



# Scope of Collections & Collecting Plan

## **1. SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS & COLLECTING PLAN**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The collections of the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula are concentrated into three primary categories: the history of Missoula County and the City of Missoula, the military history of Fort Missoula, and the history of forest management and the timber products industry in Western Montana. Missoula County history is represented by a broad range of items from the County's first century, including: furniture, farm tools, goods from the Missoula Mercantile (once the largest department store chain west of St. Paul), a certain amount of Missoula business ephemera, a 1918 fire engine, and a fine textile collection (clothing, quilts, accessories, etc.). The Museum does not collect office equipment, per se. Furthermore, the Museum no longer accessions unidentified photographs and albums. Because of the excellent K. Ross Toole Archives at the University of Montana, we do not actively collect archival materials unless they are specifically related to the military history of Fort Missoula (1877-1947). We see no need to duplicate effort or money. Our three largest document collections are the 640+ WWII propaganda posters, the over 1,200 turn-of-the-century Missoula playbills, and a 117+ piece poster collection by internationally-renowned artist, Monte Dolack (Monte Dolack Collection). The Dolack Collection is important for its environmental and ecological references to the Northwest area. This donation/collection is augmented via an ongoing agreement between the Museum and Mr. Dolack, whereby the Museum receives bi-annual donations of the latest Dolack poster prints. The Museum also developed a small vacation-related collection of maps, brochures, and other ephemera for an exhibit.

The early history of Fort Missoula is represented by some original buildings and architectural fragments remaining of the old Fort, as well as a number of military items (uniforms, insignia, firearms, and written records relating directly to Fort Missoula's participation in the 1877 Nez Perce War, and the 25<sup>th</sup>. Infantry / 25<sup>th</sup>. Infantry Experimental Bicycle Corps (1880-1899)). The Museum also collects items pertaining to the Alien Detention Center (ADC, 1941-44). The Museum keeps a narrow collecting focus on clothing collections because of the cost of maintenance. Only a few uniforms per gender per war are collected, from the 1870's through WWII, and generally only those used by Missoulians and/or Montanans.

## 1.2 Scope of Collections

The permanent collections at the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula may be best apprehended through several broad collection categories, to wit:

### 1.2.A Forestry & Timber Production

The Museum also maintains a vast collection of objects pertaining to forestry and the forest products industry in Western Montana, such as: chainsaws, hard hats, tools, fire finders, historic structures (Sliderock Lookout), etc. These objects derive from many sources, including: the United States Forest Service (USFS), local lumber companies, railroad firms, and service workers.

### 1.2.B Fort Missoula Items (History of military occupation of historic Fort Missoula during its use as an active military post)

Items in this collection category are largely stored as flat files, to be found in the Photo Document Room (Main Museum- Building 322), and include: Maps, drawing plans, blueprints, archival documents, photographs, and some small, three-dimensional objects. The Museum also possesses other three-dimensional objects pertaining to the Fort's military history, including: Military uniforms, insignia and accessories, weapons, and items from the Bill Sharp Collection, as well as those originally belonging to Colonel Kobes. Furthermore, the Museum maintains a large volume of research files relating to the military history of the fort. This research may be broadly grouped, accordingly:

25<sup>th</sup> Infantry research (1888 – 1898);

Alien Detention Camp (ADC) research (1941 – 1944);

Branch Disciplinary Barracks (military prison research, 1945 – 1947);

Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) research, primarily by Bill Sharp;

General research re. Fort Missoula (1877-1947), inclusive of 2 original daybooks from the early occupation of the post (i.e. late 19<sup>th</sup>. C);

WWI research (1914 – 1918), inclusive of Colonel Kobes' papers;

WWII research (1939 – 1945).

This collection also contains a set of "land use" drawings completed by archaeological intern, Allen Burns, for the majority of the Museum's property (32 acres). The base map utilized for this project is a 1944 ('45?) blueprint, and the land use drawings illustrate as many buildings as were found/known at the time (1984), arranged in overlay by decade. These are stored as flat files in the Photo Document Room (Main Museum- Building 322). A major collecting goal for this particular category will be to complete similar land use/archaeological surveys for the remainder of the Alien Detention Camp (ADC) area. (note: the Fire Station / Guard House was actually built in 1938 (and is now used by the USFS), although the United States Army altered the façade to match the "New Fort," Spanish-Colonial architectural style of the remaining buildings constructed in the 19'teens).

