**Intern Journal**

Week 1:

So, I have started the internship. So far, I am figuring out how to navigate the archive as well as slack. It is a little intimidating, but I am sure with time and effort I will become more comfortable and acquainted with it. I am most excited to add these skills to my resume and the more I learn about the internship the more I think the it is a worthwhile venture. It is exciting to think I am contributing to such an important project that will aid historians for generations. I also look forward to learning of the pandemic’s effect on others since I know my personal perspective is limited. My favorite part of global history is seeing other people’s perspectives. There’s so much out there that I do not know and wont experience but at least if I can learn about it, I feel I can become a more well-rounded historian and more understanding. I feel it is very important to share different perspectives among different people because that is the only way to end discrimination and cultural ignorance.

Something that I am thus far enjoying about the internship is the great sense of camaraderie. Normally it is difficult to connect with classmates in the online forum but between the zoom meetings, slack and group chats I really feel like I am part of a team and am fostering a professional relationship with my colleagues that I have not previously felt. This is especially helpful given our present isolation due to the pandemic because my sense of community has been somewhat lost due to social distancing procedures.

As I scroll through the slack app while eating my dinner, I am reading posts and information about our project, but I can’t help but wonder the differences in this internship versus a traditional in person one. On one hand the instruction may be more difficult to cover and getting all the interns together may be more difficult but I wonder given our on-line presence if we will tend to work more than a traditional intern since we do not clock in or clock out but work as we choose. Obviously, some will try and take advantage of the honor system but others like myself might tend to become consumed with the work and avidly work more than the required 12 hours per week. It makes me question if this format of interning will become the new norm in the future or if it is only during this crisis that such opportunities arise.

The historian in me is excited to work on this project but I can’t help but mourn the lost information of the past due to frivolous burnings or natural catastrophes. I have been skimming the archive to see the information already put forth and I wish we had something similar for different time periods. It is amazing that everyday people can simply add their own information or stories to this database. There are no requirements to add to the data base so hopefully we can receive information from all types of society and get a well-rounded data base. I know many of my fellow interns are focusing on bringing to light the underrepresented and repressed in our society and the specific task of seeking to give a voice to the marginalized is admirable and necessary. Too often is history told from the wealthy/privileged/powerful aspect of society.

Looking the Archive, I am both overwhelmed and disappointed at its content. There is so much information in it and I feel daunted at the task of working on such an important project. At the same time however, I am seeing how little is represented. We have made a great beginning, but it seems an impossible task to contribute all that is going on into the archive. I want to add to the project and be proud that when my grandchildren are learning about the Pandemic, they have a wealth of information to look at, but it seems like I am climbing Mount Everest with zero supplies or training.

Week 2:

Yesterday I started my internship week two work. I realize it contains an extensive amount of material to read in order to teach us some new concepts. While slightly overwhelming I remember from my previous class in Global history that not every single item has to be read line by line. My skimming skills are becoming essential in this internship. I also examined the archive looking for silences that were noticeable and the overwhelming feature is that there are many silences. I know part of this is due to the newness of the project and I hope by the end of the it many more voices will be represented.

Today I am reading through more of the material to understand my collection plan process. I plan to dedicate about 2 hours every day to the internship and take Sunday’s off to be with my family. I was successful in this endeavor last week and hope I can keep it going. Something difficult I have encountered is our assignments generally aren’t graded and it is making it difficult for me to gauge how pristine I need to make them. I have never taken a pass or fail class before, and it is honestly more worrisome to me than a regular class.

Zoom meeting went really well I think we are all getting to know each other a little better. The silences discussion although brief was informative. The more I learn about them the more inevitable they seem. The silences paper by David mentions several types of silences and luckily, I think many of those can be prevented. Since we are a crowd sourced archive there isn’t bias by curators being the only ones choosing which materials to add and also, I do not see the government attempting to make the archive secret. The historians are of course going to have bias on what we feel is important to add but hopefully since the archive is such a large collaboration, we can limit the biases through so many united perspectives. I personally want to make sure the military perspective is shared as well as do what I can to add to the Spanish archives. I am inclined to choose to use the military for my collection. Fort Bragg is the most populated military base in the country and since my husband is stationed there, I have access to the base and people. I am hoping to use this connection to add in a meaningful way to the collection.

Watching and reading the publicity section I realize how the archive is already vastly different than many others. It is not created by a government institution but by historians and civilians alike. While we are curating it is made very clear in the publicity pieces that this is an archive of the people.

Today I got added to the backend of the site and I am surprisingly excited. I thought I would be nervous or worried to be part of the curation process, but I am actually really excited to learn a new skill set! I also discovered how to save an online news article which is very helpful and adds to the items I can add to the archive. I worked on my collection plan, which is in fairly good shape, but I am hesitant to call it finished until I have heard from my fellow classmates on its creation.

I have been working diligently every day to get through the slew of writing but had difficulty completing the assignments. I chose to write a rough draft of each and slowly revise them daily to see if my thoughts or writing skills Improved the final product. The writing gods finally gifted me with some inspiration yesterday and I was able to finally complete them. It is difficult to know how to do the assignments since they are so vastly different than the assignments I am used to encountering as a history student however I understand it is only by being out of my comfort zone that can develop me skills. It has also been an emotional week given everything that is occurring nationally, and my heart is heavy.

