month) for special exhibits to neighboring institutions (within a 100 mile radius). Any other loans from the Museum must be approved by the Texas City Historical Preservation Corporation.

#### Cross Organizational Cooperation:

The Moore Memorial Public Library in Texas City maintains a Local History Archive. Since the Museum and the Archive share a purpose it is important that we work as partners to preserve the

history of Texas City. The Museum grants the Library (Archives) permission to digitize items in the Museum's collection to make the collection more accessible, while retaining the rights of the collection. The Museum will receive a byline credit on any images or information from the Museum's collection.

During the Museum's collection assessments, any archival materials being deaccessioned from the collection will be offered as a transfer to the Library Archives. Additionally, in the spirit of cooperation, any new donations of archival materials that do not match the criteria laid out in this policy, will be offered to the Library Archives.