



Smithsonian

Robert Frederick Smith Summer 2023 Internships

Offsite at Museum of the Grand Prairie

ORAL HISTORY (1 POSITION)

Museum of the Grand Prairie – Mahomet, Illinois

The Museum of the Grand Prairie, an organization within the Champaign County Forest Preserve District, is located approximately 11 miles northwest of Champaign-Urbana, home of the University of Illinois. The museum is a rural institution with a mission to collect, preserve and interpret the cultural and natural history of Champaign County and East Central Illinois for all generations.

Position Description:

The Museum of the Grand Prairie (MGP) is home to the Doris K. Wylie Hoskins Archive for Cultural Diversity. The archive contains a large body of materials concentrating on the African American experience in Champaign County and East Central Illinois. The archival materials extend from 1861 to the present with the majority ranging from 1930 to 2000. The collection consists of many different types of materials, including scrapbooks, photographs, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, handwritten notes, published and unpublished works, and oral history recordings.

The intern will contribute to preserving essential history by cataloging, indexing, excerpting, and promoting not less than 30 previously digitized oral history interviews. These interviews represent the miscellaneous oral history component of the Hoskins Archive, an underutilized and largely inaccessible resource in preserving and sharing the legacy of the local African American community. This work also provides the intern with experience processing older collections and sharing those collections with the community.

Primary Intern Duties:

- Process and catalog not less than 30 oral history interviews born on various media with all surrogate CD and digitized copies
- Implement standard museum industry software and established museum procedures for collections processing, cataloging, and data entry
- Index oral histories using project specific criteria and established collections procedures.
- Create indexed log of subjects found in each interview
- Develop museum social media content and public programming to promote the oral history collection
- Develop a summary of the internship project, key takeaways, and the general intern experience to present in a public program and/or online exhibit

Learning Outcomes:

- Experience and understand the importance of proper data management and preservation of oral history interviews after collection
- Appreciate the amount of work and attention to detail required to effectively manage oral history interviews

- Grasp the importance of interview content accessibility, and strategies to facilitate access, including indexing and digitization
- Build an understanding of how to address an oral history collection as found in a less than ideal state
- Appreciate the importance of actively sharing the process and product of oral history work with the public through social media, exhibition, and programming
- Contribute to day-to-day operations of an AAM accredited museum

Prerequisites:

- Interest in African American history and culture
- Ability to learn new technical and digital skills
- Valid U.S. driver's license

Transportation:

- MGP is in a rural location outside Champaign-Urbana, IL and is not accessible by public transportation
- Additional funding may be available to offset rental car expenses if needed
- Neither NMAAHC nor MGP can arrange or fund personal travel expenses directly

Work Environment: The successful intern will learn to work and effectively communicate in the museum environment. The successful intern will possess above average communication skills, enabling them to comfortably and professionally interact with staff, volunteers, and the public both in passing and during programming. The successful intern will possess excellent teamwork abilities; empathy towards others will minimize friction in often small, busy workspace. The intern will experience a personable work environment that recognizes their humanity and respects their needs.

Physical Demands: This internship requires the regular use of a computer, telephone, and other office equipment. This internship also requires that the intern be able to speak and hear in order to effectively communicate with various internal and external constituents. The visual acuity to review, prepare, and analyze information is required. While performing the duties of this internship, the intern must be able to remain in a stationary position for prolonged periods of time; the intern may regularly handle, grasp, or feel objects; reach, push, or pull to reposition items and may occasionally lift and transport up to 20 lbs. The physical demands described in this section are representative of those an employee must meet to successfully perform the essential duties of this internship. Reasonable accommodations may be made, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential duties.

Tentative Schedule: Anticipated start date of May 15, 2023; Monday-Friday 8:30am – 5pm

COVID-19 Vaccine Requirements: Vaccination for Covid-19 is strongly recommended, but not required

Eligibility: Must be authorized to work in the United States

EEO Statement: The Champaign County Forest Preserve District is an Equal Opportunity Employer and as such does not discriminate in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, genetic information, age, parental status, military service, or any other non-merit factor.