

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT PLAN



2021

Museum of Ventura County

Adopted by the Board of Directors June 22, 2021

Collection Development Plan

MUSEUM OF VENTURA COUNTY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After over 100 years of collecting, MVC is the premier repository of historical, cultural and artistic materials for Ventura County. In 2020, staff began an effort to articulate a new collections plan, built on work by the volunteer committees from previous planning documents created between 2003-2016. The Collections Plan evaluates the collection in its current state and sets a strategy to address gaps and inequities while also acknowledging its strengths.

The Collections Plan is a proactive 10-year guide for ensuring that the collections remain relevant to MVC's mission. It guides collecting activities while remaining flexible to allow appropriate consideration of unexpected opportunities.

Input into the plan was solicited through a variety of means:

- National survey
- Examination of attendance trends
- Committee, board, and staff conversations and surveys
- Stakeholder conversations

The Collections Philosophy outlines a clear consensus for how MVC views the collections and the stories they tell.

1. MVC is committed to having a collection that reflects the diverse community it serves across all of Ventura County.
2. MVC believes preserving the stories that are associated with each object in our collection is as important as preserving the object itself.
3. MVC is committed to having the most impactful collection rather than the largest collection.

The Intellectual Framework creates cohesive themes across all MVC collections to focus acquisitions and align the collections with current exhibit and programming goals. Themes identified during the planning process are:

- Deep and meaningful representations of cultural and racial identities in Ventura County, to engender a more complete and well-rounded understanding rather than token items.
- Exploration of late 20th and early 21st century events, institutions, people, and places, particularly materials that trigger nostalgia and memories for people living in the County today.
- Interpretation of the unique character, culture, and artistic expression of cities within the County, created by geographic, population, and economic differences. A focus on local events from an insider's perspective demonstrating Ventura County's hidden history, spirit of independence, resiliency and self-reliance.

- A deeper understanding of the intersection between the natural landscape and daily life, how the geography and climate generate growth in areas of tourism, sports and leisure, inspires creativity, and makes Ventura County a desirable place to live and work.
- Introductions to emerging local artists.
- More meaningful interpretation and information regarding the tension between natural resource industries such as agriculture and oil production. In turn, how tension between those industries and residential developments has changed over time and how residents are impacted by industry and vice versa.
- A more thorough understanding of the relationship between industry employers and the people who do the work.
- An explanation of how local farms feed Ventura County and supply global agricultural markets. Telling the story of the people who work the land in Ventura County and the challenges of the modern agriculture industry.
- A broader range of materials that demonstrate cultural and economic changes that shape the county, how “progress” effects people’s lives, and who it benefits and who it disadvantages.

The Collections Analysis includes a detailed description of each type of collection (archives, art, artifacts, and agriculture.) Although each collection is unique, each element shows great depth in specific time frames and from specific areas or populations:

1. Historical Objects: while the collection spans from early Chumash inhabitation to today, over half of the items (57%) date from just 50 years (1900-1950).
2. Fine Art: 70% of the artists represented in the collection come from Ventura, Ojai, and Santa Paula
3. Research Library and Archives: like the art collection, archives predominantly cover Ventura, Ojai, and Santa Clara Valley areas.
4. Agriculture: the emphasis here is on roughly the same time frame as artifacts: 1880-1950

The Collecting Objectives and Priorities prioritizes collections activities such as acquisition and deaccession as well as internal projects and storage. The affirmed philosophies and framework, when compared to the collection status today, provide the roadmap for the detailed recommendations in the plan. Although each collection has specific recommendations, there are commonalities among them all:

1. Deaccession items to create space to collect more diverse and contemporary items.
2. Prioritize items with multiple stories.
3. Explore new ways to interpret items from different perspectives to promote usage.

4. Complete cataloguing of all collections.
5. Increase accessibility to the collection. (For staff and public)
6. Increase awareness of the collection to all populations and areas of the county.

MVC's collection reflects the roots of the organization as a pioneer museum. With most of the collecting across all collections emanating from donations, the items that are offered to the Museum reflect the traditional donor and volunteer base. The high-cost barrier of the art market combined with minimal acquisition funds limits targeted art purchases and forces a reliance on gifted works.

Although the plan does not provide detailed analysis or recommendations on space or conservation requirements, it needs to be read with the understanding that these are major issues for all components of the collection. In all cases, space is inadequate for the current inventory, climate control and fire suppression systems are out-of-date or non-existent, and items are difficult to access for research or exhibit purposes.

To ensure that MVC's collections remain vital to the mission, this plan sets a roadmap for MVC to diversify the collection to represent all of Ventura County, preserve not only the physical items but the stories associated with those items, and prioritize quality over quantity.

GUIDING STATEMENTS

MVC's core guiding statements balance the Museum's work of collecting, exhibiting, and educating with outreach and an active, broader role as a community space.

Mission Statement

The Museum of Ventura County, through its collections, exhibits, educational programs and publications, celebrates the history, art, and culture of Ventura County and the Channel Islands.

Vision Statement

Inspiring vibrant communities by connecting the past, present, and future.

Statement of Purpose

To promote interest in and understanding of the history of the Ventura County region; to collect and preserve archives, artifacts, art, and ephemera bearing on the history of the region; to document current regional events; and to create exhibits and programs that enlighten, educate, and engage the past, present, and future.

COLLECTIONS PHILOSOPHY

Collections' Role in the Museum

Collections play a pivotal role in the visitor experience and connect audiences by illuminating the past, present, and future. Collections serve as a powerful tool for storytelling and evoking emotional responses that bond a community. The following statements represent MVC's philosophy regarding the role of our collections while acknowledging our limited resources of staff time, finances, and space. These were reviewed and adopted by the Board of Directors, Committees, and MVC Staff. They appear in order of consensus and the first three statements will be used to set priorities for the next ten years.

MVC is committed to having a collection that reflects the diverse community it serves across all of Ventura County.

MVC believes preserving the stories that are associated with each object in our collection is as important as preserving the object itself.

MVC is committed to having the most impactful collection rather than the largest collection.

MVC believes it should practice deaccessioning as a regular collections management tool not as an emergency procedure to address space or financial concerns.

MVC believes objects serve as evidence of the past and tell meaningful human stories for the future.

MVC believes in only collecting and preserving objects that serve to enlighten, educate, and engage audiences with Ventura County's rich history, art, and culture.

MVC believes some objects are more valuable than others based on the stories they tell and should receive more resources.

MVC believes we cannot accept one of everything. It is not the obligation of MVC to save everything made or used in Ventura County.

MVC believes warehousing objects the Museum will not use drains resources away from objects with meaningful stories.

MVC prioritizes using collections over preserving collections.

Role of the Collections Plan

The Collections Plan serves as a proactive 10-year guide for ensuring that the collections remain relevant to MVC's mission. It outlines a clear consensus for how MVC views the collections and the stories they tell. Using that philosophy, it sets a path for systematic growth and refinement while identifying storage priorities for the next decade.

The plan is based on an examination of the current collection as well as an intellectual framework. It creates a cohesive collecting strategy across all collections held by MVC. It guides collecting activities while remaining flexible to allow appropriate consideration of unexpected opportunities. Building a collection is not an exact science and requires the Museum to forecast what items will be vital for future exhibits and researchers. It requires a delicate balance of showing realistic, everyday life experiences and the beautiful, rare, and extraordinary treasures of Ventura County. The Plan increases confidence in decision making and prioritizing how to use limited resources effectively.

The plan builds heavily on the prior work of the MVC Committees. MVC initiated the Collections Plan revision in January of 2020 in alignment with the Reinvention Plan executed under the contract between MVC and the County of Ventura. The Board of Directors will revisit and review the plan every three years for relevancy.

HISTORY OF MVC COLLECTING

The Museum of Ventura County first opened in 1913 in the newly built Ventura County Courthouse (now Ventura City Hall). Soon known as the Pioneer Museum, its collections of artifacts and curios were the legacy of Dr. Cephas Bard, a Pennsylvania doctor who came to Ventura after the Civil War. A compassionate man with wide-ranging interests, Dr. Bard accepted historical objects in lieu of cash payment for his services.

The Museum evolved and transformed significantly over the next 100 years. It moved twice as it outgrew its homes. Its collections expanded to incorporate art, agricultural equipment, photographs, reference books and materials, as well as memorabilia of all types. While the Museum initially focused on the City of Ventura, it grew to encompass and be the official repository of historical artifacts and documents for the entire County of Ventura. Apart from art works acquired after 1994, MVC gained most of the collection via donation. It is only through the generosity of the community that the collections continue to grow and develop.

Cabinet of Curiosity Era (1910-mid 1970s)

Dr. Bard's Collection of cultural pieces formed the basis of the Pioneer Museum's collection. Totalling over 200 pieces, the collection contains Chumash, Spanish and Mexican American, and Anglo objects. In general, the earliest items added to the Pioneer Museum's collection are highly provenanced and date to the second half of the 19th century. During this period, the items are not valuable in and of themselves, but rather because of the history that they symbolize. Many of the pieces still have their "exhibit labels" as hand-written stickers adhered to the physical object or "old card" text written on the catalog cards. Roughly 800 items received by the museum during this time are cataloged under the "0000" accession number meaning they were received at an unknown date. Many of those items have lost their historical significance from a lack of documentation.

As the Pioneer Museum had not yet codified its mission to collect only local history, some of the items are not from Ventura County, but represent anything interesting from United States history. The curator had complete autonomy to accept items and often incorporated them immediately into the exhibits. This timeframe also represents the largest collection of natural history specimens in the collection ranging from shells and minerals to taxidermy specimens. Many are local, but some represent the larger natural world. During this time, the curators began an informal library collection.

The writings of E.M. Sheridan, curator from 1916-1938, were kept in the Museum, but there was no official library. The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly was launched in 1955 and additional publications followed, including a newsletter and the Museum's first book-length publication. These were kept as part of the collection. It is unknown when the library's photograph collection officially began, but it is likely to have grown out of the object collection. The end of this period is marked by outgrowing the museum space at 77 North California and the impending move and expansion to the new building.

Settler Era (mid 1970s-mid 2000s)

This period of MVC's collection is categorized by unprecedented growth, improved management and shrinking resources. The prospect of a new museum space sparked a surge in donations in the late

1970s. During this collections boom, the County enacted Prop 13, effectively cutting the Museum's financial support.

