
COLLECTIONS POLICY PLAN & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE HISTORIC PRESTON GAS STATION

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Museum Studies
Certificate Program

Preston Station Historic District Collections Management Policy

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Table of Contents

GLOSSARY.....	3
I. INTRODUCTION	5
A. MISSION	5
B. VISION STATEMENT	5
C. HISTORY OF PRESTON’S STATION	5
D. CONTACT AND SOCIAL MEDIA INFORMATION	6
II. SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS	6
A. A TIERED COLLECTION	6
<i>Foundation Artifacts.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Education Artifacts.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Cultural Artifacts.....</i>	<i>7</i>
III. ACQUISITION POLICY.....	8
A. DIGITAL INVENTORY OF COLLECTION	8
B. CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTANCE INTO COLLECTION	8
C. CRITERIA FOR REJECTION INTO COLLECTION	9
IV. DEACCESSION POLICY.....	9

A.	CRITERIA FOR SELECTING AN OBJECT TO REMOVE FROM PERMANENT COLLECTION	9
B.	DEACCESSION PROCEDURE	10
V.	LOANS	12
A.	INCOMING LOANS	12
B.	OUTGOING LOANS.....	12
VI.	COLLECTIONS CARE.....	12
A.	GUIDELINES FOR COLLECTIONS CARE	12
B.	HANDLING AND CARE OF ARTIFACTS	13
C.	TEMPERATURE AND CLIMATE STABILITY	14
D.	PEST MANAGEMENT	14
VII.	APPENDIX	16
A.	DIGITAL INVENTORY FORM	16
B.	DEACCESSION FORM	16
C.	LOAN FORM	16

Glossary

This is a glossary of ‘museum terms’ frequently encountered throughout this document.

Accession: (v) the formal process used to accept and record an item as an official collection object. (n) an object or group of objects accepted into the collection at the same time.

Collections Management Policy: a board-approved (or other governing authority) document that governs the collecting activities of a museum.

Deaccession: the formal process used to remove an object from the collection permanently; this is separate from disposal.

Disposal: the act of physically removing the object from the museum premises once it has been deaccessioned. Disposal can include donation to another museum, witnessed destruction, sale at auction, etc.

Mission: a formal, short, written statement of the purpose of an organization. The mission statement should guide the actions of the organization, spell out its overall goal, provide a sense of direction, and guide decision-making. It provides "the framework or context within which the company's strategies are formulated." (Hill and Jones. Strategic Management. Houghton Mifflin Company: New York, 2008, pg 11)

Organizational Capacity: an organization’s potential to perform—its ability to successfully apply skills and resources to accomplish goals and satisfy stakeholders’ expectations. (courtesy – the International Development Research Centre, Canada)

Scope of Collection Statement: defines the purpose of the collection and sets agreed upon limits such as subject, geographical location, and time period to which each collection must relate. The

statement also may consider the uses of a collection and state the types of objects that will be acquired to fulfill the purposes of that collection. These statements tend to be very broad and often describe what is in the collection now rather than focus on plans for the future. (AAM)

Tiered Collection: the process of categorizing a museum's collection into separate parts, or 'tiers,' based on the purposes of the items or how well they support the museum's mission. (Active Collections, 2015)

Vision Statement: A formal, written statement that describes the future goals of the museum. It states what the purpose of the museum will be for the future and where they would like to be heading. (AAM)

I. Introduction

A. Mission

The mission of the Preston Station Historic District is to focus on preserving and revitalizing the District. We strive to work with local communities and non-profit organizations to educate and raise awareness of the historical significance of Preston's Station, the City of Belle Plaine, Iowa, and the Lincoln Highway, while promoting the area as a tourist destination for all generations to enjoy.

B. Vision Statement

The vision of Preston's Station is to become an educational and tourist site that teaches local history while also functioning as an important asset to Belle Plaine.

