



## **Collections Donation Guide**

John James Audubon State Park Museum

Thank you for considering the donation of an item to the John James Audubon State Park Museum in Henderson, Kentucky. As home to one of the largest collections of materials from American artist, ornithologist, and naturalist, John James Audubon, the Museum reflects continuing appreciation for Audubon's tremendous influence on ornithology and natural history. This collection is comprised of over 1,000 objects that document the lives and work of Audubon and his family, including their 1810-1819 residency in Henderson. The Museum also houses archival materials related to the history of John James Audubon State Park. Since 1938, most of these items have been donations from individuals, families, and organizations. With support from the Friends of Audubon, the Museum preserves donated items to be used for research, interpretation, publication, and as artifacts in exhibits and educational programs.

If you are interested in contributing an item to the Museum, please read this **Guide** first and then complete the attached **Potential Donation Information Form**. Send a copy of the form to:

Heidi Taylor-Caudill, Museum Curator  
John James Audubon State Park  
PO Box 576, Henderson, KY 42419  
or via email: [heidi.taylorcaudill@ky.gov](mailto:heidi.taylorcaudill@ky.gov)

For more information, please contact the Curator by phone at (270) 826-2247 ext. 233 or by email at [heidi.taylorcaudill@ky.gov](mailto:heidi.taylorcaudill@ky.gov).

**Please note:** While the Museum does not accept unsolicited donations through the mail or in person, we are happy to work with you to schedule time to evaluate your potential donation. Please send an email or letter to the Curator along with the **Potential Donation Information Form** and photographs of the item. Provide as much information about your item as possible. Once your information has been reviewed, the Curator will follow up with you. If needed, she will schedule an appointment to talk with you and learn more about your item. Not everything will be accepted.

\*\*\*\*



## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the John James Audubon State Park Museum is to preserve and exhibit the art and related artifacts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century artist-naturalist John James Audubon who changed man's perception of the natural world. This museum, owned by the citizens of the Commonwealth, will make available for public view the art of Audubon for purposes of appreciation and education through various types of exhibits and programs.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What types of items does the Museum collect?**

All items offered for donation to the Museum must be approved by our Collections Committee, which evaluates each item for its fit within the scope of our mission and whether it will make a potentially significant contribution to the existing collection. Generally, we collect items that directly relate to the lives and work of John James Audubon and his family as well as materials that chronicle the history of John James Audubon State Park. The formats of these items include, but are not limited to, photographs, manuscripts, prints and drawings, paintings, newspaper clippings, books, ephemera, and artifacts.

### **What can't the Museum accept everything? Why wasn't my item accepted?**

Accepting an item as a donation means that the Museum accrues the cost and responsibility for cataloging, storing, exhibiting, preserving, and conserving that object. The Museum's resources are extremely limited and so we have to be careful about accepting donations. When assessing the offer of an item, we think about the item's condition, evaluate how it would fit into our existing collection, determine whether we have adequate space to house and exhibit it, judge whether it fits with our mission, and take into account many other considerations.

### **So, I think I have an item the Museum would be interested in...**

Wonderful! Please complete the Potential Donation Information Form (attached) and mail or email it to the Curator. Provide as much information as you can about your item, including photographs of it. After reviewing this document, the Curator will follow up with you to let you know if we are interested in taking a closer look at the item.



### **Why can't I send or bring my item to the Museum now?**

Please do not mail or drop off items to the Museum without the express permission of the Curator. Unsolicited items are not our responsibility and we do not have the time to find a different home for them. We will contact you to arrange for the item to be returned to you at your expense. If we cannot get in touch with you, we may need to dispose of the item.

### **What happens after I submit the Potential Donation Information Form?**

After reviewing your form, the Curator will follow up with you. She will let you know if we are interested in taking a closer look at your item, and she may ask for more information and/or schedule an appointment with you to bring the item to the museum. Once you have brought your item to the museum, the Curator will talk with you and examine the item. She may decide to take the item into Temporary Custody pending formal acceptance by the Collections Committee.

The Curator will then ask you to sign a Temporary Custody Receipt. This receipt outlines the terms of leaving the item in the temporary custody of the Museum, including your contact information, a description of the item, and what you would like the Museum to do with the item if it is not accepted for the collection.

The Collections Committee will make the final decision as to whether or not to acquire your item for the collection. After the Committee evaluates the item and makes its decision, the Curator will contact you to let you know the outcome of the review. If the Committee decides not to accept the item, the Curator will follow the instructions you provided on the Temporary Custody Receipt to either return it to you or dispose of it. If the Committee accepts the item, you will receive a letter of acceptance plus two copies of a Deed of Gift transferring ownership of the item to the Museum. Both copies will be signed by the Curator; you will also need to sign each document. One copy is for your records and the second copy must be returned to the Curator for our records.

