

December 1, 2022



Stearns History Museum

Collections Specialist 1

Position Type: Full time, temporary

Reports To: Director of Exhibits & Curator

Wage: \$22/hour

Stearns History Museum Information:

The Stearns History Museum connects people through the power of history and culture. Located just off Highway 15 in St. Cloud, Minnesota the Stearns History Museum (SHM) sits on six acres adjacent to Heritage Park. Families can make a day of their experience and visit the museum, use the skate park, or walk the easy trails. At SHM visitors can use the archives and library for historical research, explore the exhibit galleries and discover the history of Stearns County, or participate in programs offered for people of all ages. Special events annually highlight important moments in time. Anyone interested in exploring their roots is welcome at the Stearns History Museum.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Collections Specialist is a key member of the SHM curatorial and registration staff, responsible for completing the work as described in Appendix 1 (Minnesota Historical Society Large Grant, awarded fall of 2022). The Specialist supports the work of the SHM Curator and Registrar for three-dimensional collections.

DETAILED RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Under the guidance of the SHM Registrar, become familiar with the Collector Systems database
- Using a checklist provided by the Director of Exhibits & Curator, evaluate artifacts and object records for:
 - Location
 - Clarity of description
 - Correct use of nomenclature and control language
 - Photo quality
- As needed, take new or updated professional grade photographs of artifacts
- Suggest items for deaccession to the Curator due to duplication, condition, or lack of connection to Stearns County
- Rehouse or condense objects in appropriate archival boxes, mounts, etc.

Other Duties as Assigned

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QUALIFICATIONS:

- Must embrace, support, honor, and advance the mission and public history of the Stearns History Museum
- Minimum of one year of experience working or volunteering in a museum or historic site, with preference being made toward collections experience
- Bachelors degree in History, Library and Information Sciences, Anthropology, Museum Studies or related field preferred
- Familiarity with museum collections standards and handling best practices
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Ability to stand for long periods of time
- Ability to lift up to 50 pounds and climb a step ladder
- Valid driver's license
- Must have strong computer skills including use of MS Office suite and database management

This is a grant funded, temporary, project position with a scheduled ending date of November 30, 2023. Please submit your resume and cover letter to Eric Cheever, Director of Exhibits & Curator, echeever@stearns-museum.org or Stearns History Museum 235 33rd Avenue South, St. Cloud, MN 56301. Applications will be considered through December 15, 2022.

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Appendix 1: Project Description

The purpose of this project is twofold. First, the Stearns History Museum needs to review and evaluate all objects accessioned since the 2015 Collections Inventory Project.

Secondly, the project will allow the Stearns History Museum to clean-up collections software records (Collector Systems) of erroneous and incomplete information, standardize control language for searching (example: World War II, WW II, WW 2, World War 2), and begin to provide professional grade photographs of three-dimensional collections for future online accessibility.

The evaluation portion of the project will examine every artifact accessioned since 2015 and cross check the artifact against information contained in the museum's collections management software (Collector Systems). Artifacts which are poorly documented (i.e. no accession numbers or multiple artifacts assigned to one accession number) will be checked against the paper accession files and their catalog record updated to reflect their status. The migration of data from PastPerfect to Collector Systems in 2015 was done as the records stood with little to no changes made. As such, the need for evaluation and clean-up of metadata is necessary to ensure that staff, researchers, and the public can search and find objects effectively in the system. The evaluation will enable the museum to continue to improve intellectual control over the collections and allow for better access and preservation of the artifacts in addition to meeting AAM accreditation standards. In order to complete this evaluation, SHM will hire two full-time specialists to work under the direction of the Curator of Collections to spend 80 hours/week evaluating and stream-lining the collections database.

The Curator will spend 5-10 hours/week providing support and oversight of the evaluation. They will train the new specialists on Stearns History Museum policies and procedures such as recording time and setting schedules, produce the check list for each object being evaluated, give them a tour and help with locations for the collections, hold first weekly and then monthly meeting with the specialists and SHM Executive Director to ensure progress is being made, and produce the final report for the grant once the project is complete. The Curator will also make the decision to bring objects to the Collections Committee for deaccession when needed.

The Registrar will work on average 10 hours per week focused on daily organization and completion of the evaluation project. This includes training the specialists on the use of Collector Systems, helping with photography set-up and equipment needs, assisting with

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control language categories per the Chenhall Nomenclature System, and helping to determine recommendation for deaccession via the newly-approved SHM Collections Policy, Section III, which will then be brought to the Curator for final decisions.

The evaluation will check the following information on each of the objects being looked at both in Collector Systems and on box and shelf labels: accession number; object name and appropriate and consistent control language per Chenhall; location; description; dimensions (height, width and depth); date and condition; and consideration for deaccession if duplicate, poor quality, and relevancy to Collections Policy guidelines re: connection to Stearns County. Each artifact will also be photographed if needed OR re-photographed if the original quality was low. A checklist developed by the Curator will ensure the specialists complete the same process for each artifact. Artifacts in the exhibits will be evaluated if needed as they are moved on/off the floor and spot-checked. All of the information will be examined as entered into the museum's collections content management software, Collector Systems and edited as needed. The information entered into this cloud-based network will be downloaded and backed up once a month. Digital images of the artifacts will also be kept in separate files on the museum computers and will be backed up once a week into a cloud-based drive and an external hard drive.

The main director of the project is the Director of Exhibits and Curator at the Stearns History Museum. Every month, the Executive Director along with the evaluation team and SHM Registrar, will conduct a project review and adjust goals as necessary. Progress will be measured by a numerical count of artifacts evaluated and space traversed during the process. After 10 months of work, the examination of the objects and their records will determine grant requests for future phases of the collections improvement plan and future work priorities. Upon completion of the project, museum staff will conduct a review to determine the success of the project based on the original goals.

Ultimately, this evaluation will serve as the basis for using the public access features of Collector Systems so that researchers, staff, and visitors can search the collection online in the future.