Creation of the Museum's first Collecting Policy in 1976, a precursor to a Collections Management Policy, represents the Museum's efforts to professionalize management of the collection. The policy outlined the Scope of Collection prioritizing items with a history of creation or use within Ventura County. It designated that the collections reflect three periods of human habitation and cultural influence: Native, Hispanic/Rancho, and Settler or the agricultural trends and industrial developments during those same three periods. In 1984, the committee added a fourth period of cultural influence, the Post-Settler Period.

The move to the Main Street site sparked a new era in museum documentation. A group of volunteers led by Delee Marshall surveyed the collection and instituted a better system of cataloging. In 1994 Kathy Henri continued the work as full-time Collections Manager for the Museum. During this period, paperwork and accession records were meticulously kept on the collection and the Museum enhanced a program of preventative maintenance for preservation.

Beginning in the early 1980s, MVC benefitted from a dedicated core of community members serving on its Accession Committees. The members were representative of the Museum's audience, donors, and docents. They conducted extensive research on the periods of cultural influence, but apart from a few donations of native material, items accepted almost exclusively related to the Settler and Post-Settler period. (Although "Post-Settler" is never defined it appears to be anything owned by the descendants of Settler families.) Most items accepted during this period date from 1890 to 1940. Meeting minutes reveal that items were "accepted that have no obvious connection to County history but have value as a historical collectible." (Jan 12, 1984) The committee also accepted items into the collection so that they could be traded or sold in the future.

This time frame also sees the introduction of the Agricultural Collection. The heart of the collection is an assemblage of vintage farm equipment and tools collected under the leadership of Oxnard farmer, Bob Pfeiler. As there were no concrete plans for the Agriculture Museum at the collection's inception, the Museum accepted items on the recommendation of Bob Pfeiler with minimal definite plans for how they would be managed or preserved by MVC long-term.

Up until the mid-1970s, the only artworks accepted for the collection were historical works, primarily portraits, posters, and paintings of historic locations within the county such as the San Buenaventura Mission. The Museum formed the Fine Arts Committee with the goal of purchasing art and forming a collection of works by regional artists, but funding was an ongoing problem and only a nominal number were added in the 1980s and early 1990s. Several large collections were added to the Art Collection, such as the George Stuart Historical Figures, the architectural drawings of Wilson Stroh Wilson, and a collection of WWI Posters, etc. Art racks were built in 1989 to house the growing number of framed pieces stored in the basement.

After the Museum received the Bonita C. McFarland bequest, the Board designated the Fine Arts Committee be responsible for recommending purchases of art and administering a scholarship program. From 1994 on, the Fine Arts Committee (and the Fine Arts Accessions Committee) oversaw the selection of artworks for the collection. In 1995, the Committee introduced the Splendors of the Season fundraiser highlighting a regional artist. Many of those artists form the core of the Fine Art Collection.

The County Library system donated a large local history collection to the museum around the time the new building opened, creating the first major library collections, and in 1978, the County deposited 4 tons of historical ledgers. The next largest collections added after this were the Charles Outland collection and the Star Free Press negatives. The research collection of vertical files, including biographical, clipping, and ephemera, were begun between 1976 and 1985. Most of the photographs were added to the collection after 1982. Approximately 8,000 photographs were in the collection prior to this.

Backlog Era (mid 2007-2018)

This period is marked by a renewal of Committee-led planning efforts combined with financial instability and insufficient collections management staff. Beginning in the early 2000s, each committee drafted a plan for their individual segments of the collection. The Fine Arts Committee developed an Art Collecting Plan in 2003 (revised in 2010 and 2016). The Accessions Committee likewise created a History Collections Plan in 2007 (revised in 2016) and a special ad hoc committee created the Agricultural Collections Plan in 2013. Each plan follows a different format and creates its own system for evaluating collections. There was no collections plan specifically for the Research Library and Archives, the committee evaluated library items based on their relation to the History Collections Plan. With no specific plan or framework, the library developed haphazardly from donations by the public, volunteers, and committees.

These plans do an excellent job of classifying the collection, but items were not always evaluated in consideration with the existing collection, leading to the acceptance of duplicate materials. Insufficient staff resources to implement decisions led to inconsistency in processing and a backlog. As a result, MVC still has items that were deaccessioned nearly ten years ago, and items donated in the late 2000s may not have signed Deeds of Gift or were never cataloged. Without collections management staff, accessioning became the added duties of overcommitted curatorial staff and volunteers. An unfair burden fell specifically on the Accessions and Farm Implement Committee Chairpersons, Shelly Foote and Bill Bowie, to catalog, document, and preserve the collection.

INTELLECTUAL FRAMEWORK

The scope of each permanent accessioned collection is stated in the Collections Management Policy as the following:

- The Research Library and Archive Collection contains historically significant records and information that document the history and culture of Ventura County, the Channel Islands, and the region.
- The Historical Object Collection contains historically significant objects that illustrate the people and development of Ventura County and the events that have impacted them.
- The Fine Arts Collection contains fine and decorative arts focusing on works by established and recognized Ventura County and regional artists, and/or works relating to Ventura County, the California Channel Islands and the surrounding region.
- The Agricultural Collection contains objects that document the history, technology and people involved in the business of agriculture in Ventura County including objects associated with ranches, farms, orchards, truck farming, aqua-farming, and environmentally controlled farms.

In addition to the acquisition criteria in the Collections Management Policy, items should be evaluated for their history, artistic merit, research value and physical condition. The Museum of Ventura County collects the material culture of the entire county from human habitation to the present. The collection chronicle artistic expression, political systems, technological advances, family and social groups, religion, the built environment, commercial food production and much more. Acquisitions should have significant audience interest and the ability to tell multiple stories of local, regional, or national import.

To determine audience interest, MVC Staff analyzed audience survey results, past exhibit attendance, and held feedback sessions with stakeholders yielding the following results:

Audience Expectations

Survey Results

In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, MVC collaborated with the American Alliance of Museums and Wilkening Consulting to conduct a survey of museumgoers. The survey focused on themes such as inclusion, personal traits, and values of attendees, meaning making, post-visit behaviors, and museums using a neutral vs activist approach to content presentation. Roughly 270 community members responded to MVC's survey. This represents a response rate of 3.4%, higher than other museums' response rates, and resulted in a $\pm 6.1\%$ margin of error, at 95% confidence level.

The Museum's survey respondents were generally older, with almost 40% over the age of 70. Over 68% were female. Only 26% identified as currently raising children. Respondents were very likely to have a college degree and almost half had a graduate degree. Like many museums, respondents tended to be older, well-educated, white females—though MVC's respondents were slightly more likely to be Hispanic or Latinx. Respondents presented as community-oriented and somewhat more progressive in that they perceive MVC as a community asset and want the Museum to do more to engage a broader community; they were also more likely to want inclusive content in museums.

When asked if museums should present information neutrally, just "the facts," or take a position, 54% of MVC's respondents said museums can take an evidence-backed position on issues central to the Museum's mission while 28% said museums should always remain neutral. Survey respondents were significantly more likely to say MVC can improve by offering **more engaging exhibits** and providing **more community outreach**, compared to respondents from other museums. They were somewhat more likely to say MVC can improve by **offering a wider variety of programs that go deeper into subjects**.

Respondents were interested in stories comparing Ventura County's past to its present, then in immigration stories, and changing natural environments and how cities developed were tied for third place in terms of interest level. Respondents felt that museums should engage by being **more inclusive in their storytelling** and they wanted to be engaged for **deeper understanding, made to think in new ways, see beautiful things, and learn new facts**. Finally, respondents were more likely to want museums to do more to broaden their audiences even if they must change to do so.

Recent Exhibits and Attendance

Looking at visitor attendance over the past five years, data indicates that our visitor base is interested in more contemporary history that invokes memory and nostalgia while encouraging social interaction and providing a variety of voices and perspectives. Under the curatorship of Anna Bermudez, the exhibits at MVC include a more inclusive view of history and art, a shift that aligns harmoniously with audience expectations quantified in the Visitor Survey. The highest attendance was at exhibits like *We Remember: Ventura County to Vietnam and Back*, *California Cool*, and *At Table: The Business of Food and Community* garnered attention and high attendance, capitalizing on community memory and placing them within the larger national context.

Unfortunately, MVC's collections cannot adequately support these inclusive, contemporary history exhibits, forcing the curator to rely on loan items from outside sources to support the exhibition themes. While crowdsourcing and loans are beneficial to engage the community and reduce strain on MVC's limited storage space, it is a short-sighted collecting strategy. The longer MVC does not collect contemporary, diverse stories and materials, the further the gap stretches between MVC collections and their relevance to audiences.

Interpretive Themes

After soliciting feedback from stakeholders, MVC determined that current audiences have interests in the following:

- Deep and meaningful representations of cultural and racial identities in Ventura County, to engender a more complete and well-rounded understanding rather than token items.
- Exploration of late 20th and early 21st century events, institutions, people, and places, particularly materials that trigger nostalgia and memories for people living in the County today.

- Interpretation of the unique character, culture, and artistic expression of cities within the County, created by geographic, population, and economic differences. A focus on local events from an insider's perspective demonstrating Ventura County's hidden history, spirit of independence, resiliency and self-reliance.
- A deeper understanding of the intersection between the natural landscape and daily life, how the geography and climate generate growth in areas of tourism, sports and leisure, inspires creativity, and makes Ventura County a desirable place to live and work.
- Introductions to emerging local artists.
- More meaningful interpretation and information regarding the tension between natural resource industries such as agriculture and oil production. In turn, how tension between those industries and residential developments has changed over time and how residents are impacted by industry and vice versa.
- A more thorough understanding of the relationship between industry employers and the people who do the work.
- An explanation of how local farms feed Ventura County and supply global agricultural markets. Telling the story of the people who work the land in Ventura County and the challenges of the modern agriculture industry.
- A broader range of materials that demonstrate cultural and economic changes that shape the county, how "progress" effects people's lives, and who it benefits and who it disadvantages.