### **1.2.C “House” Collections**

Sub-collections in this collecting category include domestic items which would comprise the furnishings and sundry items necessary to reproduce a period room of a “house,” accordingly: 1890’s / 1940’s Dining Room, 1900’s Bathroom, 1920’s – 1930’s Kitchen, 1930’s – 1940’s Bedroom, and a 1960’s Living Room. By utilizing different period rooms, all or a portion thereof could be used in an exhibit as a physical base to interpret the “words, thoughts and/or deeds of the story.” Since the Museum’s audiences typically find ‘flatwall’ exhibits insufficient, elements from these collections may be added to both in-house, and incoming, traveling flatwall exhibits to broaden their impact.

#### **1.2.C.1 1890’s / 1940’s Dining Room**

This sub-collection possesses the 1890’s china, as well as the china and glassware for the 1940’s timeframe. However, a primary collecting goal for this sub-collection involves the acquisition of the 1890’s silverware (plated is fine and cheaper), with settings for at least 6 people, glassware, and a pair of candlesticks.

#### **1.2.C.2 1900’s Bathroom**

The least complete of all such “house” sub-collections, the 1900’s Bathroom possesses only the original 1903 wood toilet from the Missoula Art Museum; a device that would have been found in a home of the same time as well. Primary collecting goals for this sub-collection involve the acquisition of the following: sink, mirror, bathtub, and accessories.

#### **1.2.C.3 1920’s – 1930’s Kitchen**

Although largely complete, a primary collecting goal for this sub-collection involves the acquisition of a long white porcelain sink with cloth skirt (plain color or pattern of that period).

#### **1.2.C.4 1930’s – 1940’s Bedroom**

As the “house” sub-collection that changes the least in families, this ‘period’ room is mostly done. That said, a primary collecting goal for this sub-collection involves the acquisition of vanity lampshades (either real or reproduction) in the Art Deco style.

#### **1.2.C.5 1960’s Living Room**

Among the largest of the “house” sub-collections, this ‘period’ room contains a 3-piece couch / chairs set which may displayed in multiple configurations (ideal for exhibits). Several wall items and knick-knacks round-out this time period, which was collected because the items were available, in good condition, usually free, and small enough to handle (1970’s furniture was often large, heavy, and would require more maintenance / people, etc.). Primary collecting goals for this sub-collection involve the acquisition of a “velvet Elvis” wall hanging, and new foam rubber interior for the couch / chairs set.

The foam needs to be replaced before it ruins the upholstery fabric, in addition to the fact that contact with the material ‘impresses’ the form upon the seats and/or backs leaving a permanent indentation.

**1.2.D Huff Collections** (Military dress and insignia)

Items in this collection category include approximately 59 framed lithographs (ca. 1905) by artists H.A. Ogden and Thomas Hunter. The lithographs feature individual subjects, although they primarily focus on U.S. Army uniforms and accessories from the mid-19<sup>th</sup>. through the early 20<sup>th</sup>. C.

**1.2.E Laundry Collection**

The Museum maintains a collection comprised of a wide variety of washing machines from the early 1800’s up through the 1940’s. Several types of wash boards and other related accessories round out this collection. Many of the items in this collection will require serious restoration.

**1.2.F Medical / Dental**

The Museum maintains an extensive medical / dental collection, including such items as: Dr. Evert’s examination table and other items (1920-40s), an older wooden exam table, a variety of medicine bottles and related containers (stored in a locked cabinet in the Photo Document Room (Main Museum- Building 322)), several physician’s bags and impedimenta, etc. Although the bulk of the dental collection derives from one donor (Dr. Bell), the remaining medical items originate from several area doctors. This is a rather large, and well-represented collection.

**1.2.G Missoula Businesses**

Sub-collections in this collecting category involve a sampling of artifacts, photographs / archival documents, and business ephemera from specific businesses significant to the history of the City of Missoula, and general professions vital to the life and culture of citizens of Missoula County.

**1.2.G.1 Missoula Mercantile (Bon Marche, Macy’s)**

This sub-collection contains a host of business ephemera from the era of the Missoula Mercantile, such as: bags, button hooks, boxes, etc. The collection also contains “THE BON MARCHE” signage, and small three-dimensional items pertaining to that iteration of the store. The collection further features a range of photographs: early images of the Missoula Mercantile, views of The Bon Marche (ca. 1989), and some current shots of the Macy’s façade. Primary collecting goals for this sub-collection involve the acquisition of three-dimensional Missoula Mercantile and later Bon Marche items from the new Macy’s store manager, Brian Murray.

