What is this?
Solving Problems Found in Collection
Hello!

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Outline of today's webinar

- Defining FOUND IN COLLECTION (FIC)
- Where to find FIC objects
- Numbering FIC objects
- Researching FIC
- Accessioning FIC
- Reconciling FIC
- Disposition of FIC objects
- Tips to prevent FIC
Everyone has FIC objects in their collection.
What kind of museums have FIC objects?

- Mega-Large Museums
- Mid-Size Museums
- Small Museums
- Large Museums
- Art Museums
- Natural History Museums
- History Museums & Historical Houses
1. Defining FIC

Found In Collection
Undocumented objects that remain without status after all attempts to reconcile them to existing records of the permanent collection and loan objects are completed. -- MRM5
FIC items might be:

**Something Fairly Straightforward:**
- Collections objects accidentally separated from their ID info
- Loan objects accidentally separated from their ID info
- Study objects mistakenly housed with accessioned items
- Props accidentally brought into the collections area

**Something a Little More Complex:**
- Objects with no documentation
- A potential donation brought in for consideration
- Personal items belonging to staff, board members, or volunteers
FIC items might be a lot more complex

CONFUSING
◆ Something that was acquired but not accessioned
◆ Something previously deaccessioned but not removed

PROBLEMATIC
◆ Provenance or materials -- and therefore intentionally not numbered

ILLEGAL
◆ Something stolen and hidden in plain sight
Hidden in plain sight
Wait! You said keys weren’t FIC!
I said USUALLY!
2. ACCESSION NUMBERS

The Social Security Number of the Objects
Sample accession numbering conventions

◆ 14.6.4
◆ 2014.6.4
◆ 2014.006.004
◆ RML.2014.006.004
◆ 2014.100.006

Be consistent in how you number your accessions
Your accession files and database are essential resources for researching and reconciling FIC objects.
3. Where to find FICs

HINT: They may be anywhere in your museum
Where to find FICs

- Collections storage
- Exhibition prep space
- Closets, hallways, basements, attics
- Offices, board rooms
- Inside other accessioned objects
- Intermingled with education collections, props
Stored inside a collections object
Number your non-accessioned objects

- Prop 0001
- ED.2017.001
- NONACC

Be consistent in how you number your non-accessioned objects
FIC scenarios

1. The object was found in collections area and has an accession number and there is no standard Deed of Gift but there is some evidence of donor.

2. The object was found in a collections area and has an accession number but is lacking other information.

3. The object was found in a collections area, has no number, lacks info about donor or lender but has a note attached to it.

4. The object was found in a collections area and is missing all documentation.

5. The object was found in a non-collections area and is similar to other objects in the collection.

6. The object was found in a non-collections area and is not similar to any other objects in the collection.
Very helpful note attached to stand found in closet!
4. Researching FICs

Good News! It’s probably less work than you did for your master’s thesis
Accession numbers can be hidden underneath
Love your database & data!

Your database is only as useful as the information you put into it. Use keywords and search terms that will help anyone find the object.
Label it!

Front and center
Student art

Left behind or accessioned?
5. Accessioning FIC
They are now part of your collection
Number your FIC

- 2017.001.001
- 2017.INV.0001
- TEMP.2017.1
- 2017.500.001
- 1950.001.001 (if your museum started after 1950)

Be consistent in how you number your FICs
Ask questions!

Determine if this object is right for your collection.
Questions to consider while researching FIC

- Is it relevant to your museum's mission?
- What is the scientific, scholarly, historic, aesthetic or financial value?
- What is the physical condition?
- Is object is of Native American origin?
- Does it pose a threat to you or the collections?
6. Reconciling FIC

Oops! We really DO know what this object is.
Reconciled!

2003.0053 = 1954.1906
7. Disposition of FIC

When you decide NOT to keep your FIC
8. Tips for preventing FIC

Hopefully they will even be helpful
Use separation sheets
Retag your objects after each exhibition with their original tags.
You can also split your content

Black

Is the color of coal, ebony, and of outer space. It is the darkest color, the result of the absence of or complete absorption of light.

Differentiate one object from another
Label envelopes of fragments. Include accession numbers!
Be technically correct. And logical.
Document!

Write down all of your steps & decisions. Your successor will thank you.
**Description**

A French, transitional Louis XV-XVI commode. Signed by Simon Guillaume of Paris. Inlaid with pearwood and ivory, a hunting scene is represented on the lower front panel. The top is made of Brescia marble.

**Collector**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Col. Date</th>
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**Material**

wood/ marble

**Made**

Guillaume, Simon/ Paris, France
Tips for Preventing FIC

- File your paperwork
- Use separation markers
- Conduct regular inventories
- Update your database with every move
- Retag your items after each exhibition
- Clear your object cart after each use
More Tips for Preventing FIC

- Use enough description to differentiate objects
- Restrict access to your collections storage areas.
- “Think like” your colleague or predecessor.
- Make sure that your catalog records are logical, as well as technically correct. Enter search terms!
- Document everything you do.
- Don’t put it off.
Thanks!

Any questions?
You can find me at jzink@rosenbach.org