

SMITH COLLEGE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (FALL 2023)
2023 Internship Project Description

(Send to Alex Capobianco [REDACTED])

Name of Smithsonian Staff Mentor(s): Franklin A. Robinson, Jr.

Title of Smithsonian Staff Mentor(s): Archivist

Phone Number(s): [REDACTED]

Email Address(es): [REDACTED]

Museum/Institute/Office: National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

Department/Division/Office (if applicable): Archives Center

Project Title (must be ONSITE): Researching African American Labor in the Robinson and Via Family Papers.

Project Description – *Please provide as much detail as possible. What will the intern learn? How will this internship benefit the intern and your unit? Please also include any relevant background information on the function of your unit, department, or office:*

Using the Robinson and Via Family Papers the intern will research and gather data relating to the African American laborers that worked on the Robinson farm between 1866-1968. The intern will do specific research into wages paid, days worked, types of jobs worked, and any other data that might be found within the papers pertinent to labor on the farm during the stated time period. This is to give a clearer, more focused, scientific look at the working life of those tenants working the farm during this time period.

The project will involve reading, extracting relevant information, documenting findings, and writing research reports with particular focus on the specific areas of research outlined above. The intern should have solid research and writing skills and have completed some courses with components in 20th century studies, labor, agriculture, social history and general United States history of the 20th century. Courses with a focus or segment in mid-Atlantic agriculture, labor, African-American history, women's history would be especially helpful.

This will benefit the unit and my current research and writing focusing on a work in progress entitled, *The Home Place: A Southern Maryland Family and Their Farm, 1843-1975*, to be published by Smithsonian Press. The book at its core centers on the Robinson family and the tobacco farm they owned for 132 years in Prince George's County, Maryland exploring family, farming, and labor during the stated time period.

The intern will learn statistics collecting, data evaluation, research skills within an archival collection, presentation of data collected in a written form, and social history of the mid-Atlantic farming culture of the late 19th and early 20th century. The intern will also have a reference component assisting the reference team with it's function in the reference room.

Function of Our Unit

The Archives Center is a full-service archives within the National Museum of American History serving the public and the museum community.

Mission

In support of the Museum's mission, the Archives Center identifies, acquires, and preserves significant archival records in many media and formats to document America's history and its diverse cultures. The Center's staff members arrange, describe, preserve, and make collections accessible in support of scholarship, exhibitions, publications, and education.

We offer these services in a professionally managed reference center and through on-line databases, finding aids, and other forms of publication. We provide expert advice on archival practices and standards and, through educational outreach activities we strive to clarify the role that organized archives play in American life. The Center actively pursues alliances inside and outside the Institution, in recognition of the need for cooperation and financial support.

Reference Services and Collections

We have 1586 collections. In FY 2019 we had 530 researchers, 210 of whom were graduate students working on their dissertations, while 191 were doing research for books and articles, and 71 were working on exhibitions. Subject strengths include the history of radio, television, telegraphy, computing, and other aspects of the history of technology with a special interest in the history of invention; advertising, marketing, and entrepreneurship; commercial visual ephemera (post cards, greeting cards); American music (sheet music, jazz) and musical instruments. These, and a wide range of other subjects, are documented in business records, personal papers, and extensive holdings of motion picture film, video and sound recordings, historical photographs, and oral histories.

Learning Objectives:

- Assessing and researching archival material with a specific focus.
- Drafting and writing research findings into a useful document to support writing.
- Assisting with reference will provide reference room skills and support of a reference staff and researching public.