Delaware Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs
29 N. State St., Dover, Delaware 19901
Tel. (302) 736-7400 | Fax. (302) 739-5660
history.delaware.gov

Guidelines and Standards for the Curation of Archaeological Collections

Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

By:
Karli M. Palmer, Curator of Archaeology, HCA
Paul M. Nasca, Former Curator of Archaeology, HCA
and
Kerry S. González, Former Senior Principal Investigator, Gray & Pape

Revised
2025

This document supersedes all prior versions of the Delaware *Guidelines and Standards for the Curation of Archaeological Collections*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Curator of Archaeology would like to acknowledge the individuals and institutions that have contributed to the revised standards of curation presented here. Foremost of these is retired Delaware Curator of Archaeology, Charles "Chuck" Fithian. Much of this document and its procedures were established by Chuck during his tenure with the State. Chuck set a high bar for those holding the curator position, and through his astute attention to detail and dedication, he has ensured that Delaware's archaeological collections are well curated for future generations. This publication would not have been possible without the assistance of co-author, Kerry González. Kerry's decades of archaeological field and laboratory experience, especially working with curation standards from numerous other states, has added a true level of refinement to these guidelines.

The authors are indebted to curators Sara Rivers Cofield and Rebecca Morehouse, of the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory, Maryland Historical Trust, for their willingness and permission to borrow heavily from their recently revised archaeological curation guidelines and standards. Their openness and good will is a model for how curators and archeologists in state government can work together.

Lastly, the authors wish to thank our outside reviewers. These include Gwen Davis, Sarah Carr, and Hannah Lewis of the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office, John Martin and John McCarthy of the Delaware Department of Transportation, Lu Ann DeCunzo and Andrea Anderson of the University of Delaware, and Lee Priddy, Marina Tinkcom, and Kat Baganski of Dovetail Cultural Resource Group, a Mead & Hunt Company. Their time, knowledge, and thoughtful suggestions have made these guidelines more understandable and practical. Their effort will ultimately lead to a higher quality of curation for Delaware's archaeological collections and ensure their long-term preservation.

INTRODUCTION

The Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs (henceforth referred to as the Division, or HCA) is the principal state-government agency charged with the professional preservation and management of Delaware's cultural legacy. The Division's curatorial responsibility and authority are established through provisions in the Delaware Code. To meet this responsibility, the Division operates and maintains a state-of-the art curatorial facility called the Delaware Center for Material Culture (CMC). This facility is centrally located in Delaware's state capital, Dover. The CMC is the primary repository for archaeological collections (objects, artifacts, and associated documents) recovered from land-based (terrestrial) or underwater (aqueous and sub-aqueous) archaeological investigations by state and federal agencies, as well as professional, semi-professional, and avocational endeavors within the state.

Archaeological investigation, by nature, removes portions of or complete sites from a locale's cultural record. The information within the resulting archaeological collection becomes the only material means to understand the human behavior present at the site and within the larger context of which the site was part. Archaeological collections are regarded as an irreplaceable, non-renewable, primary resource. Therefore, the Division has developed this set of curation standards to ensure the long-term preservation and accessibility of Delaware's archaeological collections. These standards provide guidance for preparing artifacts and their associated records for curation at the CMC.

The Division reserves the right to refuse any collection that does not meet these curation standards. While every attempt has been made to ensure these standards are comprehensive, it is not possible to address every potential situation or material encountered when processing archaeological collections. Therefore, it is recommended that users of these standards contact the Division's Curator of Archaeology for case-by-case guidance on preparing collections for curation as soon as possible for any unique or challenging situations.

These curation standards take effect as soon as they are finalized and supersede all prior version of Delaware's published, *Guidelines and Standards for the Curation of Archaeological Collections.*

1.0 ACCESSION NUMBERS

1.1 Defining the Accession Number

The curation process for an artifact collection begins by obtaining an archaeological **Accession Number** (previously referred to as a Provenience/Catalog Number). This number is issued by HCA's Curator of Archaeology and is comprised of two parts (e.g. **2021.0107)**. The first part designates the calendar year that the accession number was requested. This is followed by a decimal point and then the next available number in the collection list that is maintained by the curator. In this example, Accession No. 2021.0107 would be the 107th collection to be accessioned by the Curator of Archaeology in 2021. The accession number is not to be confused with the archaeological site number, such as 7K-C-061, which is assigned by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

1.2 Additional Accession Numbers

Instances where a project may require more than one accession number assigned to the artifact collection is when multiple sites are encountered within a project area, a unique type of field methodology is employed (e.g., metal detecting), when there is the addition of **isolated finds,** or when a non-site determination is made, such as with artifacts interpreted as being a historic-period **field scatter**. Artifacts interpreted as a field scatter or isolated finds will require a unique accession number denoting them as such.

Another example of a collection requiring additional accession numbers is when there are multiple phases of a project. For instance, a Phase I survey is conducted and then a Phase II is undertaken the following year on a specific locus within the broader survey area. One accession number will be issued for the Phase I artifacts and a second for the focused Phase II artifacts.

1.3 Requesting an Accession Number

To request an accession number, send an email to the Curator of Archaeology (see Appendix E: Contacts). The email address for the curator will be their **first name, period, last name @delaware.gov**. The email needs to contain the following information:

- Name of the project
- Level of investigation (Construction monitoring, Phase I, Phase II, Phase III etc.)
- Name of the company or group that did the archaeological work
- Agency or entity for which the work was conducted
- Type of site, isolated find, or non-site
- Site number and name of any recorded archaeological sites encountered or identified

A sample email may read:

> Subject: Accession Numbers Request – Dover Green Expressway
>
> Dear Curator of Archaeology,
>
> I am writing to request two archaeological accession numbers. First State Archaeological Consulting recently conducted Phase I and II investigations of the proposed Dover Green Expressway project for DelDOT. The project identified one historic site interpreted as part of the previously recorded Old State House site, 7K-C-061, as well as a newly registered multi-component site, 7K-C-123, called the Parking Lot site. No further archaeological work is anticipated for this project.
>
> Thank you for your assistance.
>
> Sincerely,
> Jane Doe
> Laboratory Director

Obtaining an accession number is a required step for all collections that are to be curated by HCA.

2.0 CLEANING

2.1 Overview

All stable artifacts must be cleaned as part of the curation process, unless doing so would be detrimental to future research value (such as residue analysis). This will ensure accurate identification, cataloging, and long-term preservation of the objects. Appropriate cleaning procedures depend upon the type and condition of the material. Care must be exercised during the cleaning process to ensure that the integrity and informational value of the object are maintained.

2.2 Wet Washing

Simple tap water should be used to wet wash artifacts. Do not place artifacts directly under a stream of water, do not leave artifacts submerged/soaking in water for an extended period of time, and do not use soap or chemical cleaners in the washing process. Brushing (not scrubbing) with a soft bristle brush, such as a toothbrush, will aid in the removal of dirt. Be sure to wash all surfaces of an artifact, including edges. Artifacts need to be rinsed in clean water prior to being allowed to dry to ensure that a light film of dirt does not remain. Artifacts need to be allowed to properly dry before bagging. This is especially true for porous materials, such as earthenwares and brick. If not allowed to dry completely, a microenvironment may be created when bagged, resulting in a mold bloom or further artifact deterioration. Artifacts that may be wet washed include historic ceramics, glass, bone, stone, brick, shell, and coal.

2.3 Bulk Wet Washing

Some artifacts, if recovered in a high frequency, may be wet washed in bulk using tap water. This may be done by portioning out the artifacts in a bucket or basin and agitating them either manually or with a water spray to remove the dirt. Limited brushing may be required if heavily soiled. These artifacts need to be properly dried before bagging, as stated above. Artifacts that may be washed in bulk include, window glass, brick, shell, slag, coal, thermally altered stone (TAS), and fire-cracked rock (FCR). Artifacts subject to bulk washing may also be subject to sampling and discard (see Section 4.2).

2.4 Dry Brush Only

Dry brushing is necessary for most artifacts made of organic materials, precontact ceramics, and metals. The chlorides in tap water can accelerate the corrosion process in some metals, particularly iron. Dry brushing should be done with a soft bristle brush such as a toothbrush, paintbrush, or a natural bristle scrub brush for larger artifacts.

2.5 No Washing or Brushing

Do not wash or dry brush artifacts that are thought to have possible DNA, residue, or trace elements research value. These may include projectile or spear points and other stone tools, char on ceramics or smoking equipment, and complete bottles or ceramic containers. Diagnostic, rare, or fragile artifacts worthy of specialized conservation should also not be washed (see Section 4.3). Charred or carbonized remains intended for radiocarbon dating should not be washed or handled. These samples need to be wrapped in foil and containerized (see Section 4.6). **In most cases, carbon samples or artifacts that require analysis will *not* be accepted for curation until *after* that analysis is completed.** Consult with the Curator of Archaeology if a situation is encountered that may require un-analyzed materials to be accepted.

2.6 Conclusion

Care must be taken when assessing how an artifact should be cleaned and handled. The Table below (2-1) provides basic guidelines on which method of cleaning is appropriate for common types of artifacts. All artifacts should be cleaned unless this will harm the object or result in the loss of artifactual data such as residue, DNA, or other trace materials with potential research value. Artifacts for conservation, Carbon-14 dating, or sampling and discard are to be treated differently. **If questions arise as to how an artifact(s) should or should not be cleaned or handled, contact the Curator of Archaeology.** Artifact collections determined by the Curator of Archaeology to be insufficiently cleaned are subject to refusal.

Table 2-1. Details on materials that may be wet washed, washed in bulk, dry brushed, or curated unwashed. For questions about exceptions or anything not on this list, contact the Curator of Archaeology (Adapted from Morehouse, Rivers Cofield, and Doub, 2020).

