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## **Section 1: Mission Statement**

The purpose of the Joliet Area Historical Museum (JAHM) is to stimulate interest in the origin and development of the Joliet area. The mission of the Joliet Area Historical Museum is to fulfill its purpose by offering educational opportunities to the broadest possible public, nurturing an appreciation of the history of the Joliet area from the earliest recorded time to the present. The museum's mission shall guide all efforts, including operating a museum, collecting, preserving, researching, and interpreting local history, and developing educational programs and earned income activities compatible with the museum's purpose.

Sound fiscal management of all assets is recognized as a responsibility of the museum. This includes administration of the museum and care of the collections. The museum shall make every effort to meet professional standards of museum operation and to provide optimum protection for collection items in order to extend their existence for the enjoyment and education of future generations. This shall include controlling the environment of storage and exhibition areas, supplying necessary support for collection policies, and providing adequate security for the collection at all times.

The Museum shall disseminate information to local and area schools and to the general public through exhibits, educational activities, outreach programs, publications, and special events. Every effort shall be made to document accurately and to interpret impartially the contributions of all who are a part of the historical record of the community.

## **Section 2: Statement of Authority**

### **2.1 - Staff**

Primary responsibility for the collections sits with the Curator and Registrar (Hereby referred to as Collection Staff) under the supervision of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The Collection Staff maintains the responsibility for ensuring preservation and accessibility of the collection, as well as its legal, administrative, and physical management. Collection Staff is responsible for facilitating public access to the Archives and Manuscripts, and Library holdings. Collection Staff is responsible for the intellectual content of the collection records, interpreting the collection and shaping the collection through acquisitions and deaccessions that fulfill the mission and goals of the Joliet Area Historical Museum, the Old Joliet Prison Historic Site, and the Planinsek Grocery & Meat Market Museum. Collection staff is responsible for facilitating incoming and outgoing loan agreements under the supervision of the CEO.

### **2.2 - Collection Committee**

The Collection Committee is a standing committee made up of members of the Board of Directors. The Committee is responsible for approving all of JAHM's accessions, deaccessions, collection related policies and objectives as recommended by Collection Staff. All changes to collection related policies are also subject to further approval by the Board of Directors.

### **2.3 - Board of Directors**

The Joliet Area Historical Museum is overseen by a Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for final approval on all collection related policy changes, and any additional actions or decisions Collection Staff and Collection Committee feels merit Board approval. While accessions do not need Board approval, any staff purchases for the permanent collection and any acquisition related expenditures over \$3,000 must be approved prior to purchase by the Board of Directors.

### **Section 3: Code of Ethics**

The ethical management of the Joliet Area Historical Museum collections is vital to fostering public trust and upholding the museum's mission and values. Museum staff and Board of Directors should:

- Maintain and develop collections for long-term preservation in fulfillment of JAHM's mission for current and future generations.
- Act ethically and legally in collecting, acquiring, reproducing, lending, and disposing of collection materials.
- Acquire, care for, exhibit, and make collections accessible with transparency and competency to engage the public with collections.
- Refrain from adding to personal collections that overlap in scope with those of the museum during their time of employment or appointment to the board. Museum staff, or Board of Directors may not use an affiliation with the institution to promote their personal collection activities.
- Maintain collection records that are complete, accurate, orderly, and accessible.
- Protect confidential information by observing laws and regulations related to the security of confidential records and the privacy of individuals or groups. Specifics of donations will only be discussed with the donor or authorized descendants as indicated by the donor.

## Section 4: Scope of Collections

Interpreting the history of Joliet is the primary focus of the Joliet Area Historical Museum's collections, exhibits, publications, and programs. The scope of the museum's collections shall place special emphasis upon the following:

- **Early Life in the Joliet area:** This includes but is not limited to geological formations; natural areas including prairies and wildlife habitats; Native American occupation; settlement patterns
- **Built environment in the Joliet area:** This includes but is not limited to architecture in its broadest social context, going beyond great buildings and architects.
- **Life in the Joliet area:** This includes but is not limited to community, neighborhoods, local history, religious life, recreation, leisure and entertainment, education, crime, and domestic life.
- **Work in the Joliet area:** This includes but is not limited to the impact of waterways on the area, development of transportation systems, agriculture, industry, local businesses, and economic development.
- **Governance in the Joliet area:** This includes but is not limited to civic government, citizen movements, urban planning and education.