### **1.2.G.2 Blacksmith's Shop**

Virtually complete, this sub-collection contains the various implements required for the operation of a blacksmith's shop, such as: hammer, anvil, tongs, etc.

### **1.2.G.3 Barber / Beauty Shop**

These two sub-collections contain, respectively: a men's and child's chairs, a barber pole (glass is cracked and must be handled with great care), and two permanent wave machines (only one would normally have been acquired, however the second came with an important story re. the local fair that needed to be preserved). Primary collecting goals for these sub-collections involve the acquisition of a variety of impedimenta relating to the haircare industry.

### **1.2.G.4 Cabinetmaker / Carpenter's Workshop**

Although largely complete, this particular sub-collection possesses a number of duplicate items (specifically planes), which will require inventory, identification, and exchange of some surplus items with other museums to better enhance the collection).

### **1.2.G.5 Telephone Equipment**

This sub-collection contains a variety of telephone equipment from various companies operating in the Western Montana region, notably Mountain Bell and Independent Telephone, among others.

### **1.2.G.6 Railroad**

Items in this sub-collection pertain to the operation of railroads in Western Montana (particularly the Northern Pacific Railroad), and the role they played in the history of Missoula City / County. A small to medium size collection, the railroad items are mostly works-on-paper (to be found in the Photo Document Room (Main Museum- Building 322)), and consist of no small volume of railroad timetables.

### **1.2.H Missoula County High School / Golden 'M' Alumni Collection** (Missoula County High School, 1905 – 1965, memorabilia)

A collection still in the process of being assembled, items in this category include three-dimensional objects and works-on-paper pertaining to the history of Missoula County High School (1905 – 1965). The Museum already possesses most of the trophies, yearbooks, and school newspapers, although other "school or related" objects round out the collection. On an annual basis, either the Curator of Collections or the Collections Assistant attends the Golden 'M' Alumni luncheon / dinner, with a small selection of items from the collections. Furthermore, the Museum completes a short-term exhibit for the Alumni each summer (mid-July through late-September) in the Orientation Gallery, timed to coincide with the 50-year reunion. This annual exhibit is scheduled around displays of the Museum's Recent Acquisitions, which occur in the same space. This collection is of great

importance to the Museum, based upon the impact that Missoula County High School (MCHS) had as a part of the social fabric of Missoula City / County. A primary collecting goal for this category involves acquiring “Bitter Root” yearbooks for those years which the Museum does not already possess.

**1.2.I Monte Dolack Posters** (Environmental issues of Montana and the Inland Northwest during the latter 20<sup>th</sup> Century)

The Museum maintains some 117 posters in this collection, initially donated in 2007. Via an agreement with the artist, Mr. Dolack will be donating a print of each new poster to the Museum. Upon notification through the artist’s mailing list, a copy of each new poster is made and placed on file. Approximately two times per year, the Curator of Collections then arranges a meeting with the artist to request our ‘prints’. Separate Deeds of Gift are drawn up for each such accession and a copy of the original Letter of Agreement is attached to the accession file. In addition to documenting the environmental issues prescient to Western Montana and cataloguing the work of a prolific local artist, the Museum also aspires to find a donor to purchase (for the purposes of donation to the Museum’s permanent collections) Mr. Dolack’s primary source materials (i.e. drawings, sketches, journals, etc.).

**1.2.J Textile**

The Museum maintains a very large textile collection, inclusive of: Quilts, dresses, hats, aprons, lace, gloves, stockings, socks, uniforms (military, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Red Cross, Forest Service (USFS)), curtains, rugs, tablecloths, etc. This collection is extensive and very well represented, although a primary collecting goal for this category will be to improve our collections of “useful” quilts.

**1.2.K Theatre Playbills of Missoula City** (Early 20<sup>th</sup> C Missoula theatre)

The Museum maintains a large collection of early 20<sup>th</sup>. C Missoula City theatre playbills, ranging from verbal to visual, and numbering approximately 1,200 individual items. A principal portion of this collection was given by a single donor (Huff), although the entire collection boasts multiple donors. A book containing copies of these playbills was assembled for donation to the University of Montana (Mansfield Archives) to complement their similar collections, and the Museum retained an additional copy in the Research Files.

**1.2.L WWII Propaganda Posters** (Produced for the civilian home-front)

The Museum possesses approximately 640+ WWII propaganda posters, produced to inspire and mobilize civilian support during the Second World War. A large selection of duplicate posters have been culled from the permanent collection, and are to be used to meet our collections goals by improving our holdings via exchange. One such goal involves acquiring smaller versions of two rare ‘Freedom’ posters by artist Norman Rockwell. The Museum, in fact, possesses all four posters in the Rockwell ‘Freedom’ set, although two of them are impractically large for the purposes of exhibition.

