

# The Trump(ism) Memorabilia Collection

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## Project Description

Inspired by the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia founded by sociologist David Pilgrim, the Trump(ism) Memorabilia Collection strives to preserve objects emblematic of the Trump Era. By preserving and displaying material culture associated with Trump, I hope to combat future denial of this figure's popularity and fascist tendencies—especially by the 55% of white women and 61% of white men who voted for him in 2020. It is critical to tell the truth amidst continued anti-intellectualism and the mainstreaming of right-wing extremism, and this collection is a means of doing so. Future exhibitions will provide space for reflection and dialogue on Trump's rise to power, responses to it through material culture, and what each suggests about American history, culture, and futures.

### The Collection:

- 40+ objects so far
- Acquired through donations; online purchases; and my own personal collection
- Includes hats, flags, bumper stickers, pins, a coffee mug, soap, a pillow, dog poop bags, mylar balloons, campaign materials, and even a crocheted toilet roll cover.

### Ethical Acquisition Guidelines:

- No purchases from Trump campaign sites
- Spend as little as possible. Seek donations; bargain; buy secondhand.
- Consider financial/social cost versus educational/preservation benefit



## Current Focus: Artifact Care and Refining Scope

- Writing general condition reports and care sheets
- Investing in dehumidifier, acid-free storage containers, dataloggers, and other preservation equipment
- Going back into “acquisition mode” and seeking out objects
- Current foci: donated objects belonging to supporters, objects reflecting 2020 election denial, objects pertaining to prominent white supremacist supporters/historic movements

## Next Steps: Crowdsourcing, Digitization, and Exhibition

- Crowdsource donations and donor interviews
- Catalog and exhibit the objects using Google Forms and Omeka. Buy a domain name!
- Exhibit materials in a way that contextualizes Trump as a symptom and a symbol, not a cause.

## Selected References and Resources

### On Whiteness and Right-Wing Politics

- Hochschild, Arlie. 2018. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. The New Press.
- Metzl, Jonathan. 2019. *Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Racial Resentment is Killing America's Heartland*. Basic Books.

### On Collection Care

- Basic condition reporting webinar (Deborah Rose Van Horn): <https://www.connectingtocollections.org/basic-condition-reporting/>
- Guide to agents of deterioration (Government of Canada): <https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/agents-deterioration.html>

### Helpful Organizations and Institutions

- Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia: <https://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/>
- American Association for State and Local History (online courses): <https://aaslh.org/professional-development/online-learning/>

## Acknowledgements

This project is funded by an Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship for the Digital Humanities. Many thanks to Sarah Swanz, Rebecca Elder and my AASLH “Caring for Collections” classmates, my DH fellows colleagues, and members of the Social Justice and Public Humanities and Collections working groups for their feedback and support.





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Feel free to e-mail me at [elizabeth.k.barna@gmail.com](mailto:elizabeth.k.barna@gmail.com) if you have questions or comments, or want to collaborate! 😊



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