

Student Projects Available at the National Agricultural Library

Special Collections, NAL, has internship and practicum opportunities available for graduate students. Please see the list below for descriptions of projects. For additional information or to make an appointment to see the collections, contact Sara Lee at (301)504-5876 or speccoll@nal.usda.gov.

Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center History Collection

The student will completely arrange and describe the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center History Collection. The collection contains a wide assortment of materials, including land surveys, building specifications, blueprints, reports, photographs, and memorabilia such as custom-made glass lab equipment and a silver tea set. For more information about the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), please visit the web page at: http://www.ars.usda.gov/main/site_main.htm?modecode=12-00-00-00.

Image Collection

Like many archives, Special Collections has increased its digitization of photographs, watercolors, documents, and other materials from its collections over the past few years. The student will enter information about these images into various databases using Microsoft Access software, creating an inventory that will be searchable by Special Collections staff and users. Additionally, the intern will assist staff in improving the current online image gallery by adding images and creating a user-friendly display.

Through the course of the project, the intern will become proficient in describing visual materials in a database environment. The intern will also be able to use DreamWeaver to create web pages and work through the challenges of creating web pages in a highly structured web design environment.

The Henry G. Gilbert Nursery and Seed Catalog Collection

(This is an ongoing project and more than one student may work on the collection.)

The Henry G. Gilbert Nursery and Seed Catalog Collection is a valuable and well used holding of Special Collections. The collection consists of over 200,000 domestic and foreign catalogs, which are studied for a wide range of research topics. The student will organize, re-house catalogs, and label boxes from 1945 through the present. As part of the project, the intern will provide the proper housing for catalogs with preservation needs as well as identify particularly striking images from the catalogs for an online image gallery. The intern will add previously scanned catalogs to the online image gallery and scan additional images.

Charles Edwin Kellogg Papers

This project consists of completing the processing of the Kellogg Papers. Kellogg (1902-1980) was a world famous USDA soil scientist and his papers contain scripts of Kellogg's speeches, articles, reviews, reprints, correspondence, field notes, journals, slides, photographs, soil maps, and publications relating to soil science and agriculture.

The following processing activities are necessary to complete the collection: re-housing and describing of photographic materials; processing of travel journals and field notebooks; evaluate arrangement of correspondence; creation of an inventory then a bibliography for the Book Collection; number folders and label boxes for entire collection; revise series descriptions and the entire finding aid once all processing work has been completed.

J. Horace McFarland Collection

(This is an ongoing project and more than one student may work on the collection.)

The project consists of organizing and describing a collection of photographic negatives, prints, and watercolors of plants, gardens, and cities. Horticulturist, conservationist, and master printer J. Horace McFarland (1859-1948) was a founder of a horticultural printing company in the nineteenth century. Company employees produced or gathered photographs to have available for sale for publishers to have printed in their seed catalogs. Many images were taken at McFarland's famous trial gardens on the grounds of his residence, Breeze Hill. For more information on McFarland, see the following websites: http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/sontag/mcfarland.htm
<http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/heritage/cwp/view.asp?a=3&Q=444048>

Tasks include analyzing original order of materials, re-housing fragile glass and acetate negatives into acid-free envelopes and boxes, labeling items, creating or assisting with the creation of a database on the collection, entering plant descriptions and other collection information into the database, and writing a finding aid or guide to the collection.

USDA Fiber Collection

(Two students are needed for this project.)

The project consists of organizing and describing a collection of fiber plant specimens, negatives, photographs, and paper materials. Begun in the early 1900s by Lyster H. Dewey, United States Department of Agriculture botanist in charge of fiber plant investigations, the USDA Fiber Collection materials cover the subject of natural plant fiber crops other than cotton and include information on cordage, textiles, and miscellaneous fibers as well as the products made from them.

Tasks include analyzing original order of materials; re-housing paper documents, fragile glass and acetate negatives, and fiber samples into acid-free envelopes and boxes,

labeling items, creating or assisting with the creation of a database on the collection, entering fiber sample and photograph descriptions and other collection information into the database, and writing a finding aid or guide to the collection.

USDA Pomological Watercolor Collection

(This is an ongoing project and more than one student may work on the collection.)

The project involves re-housing the USDA Pomological Watercolor Collection, which consists of approximately 7,000 exquisite, original watercolors. Tasks include sorting the images alphabetically by scientific nomenclature; photocopying the original cardboard frame; inserting the original watercolor and frame copy into new folders; printing and applying labels; and filing folders. To view a selection of images from the collection, please see the Special Collections website at

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/speccoll/collectionsguide/mssindex/pomology/pomology.shtml>

U.S. Forest Service Smokey Bear Collection

(This is an ongoing project and more than one student may work on the collection.)

The intern will assist with the organization of the U.S. Forest Service Smokey Bear Collection. This collection contains materials relating to the promotional campaign for forest fire prevention and fire safety carried out by the United States Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service, and Advertising Council from the 1930s to present. The intern will survey, re-house, and describe the photographs and negatives contained in the collection. Materials include 8x10" negatives, 3x4" negatives, 2x2" negatives, 8x10" black and white prints, 3x4" color prints, and many other formats. The intern will re-house the materials in appropriate boxes according to directions from Special Collections staff, then describe the materials to the item level in an Access database according to the established guidelines.

Upon completion of the project, a large section of the Smokey Bear Collection will be re-housed and described to the item level according to the standards developed for this collection.

U.S. National Parasite Collection Records

(Two students are needed for this project.)

The project consists of organizing and describing the U.S. National Parasite Collection Records, a collection of animal parasite materials created by the Animal Parasitology Institute of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The records contain photographs, line drawings, lantern slides, correspondence, reports, and negatives of animal parasites. Many of the drawings were used as illustrations in publications. There are also materials on the history of animal veterinary parasitology in USDA, including biographical information, photographs, and documents prepared for the centennial anniversary of the Bureau of Animal Industry.

Tasks include analyzing original order of materials, making an inventory of parasitology books, placing drawings and other materials into appropriate archival housing, creating or assisting with the creation of a database on the collection, entering parasite drawing descriptions and other collection information into the database, and writing a finding aid or guide to the collection.