

Stewart Indian School Cultural Center and Museum Scope of Collection Statement

Introduction

This Scope defines the scope of past and future collections of archival and artifact materials at the museum. These collections contribute to an understanding of Stewart Indian School history as a government boarding school operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in Carson City, Nevada, from 1890 to 1980.

Stewart's History

- Stewart was a federal boarding school created by the State of Nevada in 1890.
- Originally 240 acres, the school opened December 17, 1890 with 37 students from Washoe, Northern and Southern Paiute, and Western Shoshone tribes, and three teachers.
- The federal Bureau of Indian Affairs established the boarding school to train and educate Indian children for assimilation.
- The school opened in a Victorian-style wood framed dormitory/school house. As enrollment increased, new buildings were added.
- Virginia and Truckee Railroad stop established 1906 to deliver supplies and students.
- By 1919, 400 students attended the school.
- Curriculum included reading, writing, and arithmetic.
- Curriculum for boys included ranching and farming, mechanics, woodworking, painting, and carpentry.
- Girls attended classes in baking, cooking, sewing, laundry, and practical nursing.
- Much of the school's basic needs were supplied by students' work.
- Vocational training remained the school's principal focus until a shift to academics occurred in the late 1960's.
- The school closed in 1980 due to federal budget cuts and earthquake safety issues with the masonry buildings.
- The State of Nevada acquired the campus through several transactions during the 1990's and is now used by the State for classes, training, and agency offices, including the Nevada Indian Commission located in the former Superintendent's home.
- The Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California established the Stewart Community on much of the former school's land.
- Today, the Stewart Indian School is listed on the National Registrar of Historic Places.
- The Stewart Indian School Cultural Center and Museum preserves the history of Stewart and provides present day information about Nevada tribal culture and art.

Cultural Resources at Stewart Indian School

1. Research collections of archival materials
2. National Register of Historic Places buildings on 110 acres of land
3. Stewart Indian School Father's Day Powwow grounds
4. Stewart Cemetery (on Washoe tribal land)
5. Stewart "S" on Prison Hill
6. Murals in various buildings on campus
7. Stewart Indian School Trail (Guide by Cell Audio Tour)

Stewart Collections

Archival Documents:

Enrollment records
Historical photographs and negatives
BIA reports
Superintendent and teacher reports
Superintendent and teacher correspondence
Oral histories
Scrapbooks
Student correspondence
School newspapers and yearbooks
Newspaper articles about Stewart

Art Collections

Sculptures
Baskets
Jewelry
Pottery
Paintings

History Collections

Furniture
Tools
Typewriters
Sewing machines
Ironing Boards
Musical instruments
Textiles

Clothing
Equipment
Trophies and awards
Band Uniforms and accessories

Ethnographic Collections

Cultural items
Metates
Katcinas

Geology Collections

Volcanic and river rocks from Nevada in 65 buildings

Archaeology Collections

Archaeological finds and report from the University of Nevada, Reno

Acquisitions Policy

The museum acquires objects for its collections by gift, purchase, exchange, transfer, or field collections. Acquisition of objects is governed by the museum's ability to manage and preserve them according to American Alliance of Museums National Standards and Best Practices for US Museums. In accordance with these practices, Stewart will discourage gifts with limiting conditions or restrictions. Objects must be acquired, accessioned, and cataloged within these national standards and best practices. This Stewart acquisition policy prohibits any proposals for the acquisition of firearms and ammunition.

It is a cultural tradition to accept gifts from tribes. All such gifts should be reviewed for appropriateness for addition to the archival or museum collections. This policy is managed by the museum curator.

The museum's Advisory Committee consists of Stewart alumni and former staff. The committee meets quarterly to discuss cultural preservation issues including, but not limited to, the Scope of Collections statements, accessions, de-accessions, and loans. The committee makes recommendations to the museum director on fundraising, exhibitions, and educational programming. The museum curator develops guidelines for research according to the Society of American Archivists guidelines for research materials.

Acquisition Criteria

If the acquisition of an object or objects is justified by a Scope of Collections Statement, the Stewart Indian School Cultural Center and Museum may reserve the right to accept or reject objects on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Are the objects site specific?
Objects original to Stewart as determined by the Scope of Collections Statement are given first consideration for acquisition over non-Stewart specific objects. Objects related to Stewart, but not original to Stewart are considered next in priority. Decisions made concerning the acquisition of non-Stewart specific objects are based on their significance to the Cultural Center's interpretive and resource management programs on such factors as authenticity. Reproductions are considered non-Stewart specific objects.
2. Physical condition.
Is the object intact? Are all parts present? Is there evidence of deliberate or accidental damage (e.g. paint-spilled on an object)? Does the object show signs of abuse or neglect (e.g. axe was used for prying or hammering; tool edges worn beyond capacity or sharpening them)? Is the object made of materials that are inherently unstable (e.g. cellulose nitrate negatives)?
3. Rarity.
If an object is considered rare, it may be advisable for the Cultural Center to accept a donation regardless of defacement damage, or incompleteness, or the quantity of a class of object already in the collection. This criterion is particularly important when considering Stewart-specific objects.
4. Availability.
Except for objects original to Stewart, the curatorial staff should take advantage of the availability of proposed donations to replace the objects already in the collection that are in poorer condition or of lower quality.
5. Authenticity.
Can it be determined that the object is what the donor/seller/field collector purports it to be?
6. Collections Management.
Does the Cultural Center have the resources (e.g. funding, staffing, facilities, equipment) to properly manage the object?

Uses and Restrictions

Uses

The museum collections may be used for academic purposes, ceremonies, exhibits, interpretive programs, research, and other interpretive media (e.g., publications based on collections). Primary considerations when deciding on the use of an object are its long-term preservation and maintaining the integrity of the collection as a whole.

Museum collections may be available to persons for use in religious rituals or spiritual activities in accordance with the museum curator and the museum's handling policies.

Researchers and other specialists will register with the museum and may examine objects and archival materials under the conditions and procedures outlined in the museum's research policies and procedures. Any interpretive use that may be defined as consumptive must be authorized in advance, as outlined in the museum's research policies and procedures.

Restrictions

The museum's collections will not be used in living history programs.

In accordance with NAGPRA, the museum will not exhibit or photograph any American Indian artifacts that have been identified as ceremonial and cultural patrimony. The museum does not accept as donation and will not exhibit or photograph any items that are considered to be from a burial.

Some museum or archival materials may be exempted from public disclosure subject to the museum's research policies and procedures and applicable laws.

The identities of community consultants and information about sacred or other culturally sensitive places and practices will be kept confidential when research agreements or other circumstances warrant.

Restrictions may be placed on the publication of images or manuscripts in the museum collections if these materials are subject to copyright and if this right has not been signed over to the museum.

Management Actions

This Scope of Collections Statement must be reviewed every two years and revised by the museum director and curator when necessary to remain supportive of and consistent with the museum's mission and activities. The revisions must be reviewed by the museum's advisory committee before being formally adopted.