

Curator of African American Collections Position Description

Position Summary

This permanent, full-time position continues and expands upon the efforts of the Filson Historical Society to more fully represent the history and culture of Kentucky and the Ohio Valley through collecting, preserving, and sharing the stories of Black history and life. This position is supported by the Filson's African American History Endowment and will supervise support positions including cataloging staff and interns. This position will draw from skills in community engagement, libraries and archives, education, and academic research and publication to represent the Filson as a trusted source for the study and celebration of Black history in Kentucky.

Collections-Based Outreach

- Develops and sustains strong relationships with individuals and organizations (business, educational, religious, community service, social, etc.) in the African American communities of Louisville and the surrounding region.
- Drawing from input of community partners, identifies issues of contemporary significance and proactively builds Filson collections to support research on those questions
- Works with partners in K-12 and higher education to expand and improve the teaching of Black history in classrooms
- Prepares and assists with funding proposals to expand the capacity and impact of the African American History Initiative, in cooperation with the Director of Collections & Research and Filson development staff

Collections Stewardship

- Accessions and processes collections in cooperation with other members of the Filson curatorial staff and following established policies and procedures
- Serves as a voting member of the Filson's Collections Management Committee, which approves all accessions, plans cataloging projects, and evaluates potential deaccessions
- Develops online and physical exhibitions that feature Filson materials
- Works with relevant Filson staff members to prepare social media and print publication content that promotes the collections and mission of the Filson. This includes annual contributions to both *Ohio Valley History* and *The Filson* newsmagazine
- Tracks time spent on collections management tasks and submits monthly time reports to the Director of Collections Access

Supervises Support Staff, Volunteers, and Interns

- Supervises day-to-day work of assigned support staff, volunteers, and/or interns, including periodic formal and informal check-in meetings as necessary
- Produces and maintains job descriptions of any direct-reporting staff as well as volunteers and interns as appropriate
- Produces and maintains onboarding materials for staff, volunteers, and/or interns assigned to the African American History Initiative
- Uses annual performance reviews of direct-reporting staff to evaluate performance based on the criteria in the job descriptions and makes changes as needed to reflect new responsibilities and expectations

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- In consultation with the Director of Collections & Research, develops an annual budget for support staff, cataloging and collections storage supplies, travel, professional development, and outreach support for the African American History Initiative

Preferred Qualifications

- Graduate degree in history, African American studies, library and information science, or other related field. Three or more years of work experience directly related to the listed duties can be substituted for a graduate degree.
- Knowledge of Black history and culture, particularly in Kentucky, the Ohio Valley, and Upper South
- Demonstrated ability to build communities of trust within marginalized groups
- Strong interpersonal skills and ability to develop meaningful relationships with local campuses and communities on behalf of the Filson
- Knowledge of collections management processes including cataloging, conducting physical inventories, as well as collections handling, housing, and storage
- Computer proficiency, primarily with Microsoft Office, especially Excel. Experience with Omeka, PastPerfect and/or other collections software preferred

Compensation and Benefits

Salary of \$70,000 per year with a competitive benefits package including health and life insurance, 403(b) match, and generous paid time off, holidays, and volunteer time off. This is a full-time position, expected to work 40 hours per week, based at the Filson's campus in Louisville, Kentucky. The Filson's standard operating hours are 8:30 am – 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. Because of the outreach nature of this position, the holder should expect to occasionally flex time to work on weekends and evenings. Occasional travel within Kentucky and the United States is required. This position reports to the Director of Collections & Research.

Application Procedures

Applications including 1) a cover letter detailing relevant experience and expertise, 2) a resume or CV, and 3) contact information for three professional references should be submitted to Dr. Patrick Lewis, Director of Collections & Research, via email at patricklewis@filsonhistorical.org by **September 1, 2023**.

An inclusive panel of Filson board and staff as well as community stakeholders will review application materials and conduct interviews, with the goal of having the curator begin work at the Filson in January 2024. Questions about the position and application process should be directed to Dr. Lewis.

About the Filson

Since its founding in 1884, the Filson Historical Society has collected, preserved, and shared the significant stories of Kentucky and Ohio Valley history and culture. Its collections of art, objects, manuscripts, prints and photographs, and rare publications are used by scholars from around the world and diverse researchers in and near Louisville. Its publications, exhibits, and events bring the latest perspective on the region's past to its public audiences.