Wet-wash each artifact	Bulk wet-wash artifacts	Dry brush only	May remain unwashed for specialized analysis (consult with Curator)
• Historic Ceramics • Glass • Lithics • Bone	• Shell • Brick • TAS/FCR • Slag • Coal	• All metals • Wood • Leather • Textiles • Precontact ceramics • Fragile objects	• Stone tools that are to be tested for blood or pollen residue • Ceramics that are to be tested for food residue • Tobacco pipes and bowls • Complete bottles

3.0 ARTIFACT CATALOG

3.1 Overview

An **Artifact Catalog** must accompany all artifact collections submitted for curation. Both a hard copy and a digital version are required. The primary purpose of the artifact catalog is to maintain provenience, provide accurate artifact identifications and counts, and serve as a starting point for analysis of the objects.

3.2 Formatting

The artifact catalog must be submitted in a spreadsheet format. It is required that the digital version be in a Microsoft Windows-compatible format such as Excel. Each entry in the catalog must include the following information:

- Site number, isolated find number, or field scatter number
- Accession number
- Provenience number
- Depth and/or stratum artifact was recovered from
- Artifact number
- Artifact count
- Detailed artifact description

Sample formatting of the artifact catalog spreadsheet is provided in Table 3-1.

Two hard copies of the artifact catalog are to be submitted with each collection for curation – one bound in the report and the other unbound as part of the supporting documentation (see Section 7.0). These two catalogs are often the same. However, it is acceptable to abridge the report's artifact catalog (eliminating some non-essential columns) to fit, in landscape orientation, the size of the report page. Another acceptable means to save space in a report's artifact catalog is to include the site number and accession number in the header of the catalog and not in a designated column. This is best employed when there is only one site, and one accession number represented in the artifact collection.

3.3 Provenience Number and Artifact Number

The **Provenience Number** and **Artifact Number** are each determined by the consultant. The provenience number is a sequential list of numbers, starting with "1," assigned by the principal investigator or the laboratory director to designate a specific location or method of field recovery (e.g. surface collection, metal detector hit, shovel test pit, excavation unit, trench, or feature). These numbers are consecutive and do not repeat within the assigned accession number.

The artifact number is assigned by the laboratory director to the individual artifacts within each provenience number. If multiple artifacts of the same material and object classification were found in the same provenience (e.g. 5 whiteware body sherds all found in the B horizon of STP 1), these can be grouped together under one artifact number. Artifact numbers are sequential, starting with "1," but start over with each new provenience number. Together, the accession number, provenience number, and artifact number create a unique identifier, or **Catalog Number** (see Table 3-2) for individual artifacts or groupings of artifacts of the same type and provenience. **It is important that all entries in the artifact catalog are appropriately sequenced.** An artifact catalog determined to be out of sequence by the Curator is grounds for refusing the collection.

Table 3-1. Sample formatting for an artifact catalog.

Site #	Accession #	Provenience	Provenience #	Stratum/ Depth (cm below surface)	Artifact #	Count	Description
7NC-F-123	2022.0014	STP A-1	1	Fill; 5-10 cmbs	1	4	Blue shell-edged creamware rim sherds
7NC-F-123	2022.0014	STP A-1	1	Buried A horizon; 15 cmbs	2	1	Machine-cut nail shaft
7NC-F-123	2022.0014	STP A-1	1	B horizon; 22 – 25 cmbs	3	45	Clear machine-made bottle glass
7NC-F-123	2022.0014	STP B-1	2	Fill; 10-12 cmbs	1	12	Aqua window glass
Field Scatter 1	2022.0015	Surface Collect. 1	1	Surface	1	2	Quartz debitage fragments

Table 3-2. Numbering system explained using example: 2022.014-002.001

Title	Example	Explanation
Accession #	2022.0014	Year Accession Number was assigned (2022). Order in which number was assigned (.0014 = fourteenth curated archaeological project recorded in 2022).
Provenience Designator	2	2nd provenience within site
Artifact Identifier	1	First artifact within provenience 2
Catalog Number	2022.0014-2.1	Accession # - Provenience Designator. Artifact Identifier

3.4 Artifact Identification and Resources

Accurate artifact identification is essential to the cataloging process. Repeated misidentifications can skew overall site interpretation and diminish the potential of a collection for future research and display. Artifacts catalogs found to have an excessive number of misidentifications by the curator may result in refusal of the collection.

To safeguard against this, it is expected that various print and on-line resources, such as those listed in Appendix D, will be consulted when cataloging Delaware collections. Additionally, it is often better to catalog artifacts under more general nomenclature when there is uncertainty about identification. For example, if a zooarchaeologist is not available to identify faunal remains to genus and species, it is better to simply catalog them as "Bone, Faunal" than to make an incorrect guess as to what animals and skeletal elements are represented.

4.0 SPECIAL CONCERNS: ARTIFACT RECOVERY, RETENTION, STUDY, AND CARE

4.1 X-Radiography

The use of x-radiography (x-ray) to assess and identify metal objects, especially corroded iron, is encouraged. This form of documentation is both beneficial in documenting corroded metal objects prior to complete loss from deterioration, and as a means by which to make decisions regarding artifact conservation or sample and discard. Nails or other metal objects that are so heavily corroded that they cannot be identified by eye and/or are likely to disintegrate in storage should be x-rayed and then discarded. Ensure that provenience information be maintained when undergoing x-ray documentation (Figure 4-1). Any x-ray imagery and analysis should be submitted within the collection's Final Report and analysis and laboratory documents. X-rays delivered with a collection as part of the associated documentation should be labeled with site and provenience numbers corresponding to the artifact catalog.

X-ray service may be obtained, most often for a fee, from conservation laboratories, universities, or medical dental, and veterinary businesses. This cost is often offset by reduced curation fees when sample and discard is employed on collections containing a high density of corroded iron artifacts.

Print and on-line resources regarding the use of x-ray with archaeological collections is available in Appendix D.

Figure 4-1. Example of proper layout of materials for x-ray. Small proveniences may be left in their respective bags (Morehouse, Rivers Cofield, and Doub, 2022).

4.2 Sample and Discard

When a surveys or excavations encounter non-site artifacts or large quantities of bulk materials, such as brick, slag, coal, shell, fire cracked rock (FCR), and thermally altered stone (TAS), a **sample and discard** and/or a **limited collection** strategy, may need to be employed due to limited curatorial space. A characteristic sample of each type of material, however, must be retained for the collection.

Each strategy shall be developed on a project-by-project basis in consultation with the Curator of Archaeology, SHPO, and client or agency. Variables that must be considered when deciding what materials should be retained, and how large a collection of retained samples should be, include:

- Evaluation of the quantity of materials and how they are distributed throughout the project area.
- The context in which archaeological materials have been found (i.e. are the materials associated with an intact feature or found among 20th century historic scatter?).
- The range of variation within a material type/artifact class.
- The condition of the artifacts.
- The number and variety of specimens needed for the statistical analyses that may be used to study the objects.
- The scientific research potential as well as the heritage-related uses and values of an artifact class within a particular context.
- Threats to the site/survey area (if more work is likely to be done in the project area, it may be less pressing to collect large amounts of material than it would be for a salvage operation).

It is best to develop a sampling strategy prior to the beginning of fieldwork to avoid the unnecessary collection of bulk materials. Bulk materials can often be noted, counted, weighed, and photographed in the field without having to be brought into the laboratory. Generally, types of materials that should be documented in the field, but may not need to be retained for cataloguing or laboratory analysis include:

- Construction materials such as brick, lumber, and concrete fragments without diagnostic features (retain a small sample of each type).
- Non-diagnostic artifact fragments smaller than a dime.
- Late 20th and 21st century debris (e.g. Styrofoam pieces, aluminum foil. modern cans etc.), particularly when less than 50 years old. Make sure to distinguish between modern plastics and historic plastics such as Bakelite.

Bulk materials and artifacts formally collected and brought into the lab must be cataloged and documented prior to discard. In general, documentation should include photography, distribution information, count, and weight of materials. Generally, materials that may be discarded after being analyzed, counted, weighed and photographed in the lab include:

- non-diagnostic vessel glass fragments

- poorly preserved non-diagnostic leather and textile scraps (after being analyzed by a specialist)
- fire cracked or thermally altered rock that is not associated with a feature (a sample should be retained of FCR or TAS from features such as hearths)
- non-diagnostic and/or waste metal scraps, strips, or wire
- slag and amorphous metal
- Large iron artifacts for which curation may not be feasible, such as car, tractor, stove, and appliance parts, or farming implements.

Additionally, heavily corroded nails, nail fragments, and other ferrous items may be discarded after documentation through x-ray (see Section 4.1). Nails that are ca. 50 years or older and that have identifiable diagnostic characteristics should **not** be discarded. Consult with the Curator of Archaeology, SHPO and client or agency if there is a high volume of nails present on the site to determine a sampling strategy.

Window glass fragments should be counted, weighed, and measured for thickness in the lab prior to discard. A representative sample should be retained of each different type of windowpane glass recovered, and the rest discarded.

Bricks, bats, or brick fragments with diagnostic features (glazed, handmade, whole bricks, maker's marks etc.) should be collected. If there is a large quantity of diagnostic brick at a site, consult with the Curator of Archaeology, SHPO and client or agency on a sampling strategy. For non-diagnostic fragments and modern machine-made bricks, retain a sample of each type of brick encountered and discard the remainder after documenting their distribution throughout the site, counting, and weighing them.

Coal and slag should be noted, counted and weighed either in the field or in the lab. A small representative sample (a couple small bags worth) should be collected and then the rest discarded.