C. History of Preston's Station

Originally built by Frank Fiene in 1912, one year before the creation of the Lincoln Highway, the Station functioned as a Standard Oil station on the corner of 7th Avenue and 19th Street. In 1921 the Lincoln Highway was rerouted through Belle Plaine and the Station was moved to its current location at the corner of 4th Avenue and 13th Street to better reach travelers along the highway. It was renamed Preston's Station in 1923 with the purchase of the Station for \$100 by George W. Preston. Home to local stories, historic road signs, and 'Preston's Corner' – a three-room motel and garage – the Station continued as a prominent landmark for Belle Plaine and the Lincoln Highway until its closure in 1989. The Station continues to be owned by descendants of George Preston and is still a destination to learn about local and highway history.

D. Contact and Social Media Information

Preston Station Historic District may be contacted through any of the following forms of communication:

- Preston Station's phone number: 816-868-3336
- Preston's website: <http://prestonsstation.com>
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/PrestonsStation/>
- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/prestons_station/

II. Scope of Collections

A. A Tiered Collection

The Station includes a variety of buildings and items such as road signs, gas station memorabilia, newspapers, photographs, a three-room motel, a garage, and 20th century gas pumps. The collections can be defined into three separate tiered categories that each require different types of care (see Section VI, Collections Care Resources for more information).

Foundation Artifacts

These are the *most personal and significant items* in the collection, most of which relate to the formation and influence of Preston's Station in Belle Plaine. These pieces are part of the permanent collection and require the most care. Artifacts in this category will only be used for research and exhibit purposes. They exist on site and will leave the site's location only with permission and documentation from the Station's owners as a form of communicating local history.

Examples of *foundation artifacts* would include Station building itself and its contents, the antique road signs decorating the outside of the building, and historical photographs of the Station and outer buildings.

Education Artifacts

These objects can be shared with the community, schools, and the public. The artifacts in this category are related to the history of Belle Plaine and the Lincoln Highway. They are slightly used, worn, possibly contain duplicates, and/or contain durable materials that can withstand potential handling by those not affiliated with the Station. These artifacts can be handled and travel off site with permission and documentation from the Station's owners to any educational institution and/or event. Examples of *educational artifacts* would be a traveling trunk containing Preston artifacts to be shared with a student classroom.

Cultural Artifacts

These objects relate to Belle Plaine history but are not significant enough to be a foundation artifact. They include items that might not be related to the Preston family personally, but they come from the community of Belle Plaine or contain significant value about societal culture during the 20th century. These items may or may not be in the Station's permanent collection. Depending on how objects are interpreted, examples of *cultural artifacts* could include old washing machines, and agricultural machinery, all found in the storage shed.

III. Acquisition Policy

A. Digital Inventory of Collection

It is imperative that there be a digital inventory of all items in the collection along with photographs and historical information about each item. The Inventory should be backed up regularly (no less than once a month) to a flash drive or another storage system in case of the main system suffering a hard drive failure or other problems.

B. Criteria for Acceptance into Collection

Each item coming into the collection will be accompanied by a completed acquisition form and will be added to the digital inventory (see appendix for form). Artifacts may be *accepted* into the Station's collection if they meet *all* the following criteria:

- I. The artifact serves the Station's mission of preserving and educating others about at least one of the following and contains historical value:
 - a. Preston's Station
 - b. The history of Belle Plaine
 - c. The Lincoln Highway
- II. The artifact fits one of the three categories listed in the scope of collections.
- III. The Station has the storage capacity and proper care measures to ensure the artifact is stored and/or exhibited with ethical and responsible museum standards, as described in the American Alliance of Museum's [*Code of*](#)

[Ethics for Museums](#) and current version of [Direct Care of Collections: Ethics, Guidelines, and Recommendations white paper.](#)

C. Criteria for Rejection into Collection

Artifacts may be *rejected* from the Station's collection if they meet *at least one* of the following criteria:

- The artifact does not serve the mission of the Preston Station Historic District.
- The artifact was derived from illegal trade and/or there is not enough documentation about the artifact's origins.
- There are duplicates of the artifact currently existing in the Station's collections.
- The Station does not have the necessary storage space and resources to care for and preserve the artifact.

IV. Deaccession Policy

A. Criteria for Selecting an Object to Remove from Permanent Collection

The board and director of the Preston Station Historic District may choose to deaccession, or permanently remove an object from its collections, after fulfilling **ANY** of the following criteria:

- It is determined the object no longer serves the mission of the Preston Station Historic District.
- The object is in such a poor state that it can no longer be handled by staff without greatly damaging the object.