Collections should reveal useful information about local events and individuals in relation to the history of Joliet. The collection may extend outside of this scope to include nationally significant holdings related to American history at the approval of Collection Staff, Collection Committee and Board of Directors.

## **Section 5: Categories of Collections**

### **5.1 – Joliet Area Historical Museum Permanent Collection**

The Joliet Area Historical Museum’s Permanent Collection contains accessioned materials that are held in trust for the public for use in exhibitions, programs, publications, and to support local research. By accessioning materials into the collection, JAHM is committing to document, preserve, and house the materials for the foreseeable future. Accessioned materials therefore demand the highest standard of documentation, care, and protection according to museum best practices to ensure they are preserved for long-term fulfillment of JAHM’s mission and purpose. While formally defined as the Permanent Collection, it is understood that individual materials may be deaccessioned out of the collection over time as regulated by JAHM’s Deaccession Policy.

The Permanent Collection has been organized into three holding categories for collection management purposes. These have been determined based on the categories set in the museum’s Past Perfect software and include:

- Archives and Manuscripts: holdings include documents, records and photographs produced by businesses, organizations, and individuals in the Joliet area that pertain to aspects of life and significant events in the history of Joliet.
- Objects: holdings consist of clothing and accessories, furniture, textiles, household items, industrial tools, advertising materials, military uniforms and medals, and additional three-dimensional artifacts which provide insight into the history of Joliet.
- Library: holdings consist of published materials including directories, periodicals, magazines, books, and other publications as deemed suitable by Collection Staff. This holding includes both primary and secondary research materials that provide insight into the history of Joliet.

Each holding category above is defined as a research collection, with the exception of the Objects category, intended for hands-on research use by the public under appropriate supervision, unless specific restrictions regarding public access are determined necessary and recorded in the catalog record for the corresponding materials.

Objects accessioned into the Permanent Collection are not available for hands-on use by the public. Research use of these artifacts by the public may be permitted under rare circumstances, when it is deemed necessary to the use and understanding of the material in order to serve the public’s best interest.

### **5.2 - Education Collection**

The Education Collection includes non-accessioned materials and are not considered part of the Permanent Collection. These materials are utilized in educational programs at the museum and are primarily for hands-on use or demonstration. It is understood that these materials are not

held to the same standard of handling as materials in the Permanent Collection and will deteriorate over time. Objects in the Education Collection are considered expendable and may be used with minimal supervision. Records of the materials in the Education Collection will be maintained in Past Perfect. All items will be given Education Collection numbers, not to be confused for accession numbers. Each item will be marked and recorded in Past Perfect following an EDU.00 numbering system.

No formal approval by the Collection Committee or Board of Directors is required, educational materials can be added to the Education Collection at the discretion of the Collections Staff and Director of Education. Because education materials are not accessioned, no prior approval from the Collection Committee or Board of Directors is needed for disposal. Donations to the Education Collection will be documented as unconditional donations and donor records maintained with no further documentation necessary.

The Education Collection is composed of objects so designated by the following standards:

- Materials deaccessioned from the Permanent Collection, and more suitable for use in the Education Collection
- Artifact reproductions
- Library materials (either duplicates of publications housed in the Permanent Collection, or not suitable for accession into the Permanent Collection)
- Materials acquired for the expressed intent of inclusion in the Education Collection
- Materials not suitable for the Permanent Collection but still maintain educational value

### **5.3 - Old Joliet Prison Historic Site Collection**

The Old Joliet Prison Collection refers to all non-accessioned materials found on site. While not formally accessioned all objects, paper records, architectural debris, and archeological finds are considered JAHM property. These materials can not be removed from the Old Joliet Prison Historic Site, destroyed, or altered in anyway without proper approval from Collection Staff, or the CEO. If materials are approved for removal, alterations, or disposal the appropriate paperwork is to be completed to track the movement of materials.