Once the Deed of Gift is complete, the item will be officially accessioned into the collection.

### **What is Temporary Custody?**

Potential donations to the Museum are first placed into Temporary Custody, a situation where the Museum provides protective care of an item until the Collections Committee considers whether to accept it into the collection. The decision to place an item into temporary custody may be made by the Curator after reviewing the



Potential Donation Information Form, talking with the potential donor, and examining the item. Potential donors sign and submit a Temporary Custody Receipt when they leave or send their item to the Museum.

**Please note:** placing an item in the temporary custody does not represent a transfer of the item's legal ownership to the Museum. That step is taken when the donor signs a Deed of Gift.

### **What is a Deed of Gift?**

A Deed of Gift is a formal and legal agreement between the donor and the Museum which transfers legal ownership and physical custody of the donated item to the Museum. It is considered irrevocable.

### **What happens to my item after the donation is complete?**

Once you sign a Deed of Gift, you transfer ownership of your item to the Museum and guarantee that the item was legally yours to donate. After completing the donation, we assign an identification number to the item, catalog it, and preserve it in a secure, climate-controlled space.

### **When will you display my donation?**

The Museum actively collects items for exhibition, research, and educational purposes far into the future. In most cases, we do not immediately display a donation. We cannot guarantee that your donated item will be displayed in the museum at any point. However, we do catalog and store all donations according to established museum and archival standards, and make them accessible to researchers by appointment.

### **Are donors recognized for their contribution?**

Whenever we display items in the museum, the names of donors are made public through the exhibit label. You may tell us how you would like your name to be listed, but cannot place special conditions on how we display or label the donation. We also list the name of the donor when using the item in lectures, presentations, or publications.



**If I donate an item to the Museum, will it be returned to me at my request?**

No. Items that have been formally accessioned into the collection cannot be returned to the donor or their descendants. Every donor signs a Deed of Gift which legally transfers ownership of the item – as well as all rights and interests – to the Museum.

**I want to donate my item, but with certain restrictions on how it will be used.**

The Museum does not accept donations with restrictions. Once the donation is complete, we carefully preserve the item so that it can be made available in the future for different purposes, such as exhibition, research, and education.

**Can I just loan my item to the Museum?**

The Museum only borrows items for special exhibits. We do not accept permanent, long-term loans.

**Can the Museum tell me how much my item is worth?**

No, we do not offer appraisals since that could be considered a conflict of interest. We recommend contacting a professional appraiser if you would like your item valued. To find a licensed appraiser, check with these organizations:

- American Society of Appraisers [www.appraisers.org](http://www.appraisers.org)
- Appraisers Association of America [www.appraisersassociation.org](http://www.appraisersassociation.org)
- International Society of Appraisers [www.isa-appraisers.org](http://www.isa-appraisers.org)

**Can I use my donation as a tax deduction?**

We recommend that you consult with an accountant, attorney, and/or the IRS. You may also want to look at Internal Revenue Service Publication No. 526, *Charitable Contributions*, and Publication No. 561, *Determining the Value of Donated Property*, both available at [www.irs.gov/publications](http://www.irs.gov/publications).

**Questions?**

If you have any further questions about donations, please contact the Curator, Heidi Taylor-Caudill, at (270) 826-2247 ext. 233 or [heidi.taylorcaudill@ky.gov](mailto:heidi.taylorcaudill@ky.gov).



## **Potential Donation Information Form**

Please return completed form to:  
Heidi Taylor-Caudill, John James Audubon State Park,  
PO Box 576, Henderson, KY 42419  
or via email: [heidi.taylorcaudill@ky.gov](mailto:heidi.taylorcaudill@ky.gov)

Thank you for your interest in donating items for the museum collection. As a first step, please fill out the form below, attach photographs of the items, and return to the Curator by email or mail.

Once the form is received and reviewed, you will be contacted by the Curator to discuss your potential donation. If you have questions about the process, please see our Collections Donation Guide or email the Curator at: [heidi.taylorcaudill@ky.gov](mailto:heidi.taylorcaudill@ky.gov).

### **Potential Donor Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First M.I.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address Apartment/Unit #

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State ZIP Code

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### **About Your Items**

How many items do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Description of Items**

Please include as many details as possible.



**History**

Please provide details on how the items were collected, when, and by whom. Is there anything you would like us to know about these items?

**Dimensions of Items**

Please provide size information.

**Condition of Items**

Please describe the items' overall condition, any obvious damage, etc.

**Images of Your Items**

Please remember to include photographs of your item(s) with your submission.

\*\*\*\*

Contact the Curator if you have further questions.