- The object is discovered to have illegal, incorrect, or unethical provenance.
- National and/or state legislation requires that the object be removed from the Station's permanent collection.
- The object has been lost or stolen for a period longer than three years.
- The Preston Station Historic District's permanent collection currently contains duplicates of the object in a better condition.
- The Preston Station Historic District no longer has the means necessary to safely store and preserve the object.
- The object creates a physical safety or health hazard to the museum staff, general public, or other items in the permanent collection.
- The board and director agree that the object is better suited for the mission of a collection elsewhere.

Once the decision has been made to deaccession an object, leadership will determine the appropriate disposal or deaccession procedure.

B. Deaccession Procedure

To deaccession an object, the museum must complete steps and consider which disposal method will be best for the situation. There are many ways to dispose of an object, but documentation must be completed before the deaccession process begins.

1. The director, or collections manager if applicable, will fill out and submit a Deaccession Form, describing the reason(s) for deaccessioning the object and suggested method of disposal. The Deaccession Form (see appendix for form).

will be presented to leadership for final approval of deaccession reasoning and disposal.

2. An object may be disposed from the permanent collection by the following methods, listed in order of preference:
 - Giving the object to another institution for which the object would be better suited, such as a museum, archive, historical society, or any other educational and historical institution. This may be done by providing the object is a gift, sale, or exchange with the receiving institution.
 - Offering the item for public sale, trade, or research activities. Money earned through these means of disposal must be used solely for supporting the Preston Station Historic Site's mission and in support of its collections, according to the [American Alliance of Museum's Code of Ethics for Museums amended in 2000.](#)
 - Destruction of the object if the object is in such a poor condition that it can no longer be used. This option should be approved and carried out by the director and collections manager.
3. Objects planned for deaccession may not be sold to, purchased by, or transferred to any member of the Preston Station Historic Site and their affiliates. This includes the site director, board members, staff, volunteers, spouses/partners, and relatives.

V. Loans

A. Incoming Loans

When artifacts are loaned **TO** the Station from another institution:

- Loans to the Station must fit the mission of the Station and fall into one of the three categories of collections for exhibit, research, and/or educational purposes.
- All incoming loans must have documentation stating the owner and identifying details about the object.
- Before arriving to the Station, an Incoming Loan Agreement form should be filled out (see appendix for Loan form).

B. Outgoing Loans

When loaning any artifact **FROM** the Station to another institution:

- The museum director must approve or reject any outgoing loans.
- It is the borrowing institution's responsibility to take care of and get insurance for loans.
- All loans must have documentation on them stating they are from the Station.
- Before final approval, an Outgoing Loan Agreement form should be filled out.

VI. Collections Care

A. Guidelines for Collections Care

Collections care requires addressing a wide range of handling and environmental hazards that threaten the preservation of artifacts and structures. Although the

Preston Station Historic Site is not a typical museum in that it utilizes the existing structures as a collections warehouse, it nonetheless aims to care for its collections in a way that preserves them for the community. One resource specifically geared towards the preservation of historic gas stations can be accessed through the NPS website [“The Preservation and Reuse of Historic Gas Stations”](#).

B. Handling and Care of Artifacts

Fragile items in the permanent collection and photographs should be handled while wearing gloves and stored in areas with little exposure to light. Different materials require different approaches. The following resources provide guidelines for how to care for specific materials.