All accessioned materials from the Old Joliet Prison Historic Site are considered part of the JAHM Permanent Collection and are subject to the policies overseeing the Permanent Collection.

### **5.4 – Planinsek Grocery & Meat Market Museum Collection**

The Planinsek Grocery & Meat Market Museum Collection refers to all non-accessioned materials found on site. While not formally accessioned all materials found on site are considered JAHM property. These materials can not be removed from the site, destroyed, or altered in anyway without proper approval from Collection Staff, or the CEO. If materials are

approved for removal, alterations, or disposal the appropriate paperwork is to be completed to track the movement of materials.

All accessioned materials from the Planinsek Grocery & Meat Market Museum are considered part of the JAHM Permanent Collection and are subject to the policies overseeing the Permanent Collection.

## **Section 6: Acquisitions and Accessioning**

### **6.1 - Criteria for Acquisitions**

The following criteria must be followed when evaluating materials for potential acquisition into the Permanent Collection to ensure that the Joliet Area Historical Museum is developing a significant and useable collection that supports the mission of the museum and best serves the public interest:

- Materials are relevant to and consistent with the purpose and mission of the Joliet Area Historical Museum as defined in this policy.
- Materials are relevant to and consistent with the scope of the collection as defined in this policy.
- Materials must present opportunities to expand or fill a gap in the interpretive scope of the collection. Preference will be given to materials that are not already represented in the Permanent Collection.
- Materials will not be considered for accession if the museum can not provide the proper storage, protection and preservation needs for the materials. JAHM will only accession material for which it can reasonably provide an appropriate level of care for the foreseeable future in accordance with collection best practices.
- Except for Library holdings, JAHM prefers to collect original materials whenever possible. Replications will only be considered for acquisition when the original materials are believed to no longer exist.
- Materials must be documented as to provenance and thoroughly researched to ensure materials are authentic. Unidentified photographs, or other materials without historical context will not be considered for acquisition.
- Materials must be legally and ethically acquired from donors or organizations with full authority to donate these materials. No materials or objects shall be knowingly or willfully accepted which are known to have been illegally collected in the United State contrary to state law, federal law, regulation, treaty and/or convention.
- Materials will not be accepted where there is cause to believe that the circumstances of their collection involved needless destruction of historic sites, buildings, structures, habitats, and objects.
- All materials are to be considered outright and unconditional gifts to be used at the discretion of the museum. Title to all objects acquired shall be free and clear, without restriction of use. While it is the museums intention to accession for long-term use and preservation, no guarantee shall be made that the gift shall be retained by the museum in perpetuity. No commitment shall be made as to exhibition, attribution, or placement of the gift.

### **6.2 - Acquisition Authority**

Acquisition of significant objects for the Permanent Collection shall be recommended by the Collection Staff, but shall require an affirmative vote of the Collections Committee and CEO.

However, collection purchases and any acquisition related expenditures over \$3,000 must be approved prior to purchase by the Board of Directors. The Registrar and Curator with concurrence of the CEO has the authority and responsibility to refuse any donation or bequest which is not within the guidelines of the collection policy. No staff or board member may obligate the museum to accept any material or object.

### **6.3 - Acquisition Appraisals**

No staff or board member shall offer appraisals of the monetary value of objects to donors or reveal the museums insurance value for the purpose of establishing a fair market value of gifts offered to the museum. Donors desiring to take an income tax gift deduction must obtain an independent appraisal from an authorized appraiser. Records of such appraisals will be kept by the Joliet Area Historical Museum. Staff and board members will not appraise or otherwise place a monetary value on objects casually brought to the museum. As a public service, staff may attempt to attribute, identify, or authenticate items brought to the museum by the public. Such attributions, identifications, and/or authentications shall be for the sole use of the individual.

### **6.4 - Anonymous Gifts**

Anonymously received objects will be recorded by the museum Registrar with approval of the CEO as a donation. It will be assumed that the sender intended a donation, and the objects can be accessioned with a clear explanation in the file as to the circumstances of the arrival. Unwanted, unsolicited objects should be disposed of by transmittal to a charitable organization, sale, or witnessed destruction. No option will be taken without a notice being sent to the sender (if known), and a lapse of sixty days there from.