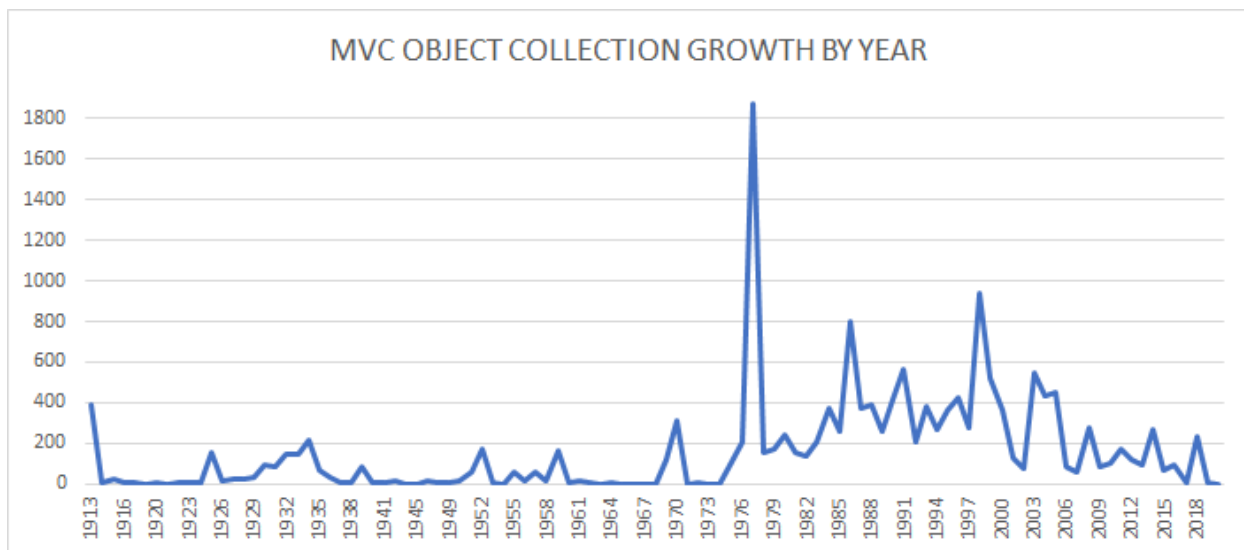
ANALYSIS OF CURRENT COLLECTIONS

The collection grew primarily by donations from individuals in Ventura County rather than museum purchase or targeted collecting. With that acquisition method comes certain challenges. Acquisitions are not always considered based on needs of the collection, but rather by what is offered and available. Considering items individually rather than by a systematic plan leads naturally to duplicates and gaps. Sometimes items held personal significance to the individuals that owned them, but that significance does not translate to a county-wide institution whose scope looks at the big picture.

Space Assessment

In 1994, library collection items began to be stored in offsite storage, as the Museum had reached full storage capacity. In the twenty-seven years since, permanent storage capacity for the collection has not been expanded. In Spring of 2021, the Museum hired a Space Consultant to assess the current collections space constraints and challenges faced by the Museum. The consultant's report will include a current physical measurement of the collections compared to current, appropriate storage and will outline three scenarios for properly housing the collection. The report will be complete by June of 2021 and will be added as an addendum to this plan, in support of the plan's preservation and housing priorities.

Growth and Overview of the Object Collections (History, Art, Agriculture)



*This does not include the 1900+ objects labeled "0000" which was a placeholder for items where the donation year and/or donor is unknown

**The Museum will add more records for the years 2007 to 2021 as the backlog is addressed.

Over 18,000 object records are cataloged in the Museum's collections management database. Some records describe groups of items (ie collection of 20 arrowheads). They include 2071 distinct object names: ie Dress, Tractor, Painting, etc. The internal lexicon separates objects into categories based on function. Most of the artworks are cataloged as Communication materials. Most of the Agriculture

Collection is cataloged in the Tools and Equipment for Materials or Distribution and Transportation. The Archaeology Collection records have not been entered in the database, so those items are not included in the 18,000.

Category	Number of Objects held by MVC	% of the collection	Most represented object names in the category
Built Environment	61	.3	Bricks, Doorknobs, Gasoline Pumps
Furnishings	612	3.3	Blankets, Decorative Bowls, Doilies, Candlesticks, Light Bulbs, Tables
Personal Objects	3246	17.7	Gloves, Shoes, Hats, Dresses, Shirts
Tools and Equipment for Materials (agriculture, animal husbandry, food preparation and service, metalworking, woodworking, mining, etc.)	3905	21.3	Food preparation and Service, Mortar and Pestles, Beads, Agricultural Implements
Tools and Equipment for Science and Technology	2282	12.5	Ammunition and Armaments, Laundry Irons, Medical equipment
Tools and Equipment for Communication	1509	8.2	Music Rolls and Recordings, Camera Equipment
Distribution and Transportation	1023	5.6	Baskets, Bottles, Spurs, (Ag collection Wagons and Tractors)
Communication	4253	23.2	Fruit Crate Labels, Paintings, Posters (Most of the Art collection is in this category), Flags, Pamphlets, Greeting Cards, Medals, Uniforms
Recreation	788	4.3	Dolls and Doll Accessories, Toy Trains and Cars, Sports Equipment
Unclassified (usually objects with unknown function)	402	2.1	Chumash Awls, Digging Sticks and Weights, Fragments (metal, cloth and wood), Tools
Natural History	220	1.2	Fossils, Stones, Ore
TOTALS	18,301	99.7%	

The database also sorts the objects into curatorial collections designated by MVC as History and Cephas L. Bard, Agriculture, Art and George Stuart Historical Figures. These collections are discussed in more detail below.

Types of Object Collections

Historical Objects Collection

The Historical Objects Collection is the oldest and largest of MVC's object collections. There are 15,497 object records cataloged in the collections management database although some of the records batch describe groups of objects (ie Group of 57 arrowheads) so the number of individual items is higher.

COLLECTION ANALYSIS BY CATEGORY:

The collections storage was initially organized by subject, a system which loosely exists in storage today. Although it does not encompass all items in our collection, it provides an approximate distribution of MVC's scarce storage space by category.

Category/Subject	Description	Cubic Feet
Textiles, Clothing and Personal Accessories	Women's, Children, and Men's Clothing, Hats, Shoes, Jewelry, Purses, Quilts, etc.	1684 Cubic Feet
Furnishings	Chairs, Cabinets, Tables, etc.	1210 Cubic Feet
Tools: Mining, Maritime, Ag and Ranching, Woodworking, etc	Pans, Weights, Samples, Hammers, Saws, Smelting Vessels, Saddles	634 Cubic Feet
Natural History	Minerals, Fossils, Taxidermy	495 Cubic Feet
Recreation	Toys, Fishing, Surfing	462 Cubic Feet
Technology	Photography Equipment; Computing, Adding and Telephones, Medical Equipment	403 Cubic Feet
Indigenous Materials:	Baskets, Material Culture Lithics, Ceremonial Clothing	337 Cubic Feet
Domestic Items	Food Preparation and Service, Laundry, Sewing, Cleaning, Dishes	248 Cubic Feet
Music	Player Piano Rolls, Record Players, etc.	88 Cubic Feet
Weaponry	Guns, Knives, Ammunition	56 Cubic Feet
Business and Organization History	Bank of A. Levy, Rotary, Social and Civic Clubs	50 Cubic Feet

COLLECTION ANALYSIS BY DATE:

Many objects in the collection are not dated including the indigenous material. Using those object records that do have information in their date field, the blue bars below show that most of the collection dates between 1880-1940s.

Date Range	No. of Object Records	Sample Events/Time Periods
10,000 BC-1700	Records not dated in database.	First People
1700-1820s	71	Spanish Colonial Era
1830-1840s	317	Mexican California
1850s	149	Establishment of American Statehood
1860s	245	
1870s	387	
1880s	914	
1890s	854	
1900s	929	
1910s	1754	Economic Expansion, Oil Boom, Civic Improvement, WWI
1920s	1587	
1930s	1563	Great Depression, World War II, Postwar Prosperity, the Freeway
1940s	1283	
1950s	677	
1960s	629	Mid-Century Changes to the end of the Millennium
1970s	647	
1980s	318	
1990s	187	
2000- today	81	Recent Past to the Present

COLLECTION STRENGTHS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Strengths and Gaps: The strongest category of items in MVC's collection are "everyday" material culture items that show what life was like for Anglo settlers and their descendants between 1880-1940. They are general history items that demonstrate how life and technology was different than it is today. This includes tea sets, irons, cooking implements, music players, medical equipment, furnishings and more. Specific histories and associated stories that could set them apart from similar items used outside Ventura County were irregularly captured at the time of acquisition. General history items are not bad, but they are limited in the ways they can be used for interpretation.

The items in the collection that are related to diverse populations are frequently utilized partly because of their rarity within the collection and because they relate to inclusivity goals in MVC's interpretation. These include a collection of Maura Flores Olney dolls, the Terrazas family donation, and items from workers such as a lunch pail and El Cortito. In the year 2019-2020, Chumash baskets were loaned, exhibited on-site, highlighted in an MVC Insider episode, a distance learning video and development materials, and requested by two separate research groups.

MVC has over-collected clothing, textiles and personal objects given the low frequency of exhibition. Although textiles must be rotated more often than other material types, they currently represent over 1/3 of the Historical Objects collection. Many items in this category typify fashion trends and do not have specific histories or associated interpretive stories.

Recommendations:

Preference acquisition, digitization, conservation and rehousing of items with specific histories and stories rather than general history items.

Explore new ways to interpret items in the collection from different perspectives to promote usage.

Refine the collection to de-emphasize the settler period and remove duplicates to free resources.
Create space for contemporary collecting.

Continue the Research and Interpretation Project for items with minimal histories.

Build relationships with diverse communities through exhibit loans and programs. Actively collect items documenting the history and culture of the Chumash, Spanish, Mexican, Latino, Filipino, Asian, Middle Eastern, South Asian, African American, Pacific Islander, and LGBTQ communities.

Explore and recommend loans with other institutions in the region rather than acquisition (short term solution).

Improve preservation conditions and housing of the objects, particularly related to overcrowding.

Finish cataloging the backlog of donation items (2007-2018).

Digitize collection for an online catalog that includes interpretive information in addition to metadata fields.

Tier the historical objects based on provenance, condition, and relevancy. Preference will be given to higher tier objects for digitization and storage priorities.

