

A Museum Project like no other

SHRINERS MUSEUM • USC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



HISTORICAL RESEARCH & INTERPRETATION INTERN

4 POSITIONS

• **3–6 HOURS WEEKLY**

• **ACADEMIC CREDIT ELIGIBLE**

• **LOS ANGELES**

About the Project:

The Shriners Museum Project is a ground-up museum-development initiative dedicated to preserving and interpreting the history of the Al Malaikah Shriners, the Shrine Auditorium, Shriners Children's, Daughters of the Nile, and more than a century of Southern California civic, fraternal, cultural, and philanthropic history.

Working with materials drawn from the historic Shriners vaults and organizational collections, interns will help transform an important but largely uncatalogued archive into an accessible, professionally organized museum collection which will eventually open to the public.

The Historical Research & Interpretation Intern will investigate the histories connected to the museum's objects, photographs, documents, buildings, organizations, and communities. Working under the direction of museum leadership, interns will use archival records, newspapers, publications, databases, oral histories, and other primary and secondary sources to identify collection materials and develop accurate historical context. Research will support cataloguing, exhibitions, educational materials, publications, and future public programs.

What You'll Do:

- Research people, organizations, events, buildings, objects, and historical themes represented in the collection.
- Use archival records, newspapers, directories, publications, databases, and other reliable sources.
- Assist in identifying undated, unidentified, or incompletely documented photographs and objects.
- Investigate provenance, ownership, use, and historical associations.
- Prepare concise research notes, timelines, biographies, and historical summaries.
- Maintain accurate citations, source lists, and research files.
- Evaluate sources for reliability, relevance, bias, and conflicting information.
- Identify gaps, unresolved questions, and topics requiring additional investigation.
- Support the development of exhibition labels, interpretive text, educational materials, and presentations.
- Coordinate w/ Collections & Archival Cataloguing Team to improve object records.
- Coordinate w/ Digital Imaging & Metadata Team to connect research with corresponding digital assets.
- Follow museum standards for confidentiality, privacy, cultural sensitivity, copyright, and responsible historical interpretation.

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Expected Deliverables

- Completed research assignments on designated objects, people, events, or themes
- Organized research files with complete citations
- Object-identification and provenance notes
- Short biographies, timelines, or historical summaries
- Recommendations for correcting or expanding catalogue records
- Draft interpretive text for selected collection materials
- A short end-of-semester summary of completed work, unresolved questions, and recommendations
- Participation in the cohort's final presentation to museum leadership

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the internship, students should be able to:

- Explain the basic lifecycle of a museum object or archival record.
- Apply consistent cataloguing and descriptive standards.
- Handle historic materials using appropriate museum practices.
- Recognize common preservation and condition concerns.
- Connect physical objects with provenance, historical context, digital images, and institutional records.
- Understand the ethical and operational responsibilities involved in building a museum collection.

Preferred Qualifications:

This internship is especially appropriate for students studying:

- History or public history
- Art history
- Anthropology or archaeology
- Classics
- American studies or ethnic studies
- Religious studies
- Museum studies
- Archival or library studies
- Journalism
- Digital humanities
- Historic preservation
- Architecture or urban studies

Applicants should demonstrate curiosity, careful reading, strong writing, responsible research habits, and an ability to distinguish documented facts from interpretation.

Experience with archives, historical databases, citations, genealogy, newspapers, or primary-source research is helpful but not required. Training will be provided.

Application & Approval

Finalists will be reviewed by museum leadership and must receive Shriners approval before accessing collection materials or historic records. Approved interns will receive onboarding, collections-handling training, a defined work schedule, an assigned supervisor, and a semester deliverables tracker

Applicants should submit:

- **Résumé**
- **Brief statement of interest**
- **Academic program and year**
- **Weekly availability**
- **Relevant coursework or experience**
- **USC faculty recommendation, when applicable**