Modified faunal shells, complete unmodified faunal shells, oyster or clam shell fragments that have hinges, and any fragments from other species' shells (mussel, whelk etc.) should be retained. Large volumes of unmodified shell body fragments from oysters or clams should be counted, weighed, and their distribution throughout the site noted, after which most of them can be discarded, keeping a sample (usually approximately 5%) of the largest body fragments.

Pieces of mortar or plaster that have lathe impressions or other notable characteristics should be retained. Non-diagnostic fragments should be counted, weighed, measured, and their distribution throughout the site noted. A sample should be retained of each different type of mortar/plaster found at the site, and the rest can be discarded after documentation.

Non-site artifacts and assemblages may be subject to discard, unless one or more of the artifacts have potential value for research, education, or exhibit. This determination is to be made in consultation with the Curator of Archaeology, SHPO and client/agency.

The final artifact catalog and report shall indicate whether an artifact or group of materials was collected and then discarded. Discarded artifacts do not need to be assigned an artifact number in the catalog but should be listed as “Discarded” where the artifact number would normally be recorded. All other information about the artifact (provenience, description, count, measurements, weight, etc.) should be included in the catalog entry as normal. Artifacts should also be photographed prior to discard. Photos of discarded artifacts should be well lit, and should include a scale, a solid black, white or grey background, and a focused (not blurry) image of each side of the artifact. Photographs of discarded artifacts should have “Discarded” noted in the digital file name.

4.3 Conservation

While it is not feasible or practical to conserve every artifact, a deliberate effort must be made to stabilize and preserve significant and vulnerable objects in a collection. The needs of most artifacts are best addressed by employing preventative conservation measures, including proper handling, housing in archival-quality materials, appropriate physical support, and providing a stable storage environment.

In addition to these basic needs, some artifacts can benefit from or require additional conservation measures. Artifacts discussed in the site report or those intended for display may only need light cleaning or stabilization. Organic artifacts recovered from wet environments, metals exhibiting active corrosion, and dry organics, bone, shell, glass, and ceramics that are brittle, delaminating, or show loss, will all require conservation and consolidation. This work shall be done only by a professional conservator.

Conserved artifacts must be boxed separately from the parent collection when preparing for final curation. The conservation documentation is to be included with the associated documents (see Section 7.2).

Budgeting for artifact conservation is an important part of the project planning process. This is especially true on data recovery projects and underwater (shipwreck) investigations. **Please consult with a professional conservator, the Curator of Archaeology, SHPO, and the client or agency before prioritizing artifacts for conservation.**

4.4 Specialized Studies

Artifacts that undergo specialized study or analysis enhance the understanding and interpretative value of a collection. These studies may include faunal, archaeobotanical, or dendrochronological analysis. Cross-mending ceramics and glass or conducting minimum vessel counts also fall within the realm of these detailed studies. **In instances where a group of artifacts are the subject of a specialized study, these artifacts should be boxed together for final curation.** Any notes, documentation or report are to be included with the associated documents (see Section 7.0). **Please consult with the Curator of Archaeology, SHPO, and the client or agency before prioritizing artifacts for specialized analysis.**

4.5 Soil and Flotation Samples

Taking soils samples is a routine procedure in archaeological field work. These samples provide the opportunity to conduct chemical and micro- and macro-archaeobotanical analysis as well as allow for the recovery of small artifacts and faunal remains. These studies should be budgeted for ahead of field work and need to be completed prior to final curation.

If floatation or water screening is employed to process the soils samples, the different size fractions of materials need to be sorted prior to final curation. Once sorted, the unused portions are to be discarded. The recovered artifacts must be packaged in 4-mil. polyethylene bags based on material and incorporated into their associated proveniences for curation (see Section 6.0). **Unprocessed soil samples will not be accepted for final curation.**

4.6 Carbon Samples

The recovery of charcoal and charred organic remains may be useful for radiocarbon dating. These burned materials should be packaged in aluminum foil which is then housed in a new (unused) glass vial (amber or clear) with a Teflon-lined cap or in an appropriately-sized, archival quality artifact box. These are then to be sealed in a 4-mil. polyethylene bag.

Radiocarbon dating should be budgeted for ahead of field work and must be completed prior to final curation, with the results submitted within the Final Report and/or among lab and analysis documentation. **In most cases, unprocessed carbon samples will not be accepted for final curation.**

4.7 Human Remains

The preferred approach for managing the discovery of human remains in Delaware is to leave them in place until a treatment and disposition plan can be developed by HCA in accordance with the Delaware Unmarked Human Remains Law (Title 7, Delaware Code, Chapter 54). Should care and safekeeping be temporarily necessary prior to repatriation or reburial, HCA will provide respectful and protective storage at the CMC. However, HCA does not accession human remains for permanent curation.

Aside from burials, at times a single human bone (such as a tooth or finger bone) may be identified in the lab as part of a larger artifact assemblage. **In any case where human remains are identified when preparing a collection for curation, please notify the Curator of Archaeology, SHPO, and the client or agency for the project before proceeding with further work.** All human remains will require specialized handling and housing materials (see Appendix B).

5.0 ARTIFACT LABELING

5.1 Labeling Overview

The preferred method for labeling artifacts is to handwrite the numbers using ink on clear or white B-72 acrylic resin. Employing pre-printed, acid-free, paper labels is also acceptable. When placing a label directly on an object, care must be taken not to obscure diagnostic features or decoration. Labels should also be placed in an area that is not likely to be visible if the object were to be exhibited. Not all artifacts require labeling directly on the object, based on size, material, or condition. Some artifacts are best served using a string tag. The key with artifact labeling is clarity and consistency throughout a collection to maintain provenience and the correlating artifact catalog information.

5.2 Label Number

The **catalog number** number applied directly to the artifact is comprised of the Accession Number, Provenience Number, and Artifact Number. A hyphen is used to separate the Accession Number (state issued) and the Provenience Number (client designated). All other numbers are separated using a period. Because this **catalog number** can be long, any extraneous zeros ("0") may be omitted when labeling artifacts. Do not abbreviate the year. Acceptable and not acceptable formats for the catalog number are demonstrated in Figure 5-1. The archaeological site number (e.g., 7K-C-061) is not to be directly labeled on the artifact but is required on the bag and interior tag (see Section 6.2).

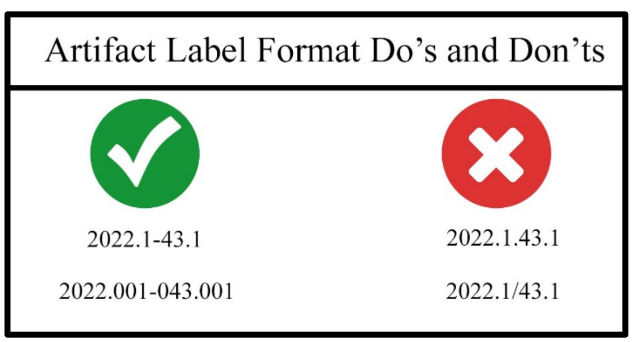

Figure 5-1. Example of appropriate artifact labels. Adapted from Morehouse, Rivers Cofield and Doub (2020).

5.3 Artifacts to be Labeled

Artifacts to be labeled directly on the object, based on composition or diagnostics, are summarized in Table 5-1. Exceptions to this are artifacts that are not washed or dry brushed to preserve residues or DNA remains and those intended for conservation (see Section 2.4).

Of the artifacts classes to be labeled, those smaller than **1/2-inch square** do not require direct labeling. However, there must be a handwritten or pre-printed tag within the bag with the artifact that contains the catalog number (Accession Number, Provenience Number, and Artifact Number, e.g. 2022.1-43.1). Anything larger must be labeled (see Figure 5-3). Some artifacts may be better served using a string tag, such as conserved objects or small finds.

Bulk artifacts, such as large amounts of shell, glass, or debitage from the same provenience require only a 10% sample to be direct labeled with the catalog number. Select the largest pieces to be labeled and after labeling, put them in an interior bag within the larger bag of bulk material. An artifact tag or archival paper label with the catalog number on it should also be placed within the larger bag containing the artifacts.

Some artifacts based on composition or condition are not to be labeled. These are summarized in Table 5-1 and Figure 5-3. Any artifacts that are not directly labeled need a string tag tied to them, or a tag inside the artifact bag with them.

Table 5-1. Artifacts to label and not label directly on the object.

Label directly on object	**Label a 10% sample within a context**	**Do NOT label directly on object**
• Diagnostic ceramics • Diagnostic glass • Lithic tools and cores • Tobacco pipes • Stable, non-ferrous metals • Small finds	• Plain, undecorated ceramic body sherds • Plain glass body sherds • Window glass • Brick • Lithic debitage (flakes, shatter, etc.) • FCR • Stable faunal bone • Stable shell	• Ferrous metals • Mortar/daub/plaster • Wood • Leather • Textiles • Fragile bone • Fragile shell • Fragile non-ferrous metals (brittle pewter, etc.) • Artifacts intended for residue analysis or conservation

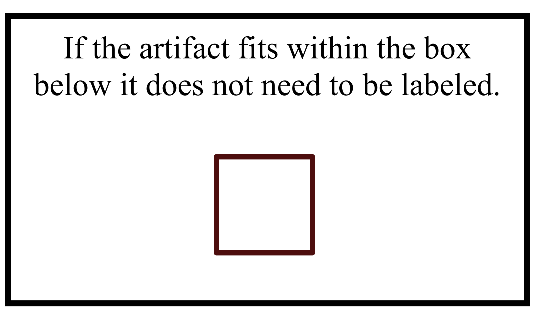

Figure 5-2. One-half inch guide for artifact labeling. Adapted from Morehouse, Rivers Cofield and Doub (2020).

