**MUSEUM OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

SDSHS Board of Trustees Report

July 11, 2025

David Grabitske, Assistant Director and Museum Director

**Education**

Summer is road season. Staff has been busy with site visits and education programs, particularly at the Literacy Conference and Ft. Sisseton.

**Exhibition**

Staff has begun palletizing and sending salvaged museum props to auction that will benefit the Foundation for the purpose of funding the new gallery.

Staff has reviewed the electrical plans of both Split Rock Studios and ISG to ensure they are complimentary.

Staff cleaned the old offsite storage at Industrial Road and moved items to the new storage facility at Grace Ave.

**Collections**

The move of collections began 19 May and completed 12 June 2025. This was an enormous undertaking that consumed the majority of time for all staff.

Staff have updated the new collections management software both with location changes resulting from the move along with other details to make the data more useful.

The following is a list of recent actions by the Collections Management Committee and offered collections were evaluated using the board-authorized collection rubric.

1. Is the object authentic?

2. Is the object relevant to the museum’s mission?

3. Can the museum acquire clear title?

4. Does the object have good provenance?

5. Would the object be redundant?

6. What is the condition of the object?

* Doris Powell, dress jacket of William Maxwell Blackburn of Pierre University and later director of the South Dakota Historical Society (Pierre dates: 1885-1897, Society: 1892-1897) and flight pants (possibly World War II)

**Discussion**: The committee recommends viewing the tailcoat as it was found in the attic of the Erskine residence, so if it matches the purported era, it could be that of Blackburn. The collection has nothing from Pierre University or Blackburn.   
**Action**: Table action on the coat pending further information and reject the pants as the collection has three other pairs.

**Further information:** At the 18 June 2025 meeting Doris Powell was able to confirm that the coat belonged to William Maxwell Blackburn. Curators also analyzed the coat and believe based on a thorough examination that it appears to have been made about 1870 and was likely brought by Blackburn from North Dakota.

**Action:** Accept for Permanent Collection.

* Paloma Norris-York, American Indian collection (club, awl case, spoon, pipe bag), 1910s.  
  **Action:**  Recommend to the donor that the items could be added to the Education Collection.
* Kendal Farmer of Washington State, collection (1950s typewriter, 1952 Singer Featherweight sewing machine, 1950s stapler, undated saltshaker, Checkerboard Café bank bag, Letter from Bob Barker about the Checkerboard Cafe, mid-20th century Hunting Jacket and a matchbook from the jacket’s pocket)

**Action**: Accept the bank bag, letter, matchbook, and hunting jacket for Permanent Collection, reject the remainder.

* Collected by Staff, program of Third Annual Two-Spirit Powwow, 2025

**Action:** Accept for Permanent Collection**.**

* John Roster, Canistota piggy bank shaped like a book, unknown date

**Action:** Reject for Permanant Collection as the Society already has 13 other piggy banks and it is in poor condition.

* Tobias Black and Joan Kingsley, American Indian items, 1920s-1950s

**Action:** Reject for the Permanent Collection as a number of items are covered by NAGPRA but offer that others may be used in the Education Collection.

* South Dakota Art Museum, William Courtis and Mary Ward Condon collections, 1860s-1880s

**Action**: Accept for the Permanent Collection

* Jodi Longman, American Indian items made for tourist trade,

**Action:** Reject for the Permanent Collection

Submitted by

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Assistant Director and Museum Director