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Illinois State Museum
1011 E. Ash Street
Springfield, IL 62703

Dear Hiring Committee,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic interest in the Museum Technician II (Registrar for Sciences) position at the Illinois State Museum. As a lifelong Illinois resident and professional historian with a Ph.D. in History from the University of Missouri, I bring over a decade of experience in historical research, museum collections management, and public history. My academic training is complemented by graduate-level certifications in Museum Studies and Geographic Information Sciences, alongside practical experience in object handling, digital systems, and interpretive programming in both government and nonprofit cultural institutions.

For three years, I worked in a historic house museum setting, managing and preserving collections of decorative arts, household objects, and regional artifacts. During this time, I developed a nuanced understanding of registration, accessioning, and environmental monitoring protocols. My tenure at the National Archives and Records Administration further deepened my experience with archival preservation and records compliance, where I contributed to the physical stabilization and digitization of federal records and media.

As a project lead for Madison Historical, a regional digital archive, I developed and implemented workflows for the digitization and metadata description of over 70 oral histories and thousands of mixed media items, including photographs, pamphlets, and architectural records. I trained undergraduate and graduate students in archival best practices, digitization protocols, and the use of digital asset management systems. As part of that and other projects I have worked extensively with PastPerfect, Omeka, and Archiver and I am confident in adapting to other collections databases, including Access-based systems.

I currently serve on my city's Historic Preservation Commission nominating and registering historic landmarks and sites, and since 2016 have regularly advised small museums in Madison County, supporting records management, registration processes, and object care. This experience has not only expanded my administrative skill set but has also deepened my knowledge of Illinois' cultural and material history, a vital asset to the Illinois State Museum's mission. I've contributed to National Register nominations and have participated in exhibit development and installation. My interdisciplinary training, across environmental, geologic, and

Indigenous histories further enriches my ability to contribute to scientific and anthropological interpretation.

In addition to my collections experience, I have developed and delivered educational programming for a wide range of audiences. While leading community outreach for Madison Historical and local preservation initiatives, I facilitated workshops for K–12 students, historical societies, and lifelong learners, connecting material culture and digital archives to Illinois's environmental and social histories.

My experience creating content for both in-gallery and virtual spaces has helped me refine messaging that is engaging, accessible, and grounded in scholarly research. This outreach reflects my belief that museum work is not just about preservation, but about making collections meaningful to communities. I also bring a strong track record of working across departments and disciplines, an approach I believe is essential in collections stewardship. At the University of Missouri and McKendree University, I collaborated with educators, archivists, and community partners while teaching geography and history.

As a museum studies professional, whether coordinating with educators to align collections with curriculum or supporting exhibit teams through object research and preparation, I understand the important role registrars serve, as the operational backbone that enables both scholarly inquiry and public engagement. I would be excited to continue this collaborative work as part of the Illinois State Museum's dynamic team.

I am a detail-oriented, collaborative, and highly organized professional who takes pride in balancing hands-on collections care with digital documentation and public access initiatives. I am excited by the opportunity to contribute to the Illinois State Museum's mission of promoting stewardship and lifelong learning through collections-based work. I would welcome the chance to bring my technical experience, passion for Illinois history, and commitment to inclusive public engagement to your team.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to the possibility of contributing to your collections and research operations.

Sincerely,
Shannan Catherine Mason, Ph.D.