

Museum Curator

Reports to: Executive Director

Status: Full-time, salaried, starting at \$36,000/year (higher starting salary possible depending on experience)

Schedule: Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., with occasional evenings and weekends

Benefits: Flexible Time Off; Employee Healthcare Bonus

Why Work at the Portage County Historical Society?

The Portage County Historical Society (PCHS) is a growing, award-winning organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the diverse stories of Portage County, Wisconsin. In 2025, PCHS was honored with the Reuben Gold Thwaites Trophy, the highest statewide recognition for excellence in local historical programming.

This is an exciting opportunity for an early-career museum professional to gain hands-on experience across collections, exhibitions, and public history in a collaborative, mission-driven environment. The Museum Curator will have the opportunity to work with significant local collections, help shape milestone exhibitions, and contribute meaningfully to an organization that is actively expanding its reach, professionalism, and community impact.

PCHS values curiosity, flexibility, collaboration, and a sense of humor. This role is well suited for a recent graduate seeking their first full-time museum position or an early-career professional with some hands-on experience who is ready to take on greater responsibility. In a small staff environment, the work is varied, fast-paced, and rewarding—and your contributions will be visible and valued.

Position Summary

The Museum Curator is responsible for the stewardship, care, and interpretation of the Portage County Historical Society's collections and exhibitions. This position ensures that collections are preserved according to professional standards, exhibitions are historically accurate and engaging, and that collections and exhibit spaces are maintained in ways that support long-term preservation and public access.

Building on recent statewide recognition, including the 2025 Reuben Gold Thwaites Award, the Museum Curator will play an important role in researching, developing, and curating milestone exhibitions that reflect the Society's history, growth, and future direction.

This position requires a high degree of flexibility. The Museum Curator must be comfortable shifting between responsibilities, responding to changing priorities, and doing what is needed to keep progress moving forward for the organization's collections and exhibitions.

Collections Management

- Lead the accessioning, registration, and documentation of new donations and loans.
- Oversee the care, inventory, cataloging, research, and storage of artifact, photograph, archival, and costume collections.
- Maintain accurate collections records using the Society's collections management system (CatalogIT).
- Coordinate digitization and photography of collections to improve access and preservation.
- Develop and update collections management policies and procedures consistent with museum best practices.
- Support grant writing and reporting related to collections care and preservation.
- Recruit, train, and support collections volunteers and interns.

Exhibitions and Research

- Plan, develop, and install permanent and temporary exhibitions in collaboration with staff.
- Ensure exhibitions are historically accurate, accessible, and aligned with the Society's mission.
- Prepare objects for display, including mounts, labels, and environmental considerations.
- Conduct historical research to support exhibitions and respond to reference requests.
- Write interpretive content for exhibits, programs, and public-facing communications.
- Serve as an internal resource on collections and research for staff, board members, and volunteers.

Facilities and Project Coordination

- Coordinate maintenance and facility projects as they relate to collections storage, exhibition spaces, and the preservation of artifacts, working with the Executive Director, contractors, and volunteers as needed.

Public Engagement and Organizational Support

- Support and participate in public programs, tours, and special events.
- Deliver occasional public presentations related to collections or local history.
- Assist with site staffing and visitor services as needed.
- Demonstrate flexibility in day-to-day responsibilities, adapting to changing priorities and contributing where needed to support collections care and exhibitions.

Preferred Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in history, public history, museum studies, or a related field (master's degree preferred but not required).
- Internship, volunteer, or professional experience in a museum, historical society, archive, or cultural heritage organization.
- Familiarity with collections management, exhibitions, or curatorial research through coursework or applied experience.
- Experience with collections management systems and digitization workflows (CatalogIT experience a plus).
- Strong research, writing, and organizational skills.
- Ability to manage multiple projects and adapt to changing priorities in a small-staff environment.
- Comfort working collaboratively with staff, volunteers, contractors, and community partners.
- Interest in local history and a commitment to professional museum standards and best practices.
- A sense of humor and the ability to approach challenges with creativity, perspective, and professionalism.

How to Apply

Please submit a **resume and cover letter** via email to:

John Harry, Executive Director
Portage County Historical Society
jharry@pchs.org

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Application deadline: January 30, 2026.