

Summer Intern Tells All!

My Summer at the David Library

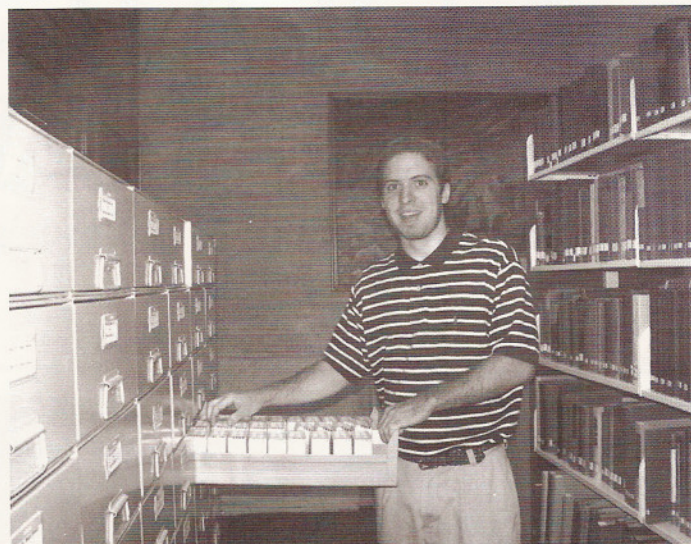
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The time I spent as an intern at the David Library of the American Revolution was a productive, rewarding and enlightening experience. Through long and short-term projects, daily research assignments and providing general assistance to staff and patrons of the library, I learned the vital skills that a historian needs in order to be a marketable, well-rounded professional. Reading primary source documents, loading microfilm, conducting genealogical research and finding one's way around a massive archive collection are just a few of the valuable tools that are essential in making a complete historian. Through my internship at the David Library, I feel that I have added another crucial piece to the puzzle in my educational career and I know that my time spent there will pay off for many years to come.

One of the most rewarding aspects for me in doing the internship at the DLAR is that I left feeling as though I contributed a great deal to the betterment of the Library. On an almost daily basis, I was assigned research questions from patrons who used the information for myriad reasons, such as family histories, books, or to advance the work of historical societies. At one point I worked extensively with the Cornwallis Papers for someone who was writing a book on Francis Marion's role in the Southern Campaign. I also researched a loyalist by the name of John Tabor Kempe for a historical institution in New Jersey.

In many ways I played the role of a detective, trying to find as much information about these individuals and the events that surrounded them. Oftentimes it was very difficult to find what a patron had asked for, but in the end I think everyone who had a question went home satisfied.

In addition to these smaller assignments, I completed several larger, long-term projects during my stay at DLAR. One great accomplishment that I achieved with my fellow intern Chris Johnson (from Dickinson College) was the completion of an inventory of the entire library, including over 7,000 books, 1,000 pamphlets, and 200 reference guides. Although sometimes tedious, the work familiarized me with the collection and it felt great to finish the entire inventory before the end of my tenure.



Robert Fisher cheerfully inventories the microfilm

Another project I worked on was the organization and cataloging of the Graphics Collection. This was a collection that contained 135 images of the American Revolution from 19th century newspapers — such as *Harper's Weekly* — that were in the Library's vault but never previously catalogued. Chris and I worked on this as well, along with our other colleague, Sally Siebert (from St. Joseph's University). We numbered each image and then created a catalog entry for the collection. It was gratifying to see patrons make use of these graphics right away, even before the Library had a chance to advertise its availability.

My favorite project was the compilation of a list of materials from historical societies that DLAR might consider for acquisition. I got to go online and search the collections of at least 20 institutions that might have materials that would enhance the Library's collections. Mostly I appreciated that staff members at the Library were interested in hearing my opinion about these potential acquisitions.

I also had fun helping a film producer find images that he will use in a television program on Colonial American cooking being produced for PBS. As lame as it may sound, when that TV show airs, I'll be very proud of my contribution to it!

Every day of my internship, Librarian Kathie Ludwig made sure she had assignments for me that were challenging and interesting. Not only did I learn the skills of an historian, I also learned much about history through the assignments, as well as through the all-day teacher workshop I got to attend. I also enjoyed my collaborations with the other interns. I would definitely recommend an internship at the David Library to history majors or to any college student considering a career involving research or librarianship.