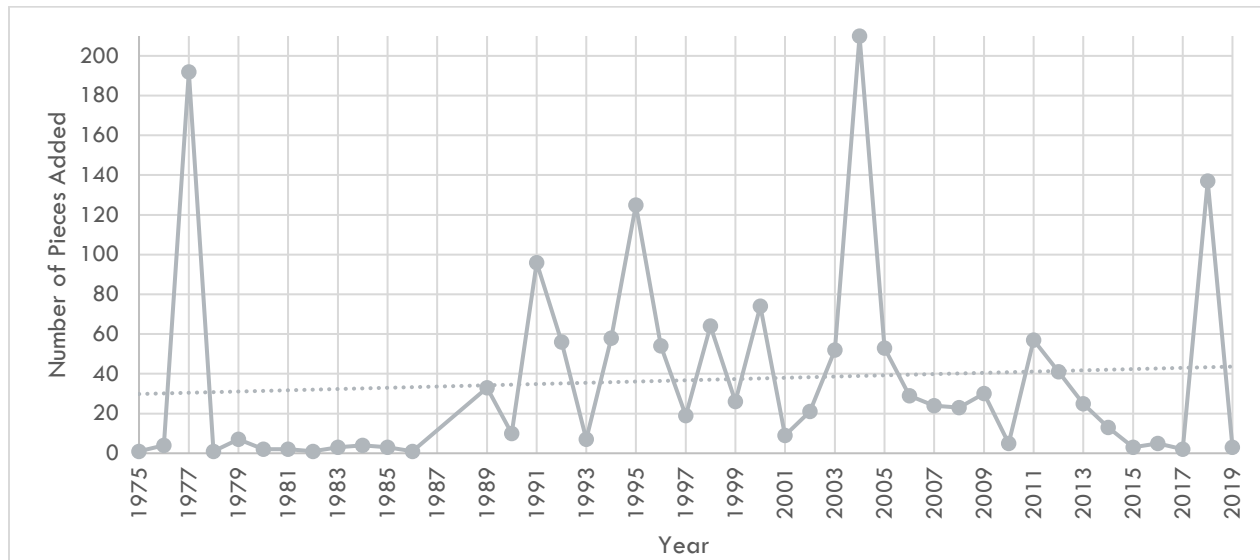
Create a subject tag schema in conjunction with the Research Library and Archive to track local topics of interest and interpretive themes.

Devise a way to track usage of the collection beyond the exhibition portal in the collections management database (include items pulled for research or integrated into educational curriculum.)

Fine Art Collection

The Museum collects the full range of fine and decorative arts focusing on works by established and recognized Ventura County and regional artists, and/or works relating to Ventura County, the California Channel Islands and the surrounding region. There are currently 1874 works of art held by MVC. The Fine Arts Committee evaluated the collection in 2018 and a resulting 6% of works were deaccessioned with approval from the Board of Directors.

GROWTH OF THE ART COLLECTION SINCE 1975*



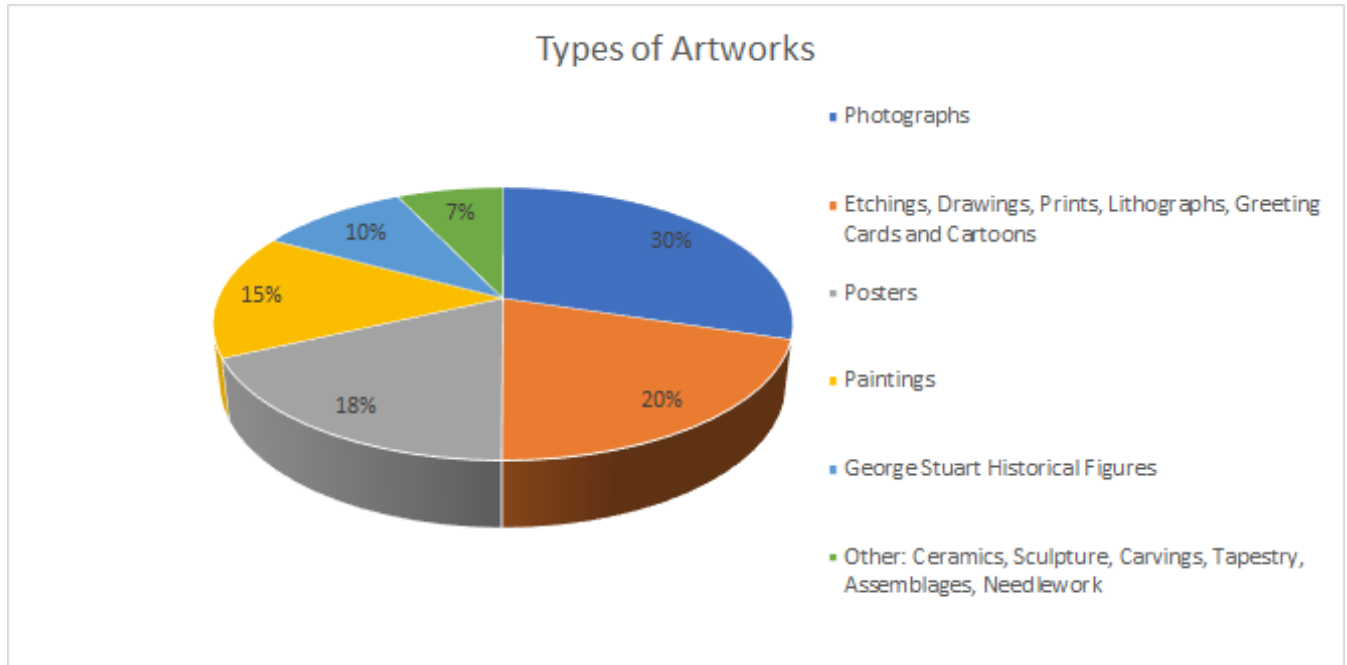
*The peak in 1977 is the acquisition of George Stuart Historical Figures. The peak in 1991 is the acquisition of Wilson Stroh Wilson Architectural Drawings. The peak in 1995 includes the Bank of A. Levy Art Collection. The peak in 2004 includes the Horace Bristol Photographs. The peak in 2018 includes the portraits by Johanna Spinks.

COLLECTION ANALYSIS BY TYPES OF ARTWORKS

The collection is divided into categories by medium. Art Life magazine (not yet cataloged in the database) and the George Stuart Historical Figures are categorized separately (only 187 of the figures stewarded by the Museum are cataloged in the database). There are several large poster collections assigned to the art collection classification in the collections database.

- **Photography:** includes outstanding examples ranging from Horace Bristol's historic photos, and Neil Barr's iconic depiction of fashion to diverse subjects by numerous contemporary photographers including Lis Schwitters and Stephen Schafer
- **Etchings, Drawings, Prints, Etc.:** Includes quite a few pieces of Western art (Edward Borein), John Nava figure studies, and historical mission etchings by Henry Chapman Ford. It includes other notable artists such as the Botkes and Catherine Day Barroca.
- **Painting:** includes most of the 15 Splendors artists (and many artists in the Bank of A. Levy Collection). Painting mediums include oil, acrylic, watercolor and some pastels.
- **Ceramics, Sculpture, Fiber and Textiles, etc.:** includes two exceptional collections of work by Beatrice Wood and Otto & Vivika Heino as well as a small number of contemporary pieces.

Both Sculpture and Fiber/Textiles are newer categories represented by a smaller number of works.



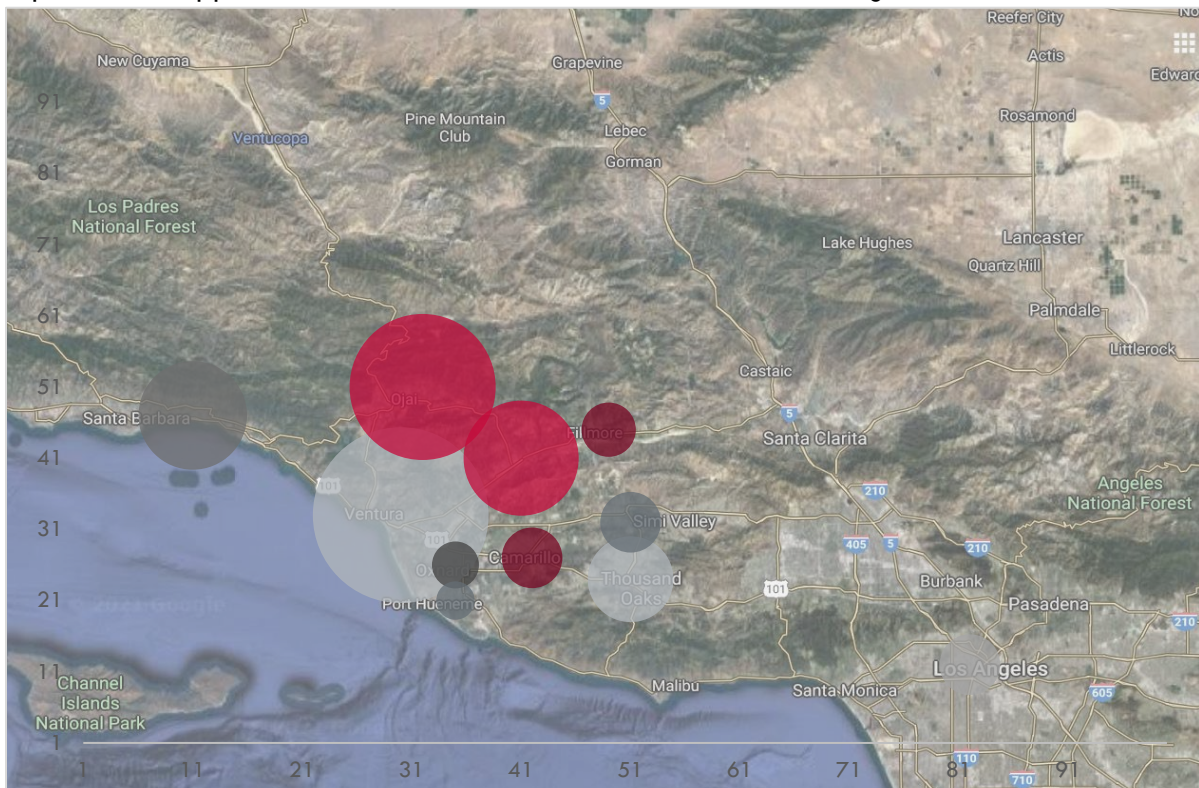
MATERIAL TYPE	# IN COLLECTION	% IN COLLECTION
PHOTOGRAPHS	558	30%
ETCHINGS, DRAWINGS, PRINTS, LITHOGRAPHS AND CARTOONS	377	20%
POSTERS	338	18%
PAINTINGS (ON CANVAS AND PAPER)	281	15%
GEORGE STUART HISTORICAL FIGURES	187	10%
CERAMICS, SCULPTURE, CARVINGS, TAPESTRY, ASSEMBLAGES, GREETING CARDS, NEEDLEWORK	133	7%
TOTAL WORKS IN ART COLLECTION	1874	100%

COLLECTION ANALYSIS BY ARTIST:

There are 174 individual artists represented in the collection. At this time, MVC has not collected demographic information such as gender or ethnicity from the artists in the collection. Although that data could help MVC evaluate if the Fine Art Collection represents the Ventura County's artist community, assigning gender and ethnicity without artists self-identifying that information is problematic.