Figure 5-3. Examples of what to label and not as specified in Table 5-1. Adapted from Morehouse, Rivers Cofield, and Doub (2020).

5.4 Placement and Size of Labels

Labels need to be tactfully applied to an artifact so as not to obscure important diagnostic attributes, decoration, or overwhelm the appearance of the object with numbers. Avoid placing the label on broken edges or areas where there is loss to the artifact. The numbers (handwritten or printed) need to be small, but legible with the naked eye. Figures 5-4 and 5-5 illustrate proper labeling techniques and common errors to avoid.

5.5 Handwritten Ink Labels

Direct labeling of the artifacts using permanent, black archival ink is the preferred labeling method. A basecoat and topcoat of Acryloid B-72 dissolved in acetone is required.

Dark colored artifacts, such as green wine bottle glass, are to be labeled using an undercoat of 10% Acryloid B-72/acetone containing white titanium dioxide or a clear basecoat of 10% Acryloid B-72/acetone and the number written using archival ink.

To apply handwritten ink labels, use the following procedure:

1. Tactfully apply a basecoat of clear or white-tinted 10% Acryloid B-72/acetone to an area of the artifact
2. Handwrite the catalog number on the applied basecoat
3. Apply a topcoat of clear 10% or greater Acryloid B-72/acetone over the catalog number

After each step, allow for the necessary drying time.

5.6 Printed Paper Labels

Printed acid-free paper labels are an acceptable labeling method. These are to be printed with a **laser printer**, not inkjet, using a sans-serif font such as Calibri, Tahoma, or Verdana in 5- or 6-point size.

For the basecoat and topcoat, various emulsion adhesives may be used depending on the type of artifact. These include Polyvinyl Acetate (PVA), Liquid Matte Medium, or Rhoplex for porous artifacts. See Appendix B for suppliers.

To apply paper labels, use the following procedure:

1. Tactfully apply a basecoat of adhesive to an area of the artifact
2. Using tweezers, apply the paper label on top of the wet adhesive
3. Allow these to dry completely
4. Appy a topcoat of adhesive or clear Acryloid B-72/acetone over the paper label, and allow to dry

5.7 String Tag Labels

Archival quality paper sting tags may be used to label artifacts that allow for a tag to be attached. These include durable artifacts that are hard to label and small objects, such as beads, buttons, or pierced coins (see Figure 5-4). String tags are also to be used to label large artifacts that do not fit into a polyethylene bag.

Handwrite each tag using an archival quality ink pen intended for use on paper, such as a Pigma pen. For difficult to label and small artifacts, the catalog number is all that is required to be written on the tag. For large artifacts, record the site number, catalog number, and all provenience information. This is the same information that is written on an exterior context bag (see Section 6.2).

Figure 5-4. Example of appropriate label placement. Adapted from Morehouse, Rivers Cofield, and Doub (2020).

Figure 5-5. Example of incorrect label placement. Adapted from Morehouse, Rivers Cofield, and Doub (2020).

6.0 BAGGING, TAGGING & BOXING COLLECTIONS

6.1 Overview

The process of bagging and boxing collections for curation follows a logical sequence based on provenience. All artifacts shall be placed in archival quality storage materials labeled and tagged with their provenience information. Most artifacts will fit within polyethylene bags of various sizes and the prescribed boxes (see Section 6.3). Any artifact that does not fit within these will require oversized archival quality housing to be determined in consultation with the Curator of Archaeology. Please refer to Section 7.0 for the preparation of associated documents.

6.2 Bags, Sorting, and Tags

All artifacts for curation shall be placed in new (unused) polyethylene 4-mil. thick recloseable bags. For heavy or very large artifacts, a 6-mil. thick bag may be necessary. Use an appropriate size bag for the artifact. Avoid stuffing an artifact into a bag in which it barely fits. Equally, avoid putting a small artifact into an overly large bag. **Do not use bags smaller than 2.0" x 2.0".**

Artifacts are to be arranged and bagged sequentially by provenience using the catalog number (Accession Number, Provenience Number, and Artifact Number) **as assigned in the artifact catalog.**

Never combine different artifact types or materials into a single bag, such as all the artifacts from a shovel test. Also, never lump artifacts with different catalog numbers together in the same bag. Individual artifact bags need only be labeled on the exterior with the catalog number. The individual bags must then be grouped within a larger bag by **provenience number** and labeled on the exterior with **site number, catalog numbers, and provenience information** (see Table 6-1 and Figure 6-1). All bags are to be labeled using permanent black marker. An alternative to this method is described in Section 6.5 below.

Perforate each bag allowing for air exchange. Use a large needle on bags containing small artifacts or a hole punch for bags with larger artifacts.

A tag is to be placed inside each artifact bag. This tag can be handwritten or pre-printed. At minimum, this tag must contain the catalog number (Accession Number, Provenience Number, and Artifact Number, e.g. 2022.1-43.1). Additional information may be included if time and budget allow or if a pre-printed tag is used (See Appendix A). This tag is to be made of acid-free card stock or high density spun polyethylene fibers (Tyvek). Archival quality ink is to be used to handwrite labels.

Table 6-1. Necessary exterior bag label information.

Individual Artifact Bag	Grouped Provenience Bag
• **Catalog number (made up of the accession number, provenience number, and artifact number)**	• **Site number** • **Range of catalog numbers** • **Specific provenience information (STP #, Unit #, Feature # etc.)**

In the event an artifact is pulled from its curatorial storage location, such as for exhibit, specialized study, cross-mending, conservation, etc., a **removal slip** must be included in the bag to note the artifact(s) permanent location (see Figure 6-2). This slip of paper should contain, at minimum, a description of the artifact that was removed, the count, the catalog number (Accession number - provenience number. artifact number), the reason for removal (exhibit, research, conservation etc.), the current location of the artifact, the date the artifact was removed, and the name of the individual who removed it. Ideally, all artifacts should be present when a collection is transferred to HCA. **Please consult with the Curator of Archaeology before delivering a collection with temporarily removed artifacts.**

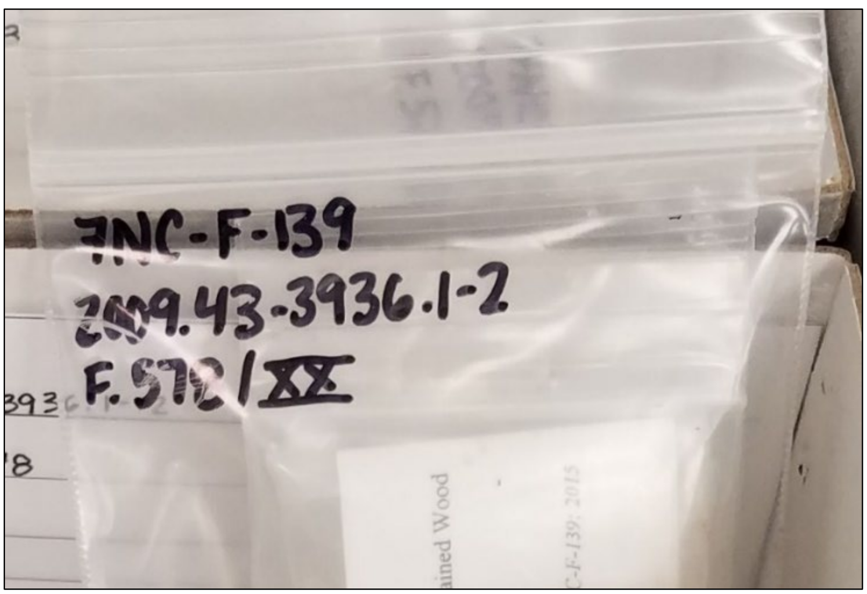

Figure 6-1. Example of a properly labeled grouped provenience bag.

Figure 6-2. Example of a properly completed removal slip.

6.3 Containerization

The standard box for archaeological curation in Delaware is a 0.60 cubic foot polypropylene flat. Upon the completion of proper bagging of the artifacts, the collection must be organized by provenience within the flat using archival interior metal-edge paper boxes. The collection must be placed in the flat in running provenience order. The lowest provenience number would go in the lower left corner and then proceed toward the back of the flat. Rows proceed from left to right (Figure 6-3). The size of the interior boxes may vary depending on what works best for the bagged artifacts. Multiple proveniences with few artifacts may be grouped in the same interior box, as long as each provenience bag is well labeled.

3	**6**	**9**
2	**5**	**8**
1	**4**	**7**

Figure 6-3. Proper organization of an archaeological flat.

Collections should be packed efficiently within the flat to maximize the available space without overpacking it. For collections with heavy objects such as bricks or FCR, each flat should be packed so that the weight is evenly distributed. To achieve this, it is acceptable to have one or two interior boxes be out of sequential order. **Flats are not to weigh more than 25 pounds when fully packed.** Over-packed boxes will not be accepted by the Curator.

Unused space within a flat is to be filled by using an **upside-down interior box** (see Figure 6-4). All artifacts must fit flush within a flat, meaning nothing should be poking up when the lid is put on the box. Objects that do not fit into a flat, should be boxed using a polypropylene document-sized box (also knowns as a "banker's box." If the object does not fit in the document-sized box, it is considered an over-sized object. Please consult with the Curator of Archaeology for the appropriate housing for an over-sized object. Please also consult with the Curator of Archaeology for very small collections that take up less than half of a *properly organized* flat.

A complete list of supplies for boxing and containerization is provided in Appendix B.

Figure 6-4. Example of properly organized and well packed archaeological flat. Note the upside-down interior box (marked by a red arrow) used as a space filler.

Each interior box must contain an interior box label. This label contains provenience information, as well as general observations on the contents, the recorder, and date the collection was packed (Figure 6.5). The overall label must be printed on acid and lignum-free cardstock. The corresponding information may be printed or hand-written. A template for this label is provided in Appendix A).

