

NHA Research Library Volunteer Opportunities

Mission Statement of the Nantucket Historical Association

The Nantucket Historical Association preserves and interprets the history of Nantucket Island and fosters an appreciation of its historic significance.

Nantucket Historical Association

What distinguishes Nantucket is a pervasive sense of history — a sense of place, of tradition, of historical belonging. Since 1894, the Nantucket Historical Association has worked tirelessly to preserve the historical record of this island. The NHA's properties serve as touchstones to centuries of traditions. Its collections provide the narrative with detail and nuance. Its programs link the past to the future — of the island, the country, and the world.

The Nantucket Historical Association Research Library contains a comprehensive collection of Nantucket-related material, including books, manuscripts, maps, and photographs. The library responds to more than 1,200 queries yearly.

NHA Volunteers

Collecting and making accessible documents and materials of Nantucket history help to fulfill our mission. The NHA and the NHA Research Library are engaged in many projects that cannot be completed without the help of volunteers. The trustees and staff of the Nantucket Historical Association thank you for your time and support, and hope that volunteering at the NHA will be an enjoyable experience. Volunteers will receive a Volunteer card entitling them to 15% off purchases in the Museum Shop.

Nantucket Historical Association Research Library Volunteer Opportunities

*Georgen Charnes, Manuscript & Photograph Curator
Elizabeth Oldham, Research Associate
Marie Henke, Photograph Archive Specialist*

Library Shelf Reading

An important activity that must be performed regularly in the library is matching the call numbers and titles as recorded in the database with the books on the shelf. In no other way can we make sure that our holdings are completely catalogued and that there are no books missing. You will be given a list of books that should be in a certain section, and will simply check off items present, search for those that are missing, and pull to-be-catalogued items on the shelf that aren't in the printout.

Time required: Can be done for short periods of time

Computer skills required: None

Manuscript Collection Processing and Item-level Inventorying

We have several collections that need to be sorted, organized, and re-housed. Several collections need item-level inventorying, which entails creating a list of items that are included in each folder of a collection. This information will be added to the in-house database, allowing access to the materials in the collection.

Time required: Probably best for large blocks of time

Computer skills required: Data entry into computer database

Newspaper Clipping for Subject, or "Blue" file

Regional and island newspapers need to be read and appropriate articles clipped to be added to the library's vertical files, known as the "blue files." The blue files contain invaluable information on Nantucket persons, places, and events. The blue file subject index instructs volunteers on the appropriate articles to clip and add to the files.

Diaries

In 1998 the library acquired a collection of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century diaries kept by Martha Fish, who lived at Cherry Grove Farm, on Hummock Pond Road. The diaries provide a detailed description of the everyday activities of the Fish family and their friends and neighbors. Most of the diaries remain to be read and described. A volunteer will make note of events and activities of particular interest and enter them into the computer. These diaries are wonderfully informative of domestic life in late-nineteenth-century Nantucket.

Time required: Best to have large blocks of time

Computer skills required: Typing into computer

Logbooks and Journals

A logbook is the account of a voyage, kept by the captain or first mate. Accounts of voyages kept by other crew members or passengers are referred to as journals. Reading and summarizing the library's almost 700 logbooks and journals is the library's longest on-going volunteer project. Some of the logs and journals have been summarized, but there are plenty more that need work. Volunteers have the opportunity to read intriguing first-hand accounts of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century whaling and merchant voyages. A list of indexing subjects has been established to guide volunteers in the extraction of information from a ship's log or journal.

Time required: Probably best for large blocks of time

Computer skills required: Typing into computer

Transcribing

Some logs we would like transcribed in full. Working from the log or scans of a log, the volunteer will have to learn to decipher the log-keeper's handwriting and then type the text into the computer. Other transcribing tasks are also available.

Time required: Varying; may work at home if scans are available

Computer skills required: Typing into computer

If working from scans of a log, this task could be done at home.

Scrapbook description

Within our scrapbook collection are clippings of biographical information, architectural information, and descriptions of events. However, without proper cataloguing, we will never be able to access it.

Time required: Probably best for moderate blocks of time

Computer skills required: Typing into computer

Sarg book collection organizing

Our collection of Sarg material needs to be inventoried and possibly scanned and recatalogued.

Time required: Probably best for moderate blocks of time

Computer skills required: Typing into computer

Oral Histories

Many of our oral history audio and video tapes need to be copied, listened to, and catalogued. Other projects associated with oral history program will be coming soon.

Time required: Probably best for moderate blocks of time

Computer skills required: Typing into computer

Photographic Collections

The library contains nearly 50,000 images of Nantucket persons, places, objects, and events. Photographic formats include lantern slides, daguerreotypes, cartes-de-visite, glass-plate negatives, and color slides. Postcards and photo albums are also part of the photographic collection. Preserving and providing access to the collections require reasonable computer literacy. Tasks include:

- *Scanning into an image database* – This project would involve using Adobe Photoshop, (you'll be surprised how easy it is!) *Time required: Larger blocks of time better; Computer skills required: Data entry into the computer databases; photoshop skills a plus;*
- *Cataloguing photographs* – This project involves using the in-house database, Inmagic, to create individual records for each photograph, and attaching digital images for viewing. *Time required: Larger blocks of time better; Computer skills required: Data entry into the computer databases;*
- *Quality check image records* – Correct records on individual photographs in our database.

OCR-ing Historic Nantucket articles

The articles published in the *Historic Nantucket* are information-rich; we would like to offer them through the web. We would like to convert many of our articles to electronic format.

Time required: Probably best for have moderate blocks of time

Computer skills required: Scanning, saving, editing, cutting and pasting.

Transcribing Chase log summaries

Many of our logs have been summarized, but the summaries are in a binder, not on our searchable database. Simply transcribing these into a word processor would provide excellent access. This project could even be done at home!

Time required: Very flexible

Computer skills required: Minimal



NANTUCKET HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Volunteer application

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for the NHA. In order to get to know you better and properly match you up with your interests, we ask that you fill out the following questionnaire. We appreciate your time!

Date: _____
Name: _____
Mailing address: _____

Telephone number: _____
Email address: _____

What special interest, skills or volunteer experience do you have?

When are you available? Please list preferred times and dates.

What areas are you interested in volunteering in?