Through qualitative analysis and discussion with knowledgeable staff, it appears that roughly 60% of the artists are male and 40% are female; however, roughly 70% of the total works in the collection were made by male artists and 30% were made by female artists. Additionally, roughly 4% of artworks in the collection were created by Latino artists, 1% by Asian American and Pacific Islanders, 0% by Black/African American artists and 95% by white artists.

Geographic information is available for all but 39 artists in the collection. The following map represents an approximate visualization of where artists work in the region.



GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION	NUMBER OF ARTISTS IN MVC'S COLLECTION
VENTURA	42
OJAI/OAKVIEW	29
SANTA PAULA	18
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY	16

THOUSAND OAKS, WESTLAKE, NEWBURY PARK CAMARILLO LA COUNTY SOMIS, MOORPARK, SIMI VALLEY FILLMORE OXNARD PORT HUENEME	9
	5
	5
	5
	4
	3
	2

COLLECTION STRENGTHS/RECOMMENDATION

Strengths and Gaps: Beginning in 1995 the “Splendors of the Season” exhibition and fundraiser featured a prominent Ventura County or regional artist each year. Those “Splendors” artists comprise the main strength and a very important part of the Museum’s Fine Art Collection. They include Beatrice Wood, Mary Michel, Douglas Shively, Susan Petty, the Brooks Sisters, Hiroko Yoshimoto, John Nava, Gail Pidduck, Sherry Loehr, the Botkes, Catherine Day Barroca, Simms Taback, Richard Schloss, Jeff Sanders and Omar d’Leon. In surveys for the collections plan, multiple participants highlighted artists Gail Pidduck and the Botkes for producing works that are particularly moving.

The Fine Art Collection is strongest in the subjects of landscapes and portraits, when including the works of photography. Survey respondents enjoy how MVC’s collection captures the richness of artists’ responses to the natural beauty and rural scenery of Ventura County and the Channel Islands.

The collection is dominated by 2D works, but acquisitions from the last 10 years expand the various media types in the collection such as fiber arts (John Nava, Michael Rhode, and Porfirio Gutierrez, etc) sculpture and ceramics (Myra Toth, David Spaulding, Richard Flores, etc) although there is more work to be done.

Recommendations:

Set aside the Hoffman Gallery as a dedicated space for rotating art exhibitions.

Support the Chief Curator to present an invitational exhibition each year to showcase contemporary emerging artists.

Maintain a list of artworks and items to prioritize for conservation as funding becomes available.

Invite discussions with artists as to how they would like to be best represented within the Museum collection; consider exchanging work with the artist rather than further acquisition given the absence of collections storage space. Collect key representative works by artists rather than the entire spectrum of their work.

Prioritize pieces with interpretive stories that can be used to illustrate multiple themes and subjects. In addition to quality, size and medium, artworks should be evaluated for the richness of information about the artist, their historical and artistic context, their ability to inspire emotion for viewers, and their point of view.

In the first three years, the Art Collecting Subcommittee will convene to evaluate gaps, potential acquisitions and works for deaccession or exchange. Roster will include three rotating members of the Fine Arts Committee, staff members, and rotating prominent experts in regional art by focus area (ie Kevin Wallace for ceramics, etc).

Create a traveling exhibit/loan program to increase the collection's usage, visibility and exposure.

Create an artist survey that sensitively asks for demographic data while seeking written non-exclusive copyright licensing on works with unclear intellectual property ownership.

Complete further analysis about the subject matters represented in the Fine Art Collection (landscape, still life, portraits, etc) and create a series of subject tags to track those categories.

Revisit the categorization of items within MVC's collection (should the posters be included in the Fine Art Collection, etc.).

Plan a long-term storage solution for the entire collection.

Agricultural Collection (Formerly Farm Implements Collection)

In 2016 the Agriculture Planning subcommittee formed to create an Agriculture Collections Plan and to classify the implements to identify gaps and redundancies within the Agriculture Collection. The group attempted to match collections items with the growing cycle of Ventura's most influential crops. They approved 50 items for deaccession (5% of the collection), but the items were never divested.

There are 932 object records cataloged in the Agriculture Collection, but the separation between Agriculture and Historical Objects is sometimes arbitrary. For example, some animal branding irons are in the Agricultural Collection, but impressions of the brands are cataloged in the Historical Objects Collection. General use tools (ie wrench, saw, drill press etc) are divided inconsistently.

This collection struggles with storage and inventory difficulties. Although accepted by the committee, many items remained in the physical possession of the donors because there was no dedicated storage solution. As a result, many items are inadequately cataloged. The harsh storage environment also leads to problems physically labeling the pieces with their accession number creating inventory challenges.

COLLECTION ANALYSIS BY FUNCTION:

Agriculture Function*	Approximate Number of Records	Example items	Number Deaccessioned in 2016
Animal Husbandry	110	Animal Tack (yokes, singletrees, etc), Sheep Shears, Animal Branding Irons	0
Equipment Maintenance	112	Blacksmithing Tools, Gasoline Pumps, Wagon Jacks, Grease Guns	4
Fertilization	9	Manure Spreader, Broadcasters, Fertilizer Distributors	1
Irrigation	13	Irrigation Pipes, Water Pumps, Irrigation Furrower	0
Pest Control	6	Animal Traps (deacc) and Power Sprayer	3
Fire Suppression	3	Hose Carts, Water Tank	
Land Preparation	116	Scrapers, Plows, Harrows, Subsoilers, Graders	11
Planting	41	Planters, Seed Drills, Broadcasters	5
Growing and Raising	35	Orchard Heaters, Cultivators, Frost Alarms	1
Harvesting and Picking	62	Stalk Cutters, Hay Rakes, Bean Threshers	6
Processing	51	Shellers, Nut Hullers, Thresher-Separators, Pitting Knives	4
Packing and Shipping	60	Dolly, Fruit Crates (not labels), Jackson Hooks, Hay Baler	2
Home Life	15	Stoves, Ranch Bell, Chopping Block	1
General Use	82	Tractors, Drill Presses, Saws, Wheelbarrows	5
Transportation	110	Wagons, Wheels, Surreys, Animal Tack	5
Unclassified	204	Gas Engines, Harpoon, Racing Chariots	0

*The Agriculture Planning Subcommittee created these function designations.

COLLECTION ANALYSIS BY CROP

Crops	Number of Records	Example Items
Apricots	9	Drying Tray and Track, Pitting Knives
Avocados	2	Platform Scale, Picking Bag
Citrus	50	Sorting Tray, Ladder, Orchard Heaters, Crates
Beets	9	Wagons, Planters, Beet Topping Knife
Corn	10	Planters, Shellers, Grinder
Field Flowers	0	
Grains	16	Grain Binder, Seed Drill, Reaper
Grapes (Wine)	5	Fruit Presses, Wine Vats
Hay	32	Hay Knives, Hay Rakes, Jackson Forks
Landscape Plants and Sod	0	
Lima Beans	37	Planters, Stalk Cutters, Wagons, Threshers
Potato	3	Planters, Diggers
Raspberries	0	
Row Crops (Broccoli, Celery, Lettuce, Tomato)	10	Irrigation Pipes, Cultivators, Transplanters
Strawberries	1	Strawberry Row Cart
Tree Crops (general term)	18	Crawler Tractors, Tree pruners
Walnuts	16	Nut Huller, Dehydrator, Drying Trays
Not associated with a crop or linked to minor crops not listed.	209	

COLLECTION STRENGTHS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Strengths and Gaps: Bob Pfeiler's original vision was to "show the changing technology manifested in farm equipment" (Early Bird Newsletter). Two years after opening the Ag Museum and seeing how it functioned, the Agriculture Subcommittee revised the scope to include the history, technology and people involved in the business of agriculture. The collection has not had time to adapt to the new scope. Apart from a general acknowledgement of which family owned the implements, the collection does not show the "people" of agriculture. Similarly, the only element of the business of agriculture that is represented is the field equipment. The collection does not document the entire operation from field to consumer. Upcoming exhibits will focus on *Feeding Ventura* (historically and modern day) rather than the technological developments in order to engage the Ag Museum's audience.

The technology aspect is the most well-developed part of the Agriculture Collection's scope. The collection includes a complete 60-year timeline of tractors used for various crops throughout Ventura County. Although not all are in exhibitable condition, the tractors can bridge the interest gap between experts and children as favorites of both. The collection includes a full complement of land preparation implements including plows of all dates, harrows, and cultivators. The collection of buggies and wagons is also a strength.

The implements strongly communicate the history of popular crops from 1880-1950. There is a gap involving the current agriculture community and the challenges faced by the modern industry that generates more than \$2 billion annually and employs over 30,000 county residents.

Recommendations:

Evaluate the items and keep only those that are likely to be exhibited and used in programs. Items that cannot be exhibited due to condition, size, interpretative interest, or safety concerns should be deaccessioned to free resources for the rest of the collection.

Develop a sustainable, long-term storage solution for a minimized Agriculture Collection.

Remove all material that is not accessioned from storage locations.

Research the existing collection further to document the function, county location, date, and family that used the implements to expand the interpretation possibilities of the existing collection.

Tier the collection based on provenance, condition, and relevancy to exhibits and programing. Preference will be given to higher tier objects for digitization and storage priorities.

Expand the collection to show the life and career of people beyond the implements. (ie work clothes)

Archaeology

The Archaeology Collection comprises roughly 610 cubic feet. Each box is labeled by its archaeological site number and is separated by material type. Most of the Archaeology Collection originated at the site CA-VEN-87, the San Buenaventura Mission site. Other sites with materials of 10 cubic feet or less include CA-VEN-1071H, CA-VEN-480, CA-VEN-1668, CA-VEN-4, CA-VEN-1801, CA-VEN-1222H, and one box each from Encanto Del Mar and E.P. Foster House. The Archaeological Collection was collected and deposited almost exclusively by Greenwood and Associates. 260 cubic feet of materials are stored in the "archaeology cage", designed to limit access, but as other collections grew, they were moved and stored in the cage. Stone items are kept outside on pallet racks and in the Children's Garden comprising an additional 350 cubic feet of space.

MVC acquired archaeological material over the years without a clear policy about how it would be managed. As a result, the excavation and artifact documentation were separated from the artifacts meaning there is no longer physical or intellectual control for this category of material. The materials are stable, but not easily accessible with no finding aid or catalog for the collection. In 1996, MVC transferred the archaeological materials from the Ventura County Archaeological Society to Moorpark College.

COLLECTION STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Strengths and Gaps: As an output of the positive working relationship between Greenwood and Associates, the City of San Buenaventura and the Museum, the materials related to CA-VEN-87 (site of the Albinger Archaeological Museum) forms the main strength of the collection.

Recommendations:

Although CRM (Cultural Resource Management) work happens in county, the Museum does not currently have the resources to serve as a local repository for the resulting artifacts. The Museum is not looking to grow this collection.

Improve the environmental conditions and move the lithic material stored outside.

Defer cataloging the collection in PastPerfect until the Museum can establish a partnership with an educational institution (Consider for the next Collections Plan)

Education and Rapid Response Collection

Education Collection: Although all MVC's Collections Management Policies over the years have allowed education or study collections, there are only three items designated and cataloged as such. Rather than tracking individual objects, materials for hands-on tours are kept separately and not recorded in the collections management database.

Consider removing this designation and allow the Education Department to manage their materials. Offer history deaccessions to the Education Department for use in programs.

Label all education materials that could be confused for collections as "PROPS" such as the tractor outfitted for children's exhibits, etc.

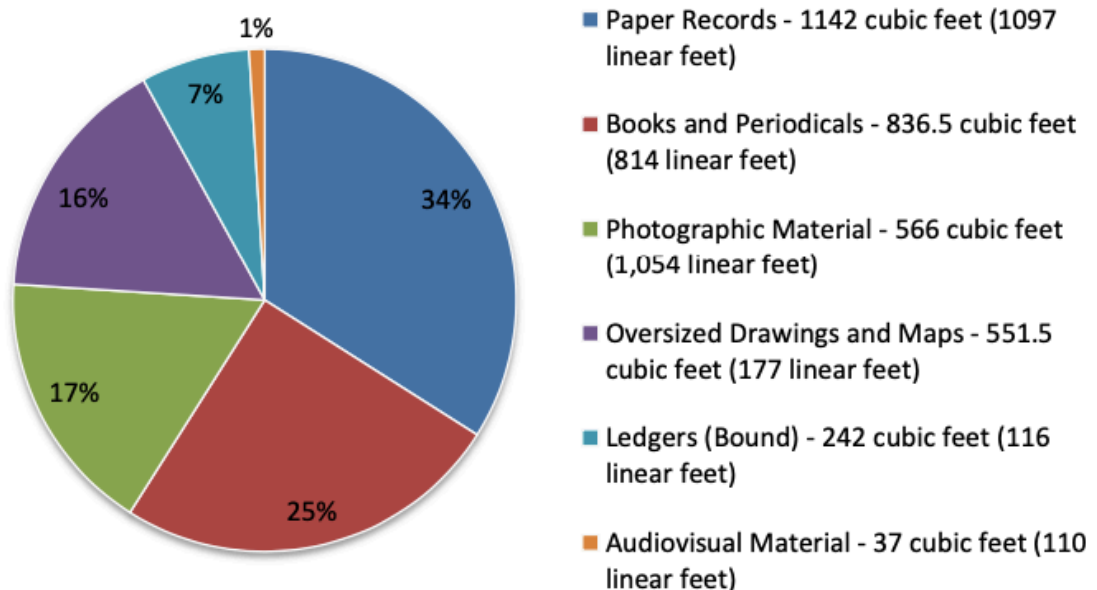
Rapid Response Collection: Instituted after the Thomas Fire in 2017, this small collection of materials has not been cataloged. Staff created procedures for managing the Rapid Response Collection in 2019 and they are included in the Collections Procedure Manual.

Research Library and Archive Collection

The Research Library and Archives Collection consists of an estimated 150,000 discrete items, constituting 3,330 cubic feet of materials. The collection began as an institutional collection, with curators and Museum directors collecting materials for consultation. In the 1970s, the Museum Library officially opened. In 1994, library collection items began to be stored in offsite storage, as the Museum had reached full storage capacity. In the twenty-seven years since, permanent storage capacity for the collection has not been expanded.

Analysis of Formats

Physical Formats



The Research Library and Archives Collection has not had a specific collections plan applied to its development. The collections are cataloged in a range of different systems, from electronic catalogs to card catalogs, and these systems do not use the same cataloging schema to describe them. The systems do generally use Library of Congress subject headings but there is a vast number of local subject heading terms that have been applied to the collections.

Paper Records (1142 cubic feet)

Record types collected include correspondence, newsletters, financial records, club and organization records, monographs, reports, newspaper clippings, programs, land survey records, project proposals, manuscript collections, yearbooks, and vital records, among others.

Books and Periodicals (836.5 cubic feet)

These volumes include general reference volumes regarding California history and culture, as well as specialized books pertaining to subject matter specializations. These also include extensive periodicals pertaining to local history, genealogy, and archival/museum practice. They also include fiction books authored by local writers.

Photographs, Slides, Film Negatives, Microform (566 cubic feet)

The photographic materials include prints, negatives, slides, and scrapbooks. The materials document locations, people, and events in or around Ventura County. The collection also contains over 1,000 microfilm reels, as well as various microfiche cards throughout the collection. Photographic positives include tintypes, daguerreotypes, cyanotypes, and silver gelatin prints. The photographic collection's strengths include an extensive collection of JC Brewster photographs, one of the earliest and most prolific photographers to set up a studio in Ventura County. Photography by Waldo Dingman and several other well-known local and regional photographers is also included in the collection. This collection also includes large format negatives, as well as panoramic images.

Oversized Drawings and Maps (551.5 cubic feet)

The Architectural Plans and Drawings collection consists of architectural plan and drawings created primarily by the firms "Wilson & Stroh", "Wilson, Stroh & Wilson", and "Wilson, Stroh & Fickes Architects and Planners." The drawings are mostly for Ventura County, but Santa Barbara, Kern, and Los Angeles counties are also represented. The drawings cover a wide variety of projects for both public and private parties, including but not limited to residential, educational, agricultural, business, and industrial construction.

The majority of maps are of Ventura County, but there are several from other California locations, Oregon, and Arizona. Maps are of various types, including aerial photographs and topographical. They show land, housing tracts, roads, surveyed areas, rail lines, and equipment locations. They also illustrate water use and rights, land development, oil extraction, and legal cases, among others. Materials include cloth, parchment, vellum, and heavier stock papers. The majority are hand drawn, in either ink or pencil, which is most prevalent. The Aerial Photographs, considered maps in the collection, represent aerial photography of the land features of Ventura County in 1929, 1945, 1948, various years in the 1960s, 1970, and 1993.

Ledgers (242 cubic feet)

The bulk of the ledger collection represents County records, such as Assessor's Rolls. The collection also includes ledgers from the Bank of A. Levy and the Bard Family, particularly the Berylwood Investment company. The ledgers are leather and cloth bound and range in size from 3' by 3' to as small as 6" by 11". Contents include tax records, financial ledgers, store credit and sales ledgers, hotel and Chamber of Commerce visitor logs, and payroll accounts.

Audiovisual Material (37 cubic feet)

The audiovisual material is comprised of VHS tapes, audio cassette tapes, vinyl records, U-Matic tapes, DVDs, CDs, and film reels. The Oral History collection makes up the bulk of the cassette tapes, with over 450 interviews of local residents speaking on topics of local history. VHS tapes generally represent locally produced media from the 1980s, with some reference copies of items produced elsewhere commercially featuring Ventura County stories. A small selection of vinyl records represents local musical compositions, as well as recordings of Chumash language speakers. The optical media generally houses secondary copies of digitized photographs. The film reels represent a small collection of farm scenes from the Keene family.

Library and Archives Collections Analysis

Overall collection: The bulk of the dates for the material range from the 1880s to the early 2000s, with material dating as early as 1475 and as late as 2020. All collections tend to have more coverage of Ojai, Ventura, and the Santa Paula/Fillmore/Piru area. The collection is catalogued in multiple systems and there is no consolidated mechanism for analyzing the entire collection. Staff have used both quantitative and qualitative analysis to identify subject, date, and geographic coverage information.

ANALYSIS BY SUBJECT

At this time, there is no consolidated way to analyze the entire collection by subject. Only the monograph and manuscript collections have been assigned subject terms.

The manuscript collection is cataloged using non-Library of Congress subject headings for the most part. Of the 1835 subject headings assigned, 215 were Library of Congress, 2 were Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names, and 19 were from the Art & Architecture Thesaurus.