### **6.5 - Accessioning**

All materials accessioned into the Permanent Collection shall be assigned accession numbers and shall be catalogued in Past Perfect with documentation in accordance with professional standards. Accessioning files shall be completed within sixty days following the museum's receipt of legal title to an object.

## **Section 7: Deaccessioning**

### **7.1 - Criteria for Deaccessioning**

Accessioned materials may be deaccessioned from the collection when one or more of the following criteria are met:

- The material has deteriorated beyond reasonable repair, or JAHM can no longer adequately care for or preserve the object in accordance with professional accepted standards.
- The material is redundant and not otherwise needed for exhibit or educational purposes.
- The material poses a threat to museum staff, the public, or other objects in the collection.
- The object is no longer relevant to the purpose and mission of the museum and would be better suited at a different institution.
- JAHM does not have free and clear legal title to the object and therefore accessioned the object in error.

### **7.2 - Deaccession Authority**

Before disposing of any objects from the collection, reasonable efforts should be made to ascertain that the museum is free to do so. Deaccessioning will take place on a case-by-case basis for any object that meets the above criteria. The Collection Staff will recommend materials for deaccessioning to the CEO and Collection Committee and upon approval the proper means of disposition will be agreed upon and carried out.

To ensure transparency and accountability, an adequate record of the circumstances of the deaccessioning decision making, authorization, and disposal process will be retained as part of the museum's permanent records.

### **7.3 - Means of Disposal**

The manner of disposal should be in the best interest of the Joliet Area Historical Museum, and the public it serves. JAHM will dispose of each object through a manner appropriate to that piece.

Disposal methods may include:

- Transfer to the museum's Education Collection, Reference Collection, or another department.
- Transfer to another, more appropriate institution
- Public sale or auction.
- Witnessed destruction.

Objects will not be sold back to the donor, and the donor does not need to be notified. However, JAHM may choose to notify donors of the deaccessioned materials as a courtesy.

If public sale or auction is deemed the most appropriate method of disposal, any funds generated will be applied back to the Collection Department for new acquisition purchases or direct care of collections.

Deaccessioned materials will not be given or sold privately to museum employees, board members, volunteers, or other associated parties.

## **Section 8: Loans**

### **8.1 - Incoming Loans**

The Joliet Area Historical Museum borrows materials from individuals, institutions, and other organizations for use in exhibitions. JAHM will exercise the same care and storage for incoming loans as it does for its own collection. Before agreeing to an incoming loan, Collection Staff must ensure that it can store, protect, preserve, and account for the materials in accordance with professional standards.

Collection Staff may only initiate an incoming loan after consultation with and approval of the CEO. All incoming loans will be subject to a clear period of time, not to exceed a ten year period. An Incoming Loan Agreement must be signed by both the Lender and the Curator. JAHM will not authorize any open ended, or permanent loans. Agreements documenting incoming loans are maintained by the Registrar and retained as part of the Joliet Area Historical Museum's permanent record. The additional conditions governing incoming loans are laid out clearly on the back of the Incoming Loan Agreement.

### **8.2 - Outgoing Loans**

The Joliet Area Historical Museum lends its collection materials as a professional courtesy and way to broaden access to its collection, to other institutions for exhibition purposes. When lending materials to other organizations JAHM relinquishes physical custody of the material for a specific purpose and a clear period of time, not to exceed to a ten year period, while retaining title and ownership of the material. JAHM will not agree to any open ended, or permanent loans.

JAHM also lends non-accessioned materials from the Old Joliet Prison Historic Site to local artists, community members, and other institutions to encourage creative community engagement in the preservation of the site. When lending materials to outside entities JAHM relinquishes physical custody of the material for a specific purpose and a clear period of time while retaining title and ownership of the material. If materials are loaned out with approval for alterations JAHM retains ownership of the finished product.

Collection Staff may only initiate an outgoing loan after consultation with and approval of the CEO. All outgoing loans are subject to an Outgoing Loan Agreement, which must be signed by the Borrower and the Curator. Agreements documenting outgoing loans are maintained by the Registrar and retained as part of the Joliet Area Historical Museum's permanent record. The additional conditions governing outgoing loans are laid out clearly on the back of the Outgoing Loan Agreement.

