

Frequently Asked Questions about donating to the Kentucky Historical Society:

What's the procedure for donating an item to the Kentucky Historical Society (KHS)?

First, make an appointment (in person or on the phone) with the appropriate staff person. KHS staff will discuss the item with the donor and determine if it seems appropriate for the collections. If the object should be considered, a temporary custody form will be completed and the object(s) will be stored in a secure place until reviewed by the KHS Collections Committee within 90 days. If the object is not available for inspection, detailed photographs will be requested along with any available background information.

How does KHS decide what to accept?

If KHS accepted everything, we'd run out of space fast! The selection process is rigorous and ensures that KHS only accepts pieces that can be properly cared for and can help tell Kentucky's story. When an item is offered, a staff person studies the object, researches the collection for similar items and presents all information to the KHS Collections Committee. The committee, comprised of curators, archivists, librarians, historians and folklorists, discusses whether it meets the KHS collecting criteria and a vote is taken.

What are the collecting criteria?

What is the Kentucky connection? Do we have other items like it in our collection? Does this one tell a better story? What is its condition? How much of its history do we know? Can we properly take care of it?

What does KHS collect?

KHS collects objects, photographs, oral histories, documents of all kinds, books and genealogical materials; anything that tells the story of Kentucky and its people.

Will the KHS staff appraise the donation?

No. Due to legal and ethical rules KHS staff are not allowed to appraise items for any reason. All appraisals are the responsibility of the donor.

Are donations tax deductible?

Many donations to KHS collections are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Please consult your accountant or tax preparer for details.

Am I giving up ownership of the item(s)?

All donations are considered unrestricted gifts unless it is otherwise stated on the donation form. Once a decision has been made to accept an item(s) then a "Deed of Gift" is given to the owner. This document transfers legal ownership of the item(s) to the Kentucky Historical Society.

What happens to the items once they become KHS property?

Items are cataloged and stored in environmentally safe and secured areas. Items may be used in on-site exhibitions or loaned for exhibition to other institutions. Although there is no guarantee that the item(s) will be always be on display, KHS collections are available for research purposes.