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INTRODUCTION

The *Museum Handbook* covers a broad range of topics to guide National Park Service staff in managing museum and archival collections:

- Part I covers planning, preservation, and protection for the disciplines and materials represented in NPS collections, including professional ethics, specialized storage, environment standards, conservation treatments, and emergency preparedness.
- Part II outlines procedures for museum record keeping, including accessioning, cataloging, loans deaccessioning, photography, and reporting annual collection management data.
- Part III provides guidance on access and use for interpretation, education, exhibition, and research. It covers legal issues, publications, two and three-dimensional reproductions, using museum objects in exhibits and furnished historic structures, and providing access for research.

NPS staff responsible for collections should make informed choices based on their own skills and experience, standards and procedures outlined in the *Museum Handbook*, advice provided by specialists, and additional information provided in the references found in the *Museum Handbook*. Staff should, as needed, seek advice or technical information from support offices, the Harpers Ferry Center, and the Museum Management Program, National Center for Cultural Resources.

By following the practices represented in this guidance, trained staff can ensure that the National Park Service collections will be, as mandated by the 1916 NPS Organic Act, preserved and maintained for the use and enjoyment of the present and future generations.

Ann Hitchcock
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