Photographs and newspapers:

- [“Care, Handling, and Storage of Photographs”](#)
- [“The Care and Preservation of Photographic Prints”](#)
- [“Care of Photographs”](#)
- [“Preservation Measures for Newspapers”](#)
- [“Preserving History: Here’s How to Keep That Historic Newspaper for Years to Come”](#)
- [“How Do I Preserve My Newspaper?”](#)

Historic Vehicles

- [“The Care and Preservation of Historic Motorized Vehicles”](#)

Metal Artifacts

- [“Caring for Your Metal Objects”](#)

- [“The Preservation of Historic Signs”](#)

Water Damage and Salvaging Artifacts after a Flood

- [“Salvaging Water-Damaged Family Valuables and Heirlooms”](#)
- [“After the Flood: Advice for Salvaging Damaged Family Treasures”](#)

Fire Damage and Salvaging Artifacts after a Fire

- [“Museum Fire Protection”](#) Chapter 9 from the *Museum Handbook* by the National Park Service
- [“After the Fire: Advice for Salvaging Damaged Family Treasures”](#)

C. Temperature and Climate Stability

Ideally, artifacts are stored in a location with a stable climate to prevent damage from fluctuating temperatures and humidity. However, understanding that the Preston Station Historic Site is currently an uncontrolled environment, the immediate goal is to identify items that are less sturdy or fragile in nature and remove them to a controlled environment that provide stable temperature and humidity. The following resources can provide further insight.

- [“Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings – Problems and Recommended Approaches”](#)
- [“A Practical Guide for Sustainable Climate Control and Lighting in Museums and Galleries”](#)
- [“Realistic Preservation Environment”](#)
- [“Monitoring Temperature and Relative Humidity”](#)

D. Pest Management

Pests can include animals, insects, mold, fungi, and mildew and can cause widespread damage to certain types of collections, often going undetected for

lengthy periods of time. The Preston Station Historic Site checks for pests twice a year (fall and spring) and has an integrated pest management plan to monitor and prevent damage. Tips for monitoring pests and dealing with any damage can be found in the resources below.

- [“11 Step Process to Developing and Implementing an Integrated Pest Management Strategy”](#)
- [“Anoxic Microenvironments: A Treatment for Pest Control”](#)
- [Museum Handbook: Chapter 5: “Biological Infestations”](#)

VII. Appendix

A. Digital Inventory Form

See pages 17-18.

B. Deaccession Form

See page 19.

C. Loan Form

See page 20.

Preston's Station Historic District Accession Form

Accession Number:	Date Received:	Accession Date:
Collections Category: <input type="checkbox"/> Foundational Artifact <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Artifact <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Artifact		
Title/Description:	Transcription:	
Condition: <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor Describe specific condition features:		
Location:		
Type of Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> Gift <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer <input type="checkbox"/> Bequest <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase / Price: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Field Collection <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	Material(s):	Restrictions:
Source/Donor Name:		
Address:	State:	ZIP:
Phone:		
E-mail:		
Received By:		
Accessioned By:		

Preston's Station Historic District Accession Form

Provide any historical content details specific to this object here:

Preston's Station Historic Site Deaccession Form

Item Accession Number: _____

How Acquired: _____

Donor Information:

Item Description:

Collection Category: _____

Reason for Deaccession (Check all that apply):

- POOR CONDITION – The item is too deteriorated or in poor condition that it no longer is of educational use, nor can the item function effectively to tell the history of Belle Plaine OR Preston's Station. It is beyond current means of conservation and poses a risk to other items in the collection.
- RELEVANCE – The item does not contain enough relevance or purpose to be of use to serving the mission of the museum.
- REDUNDANCY – The museum already contains more than one of this item.
- DOCUMENTATION – There is not enough documentation about the item to prove it has relevance to the collection.
- CARE – The museum can no longer adequately care for this item.
- USE – The museum does not see this item being used in future exhibitions or for educational demonstrations and activities.
- LEGALITY – Investigation has shown the legality of ownership for this item is questionable.
- OTHER (Describe):

Recommended Disposal Method (Sale, Exchange, Gift, Destroy, Other):

Prepared By: _____ **Date:** _____

Reviewed By: _____ **Date:** _____

Preston's Station Historic Site Loan Form

INCOMING LOAN

Loaned Item(s): _____

Lender's Name: _____

Phone: _____

Lender's Address:

Dates and Duration of Loan(s):

Insurance: _____

Purpose of Loan:

Special Conditions:

OUTGOING LOAN

Loaned Item Accession Number(s): _____

Borrower's Name: _____

Phone: _____

Borrower's Address:

Institution: _____

Dates and Duration of Loan(s):

Insurance: _____

Purpose of Loan:

Special Conditions:

