



The Robert Frederick Smith Fund

Robert Frederick Smith Summer 2020 Internships

Offsite at Chicago History Museum

PROCESSING AND DIGITIZATION (1 POSITION)

Chicago History Museum – Chicago, Illinois

Chicago History Museum's mission – to share Chicago's stories, serving as a hub of scholarship and learning, inspiration, and civic engagement—is the foundation of the Museum's programs and events, exhibitions, educational initiatives, publications, and collecting activities that touch the lives of all Chicagoans and help them make meaningful and personal connections to history.

In spring of 1970, the Alliance to End Repression, later known for its efforts to end surveillance on political dissidents by the Chicago Police Department, created a Bail Task Force, which was later renamed the Cook County Special Bail Project (CCSBP). The Project worked to coordinate court-watching and pretrial interviewing efforts. The information collected during court-watching provided evidence of a racial disparity in both bail setting and sentencing and they worked to draw attention to the fact that most people before the criminal court did not have access to crucial social support networks and systems and therefore did not actually need high bonds to ensure that they would come to court. CCSBP succeeded in increasing the number of people released on recognizance in Cook County while organizing to bail people out of jail. Combined with community activism, court-watching efforts also resulted in such as establishing a weekend court and getting rid of the separate courts for women. The CCSBP records consist of 56.25 linear feet of project reports, initial arrest forms, general office files, correspondence, speeches, transcripts of hearings, annual reports, court complaint forms, and daily court observers reports, (1971-1978).

Position Description: This internship offers the opportunity to improve access to and visibility of an important social justice collection that includes a significant African American history component by processing the Cook County Special Bail Project records and creating a set of digital products related to the collection. As part of their research for creating the digital products, the intern will work with related collections such as the Alliance to End Repression records, the Hans Mattick papers on his sociological research into the correctional system, and others. The intern will work as an integral part of the archives team not just to process the collection, but also to learn about and be involved in how collections are acquired, processed, and documented by the Museum. In addition to archives staff, interns will collaborate with other departments to process, provide access to, and publicize the collection. Through the processing and digital curation aspects of this project, they will develop their appraisal skills and judgment and contribute to the Museum's larger goal of telling Chicago's stories through diverse and inclusive collections.

Sample of Intern Duties:

- Process visual materials collection
- Survey, assess, and create a processing plan for the collection
- Arrange and rehouse collection
- Finalize finding aids and catalog records
- Select items for digitization and create metadata

- Write blog posts
- Encode manuscript finding aid
- Create and complete either a Google Arts and Culture, CONTENTDM, or the Digital Chicago site based on the Cook County Special Bail project and related prison and legal system reform collections
- Encode finding aids into EAD format

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand basics of assessing, arranging, and describing collections in keeping with archival best practices
- Increased analytical, writing, research, and digital curation skills
- Improved communication, collaboration, and other professional skills
- Know how to properly apply EAD (a common job requirement in archives) to archival finding aids, and how to troubleshoot encoding and web publishing issues
- Understand how to use an XML-based structured data language in a text editor tool, a skill that translates to other libraries and archives as well as to jobs looking for technology skills
- Project management skills, including setting and meeting goals
- Understand how to implement proper archival housing and preservation techniques
- Know how to consult and understand MARC records, collection assessment reports, and other common custodial documentation
- Understanding of copyright law in a museum setting
- Expertise in identifying and selecting good candidates for digitization
- Understand metadata standards and best practices
- Know how to write effectively for a public audience
- Technical expertise with the Google interface and knowledge of best practices and principles for online exhibits through tasks that comprise the creation of the Google suite

Time Frame (flexible): Start date after May 18, 2020

Work Culture: The Chicago History Museum is a highly collaborative organization and encourages staff and interns to contribute to and promote a positive culture by demonstrating the following values in their interactions with others and through the products developed and services delivered: discovery, creativity, empathy, authenticity, integrity, service, and collaboration. Successful candidates will be communicative, engaged, embrace uncertainty, be willing to ask questions, and have an aptitude for exploring and developing with their technological skills.

Prerequisites:

- Demonstrated interest in African American history and culture
- Commitment to the mission, values, and programs of the Chicago History Museum
- Interest in archives and making archival materials accessible to others
- Able to lift up to 50 lbs
- Detail-oriented with strong analytical and problem-solving skills
- Able work independently and as part of a team
- Preferred: strong research and organizational skills
- Preferred: an aptitude for exploring and developing technological skills

Eligibility: Must be a United States citizen. Applicants must agree to submit to a background screening.