Site #: **7K-D-122** Prov./Cat#: **2025.1111**

Site Name: **John Dickinson Plantation**

TU/Feature: TU 1 Level: I - III

Artifacts/Notes:
18th century domestic materials, primarily ceramics and faunal bone.

Processed: **July 2025** Recorder: SS

Figure 6-5. Example interior box label.

6.4 Internal Curation Alternative

Internal containerization allows for an alternative curation method that is often more cost effective and can be applied to most collections. This method eliminates the use of an exterior provenience bag as described in Section 6.2. and replaces it with the internal box serving as the exterior provenience container. In some instances, such as a Phase I STP survey, proveniences may be grouped sequentially within a single box.

In most cases, artifacts bags are to be boxed by provenience or by artifact type within a provenience (e.g. glass, ceramic, debitage, etc.). Each artifact bag will need to be labeled with the catalog number as described in Section 6.2. Artifacts bags are then to be "filed" or "indexed" into an appropriately sized box, most often on edge so that they are in order based on artifact number according to the artifact catalog. Artifact bags should not slide around in a box whereby the sequential order is compromised. **Do not use artifact bags smaller than 2.5" x 3" with this method of curation.** Because of the increased thickness caused by the closure at the top of each bag, alternate the side that the artifacts bags are filed on every so often to allow for a box to fill more evenly. Each box will require an interior box label with the necessary provenience information (see Section 6.2).

6.5 Exterior Box Labels

Each box submitted for curation must have an exterior box label that specifies provenience and contents of the box. Each label should contain the **site number, site name, level of investigation, accession number, provenience number range, and box number out of the total number of boxes within the collection** (see Figure 6-6).

Rather than directly marking the box, an archival label and transparent label holder affixed to the container is required. The label should measure approximately 3" x 4" and be printed using no less than 22 pt. bold sans-serif font. The label must be printed on acid and lignum-free cardstock and placed in the archival label holder.

Figure 6-6. Example of an appropriately labelled flat.

7NC-F-139
Houston-LeCompt
Phase II
2009.43-1.3468 -
2009.43-1.3478

Box 1 of 88

Figure 6-7. Example of an exterior box label.

6.6 Box Inventory

An inventory of the artifacts grouped in each box shall be included with the associated documents (see Section 7.0). This is especially important for artifacts that have been removed from their provenience for analysis or mending and are curated as a group, such as mended ceramics, faunal material, complete stone tools, etc.

An alternative to this is to include box number location in the artifact catalog spreadsheet.

7.0 PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

7.1 Overview

Project documentation, both paper and digital, provide the written and photographic record of an archaeological investigation. These documents are an important part of any collection and need to be prepared for curation according to the guidelines below. If there are questions regarding the preparation of project documentation for curation, please contact the Curator of Archaeology. Incomplete or insufficient documentation is grounds for the Curator to refuse the collection.

7.2 Required Documentation

At minimum, HCA requires the following documentation be included with an archaeological collection submitted for curation:

- All original field notes/forms, drawings, photographs, maps, laboratory records, and specialized study documentation
- Hard copies of data generated from a paperless system along with a digital copy
- An artifact catalog (print and digital)
- Final report - two bound paper copies and one digital copy

Additional materials are either required or desired if generated, while some materials are not accepted (see Table 7-1).

Table 7-1. Summary of Project Documentation for Submittal.

Required if Generated	Desired (most relevant to Phase II and III projects)	Not Accepted
• Original field records (STP/Unit/Feature forms, notes, profile and plan drawings, daily log/journal, etc.) • Original site maps and drawings • Photos of excavations • Photo log • Laboratory records (conservation records, photos, analysis, artifact drawings, etc.) • Specialized analysis reports (faunal, botanical, XRF, radiocarbon dating results etc.) • Artifact catalog • Final report (two hard bound copies, one electronic) • Public interpretation/outreach files	• Site registration forms (CRS forms) • Scope of work/proposal • Historic/archival research • Artifact photos • Working excavation photos with up to 5 people included • Important email communications regarding project or curation	• Financial documentation • Photos not directly related to the project or site (duplicates, unnecessary photos, indistinguishable photos, photos that are out of focus, etc.) • Original/dirty artifact bags

7.3 Preparing Hard Copy Documents for Submittal

Hard copy documents shall be organized and grouped into file folders. Both letter- and legal-sized folders are acceptable. However, please use plastic paper clips or natural cotton twill tape to bind documents together. Do not use rubber bands or metal paper clips, binder clips, or staples.

Direct label each folder with **folder number**, **site number or accession number, project name, and the type of documents contained within** (see Figure 7-1 and 7-2). Do not use self-adhesive labels.

Documents that do not fit into a file folder are to be carefully folded or rolled. Use a plastic paper clip or twill tape to attach a label with the same information as a file folder.

When all the documentation has been compiled (see Figure 7-3), place these into a full or half-document size box for delivery.

Prepare these specific documents as follows:

Field Forms/Notes, Plans, Profiles, Maps, Lab Records, etc.
All original field and lab records shall be organized and grouped in file folders as described above. If there are multiple phases to a project (e.g., Phase I and II), separate and file the documents by each phase of investigation. If digital field forms are used, these will need to be turned into hard copies.

Artifact Catalog:
Submit one unbound hard copy of the artifact catalog printed on 8.5" x 11" paper. If there is more than one site in a project, print separate catalogs and place the catalogs in site number and accession number order. Two-sided printing is preferred for multiple pages. Place in a file folder as described above.

Photos and Photo Logs:
A contact sheet of project photos is required. Print the photos in color as thumbnails on 8.5" x 11" paper, single sided. Include a hard copy of the photo log as well with matching photo nomenclature. Place in file folder as described above.

Report:
Submit two bound hard copies of the final report. These do **not** have to be in file folders but should be labeled on the spine with the site number and report title. **For Section 106 projects, the Curator of Archaeology will verify that the final report has been accepted by the State Historic Preservation Office. If the final report has not been approved by the SHPO, the collection will be refused until this is rectified.**

Box and Folder Inventory:
Include a single page inventory of the contents of each box and folder being submitted for curation. For a template, see Appendix C.

7.4 Preparing Digital Documents for Submittal

Digital documents are to be submitted using an archival-quality CD-R/DVD-R. Use multiple, if necessary. A USB storage device is also acceptable, but the gold archival disc is the preferred method.

Each storage device should be clearly labeled with the **site number, accession number, project name, and date.** For CDs, a printed label is preferred to writing directly on the surface. For USB devices, an adhesive label or small box container should be used.

Include the digital file storage device(s) with the hard-copy documents for curation.

Prepare these specific documents as follows:

Field Forms/Notes, Plans, Profiles, Maps, Lab Records, etc.

Digital copies of these records are not mandatory. However, if they already exist as .PDF or .PDF/A files, include them. These digital documents should be organized into folders just like the hard copies. Both the folders and files should be clearly labeled.

Artifact Catalog:

A digital copy of the artifact catalog is required. This may be in either a .XLSX or searchable .PDF or .PDF/A format.

Photos and Photo Logs:

Submit only digital photos that are in focus and relevant to the archaeological collection. Images irrelevant to the excavation or excessive duplicates are to be deleted prior to curation. Photos should be organized into labeled folders (eg. Phase I, Phase II, Test Units, Artifacts, Discarded Artifacts etc.).

Report:

A digital copy of the report is required. This must be in a PDF or .PDF/A format.

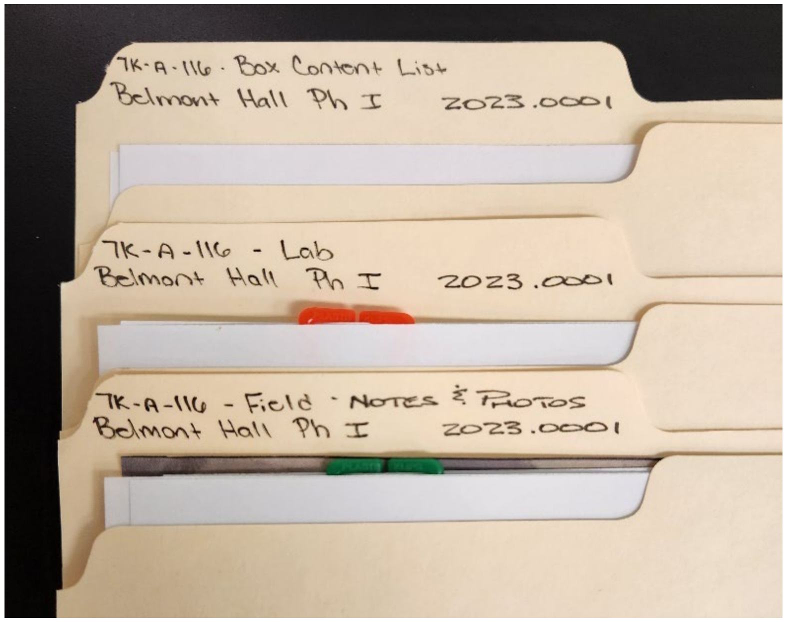

Figure 7-1. Example of how to properly label a folder for submission of hard copies.