### **1.3 Collecting Plan**

The Museum collects the material culture of the people of Missoula County and its environs, and preserves it for the benefit of present and future generations. We look for objects, ordinary and extraordinary, whose stories and meanings are rich and complex, have inherent worth, both reflect and challenge the conventional wisdom, and invite us to look deeper or broader. These objects and their documented contexts illuminate and interpret the larger themes of our history. Our collections form the foundation for research, scholarship, exhibition, public programs, and outreach.

#### **1.3.A General Statements**

**1.3.A.1** The role of objects is to serve as a form of evidence of the past, along with documents and visual records.

**1.3.A.2** Objects have many meanings, and, over time, knowledge about the objects and the interpretations of the past will change.

**1.3.A.3** In the future, as in the past, the Museum's collecting will be guided simultaneously by current themes for exhibitions and public programs and by the larger goal of a comprehensive historic collection. Long-range collecting and current themes may not always be in accord (nor need be).

#### **1.3.B Intellectual Principles for Future Collecting**

**1.3.B.1** The Museum's collections should reflect the breadth, depth, and complexity of the experiences of the people of Missoula County. The Museum actively seeks items to illuminate under-represented stories and groups.

**1.3.B.2** Objects will be chosen that have their own stories, and which make clear larger stories (particularly those of a local and regional character).

**1.3.B.3** Museum staff will continue to re-examine collections in response to new scholarship and changing interpretations.

**1.3.B.4** Museum staff consider it of the utmost importance that we strive to conserve and preserve our objects to the best of our abilities and resources. However, as a smaller museum, our staff and financial resources are limited. As such, careful consideration shall be given towards objects that may stretch these resources. Objects that require extreme conservation, or are in a state of disrepair or neglect, will be weighed very carefully prior to acquisition. Only those objects whose

benefits to our mission (such as those of great cultural, artistic, or historical significance) outweigh the burden of their care, shall be considered for acquisition.

**1.3.B.5** In acquiring objects, Museum staff will pay as much attention to intellectual matters (relevance, context, significance, provenance) as to procedures (shipping, registration, etc.).

**1.3.B.6** Only objects that are deemed to be authentic shall be accessioned into the Museum's permanent collections. Reproductions, duplicates, or forgeries will be added to the Educational or Exhibit Prop Collections, or will not be accepted at all.

**1.3.B.7** In terms of cataloging, the intellectual content will be documented in an accessible manner. Research tools and documentary techniques (oral / video history, documents, photography, etc.) will be employed to provide context for the Museum's acquisitions.

**1.3.B.8** During the acquisition process, the Museum shall endeavor to garner as much supporting documentation as possible for the objects being considered. In order to support our mission, our goal is to learn the provenance, history, anecdotes, biographies, and any other factual (or mythical) information relating to our artifacts. The richer the documentation for an artifact, the more relevant it becomes to our collecting priorities.

**1.3.B.9** The Museum will adhere to both the letter and the spirit of accepted ethical standards and principles adopted by museum and other relevant professional organizations.

**1.3.B.10** With the approach of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WWII (2011) and the fact that the Museum has acquired the Post Headquarters building (Building T1) of that period for the Alien Detention Camp (ADC), the Museum is looking forward to actively seeking any and all items associated with that episode of Missoula County's history. Fort Missoula, as one of only six Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) processing camps ever utilized, is unique in that it retains its fundamental historic integrity. The bulk of its buildings are still standing, whereas the majority of the other camps (both INS and 'relocation' camps) were demolished; leaving only a few foundations. The Museum is actively seeking to preserve the experiences of local people who remember that time here. Also to that effect, the Museum owns a collection of over 640 WWII propaganda posters (one of the largest outside of the National Archives), among other items. This is one of 2 time periods principally important to Historic Fort Missoula. Museum staff are applying for

National Historic Landmark status to enhance the Fort Missoula National Historic District Designation.

**1.3.B.11** Beginning in 2009, Museum staff will seek to develop the Homestead Cabin for the interpretation of living history between 1915 and 1920, focusing on family life.

