Project Archivist (two-year position)

The Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS), located in Boston, Mass., seeks a full-time Project Archivist to process 20th and 21st century collections of personal papers and organizational records. This is a two-year position that is not a permanently-budgeted role.

The MHS is an independent, scholarly research library founded in 1791 for the threefold purpose of collecting, preserving, and disseminating sources for the study of American history. The MHS holds more than 3,700 manuscript collections dating from the 17th century to the present, as well as extensive collections of early American imprints, newspapers, maps, printed ephemera, photographs, engravings, and other research materials.

Purpose:
The Project Archivist (PA) will process modern (20th and 21st century) manuscript collections, focusing primarily on political and judicial papers of individuals, as well as institutional records, in both analog and digital form. The PA may also assist with the selection, accessioning, and appraisal of new collections, both on and offsite.

Reporting Relationship:
This position reports to the Curator of Manuscripts and is a member of the processing team within the Collections Services department.

Schedule:
This is a full-time, benefitted position, 35 hours/week, with the workday scheduled during regular business hours Monday-Friday. The PA is expected to work onsite at the Society’s Boston location 5 days per week. Occasional remote work is possible, depending on current projects and priorities.

Major Responsibilities:
• Process 20th and 21st century manuscript collections including arrangement, basic preservation, and description using minimal processing approaches such as MPLP and iterative processing for some collections
• Write and encode finding aids using Encoded Archival Description (EAD)
• Create MARC collection-level records for entry into OCLC and ABIGAIL, the Society’s online catalog
• Survey, inventory, and appraise new collections, both onsite at the MHS and offsite
• Prepare collections for offsite storage
• Supervise student interns
• Participate in processing team meetings and actively contribute to the assessment of processing strategies and workflows.

Qualifications:
• An MLS from an ALA-accredited program in library science, with a concentration or significant coursework in archives management
• A minimum of 2 years of experience processing large, modern manuscript collections in a special collections environment; experience with political collections preferred
• Demonstrated experience with EAD and Oxygen or other XML editing software
• Demonstrated ability to write clearly and succinctly
• Experience with MARC, OCLC, and Voyager or other automated cataloging software preferred
• Experience with accessioning and appraisal preferred
• Experience implementing MPLP or other minimal processing approaches preferred
• Experience working with born-digital material preferred
• Experience supervising student interns preferred
• Ability to lift up to 50 lbs. and to transport materials onto and off of carts and shelves
• Ability to read cursive handwriting. Note: finalists will be required to complete a transcription test
• Superb attention to detail
• Ability to work independently and in a team environment
• Ability to learn software and technology efficiently and adeptly
• Ability to keep self abreast of changes in areas of specialization and daily work

Application procedure:
Please send by email a single PDF that includes a cover letter, résumé, and the names of three professional references to Stephanie Call, Curator of Manuscripts, scall@masshist.org. Please include example(s) of—or link(s) to—completed finding aid(s).

This position is available in February 2024.

Compensation and Benefits:
Annual salary: $67,000-70,000

The MHS offers a generous benefits package including:
• Medical, dental, vision, and life insurance
• Medical and dependent care flexible spending accounts
• Vacation starting at three weeks plus 12–14 holidays per year
• Unlimited sick time
• Retirement benefits with an employer match of up to 4%
• Pre-tax commuter benefits and a monthly public transportation incentive
• Reciprocal entrance to local education and cultural institutions

Pre-Hire Requirements:
MHS requires proof of a vaccination and up-to-date boosters for COVID-19 for all employees. As part of its offer process, MHS will conduct a reference and criminal background check for any finalist. We are not able to sponsor visas.

Equal Opportunity Statement:
The Massachusetts Historical Society aims to be a diverse workforce that is representative, at all job levels, of the citizens we serve. Candidates of all backgrounds are welcomed and encouraged to apply. We are committed to creating a workplace free from harassment and discrimination on the basis of race, color, ancestry, religious creed, gender identity and expression, national or
ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, genetic information, disability, military or veteran status, or any other category protected by law (also known as membership in a "protected class").

Candidates in need of accommodation in the application process should reach out to our human resources department with inquiries.

Nothing in this job description restricts management’s right to assign or reassign duties and responsibilities to this job at any time.