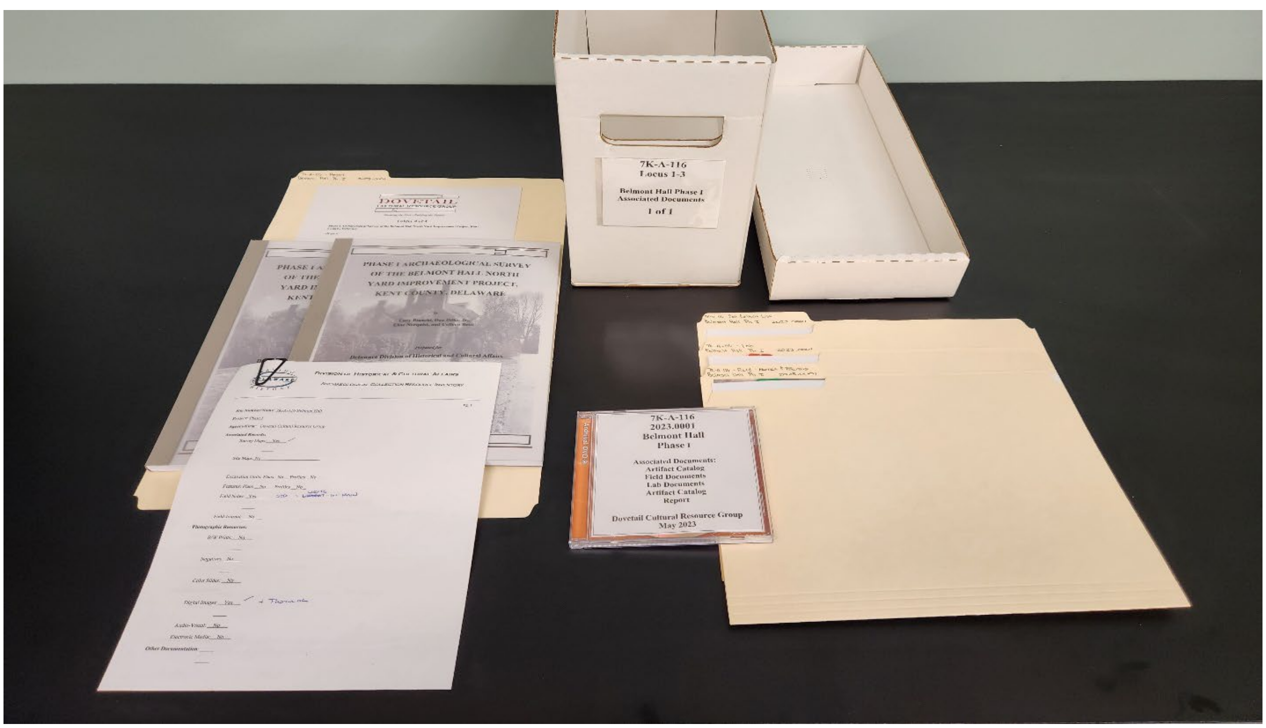

Figure 7-2. Example of a complete set of documents ready for curation.

8.0 OWNERSHIP DOCUMENTATION

8.1 Overview

All of HCA's acquisitions must be documented through a deed of gift, a receipt of purchase, transfer document, or other legal instrument of conveyance, which is retained in the records of the Division. For archaeological collections, the required ownership (or custody) documentation varies depending on the ownership of the land that the artifacts were removed from. If there are questions about land ownership for the project, or what ownership documentation is needed, contact the Curator of Archaeology. **Archaeological collections without sufficient ownership documentation will not be accepted for curation.**

8.2 Projects on State Owned Land

Pursuant to Delaware state law, all artifacts or material remains found in or on State lands, including subaqueous lands, and related records resulting from research, surveys and excavation conducted under a permit must be deposited for permanent preservation at either the University of Delaware Department of Anthropology or the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs (7 Delaware Code § 5311). However, if an archaeological collection is submitted to HCA by a state agency's consultant, rather than submitted directly by the agency, documentation that shows that a state agency owns the land that the archaeological materials were collected from and authorized the work should be submitted with the collection. An example of this would be a copy of the contract between the state agency and the consultant for the archaeological work that was performed.

8.3 Projects on Privately Owned Land

If an archaeological collection was recovered from privately owned land, HCA requires **two copies of a Deed of Gift signed by the landowner,** transferring ownership of the archaeological materials to HCA. One of these copies will be retained by the HCA, and the other will be returned to the landowner for their records after it is signed by the Curator of Archaeology and the Director of the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. It does not matter if the project was a Section 106 project or a state government funded project, or if there is an easement allowing access to the land for the project – if the land the artifacts were on is privately owned by a non-state, non-federal organization or individual, a signed Deed of Gift is required in order for HCA to accept the collection. **Collections that contain artifacts from privately owned land with no Deed of Gift will be refused by the Curator.**

8.4 Projects on Federally Owned Land

For archaeological collections from federally owned land, the Division may have a Memorandum of Agreement with the federal agency that dictates that the Division will curate the artifacts while the federal agency retains legal ownership of the collection. Please contact the federal agency that owns the land, or the Curator of Archaeology, to confirm if this is the case before attempting to submit a federal collection to HCA. If a Memorandum of Agreement is not in place, or if the Memorandum does not clearly state that newly collected materials from the federal agency's land are to be stored at the HCA repository, a letter designating HCA as the desired repository for the archaeological collection must be submitted on federal agency letterhead.

9.0 CURATION FEES

9.1 Overview

Archaeological collections submitted to HCA for curation will be subject to a one-time curation fee. The Division shall use this revenue for the long-term preservation, care, and management of pre-existing and future state-owned archaeological collections. **This fee will be invoiced to the person or entity who is physically submitting the collection and in direct contact with the Curator of Archaeology.** For this reason, CRM firms who are submitting a collection on behalf of an individual, business, agency etc., should ensure that their contract or scope of work with that entity includes curation fees in the project budget, either by estimation of the fees, or with a stipulation that the CRM firm must be re-imbursed for the fees.

If an individual, business, or agency submitting an archaeological collection via a contracted CRM firm wants to be invoiced by HCA directly, rather than through the CRM firm, they must contact the Curator of Archaeology with this request prior to the CRM firm submitting the collection.

This fee structure was enacted in Delaware Administrative Code (Title 1:902) on July 1, 2018, and does not apply to archaeological collections derived from investigations for which fieldwork started prior to the effective date.

The archaeological curation fee may be pro-rated or waived for certain collections or circumstances, with the approval of HCA's Collections Committee. A written request must be submitted to the Director of the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs for the pro-ration or waiving of the fee to be considered. The complete Curation Fee for Archaeological Collections Regulation is at: http://regulations.delaware.gov/AdminCode/title1/900/902.shtml.

9.2 Rates

Fees are charge for the curation of both artifacts and associated documentation. The fee categories are as follows:

- Flat of artifacts, full or partially full
- Standard box of documents
- Half-standard box of documents
- Per oversized artifact or per artifact requiring specialized storage

Rates were set at the time the regulation was enacted. These rates increase by five percent approximately every five years. (see Table 9-1).

Table 9-1. Curation Fee Rates Based on 5% Increase Approximately Every Five Years

	As Initiated, July 1, 2018	First Increase Effective, Expected 2025	Second Increase Effective, July 1, 2030	Third Increase Effective, July 1, 2035	Fourth Increase Effective, July 1, 2040
Flat of Artifacts	$350	$368	$386	$405	$425
Standard Box of Documents	$400	$420	$441	$463	$486
Half-Standard Box of Documents	$200	$210	$221	$232	$244
Oversized/Speci - alized	$500	$525	$551	$579	$608

9.3 Invoice and Receipt

Prior to submitting a collection for curation, a curation fee invoice should be requested from the Curator of Archaeology. To calculate the invoice, the curator will need to know the number of flats or boxes of artifacts, if there are any oversize objects or those requiring specialized care, and the amount of documentation if ½ box or more. The curator will then issue the invoice, as well as send a copy to HCA accounting. Once payment is received, a curation fee receipt will be issued upon request.

9.4 Payment

Payment of the curation fee can be made by check or credit card.

For check, make it payable to the **"State of Delaware, Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs"** and mail it to the HCA office at **29 N. State St. Dover, DE 19901** prior to the collection delivery. The check may also be submitted with the collection upon delivery.

For credit card, call the HCA office at **(302) 736-7400** prior to the collection delivery, and tell the office that you wish to pay for an archaeological collection curation fee, as instructed by the Curator of Archaeology.

Failure to pay the curation fee by the time of delivery may result in the collection being refused.

10.0 COLLECTION SUBMITTAL AND DELIVERY

10.1 Overview

Once a collection is ready to be submitted for permanent curation, contact the Curator of Archaeology to schedule an appointment. Please allow at minimum two weeks for an appointment.

In most cases, collection delivery is to be made in person. Exceptions may be made for small collections or collections where there are only documents with prior approval from the Curator of Archaeology.

10.2 Forms

In addition to the required ownership and project documentation, the following forms are required for full submittal of an archaeological collection (See Appendix C):

- The Archaeological Collection Transfer Record (ACTR)
- Box and Folder Inventory

The **Archaeological Collection Transfer Record** (ACTR) is a checklist that itemizes all the elements that are to be transferred with the collection and acts as a prompt to have all the artifacts, documentation, digital media, forms, and fee payment in proper order for delivery. The ACTR also serves as the signed delivery receipt once the collection has been reviewed and accepted by the curator.

The Box and Folder Inventory ensures that the Curator of Archaeology can verify that all required project documentation and artifacts are present, and where they are located. If a Box and Folder Inventory is not completed, the Curator of Archaeology will have to inventory the documentation and artifacts prior to accepting the collection and signing off on the Archaeological Collection Transfer Record. Because this takes a considerable amount of time, **large collections that are not accompanied by a Box and Folder Inventory may be refused by the Curator.**

10.3 Delivery

All collection deliveries are to be made at the Delaware Center for Material Culture (CMC) curatorial facility. The CMC is located at **1351 W. North Street, Suite 102, Dover, Delaware**.

