



Maine Historical Society Job Description

Reference Assistant

POSITION TITLE: Reference Assistant
STATUS: Non-exempt
SCHEDULE: Part-time, up to 28 hours per week
REPORTS TO: MHS Research & Administrative Librarian
DATE: 01/10/2023

1. POSITION SUMMARY

The MHS Reference Assistant supports research and collections in the MHS Brown Library by answering ready-reference questions, undertaking research and reproduction services, providing patron orientation and access to collections, and monitoring reading room activities. Work includes conducting reference interviews, retrieving and reshelving collections, implementing library policy and procedure, and supporting library operations. The position provides reference desk coverage, works directly with patrons, provides collection use instruction, and helps maintain an orderly reading room. Other duties include stack maintenance, reviewing incoming materials, as well as undertaking research for the institution. The position is part of the Brown Research Library's front-line staff and the MHS Collections & Research department.

2. DIRECT REPORTS

This position does not supervise staff; occasionally supervises interns and volunteers.

3. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provides reference services for in-house, electronic and telephone inquiries including answering ready-reference questions, conducting reference interviews, patron communication, compiling statistics, and authoring written replies.
- Provides patron orientation including researcher registration, outlining reading room policy and procedure, and collection handling.
- Implements reading room security and provides oversight of active researchers.
- Supports the MHS Research & Administrative Librarian with fee-based research services and reproduction requests.
- Retrieves and re-shelves materials in open and secure stacks.
- Helps maintain a clean, secure, and clutter-free reading room.
- Provides bibliographic instruction for MHS databases, including internal (Minerva/OPAC; Maine Memory Network; Collections Database; membership resources) and subscription databases (Ancestry.com; Heritage Quest; Sanborn Maps; JSTOR).
- Recommends necessary updates to catalogues, finding aids or housing labels.
- Supports in-depth and internal research requests as needed.
- Performs stack maintenance, including shifting and filing collections, re-housing, and light preservation work.
- Reviews incoming library materials (books, pamphlets, journals, etc.) for inclusion in library holdings.
- Other duties as assigned.

4. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- An advanced degree (or currently enrolled) in Library Science or related humanities-based program.
- Familiarity with special collections/archival reference services and settings.

- Demonstrated experience with researching within special collections and archives, including using finding aids and collection handling.
- Demonstrated proficiency in searching an online library catalogue.
- Strong communication skills: listening, written, and verbal.
- An open and positive attitude and enjoy working with the public.
- Strong computer skills and ability to learn new programs when needed.
- Ability to solve problems in a changing environment, high degree of flexibility and adaptability.
- Ability to adhere to and implement institutional protocol and methodologies.
- Strong initiative combined with a willingness to take direction.
- Reliability and dependability; ability to work independently or as part of a group.
- Ability to multi-task and facilitate several projects simultaneously.
- Ability to lift 25 lbs. and reach above one's head.

5. PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- MLS or equivalent in Library Science from an ALA Accredited Institution.
- Special Collections reference experience.
- Working knowledge of Maine history.
- Familiarity with genealogical research and family history.
- Working knowledge of Past Perfect Museum Software.
- Familiarity with PC platforms, WINDOWS, and Office 365.
- Experience with archival processing and creating finding aids.

6. WORKING CONDITIONS & PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

Work is performed on-site in an office and library environment using basic office equipment such as a computer, printer, telephone, and copier. Work requires sitting, walking, pushing carts, and lifting. All work is performed on-site.

7. SCHEDULE & COMPENSATION:

An ideal schedule is Wednesday-Saturday, 9-5PM. Some degree of flexibility within MHS business hours, but **Wednesdays and Saturdays are required**. A set schedule (week to week) is required.

\$22.00/ hr. with paid time off (PTO). In-town parking is provided.

CONTACT and HOW TO APPLY:

Interested parties should email a cover letter, resume, and contact information for two professional references to Cindy Murphy, Office Manager, at cmurphy@mainehistory.org. or Maine Historical Society, 489 Congress St., Suite 2, Portland, ME 04101-3498 c/o Cindy Murphy.

Application deadline: February 12, 2023.

Maine Historical Society is an equal opportunity employer committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We prohibit discrimination and harassment of any kind based on race, color, sex, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information, pregnancy, or any other protected characteristic as outlined by federal, state, or local laws.