### **1.3.C** Thematic Statement

The collections at the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula document the social, cultural, political, religious, military, medical, and technological history (as well as the daily lives) of people in Missoula County and its environs. These collections illuminate broad themes in our history, to wit:

#### **1.3.C.1** Cultural Landscape

The Museum will strive to express the development and expression of cultural histories dealing with the invention of and changes in the forms and media of cultural expression, shaped by region, community, class, gender, religion, ethnicity, race and work. This collecting theme is concerned with how Americans create, learn, and express their cultural literacy, and more specifically their associations with Missoula County.

#### **1.3.C.2** Daily Life

The domestic and business environments and the intersection and tensions between public and private life will be explored by the Museum. The collections examine the changing notions of home, family and women, and how individuals have used the domestic and business spheres to reinforce or challenge accepted ideas of family, gender roles, community, age, religion, and the division of labor.

#### **1.3.C.3** Ethnicity

The collections of the Museum also seek to understand and evaluate the important questions of who are we, where are we from and why, how we got here, where we live and why, and how we interact with one another. Key concepts to this collecting theme are diversity and complexity of the American people, the shaping and reshaping of communities over time, and the changing roles of communities in American life. Also of interest are the manner in which Americans identify themselves as members of various groups, and how the very concept of “peopling America” is informed by issues of race, gender, class, ethnicity national origin, and religious affiliation. Within this vision, the actions and interactions of Native Americans, and other minority-based histories will be explored in both public and private life by the Museum.

#### **1.3.C.4** Environment

A strong focus of the Museum’s collections explores the relationship between people and the natural environment, our cultural responses to the

natural world, how our history and lives have been shaped by the geography, topography, climate, and natural resources of the region, and how we have shaped and reshaped places and spaces (with a particular emphasis upon the role of fire on public lands, since Montana has a high percentage of public lands). Within this collecting theme, the actions and interactions of Native Americans and other minority-based histories with the natural environment will be explored in both public and private spheres.

#### **1.3.D Collecting Priorities**

The following priority levels shall be utilized by responsible staff (principally the Curator of Collections) in determining what collections shall be actively sought, acquired, and accessioned for the purposes of research, exhibition, and preservation. At all times they are to be informed and guided by the overall needs of the collections, the availability of similar materials via bequest, exchange or purchase, the significance of potential acquisitions to the mission-driven objectives of the institution, the legal and ethical guidelines of the museum profession, and the general statements, intellectual principles, and collecting themes outlined in Sections 2.3.A – 2.3.C above.

**1.3.D.1** As a matter of first priority, the Museum shall endeavor to collect items of virtually all material types pertaining to those collections categories outlined above in Sections 2.2.A – 2.2.L. Within these categories, paramount importance shall be placed upon items related to the Alien Detention Camp (ADC) and other eras of Fort Missoula’s military history.

**1.3.D.2** Of secondary priority to the collecting activities of the Museum shall be the acquisition of items pertaining either directly or indirectly to the history of Missoula County, the City of Missoula, and the forest products industry in Western Montana.

**1.3.D.3** Of tertiary priority to the collecting activities of the Museum shall be the acquisition of items which serve to emphasize the broader regional or national themes and stories which those items embody.

#### **1.3.E Recommendations For Future Collecting Activities**

**1.3.E.1** The Museum will endeavor to collect those items which will round-out the collections categories outlined above in Sections 2.2.A – 2.2.L, namely: land use / archaeological surveys for the ADC Camp (specifically) and for the remaining Fort grounds (generally), furnishings and accessories to complete the Museum’s “house” and its associated ‘period’ rooms, items relating to the Missoula Mercantile store, objects and impedimenta to complete the barber and beauty shops, items obtained via exchange from the duplicates of the cabinetmaker / carpenter’s shop, “Bitter Root” yearbooks encompassing those years of Missoula County

High School (MCHS) not already represented in the collections, the latest editions of Monte Dolack poster prints, and two smaller versions of the rare 'Freedom' WWII propaganda posters by artist Norman Rockwell, obtained via exchange from the duplicates of the Museum's extensive WWII poster collection.

**1.3.E.2** The Museum will also seek to acquire items that provide a much clearer representation of the minorities that live (and continue to live) in Missoula County, such as Native groups like the Salish and H'mong (non-NAGPRA items), as well as the black community (and associated AME Church) displaced by the loss of the lumber mills and related industries, service in WWII, and relocation to nearby urban centers, i.e. Seattle, in search of employment.

**1.3.E.3** Finally, the Museum shall seek to acquire some three-dimensional objects and related documentary material from the Missoula business icon Stoverud's Jewelry, which closed in December 2008 after 65 years in operation (opened in 1945 on Higgins Avenue).