With prior approval, shipped or mailed collections are to be sent to:

Curator of Archaeology (or the curator's name)
Delaware Center for Material Culture
1351 W. North St., Suite 102
Dover, DE 19904

Once the shipped collection is received, checked, and the curation fee paid, a signed electronic copy of the ACTR will be returned to the sender by the Curator of Archaeology.

11.0 REFERENCES

Blank, Andrew Jerome

2021 Artifact Discard Eligibility: A Potential Alleviation to the Growing Curation Crisis. Thesis, Georgia State University, doi: https://doi.org/10.57709/26842634, accessed May 2024

Crane, Brian (Versar, Inc.)

2018 Archaeological Collection Sampling and Discard Protocols. Department of Defense, Legacy Resource Management Program (Project Number 16-789). https://denix.osd.mil/cr/archaeology/guidance/field-analysis/report, accessed May 2024

Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

2015 Archaeological Survey in Delaware https://history.delaware.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/179/2019/01/Archaeological-Survey-in-Delaware-2015.pdf, accessed April 2022.

Delaware General Assembly

2018 902 Curation Fee for Archaeological Collections. Department of State, Delaware Administrative Code, 900 Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. https://regulations.delaware.gov/AdminCode/title1/900/902.pdf , accessed May 2024.

Delaware General Assembly

2005 Chapter 53: Archaeological Resources in the State. 143rd General Assembly, Chapter 153: House Bill No. 229 as Amended by House Amendment Nos. 1 &2, An Act to Amend Title 7, Title 23, and Title 29 of the Delaware Code Relating to Archaeological Resources. https://legis.delaware.gov/SessionLaws/Chapter?id=16884, accessed May 2024.

González, Kerry S. and Michelle Salvato

2019 Pictures Speak for Themselves: Case Studies Proving the Significance and Affordability of X Ray for Archaeological Collections. In *New Life for Archaeological Collections*, edited by Rebecca Allen and Ben Ford. pp. 226-244. Society for Historical Archaeology and the University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, Nebraska.

Indiana State Museum & Historic Sites

2021 Guidance for Culling Incoming Archaeological Collections. Culling-Guidelines.pdf (indianamuseum.org), accessed May 2024.

Jamieson, Andrew.

2015 Developing Strategies for Sustainably Managing Archaeological Collections. *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology & Heritage Studies*, 3(1):71-77

Kentucky Heritage Council

2008 Discarding Historic Artifacts: Guidance for Consultants. Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, KY.

https://anthropology.as.uky.edu/sites/default/files/Historic%20Artifact%20Discard%20Policy.pdf, accessed May 2024.

Kersel, Morag M.
2015 An Issue of Ethics? Curation and the Obligations of Archaeology. *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology & Heritage Studies*, 3(1):77-80.

Kersel, Morag M.
2015 Storage Wars: Solving the Archaeological Curation Crisis? *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology & Heritage Studies*, 3(1): 42-54.

Kletter, Raz
2015 Storage wars 1, curation 0. *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology & Heritage Studies*, 3(1): 55-60.

Morehouse, Rebecca, Sara Rivers Cofield, and Nichole Doub
2022 Technical Update No. 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations in Maryland: Collections and Conservation Standards. Electronic document, Maryland Historical Trust, https://mht.maryland.gov/Documents/archaeology/2022-Technical-Update-No-1-Archaeological-Collections-and-Conservation-Standards.pdf, accessed May 2024.

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission
2006 Curation Guidelines: Preparing Archaeological Collections for Submission to The State Museum of Pennsylvania. Section of Archaeology, The State Museum of Pennsylvania.

Praetzellis, Adrian and Julia G. Costello
2002 Don't Keep Everything: Historic Artifacts Discard Policy. Society for California Archaeology Newsletter, 36(3):30-33.

Rivers Cofield, Sara and Nichole Doub
2020 An Archaeologist Guide to X-Radiography at the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory. Electronic document, https://jefpat.maryland.gov/AnalyticsReports/x-ray-guide.pdf, accessed April 2022.

Shaffer, Gary D. and Elizabeth J. Cole
1994 Standards & Guidelines for Archeological Investigations in Maryland. Archeology_standards_investigations.pdf (maryland.gov), accessed May 2024.

Silberman, Neil Asher
2015 Is Every Sherd Sacred? Moving Beyond the Cult of Object-Centered Authenticity. *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology & Heritage Studies*, 3(1):61-63.

12.0 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accession Number: A unique identifier assigned to an individual artifact or, more commonly in archaeology, a collection of artifacts received from the same source at the same time. This number is used to create a general record of information about the collection, to document that a collection is under the custody and legal ownership of HCA. HCA's Curator of Archaeology assigns accession numbers in sequential order as they are requested.

Artifacts: Human-made objects or natural objects that have been altered by humans, such as ceramic vessels, stone tools or animal bone with butcher marks, found on archaeological sites, and providing information on the function and time period of the site.

Artifact Catalog: A record of information about individual artifacts or groups of artifacts of like material and provenience that are within an accession.

Artifact Number/Identifier: A unique identifying number assigned to an individual artifact, or a group of artifacts that are of the same material, classification, and provenience, within the artifact catalog. This number distinguishes an individual artifact or group of like artifacts from other artifacts within the same provenience.

Catalog Number: A number that designates a specific artifact or group of artifacts of the same material, classification, and provenience. This number is comprised of the Accession Number, Provenience Number, and Artifact Number of an artifact.

Feature: The physical remains of human activity, generally not removable from the site, such as a building or its foundation walls, trash pits, storage pits, post holes, fire hearths, and so on. The archaeological study of these reveals information about how people lived in the past.

Field Scatter: A non-site determination denoting a scattering of post-1830 artifacts in association with no other artifacts or features. This designation is the result of a common phenomenon in Delaware of waste disposal and manuring of fields to increase fertility.

Field Work: The systematic retrieval of information about an archaeological site through excavation or survey and documentation of the site.

Flat: The standard box for archaeological curation in Delaware; a 0.60 cubic foot polypropylene box measuring 20" x 20" x 3", which can house smaller interior boxes to organize artifacts by provenience.

Isolated Finds: Artifacts that are not associated with an archaeological site and are considered an isolated incident that is not representative of a location of cultural activity.

Provenience: The three-dimensional location in space and context (including geographical location, depth, and location in relation to a datum or other reference system) of an archaeological find, giving information about its function and date.

Provenience Number/Identifier: A unique number assigned to each provenience within the site. This allows for a better understanding of how artifacts within a collection were distributed throughout the site.

Repository: A facility that provides a secure, climate-controlled environment for the storage of archaeological collections, including artifacts, photographs, slides, field drawings, and other documentation.

Site: The location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure.

Site Number: A unique designator assigned by the State Historic Preservation Office to denote a particular archaeological site.

13.0 APPENDIX A: TEMPLATES FOR ARTIFACT TAGS

13.1 Artifact Tags

Artifact tagging is an important step in the curatorial process. The DCHA appreciates those collections that have tags with artifact descriptors as they can help during collection audit as well as future researchers. Below is a general guide on how to automatically create tags from your artifact spreadsheet if using Microsoft Excel. Tags can also be autogenerated if using Access.

Using the mailings function in a blank word document, first go to Start Mail Merge, then select Step by Step Mail Merge Wizard from the drop down. This wizard will take you through the process of creating tags that automatically pull from your completed artifact catalog. The video "How to Create Mailing Labels in Word from an Excel List" by Simple Software Tutorials (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BylFdTFK6t0) gives step-by-step instructions on creating labels. Note: as these labels will not be printed on actual mailing labels be sure to create a new label to meet the size needed for your tags. When finished the tags should have the following information:

- Site/Field Scatter/Isolated Find Number
- Complete Catalog Number (Accession # - Provenience #. Artifact #)
- Object Name
- Provenience Description (STP #, Unit # etc.)
- Depth
- Count

Additional information such as project name, year, and company name may also be included but is not required.

7NC-F-123 2022.001-043.001 Refined Earthenware, Creamware Undecorated, Rim STP # 6 10-15 cmbs Count: 4	7NC-F-123 2022.001-045.001 Machine-cut nail shaft, iron STP # 8 8 cmbs Count: 2	7NC-F-123 2022.001-047.003 Projectile point, Halifax, jasper STP # 10 25 cmbs Count: 1

Figure 13-1. Example format for artifact tags.

13.2 Interior Box Tags

If you chose to auto create the interior box tags, the process is much the same as creating artifact tags. First you must have a spreadsheet with the required heading and information. Then follow the directions in the label wizard.

- Site/Field Scatter/Isolated Find Number
- Complete Catalog numbers included in the interior box
- Provenience Information (STP #, Unit #, Feature # etc.)

14.0 APPENDIX B: STANDARD CURATION SUPPLIES

14.1 Online Suppliers

Hollinger Metal Edge, https://www.hollingermetaledge.com/
Gaylord Archival, https://www.gaylord.com/
Salco, https://www.stapleheadquarters.com/
Uline, https://www.uline.com/

14.2 Flat, Inserts, Boxes, and Label Holder

Flat and Inserts:

Hollinger Metal Edge

- AMCPP - Artifact box polypropylene (Flat) 20” x 20” x 3” 0.6 cubic feet
- AT4AB - Internal box (4 per flat), 9¾” x 9¾” x 3”
- AT8AB - Internal box (8 per flat), 9¾” x 4¾” x 3”
- AT16AB - Internal box (16 per flat), 4¾” x 4¾” x 3”
- AT32AB - Internal box (32 per flat), 4¾” x 2¼” x 3” 2¼

Figure 14-1. Primary artifact storage – polypropylene flat and internal boxes.