Manuscript Collection: Top 25 Subject Terms

Buildings	991
Ventura -- Buildings	302
Ojai -- Buildings	254
Schools	226
Streets.	217

Ojai -- Buildings -- Hotels	155
Portraits	153
Roads	152
Missions -- San Buenaventura	148
County	134
Oxnard -- Buildings	130
Ventura -- Views	123
Women	118
Men	115
Churches	108
Artists	101
Ventura (Calif.)	100
Wheeler Springs (inhabited place)	100
Trees	98
San Buenaventura Mission	96
Santa Paula -- Buildings	95
Beaches	90
Matilija	88
Ojai Valley	87
Buildings -- Houses	84

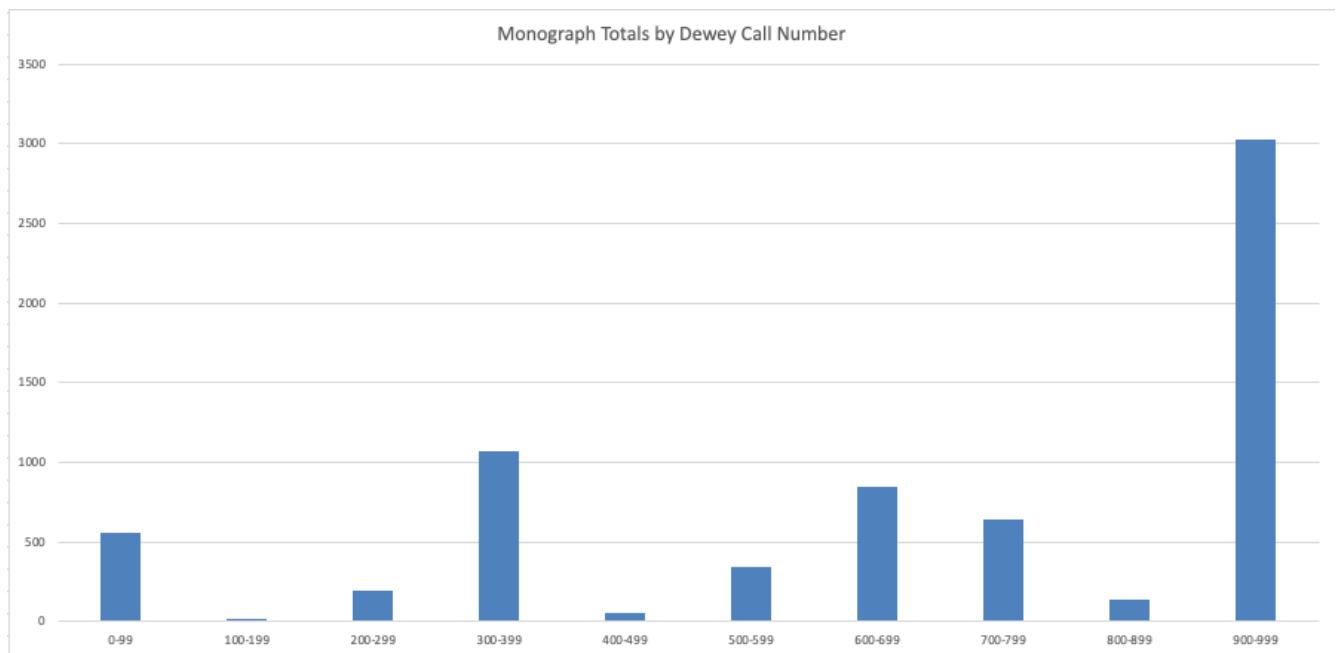
The monograph collection cataloging has adhered to Library of Congress subject headings for the most part. Record cleanup is required to properly analyze the collection.

Monograph Collection: Top 50 Subject Terms

Ventura County (Calif.)--History.	163	California--History, Local.	24
California--History.	109	San Buenaventura Mission.	23
Missions--California.	66	Authors--California--Ventura County.	22
Indians of North America--California.	59	Port Hueneme (Calif.)--History.	22
Ventura (Calif.)--History.	57	Ventura (Calif.)--Directories.	22
California--History--To 1846.	55	Ventura County (Calif.)--Officials and employees.	22
Ventura County (Calif.)--Directories.	55	California, Southern--Description and travel.	21
California--Description and travel.	51	Cooking.	21
Ventura County (Calif.)--Description and travel.	38	Dudley House.	21
California, Southern--History.	37	Environmental impact analysis.	21

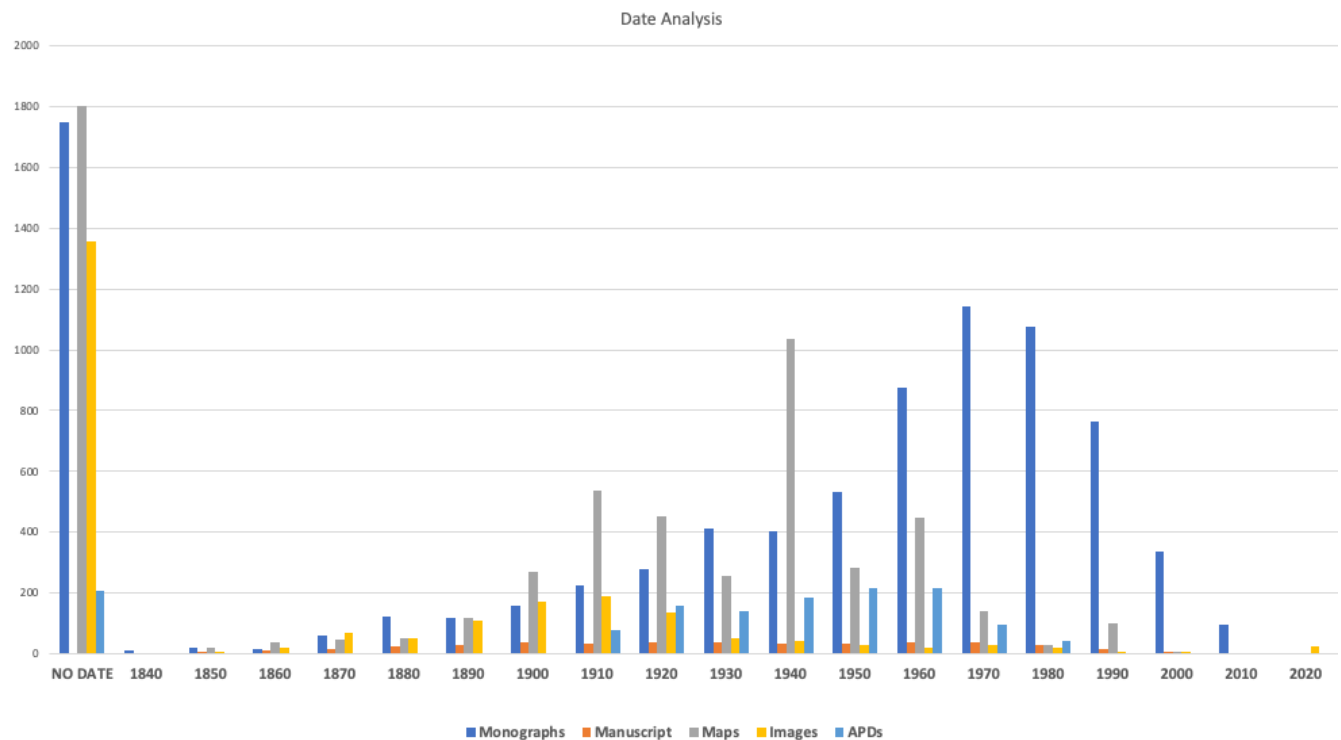
Chumash Indians.	34	Geology--California--Ventura County.	21
Overland journeys to the Pacific.	34	Santa Paula (Calif.)--History.	21
Oxnard (Calif.)--History.	34	Mason, Perry (Fictitious character)--Fiction.	20
Poetry.	31	Spanish mission buildings--California.	20
City planning--California--Ventura.	30	Ventura County (Calif.)--Biography.	20
Legal stories.	30	Ventura County (Calif.)--Economic conditions.	20
Santa Barbara (Calif.)--History.	28	Ventura County (Calif.)--Maps.	20
Agriculture--California.	27	West (U.S.)--Description and travel.	20
Detective and mystery stories, American--Fiction.	27	California--Description and travel	19
Santa Barbara County (Calif.)--History.	27	Indians of North America--California--Antiquities.	19
Agriculture--California--Ventura County.	26	Newspapers--Indexes.	19
Regional planning--California--Ventura County.	26	Roads--California--Ventura County.	19
California--Antiquities.	25	St. Francis Dam Disaster, 1928.	19
California--Gold discoveries.	25	Ventura County (Calif.)--Politics and government.	19
California--Biography.	24	Frontier and pioneer life--California.	18

The bulk of the collection is the 900 range of the Dewey Decimal system, which is the Geography and History Range. The bulk of these are in the 979s, which are western history.



ANALYSIS BY DATE

Much of the collection is not dated in the cataloguing systems. The ephemeral, clipping, oral history, biography file, and periodicals are not dated. The bulk of the monographs, maps, and image collections are not currently dated in the cataloging systems. The monographs that are dated are by publication date and not by date coverage.



ANALYSIS BY GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

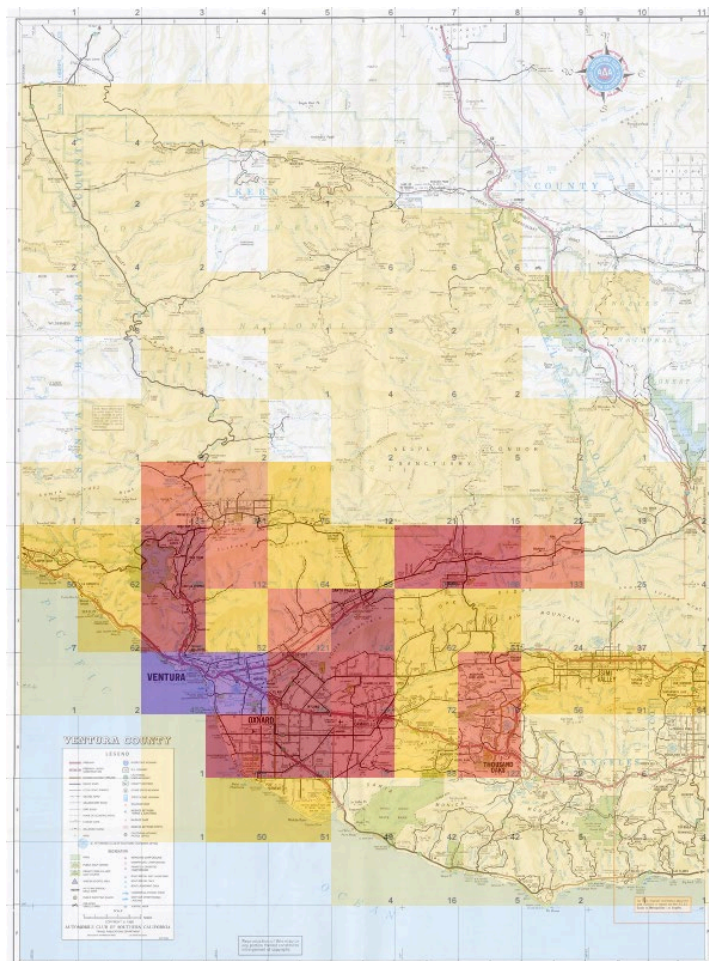
The monograph collection tends to skew towards west county geographically. Santa Barbara is better represented than some of the county's eastern cities. While Ventura County used to be a part of Santa Barbara County, the collection tends to cover events after the 1873 creation of Ventura County.

