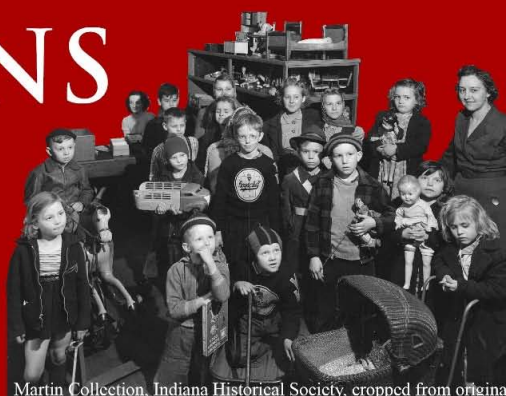


This publication is a service of the [Hoosier Heritage Alliance](#) Connecting to Collections project.

# COLLECTIONS

## Advisor



Martin Collection, Indiana Historical Society, cropped from original

Issue 15, January 2013

### Questions to answer before saying "YES!"

Stewart E. Lauterbach, curator, Howard County Historical Society, Kokomo,

[www.howardcountymuseum.org](http://www.howardcountymuseum.org)

Stew Lauterbach, curator of the Howard County Historical Society, developed the following list of questions to help staff determine what objects were a good fit for their collection. The questions, in addition to considerations about whether an object fits within the organization's mission and resources, offer ways of thinking about possible acquisitions and of facilitating practical discussions about objects that are acquisitioned into the permanent collections.

#### **Possible criteria to consider when accepting items into the collection:**

- What is it? Why was it made and for what purpose? By whom? Why is it significant?
- Is it rare? Is it valuable? How? Historically, sentimentally, monetarily?
- Is it in good condition?
- Is it compelling? (*Is it cool?*)
- Would it enhance other parts of the collection?
- Are there any strings attached?
- Are we willing to process it?
- Do we have room to store it?
- Will we be able to take care of it?
- Do we have really detailed history of the object? Are we willing to obtain it?

- Is it unique to Howard County history? Or is it typical of Indiana/U.S. history?
- Is there another institution better qualified to tell this story?
- Do we already have other examples? Do we need an example of every \_\_\_\_\_ ever made?
- Who would this object be of interest to? Howard County residents? Out-of-county guests?
- How does it fit the society's mission? (*Does this mission need to be refined?*)
- How will the item be used? How does it fit our exhibit plan?
- True or false: We **will** do an exhibit using this object.
- If Howard County history were a book, would the object (or the history it represents) warrant a footnote, a sentence, a paragraph or a chapter?
- Presuming the 80/20 rule is applicable (80 percent of the significance is in 20 percent of the objects) is this object one of the 20 percent?
- What part of history does the object represent? Is the topic significant enough to warrant preserving an object (highest cost to historical society) or can history be preserved adequately through photographs (some cost to historical society) or through mention in history books or city directories (least cost to historical society) or other ways?

#### Resources

- Connecting to Collections Online Community  
[www.connectingtocollections.org](http://www.connectingtocollections.org)
- Indiana Historical Society Lending Resource Center  
[www.indianahistory.org/our-services/local-history-services/lending-resources](http://www.indianahistory.org/our-services/local-history-services/lending-resources)

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For more information about the Hoosier Heritage Alliance, please visit [www.indianahistory.org/hha](http://www.indianahistory.org/hha).



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