



Museum of Missing History

Have you got a clue?

SUBMISSION & STYLE GUIDELINES

The Museum of Missing History's Catalogue of Missing Objects (COMO) is an online collection of missing historic objects and information. The goal of the catalogue is to tell the stories of these objects so that they can be found and preserved.

Types of Entries / Audience

There can be two versions of each COMO entry: Basic and Detailed. The Basic version is short, easy to read, and aimed at the average *Antiques Roadshow* or History Channel viewer and beyond; at anyone who enjoys a good story, mystery, or treasure hunt. The optional Detailed version is geared toward anyone who wishes to take their study further, and while it is still accessible to the casual reader in tone, it contains enough depth of information to be satisfying to the enthusiast, student, or scholar. The Museum excites an interest in history in a broad range of people, from lifelong historians to those who may have never before visited a history website or museum.

Style

COMO entries are short, factual, accessible, and, whenever possible, illustrated. They present the best available information and the latest scholarship in a simple, engaging, and easy-to-read style.

Each COMO entry has several goals:

- To educate the reader about the missing object and its history
- To tell a compelling story and make readers want to learn more
- To make identification of the object easy
- To give the reader options for further exploration

Content

The body of each COMO entry addresses five questions about the object:

- What is it?
- Why is it important?
- What does it look like?
- What is the history behind it?
- What clues do we have?

In addition to the body text, each entry includes:

- A Fact Box of the most basic information
- A photograph or rendering of the object
- Supporting images, illustrations, or graphics
- A listing of sources and links to more information

A Pyramid of Information

COMO entries can be conceived of as a pyramid of information. The further the reader goes, the more information he or she gets.

- The Fact Box, at the beginning of each entry, gives the essential information about the object.
- The first two paragraphs, which address the questions “What is it?” and “Why is it important?”, go into a bit more detail but employ only a couple of sentences each.
- The next paragraphs, which answer the questions “What does it look like?” and “What is the history behind it?”, go into still greater depth and may need to be several paragraphs long, particularly in the Detailed entry.
- The final question that the entry must answer, “What clues do we have?”, tells the reader what is currently known about the object’s possible location.

Length

There is no fixed length for COMO entries, but the rough guideline is 400-500 words for the Basic version and 800-1,000 words for the Detailed version.

Quality of Information

We strive to provide the most accurate, highly reliable information and the latest scholarship in each COMO entry.

Images and Illustrations

The main image is the most important part of the COMO entry. Showing the object that is missing greatly increases the likelihood of its being found. The image of the missing object can be a photograph, a rendering, or, as is the case of many paintings, a picture of a later copy.

Supporting images, illustrations, and graphics help to further describe the object and tell more of its story.

Sources and Copyright

All COMO entries include a list of sources, formatted to conform to MLA standards. All images must be credited.

Whenever possible, we will obtain the copyright holder’s permission for the use of each image. We will not use an image that is not in the public domain unless we have permission or are unable to locate the copyright holder.

Credit

Credit will be given to all contributors on the Museum’s website. Only established scholars attached to a cultural institution may have their name appear directly on an entry.

Submitting Entries

Please send all queries and submissions to martin@museumofmissinghistory.org.