## **Section 9: Objects in Custody**

### **9.1 - Temporary Custody**

The Joliet Area Historical Museum is accountable for all materials solicited for acquisition, loan, or other purposes the moment they are received by JAHM or a member of its staff. It is imperative that all such materials be documented, handled, and stored appropriately from the moment JAHM assumes custody. Any materials accepted into custody of the museum must be documented immediately on a Temporary Custody Form signed by the Collection Staff or the CEO, as well as the donor of the materials. The Temporary Custody Form is to document JAHM's receipt of the materials and govern its responsibilities until an Incoming Loan Agreement or Deed of Gift is executed, or the material is returned or disposed of per the donor's instructions.

### **9.2 - Found in Collection**

The Joliet Area Historical Museum has in its custody several "found in collection" (FIC) objects, taken into custody prior to the establishment of current professional best practices. The objective in dealing with items which are FIC is to review all evidence critically and thoroughly in order to determine the legal status and provenance. Because several factors can define something as FIC, materials should undergo thorough investigation before any action takes place. If no evidence of prior accessioning can be found the material may be recommended for accessioning, addition to the Education Collection, Reference Collection or disposed of according to standard museum procedures.

## **Section 10: Documentation and Care**

### **10.1 - Documentation**

All legal and administrative records documenting accessioning, deaccessioning, incoming and outgoing loans are maintained by the Registrar and retained as part of the Joliet Area Historical Museum's permanent record. Legal and administrative records will be safeguarded from hazards such as fire, water and loss, and duplicate copies of critical records shall be maintained off-site. All known provenance and other relevant information related to the materials will be documented by Collection Staff at the time of acquisition. Collection Staff will ensure that this information and any other relevant information discovered through subsequent research is reflected in the catalog record for each accession. Objects and archival collections shall be catalogued in Past Perfect according to professional standards. All catalog records shall be maintained which document locations for all materials, legal status of materials, movement from assigned locations, missing, stolen or damaged objects, and condition of objects.

The following information is considered privileged and will not be shared with third parties:

- Information requested by donors or lenders to remain anonymous
- Personal contact information for all donors and lenders
- Collection storage locations
- Appraised or estimated values for collection and loan materials

### **10.2 - Collection Processing**

New acquisitions shall be processed as soon as possible after accessioning, and collection materials will be marked with their accession number to always ensure proper identification. Objects and Library holdings will be managed at the item level, meaning all items will be assigned its own unique number. Archival collections may be processed to the item or folder level depending on the size and other contributing factors of the individual collection. Archival collections managed at the folder level will be processed according to best practices for archival management. When collections are not processed to the item level, it is imperative that materials are still discoverable and usable by the public while conserving staff resources.

### **10.3 - Storage and Housing**

The Joliet Area Historical Museum shall provide safe and appropriate storage of collection materials, and materials on loan. Storage areas must provide adequate space for orderly and safe arrangement of objects. Collection Staff will store materials according to professional best practices. Storage solutions will aim to minimize physical stress and exposure to harmful materials and environmental conditions for objects to support the long-term preservation of materials. Collection Staff will seek to limit handling and moving collections whenever possible to avoid risk of damage. Proper methods of handling materials will be followed at all times.

#### **10.4 - Inventory Control**

Comprehensive inventory records shall be created on a regular basis, not to exceed ten years to maintain physical control over the collection. Spot-inventories, using a random selection of a collection storage space, will be conducted on a bi-annual basis. To prevent any inventory issues, Collection Staff shall track collection movement using Past Perfect to ensure that home and temporary object locations are recorded accurately when objects are placed on display, used for educational purposes, placed on loan, or sent off-site for conservation purposes.

#### **10.5 - Environmental Control**

The Joliet Area Historical Museum shall make every effort to provide a safe and secure environment to ensure long-term preservation of the collection. Material, whether in use or in storage, shall reasonably be protected from life shortening forces such as excessive heat, cold, humidity, dryness, dust, UV light, and pests. Collection Staff will monitor environmental conditions on a regular basis, and shall anticipate, identify, and address any environmental issues in the collection storage areas.