Record Storage Boxes:

Hollinger Metal Edge

- 10769 - Polypropylene record storage box, 12” x 15” x 10”
- 10770 - White heavy duty record storage box w/ detached lid (acid-free cardboard), 12” x 15” x 10”
- 10755 - White heavy duty record storage box w/ detached lid half-size, legal, (acid-free cardboard), 6” x 15” x 10”

Gaylord Archival:

- GB-RC121510 - Classic record storage box (Blue B-Flute), 12” x 15” x 10”
- GB-ASB1012 - Classic record storage box half-size, legal, (Blue B-Flute), 6½”x 15¼”x 10”

Figure 14-2. Record storage boxes – polypropylene and acid-free cardboard.

Oversize Boxes:

Hollinger Metal Edge

- PCTB30186 - Polypropylene Corrugated Textile Box, 30" x 18" x 6"
- PCTB36248 - Polypropylene Corrugated Textile Box, 36" x 24" x 8"
- PCTB40246 - Polypropylene Corrugated Textile Box, 40" x 24" x 6"
- PCTB48326 - Polypropylene Corrugated Textile Box, 48" x 32" x 6"
- PCTB60246 - Polypropylene Corrugated Textile Box, 60" x 24" x 6"

Gaylord Archival:

- GBCOR20104 - Corrugated Polypropylene Textile Box, 10" x 20" x 4"
- GBCOR30104 - Corrugated Polypropylene Textile Box, 10" x 30" x 4"
- GBCOR30186 - Corrugated Polypropylene Textile Box, 18" x 30" x 6"
- GBCOR40186 - Corrugated Polypropylene Textile Box, 18" x 40" x 6"
- GBCOR30245 - Corrugated Polypropylene Textile Box, 24" x 30" x 6"

Human Remains Box:

Hollinger Metal Edge

- HRB-9 - Skeletal Remains Box, Corrugated Polypropylene

Gaylord Archival

- 52193 - Skeletal Remains Box, Corrugated Polypropylene

Box Label Holders:

Hollinger Metal Edge

- LH43 - Self-adhesive box label holders with labels 4" x 3"

15.0 APPENDIX C: FORMS

Additional copies of all forms included in this section can be requested from the Curator of Archaeology.

Delaware Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs
29 N. State St., Dover, Delaware 19901
Tel. (302) 736-7400 | Fax. (302) 739-5660
history.delaware.gov

Archaeological Collection Transfer Record

Site Number/Name: ______________________________

Project: ______________________________

Agency/Firm: ______________________________

Survey & Excavation Records:

Survey Maps: ______________ Site Maps: ______________

Excavation Unit Forms: ________ Unit Plan Drawings: ________ Unit Profile Drawings: ________

Feature Forms: ________ Feature Plan Drawings: ________ Feature Profile Drawings: ________

STP Forms: ________ Field Notes/Journals: ______________

Photographic Resources:

Printed Contact Sheet: ________ Photo Log: ________ Digital Images: ________

Other (Describe): ______________________________

Artifact Collection/Collection Records

Artifact Catalogue Hard Copy: ________ Artifact Catalog Digital Copy: ________

Laboratory Records (Describe): ______________________________

____

Analysis Reports/Results (Describe): ______________________________

____

Conservation Records: ______________________________

Human Remains: ______________________________

Deed of Gift (if artifacts were recovered from privately owned land): ______________

Box Inventory Hard Copy: ________ Box Inventory Digital Copy: ________

Folder Inventory Hard Copy: ________ Folder Inventory Digital Copy: ________

Other Records (Describe): ____________________

Final Report:

Hard Copies (2 Bound Copies): ____________ Digital Copy: ____________

Box & Folder Count:

# of Flats: ________ # of Record Storage Boxes: ________ # of Oversize Boxes: ________

# of Human Remains Boxes: ________ # of Record Folders: ________

Estimated Cubic Footage: Records: ________ Artifact Collection: ________

DHCA Staff Use Only

Collection Inspection and Audit:

Date of Delivery: ____________

Curation Fee: ____________

Notes and Comments:

Agency/Firm Representative: ______________________ **Date:** ________

Curator of Archaeology, HCA: ______________________ **Date:** ________

Director/Deputy Director, HCA: ______________________ **Date:** ________

Engagement & Collections Manager, HCA: ______________________ **Date:** ________

HCA
DELAWARE HISTORICAL & CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Delaware Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs
29 N. State St., Dover, Delaware 19901
Tel. (302) 736-7400 | Fax. (302) 739-5660
history.delaware.gov

Deed of Gift

I,____________, own the personal property described below and desire to give said personal property to the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. I do hereby irrevocably and unconditionally give and transfer to the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs all right, title, and interest, including all copyright, trademark, and related interests, in and to the following described property.

Name ____________________________________

Date ____________________________________

Address ____________________________________

____

Telephone # ____________________________________

Email ____________________________________

Description of Gift:

____

Signature of Donor

____

Donor's Printed Name, Date

____

Signature of Curator of Archaeology

____

Curator of Archaeology's Printed Name, Date

____

Signature of Division Director

____

Division Director's Printed Name, Date

Delaware Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs
29 N. State St., Dover, Delaware 19901
Tel. (302) 736-7400 | Fax. (302) 739-5660
history.delaware.gov

Archaeological Collection Folder Inventory

FIRM/AGENCY: ____________________________ **SITE NUMBER:** ________________________
PROJECT NAME: ____

ACCESSION #:___________________________ **TOTAL # OF FOLDERS:** ______________

Folder Number	Contents

Delaware Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs
29 N. State St., Dover, Delaware 19901
Tel. (302) 736-7400 | Fax. (302) 739-5660
history.delaware.gov

Archaeological Collection Box Inventory

FIRM/AGENCY: ______________________________ **SITE NUMBER:** __________________________
PROJECT NAME: ____

ACCESSION #:_____________________________ **TOTAL NUMBER OF BOXES:** __________

Box Number	Catalog Number Range	Contents (Artifacts, Shell, Flotation, etc.)

16.0 APPENDIX D: ARTIFACT IDENTIFICATION RESOURCES

Online Resources:

California Department of Transportation, Historic Artifact Identification Guide: https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/environmental-analysis/documents/env/historic-artifact-identification-sheets.pdf

Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, Native American Projectile Point Classification Guide: https://history.delaware.gov/projectile-point-guide/

Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery: https://www.daacs.org/query-the-database/

Florida Museum, Historical Archaeology Digital Ceramic Type Collection: https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/histarch/ceramic-types/

Historic Glass Bottle Identification & Information Website: https://sha.org/bottle/

Idaho Virtual Museum (artifact & osteology specimen 3D models): Idaho Virtual Museum - Home (isu.edu)

Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab, Diagnostic Artifacts in Maryland: https://apps.jefpat.maryland.gov/diagnostic/index.htm

Nail Chronology as an Aid to Dating Old Buildings, Lee H. Nelson: http://www.npshistory.com/publications/nail-chronology.pdf

NRCS East Region Projectile Point Identification Guide: https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/DE/Cultural_Resources_Point_Guide.pdf

NYC Archaeological Repository, The Nan A. Rothschild Research Center: https://archaeology.cityofnewyork.us/collection

OsteoID Bone Identification: https://boneidentification.com/

Russel Bone Atlas: https://www.russellboneatlas.com/home

Christopher White, Mellon Fellow, Furniture and Frame Conservation Lab, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, “Observations on the Development of Wood Screws in North America”: https://wag-aic.org/Am_Wood_Screws.pdf

Print Resources:

Beisaw, April M.
2013 *Identifying and Interpreting Animal Bones*. Texas A&M University Press, College Station.

Busch, Jane
1981 An Introduction to the Tin Can. *Historical Archaeology*, 15(1):95-104.

Custer, Jay F.
1984 *Delaware Prehistoric Archaeology: An Ecological Approach.* University of Delaware Press. Newark.

Custer, Jay F.
1989 *Prehistoric Cultures of the Delmarva Peninsula: An Archaeological Study.* University of Delaware Press. Newark.

Custer, Jay F.
1996 *A Guide to Prehistoric Arrowheads and Spear Points of Delaware*. Center for Archaeological Research, Department of Anthropology, University of Delaware, Newark.

Griffith, Daniel R.
1982 Prehistoric Ceramics in Delaware (An Overview). *Archaeology of Eastern North America*, Vol. 10 (Fall 1982), pp. 46-68. Eastern States Archeological Federation.

Koterski, James R.
2005 *Early Potters and Potteries of Delaware: Historical and Commercial Perspectives, 1760 - 1890.* Cedar Tree Books, Ltd. Wilmington, Delaware.

Lehner, Lois
1988 *Lehner's Encyclopedia of U.S. Marks on Pottery, Porcelain & Clay.* Collector Books. Paducah, Kentucky.

Noël Hume, Ivor
2001 *A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia. (Original work published 1970).

Toulouse, Julian H.
2001 *Bottle Makers and Their Marks.* The Blackburn Press. Caldwell, New Jersey. (Original work published 1971).

White, Carolyn L.
2005 *American Artifacts of Personal Adornment, 1680-1820: A Guide to Identification and Interpretation.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Lanham, Maryland.

17.0 APPENDIX E: CONTACTS

Curator of Archaeology:

Office: Center for Material Culture (CMC)
1351 W. North Street, Suite 102
Dover DE, 19904

Phone: 302-608-5336

Curation & Design (CaD) Team:

Office: Center for Material Culture (CMC)
1351 W. North Street, Suite 102
Dover DE, 19904

Phone: 302- 608-5330

Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs Main Office:

Office: Richardson Hall
29 N. State Street
Dover, DE 19901

Phone: 302-736-7400

Delaware State Historic Preservation Office:

For Section 106 project consultation and to obtain site numbers.

Office: Richardson Hall
29 N. State Street
Dover, DE 19901

Phone: 302-736-7410