



The Robert Frederick Smith Fund

## Robert Frederick Smith Summer 2019 Internships

### Offsite at Maine Historical Society

#### **TRANSCRIPTION AND METADATA (1 POSITION)** **Maine Historical Society – Portland, Maine**

The Maine Historical Society preserves the heritage and history of Maine: the stories of Maine people, the traditions of Maine communities, and the record of Maine's place in a changing world. Because an understanding of the past is vital to a healthy and progressive society, we collect, care for, and exhibit historical treasures; facilitate research into family, local, state, and national history; provide education programs that make history meaningful, accessible and enjoyable; and empower others to preserve and interpret the history of their communities and our state.

MHS is participating in the Congregational Library's (Boston) Hidden History Project, aimed at digitizing unpublished Congregational church records from around New England. The Abyssinian Church and Meeting House is one of the oldest standing African-American congregational meetinghouses in the United States. The records, ca. 1828-1876, represent a vibrant 19th Cent. African-American community in Portland, ME, where the Abyssinian served as a spiritual, cultural and educational center for the local population, Abolitionist movements, and a school for area children.

**Position Description:** A digital history internship, the position is aimed at providing full-text access to the significant Abyssinian Meetinghouse records. The selected intern will work to transcribe nearly 400 pages of hand-written, 19<sup>th</sup> Century manuscript content; build transcription presentation PDFs (using Adobe InDesign) and build metadata to ensure discoverability. The combination of working with original materials and creating online accessibility provides an opportunity to gain traditional archival skills (collections handling, and transcription) with technical components (building metadata, digital file management and born-digital preservation standards). The finished product will appear online through the Congregational Library's Hidden Histories Project (<http://congregationallibrary.org/nehh/main>) and the Maine Memory Network (<https://mainememory.net>).

#### **Sample of Intern Duties:**

- Review digital files and evaluate compiled materials for quality control
- Transcribe manuscript content according to existing MHS transcription guidelines
- Build supporting metadata, such as rights statements, file naming, subject headings, dates, and applicable file management to ensure long term preservation
- Coordinate with staff and fellow interns to conduct research
- Coordinate with staff to interpret and highlight important content within the manuscripts
- Assist in building the online presentation through web-based cataloguing templates
- Explore opportunities to promote the collection through social media posts, blogs, MHS newsletter, or other applicable outlets

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Increased skills surrounding historic transcription, e.g. reading 19<sup>th</sup> Century handwriting
- Digital file management and preservation skills
- Implementing online discovery tools and access points for digital history platforms
- Project management skills
- Prioritization skills and effective management of workflow
- Interpretation skills
- Interdepartmental communications
- Establish or enhance working knowledge of Adobe InDesign
- Establish or enhance working knowledge of Dublin Core metadata standards

**Time Frame (flexible):** Early-mid June through early-mid August. Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. A flexible schedule, within these parameters, is available, as long as internship requirements are met.

**Work Culture:** Interns within the Brown Library at Maine Historical Society enjoy a collaborative, yet independent work environment, surrounded by both seasoned professionals, and those new to the field. Our staff hails from varied backgrounds, including Library Science, History, Museum Studies, IT, the Humanities, and Social Sciences. MHS supports a large, active, and diverse volunteer community, and values all level of participation in preserving Maine history. The Maine Memory Network, by definition, is a consortium and relies on internal MHS staff, fellow cultural institutions, and individuals in our community. We strive to meet best-practices and excellence in preservation and access, while fostering a welcoming and collaborative environment. The dress code is business casual.

**Prerequisites:**

- Demonstrated interest in African American history and culture
- Superb attention to detail
- Strong computer skills
- Familiarity with handwritten documents
- Familiarity with image file types (Tiff, Jpeg, etc.)
- Experience with MAC OS and Adobe suite preferred
- Preference given to candidates familiar with Portland, Maine and/or the Congregational tradition