#### **10.6 - Security**

The CEO is responsible for the security of the physical sites, staff, visitors, exhibits and collections of the museum. Collection Staff are also responsible for the collections, exhibits and collection storage areas. All Joliet Area Historical Museum staff are granted unsupervised access to exhibition areas and collection storage areas. JAHM staff will exercise their authority to enter these spaces only for legitimate job-related activities. Researchers and other visitors to the museum must always be accompanied by a member of JAHM staff while in non-public areas of the site. No construction, cleaning, or other work will be permitted in collection storage areas without prior approval of the CEO, Curator, or Registrar. Handling of collection material and movement or alteration of collection storage areas is strictly prohibited without prior approval of the CEO, Curator, or Registrar.

The CEO, Curator or Registrar will coordinate all requests for admittance into the museum's collection storage areas including:

- Visiting museum professionals and/or historical agencies
- Museum interns or volunteers
- Potential donors
- Media coverage related to museum standards, the collection, collection storage, etc.

#### **10.7 - Conservation**

Preventative care is the first step in maintaining the collection for long-term preservation. However, an object's condition, value, or anticipated use may justify conservation treatment. Because conservation can be costly and time-consuming it is necessary to prioritize conservation activity to utilize the museum's resources in a manner that best serves the public interest.

Collection materials to be considered for conservation must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Material is actively deteriorating, despite proper storage and housing
- Material has been requested for exhibition, photography, or other use that will advance the institution's mission
- Material is determined to be particularly significant or unique in relation to the museum's mission

When conservation is deemed necessary, stabilization of materials will be highlighted, and minimal intervention to original materials will be prioritized over more invasive techniques to ensure as little alteration as possible. Treatment of any collection material shall be performed by a professionally trained conservator.

### **10.8 - Risk Management**

The Joliet Area Historical Museum has established a disaster preparedness plan to mitigate potential risks to the collection. The plan shall be maintained by Collection Staff and all updates to be approved by the Board of Directors. The plan sets forth responsibilities for staff in response to varying disasters regarding safety and collection recovery.

## **Section 11: Access and Use**

The Joliet Area Historical Museum recognizes its responsibility to provide public access to its collection while still safeguarding these materials for long-term preservation. As such, Collection Staff is responsible for establishing procedures to encourage the use of materials while incorporating appropriate protocols to ensure preservation and control over the collection. JAHM makes its collection accessible to the public through exhibitions, educational programs, publications, online resources, and on-site research and reference services.

### **11.1 - Public Access to Research Collections**

Majority of the Joliet Area Historical Museum collection is available for on-site use by researchers. The holdings available to researchers include:

- Archives and Manuscripts
- Library

Collection Staff is responsible for setting up appointments with researchers to utilize the collection on-site, as well as supervision of outside researchers at all times while they have access to collection materials. JAHM may limit public access to materials based on condition, privileged, or restricted information, and other reasonable factors. All research is subject to JAHM's Collections Fee Schedule.

The remaining artifact-based portion of the museum's collection is made available to the public primarily through exhibitions and special programming but is not typically used for research purposes. Due to the size, condition, and handling constraints of many of the items it is not practical to open this section of the collection up to general research. Access to this portion of the collection for research will be limited to researchers who can demonstrate that in-person access to these holdings is required to support fundamental research.

## **Section 12: Review and Revision**

The CEO, Collection Staff, Collections Committee and the Board of Directors will review the policies and procedures of the Joliet Area Historical Museum bi-annually to ensure that its requirements meet or exceed accepted professional standards, and that the museum's policies accurately reflect the purpose, mission and goals of the museum.

During the bi-annual review, any individual may recommend policy changes to the Collection Staff, or Collections Committee in writing and should include the rationale and benefits of the proposed changes. The changes will then be recommended to the CEO for presentation to the Board of Directors. Approved recommendations will be incorporated into the policy and enacted immediately. Disapprovals will be returned to the originator with explanation. The CEO of the Joliet Area Historical Museum will maintain a master copy of the policy.