Monographs: Top 25 Geographic Terms

Ventura County	563
California (general, not history)	413
California--History	318
Ventura	209
Santa Barbara city and county	170
California, Southern	153
Oxnard	106
Los Angeles	99
Geography, geology, geomorphology (various regions)	92
US West	90
Ojai	80
Santa Paula	75

Channel Islands (Calif.); Channel Islands Harbor and National Park	65
San Buenaventura	62
Port Hueneme	57
Simi & Simi Valley	46
San Francisco	38
San Luis Obispo county	38
Mexico	33
Camarillo (Calif.)	32
Conejo Valley (Calif.)	31
City planning--California--Ventura.	30
Fillmore (Calif.)	28
San Nicholas Island.	28

Map Collection Geographic Coverage: The map collection also skews toward west county coverage, though it includes a wider representation of the county as a whole than any other collection.



COLLECTION STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Strengths and Gaps: The map collection includes a wide variety of map type, with a deep representation of the urban areas and through time, with the 1850s to the 1960s well represented. Photographic, print, and oral history collections predominantly represent Anglo-American culture and history from the 1850s to the 1940s. Publication dates in the print collection are consistently represented from the 1880s to the 1990s. In qualitative analysis, researchers, collections staff, curatorial staff, and docents identified the strengths as “pioneer” Anglo-American history, culture, and politics from the 1890s to the present; the growing digital access to collections; the monograph collection’s depth and breadth; the photograph collection’s documentation of Anglo-American history and culture; the oral history collections documentation of the Anglo-American history and culture and especially agriculture; the map collection’s documentation of development over time. The most helpful collections for research and exhibits were identified as the maps, monographs, and images, especially those things that have begun to be digitized.

With the current backlog, it is impossible to analyze the entire collection as it relates to this plan’s Intellectual Framework, which creates a massive gap in understanding the collection. Library and archive systems that can catalog and make publicly available records for the wide variety of formats and collection types do not currently exist and so staff must analyze the collections cataloged in each system separately. Systems can be confusing to the public and non-library staff. Additionally, not all items in the card catalogs have been migrated to the online catalogs, which reduces their accessibility. Duplication was identified in all collections, often a strength but can be problematic given current lack of any space. The collections are currently stored in several sites, making accessibility an issue.

The gaps identified across collections center on diversity of ethnicity, subject and geography, as well as time periods. Wholly inadequate documentation exists in the collection for the historical record of the Chumash, Spanish, and Mexican periods, with almost no primary source records identified in the collection. In terms of diversity, a paucity of collections related to the following groups was identified in all collections but especially the oral history, monograph, manuscript, newspaper, biographical and ephemeral file, and photograph collections: Chumash, Spanish, Mexican, Latino, Filipino, Asian, Middle Eastern, South Asian, African American, Pacific Islander, and LGBTQ.

Recommendations:

Properly house and preserve the collection, ensuring adequate storage for all collections.

Complete processing and cataloging of the backlog collections.

Develop a series of subject, location, and community tags beyond the standard lexicon as to evaluate our effectiveness and aid searchability.

Complete a more thorough gap analysis, utilizing local tags.

Develop relationships with diverse communities to aid in closing collection gaps.

Actively collect items documenting the history and culture of the Chumash, Spanish, Mexican, Latino, Filipino, Asian, Middle Eastern, South Asian, African American, Pacific Islander, and LGBTQ communities.

Actively create relationships with East County archival and library organizations, through the Historical Alliance.

Actively collect items dating from 1960 and later.

Develop an oral history program, identifying partnerships, funding, and staffing to ensure a successful and thorough program.

Develop a public history collecting program, inviting the public to bring in artifacts and archival materials for donation or recording.

Continue to digitize the collection, ensuring accessibility for the public and staff.

Identify preservation needs for individual collections.

Items not collected by the Museum:

- Printed newspapers
- Newspapers of any kind after 1997
- Maps of locations outside Ventura County and the Channel Islands
- Unidentified photographs
- Scrapbooks, with a few exceptions
- Photographic slides
- Nitrate film of any kind
- Materials deemed to be harmful to other collection items, staff, or the public
- Items with prohibitive preservation costs
- Forges, scrapers, graders, or rippers (as recommended by the Ag Subcommittee in 2015)

COLLECTING OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

Philosophy Statement: MVC is committed to having a collection that reflects the diverse community it serves across all of Ventura County.

Years 1-5

1. **Objective:** Build relationships with new audiences
 - During the first five years of the plan, MVC must forge and deepen relationships with diverse communities. Staff should engage new audiences through exhibit loans and programs. This will allow the Museum to actively collect items documenting the history and culture of the Chumash, Spanish, Mexican, Latino, Filipino, Asian, Middle Eastern, South Asian, African American, Pacific Islander, and LGBTQ communities in the future.
 - Encourage Chief Curator to present an invitational exhibition each year to showcase contemporary emerging artists.
 - Create a traveling exhibit/loan program (particularly of the Fine Art Collection) to increase the collection's usage, visibility and exposure. **(YEARS 6-10)**
2. **Objective:** Continue and deepen gap analysis work; Currently, we have identified East County, Diverse Voices, and Post-1970 historical materials as gaps in the collection.
 - Develop a series of subject, location, and community tags for all collections beyond the standard lexicon to evaluate our effectiveness and aid searchability.
 - Create an artist survey that sensitively asks for demographic data while seeking written non-exclusive copyright licensing on works with unclear intellectual property ownership.
 - In the first three years, reestablish an Art Collecting Subcommittee to evaluate gaps, potential acquisitions and works for deaccession or exchange. Roster will include three rotating members of the Fine Arts Committee, staff members, and prominent experts in regional art by focus area.

Years 6-10

3. **Objective:** Cultivate a wider pool of collections donors and only accept donations that relate to areas identified in the gap analysis
 - Actively collect items documenting the history and culture of the Chumash, Spanish, Mexican, Latino, Filipino, Asian, Middle Eastern, South Asian, African American, Pacific Islander, LGBTQ and other diverse communities, as well as East County communities.
 - Actively collect historical and archival items dating from 1960 and later
 - Expand the Agriculture collection to show the full business and people beyond the implements. (ie work clothes)

Philosophy Statement: MVC believes preserving the stories that are associated with each object in our collection is as important as preserving the object itself.

Years 1-5

1. **Objective:** Process the backlog while it is still feasible for staff to inquire with donors about collection histories
 - Finish cataloging the backlog of historical object donation items (2007-2018).
 - Finish cataloging the library and archives backlog.

2. **Objective:** Prioritize items with interpretive stories for acquisition, digitization, conservation, rehousing, and social media, etc
 - Continue the Research and Interpretation Project for items with minimal histories in the historical object and agriculture collection.
 - Prioritize artwork with interpretive stories that can be used to illustrate multiple themes.
 - Preference acquisition, digitization, conservation and rehousing of historical objects with specific histories and stories rather than general history items.

3. **Objective:** Improve preservation conditions at MVC storage sites
 - Identify Library & Archives preservation needs and work to preserve the collection.
 - Improve housing of the historical objects particularly related to overcrowding.
 - Remove all non-accessioned material in Agricultural Collection storage
 - Plan improvements to the building and infrastructure for better disaster preparedness, and environmental conditions, storage space utilization

4. **Objective:** Reach out to the community to collect stories through public programming.
 - Develop a public history collecting program, inviting the public to bring in artifacts and archival materials for loan or recording.
 - Develop an oral history program, identifying partnerships, funding, and staffing to ensure a successful and thorough program.

Years 6-10

5. **Objective:** Increase accessibility to the stories in our collection (for staff and the public)

- Develop online object collections that have stories and interpretive information in addition to metadata.
 - Continue to digitize the library and archive collection, ensuring accessibility for the public and staff. **(YEARS 1-5)**
6. Objective: Appropriately house and preserve the collection, ensuring adequate long-term storage for all collections.
- Utilizing the Space Assessment conducted in Spring 2021, develop a plan to sufficiently house the entire collection.
 - Develop a sustainable, long-term storage solution for a minimized Agriculture Collection.
 - Maintain a list of artworks/items to prioritize for conservation as funding becomes available.

Philosophy Statement: MVC is committed to having the most impactful collection rather than the largest collection.

Years 1-5

1. Objective: Refine the collection through further analysis and deaccession in over-represented or under-used areas
- Refine the collection to de-emphasize the settler period and remove duplicates to free resources. Create space for contemporary collecting.
 - Devise a way to track usage of objects in the collection to determine which items have never or rarely been exhibited or used for research.
 - Evaluate the Agricultural Collection and keep only those that are likely to be exhibited and used in programs. Items that cannot be exhibited due to condition, size, interpretative interest, or safety concerns should be deaccessioned to free resources for the rest of the collection.
 - Revisit the categorization of items within MVC's collection (should the posters be included in the Fine Art Collection, etc.) **(YEARS 6-10)**
2. Objective: Utilize the collection we have already invested in
- Explore new ways to interpret items in the historical objects collection from different perspectives to promote usage.
 - Research the existing Agriculture collection to document the function, county location, date, and family that used the implements to expand the interpretation possibilities of the existing collection.
 - Invite discussions with artists as to how they would like to be best represented within the museum collection; consider exchanging work with the artist rather than further acquisition given the absence of collections storage space. Collect key representational pieces rather than the full spectrum of an artist's body of work.
 - Set aside a dedicated gallery for rotating art exhibitions.

- Explore and recommend loans with other institutions in the region rather than acquisition (short term solution)

Years 6-10

3. Objective: Tier the historical objects and agriculture collection

- Create a ranking system based on provenance, condition, and relevancy to exhibits and programing. Preference will be given to higher tier objects for digitization and storage priorities.