Week 3:

So, I have read all the given materials and watched the meeting I missed Monday. Today we had the supplemental meeting and I found it very helpful. It is good to know most of the students are confused and daunted by our set tasks. I do not think it is from the work being too difficult but merely because we understand the necessity and importance of our work and are trying to make sure we give the work due diligence. From everything I have learned about curating it seems a skill that is best learned on the job. While reading and discussing it is helpful a lot of the work itself is case specific and it probably won’t be until the work is actually attempted, we can see how well we apply that knowledge to the task.

Today I had a zoom meeting with a fellow intern Lyn in order to talk about curation. She had zoomed with another professor earlier in the day and wanted to share what she learned. We both agreed that it is difficult to curate anything perfectly due to the continuously changing process. We are definitely the guinea pigs of this projects but hopefully things will go more smoothly for the next group of interns. Besides we knew what we were signing up for and are still learning valuable skills while gaining class credit so all in all it is still a win. I am going to attempt my first curation today and hope I do okay.

I am going to tackle curating a few items today! I still find it overwhelming how much the process is continuously changing. I feel like almost every day there is a revision to the process, and it is like trying to swim in the middle of a hurricane. I am sure eventually the system will be finely tuned, and we will have one set way on how to do things so until then I will ride out the storm. This class is so different than any other I have ever taken but I also enjoy the sense of camaraderie I feel due to slack and the meetings. Being able to constantly touch base and communicate with those involved in the project really makes it feel like a team and I know for sure that I am not the only one struggling or feeling overwhelmed. One this I did not expect was the emotional rollercoaster this time has been. I never would have expected how emotionally draining these last few months have been from scary statistics of death due to covid-19 to the societal chaos that is worsening every day. I have seen horrendous videos of humans committing atrocities against one another and people who are supposed to protect us are instead attacking us. It is so wrong, and I have to know this is the world my children are growing up in because I can’t protect them at home in our little bubble of safety forever. I am trying to document it as much as possible for the archive so that I know future generations cannot sweep these actions under the rug, but it seems useless to change the current predicament. Sorry if this went off topic I am just really struggling to deal with the feelings of sadness and hopelessness for the current situation and it’s hard to focus on my work at times.

I finished curating my ten items and am waiting on feedback. It did get easier after a while to do it and I definitely got faster hopefully I get cleared to continue curating.

Week 4:

I have begun working on this week’s reading and the theme is about ethical responsibilities. Personally, while I understand the necessity to think of ethics, I strongly believe that the best way to document history is to document all of it regardless of how ugly it is. I am sure the Nazi’s would have loved to opt out materials covering the atrocities they committed but that would have been a huge mistake. While this is an extreme example it catches the gist of my feelings. The more information we archive the more likely that historians of the future will receive a fuller picture. If we limit the archive simply because people are worried about how that would be perceived now that would greatly detract from what people of the future would be able to know. This is why I prefer the idea of information being held private for a specific amount of time in the archive rather than indefinitely. Knowledge is power and by too heavily limiting the available knowledge in the archive we would be lessoning its power and doing a disservice to our field. It would be a shame of course if the archive was used by law enforcement to try and obtain protestors identities which is why the suggestion of blurring certain images or remaining anonymous would be a necessary step in some cases, but it should not be a rule of thumb. As much as we can give all the information, we should.

Yesterday I curated an item and also submitted one for my collection. I feel really good about the item I submitted because it relates to the military and the recent protest issues and it felt nice to represent that perspective in the archive and know others will read it. There is less pressure to be objective and professional when submitting to the archive and it is more of an outlet for my personal voice because in future generations the feelings of the people on subjects is going to be researched in addition to the official policies and ideologies. I think before the end of this course I will try and write my point of view on the pandemic and personal experience to tell future generations. One thing I am enjoying about curating is reading the information itself that has been submitted to the archive. It is interesting seeing what people chose to share and getting a glimpse into what we are creating. The curatorial practices are still slightly confusing and ever changing it seems but at least the information itself is interesting. While I am glad to have learned new skills, I do not see volunteering as an archivist in the future. Some of the interns seems to love the process itself but I honestly find it tedious at best and confusing or overwhelming at worst.

I did the largest chunk of curating today curating a total of 5 items. I am still fairly slow with the fastest one taking me about 20 minutes to do. Although I am gaining confidence in my skills and felt relieved when I had a question and asked Lawson for help but with no feedback, I decided to go with my gut on what to do. He later messaged me suggesting I do exactly as I had done which reinforced that I might actually be getting the hang of curation although far from being an expert.

Finished my assignments for the week finally! I feel like I learned a lot about curation this week.

Week 5:

Working on this week and learning how to redact. It seems easy enough, but I haven’t tried my hand at it yet. I know it is a necessary part of curation especially since the protest have become so controversial and arrests so prevalent, I understand we have to protect their identities. It still feels wrong to hide information because although there are problems today, I wonder how it will affect the archive and future generations.it seems like censorship as if we aren’t telling the whole truth about what is going on. Personally, I think history deserves honesty, but I understand that is my ideal and the reality is there are many restrictions in our work. I have become more comfortable curating although I usually end up stumped or confused at least once during a curatorial session and have to reach out for help. I do keep a detailed notebook of my curations, so it is easy to revise them later if need be it is just annoying having to wait for help which sometimes takes hours to days to get due to everyone’s conflicting and busy schedules. I recognize being on the east coast affects when I work since most of the other interns and teachers seem to be on west coast or Arizona time. I tend to work in the evening when my kids are asleep, and it seems most everyone does their work in the mornings. It seems to have quieted down in the curation process and there isn’t so much procedural change thankfully.

We got put into four person teams to complete a few days and hopefully catch up.it feels chaotic again one of my teammates and I curated the same items on accident due to miscommunication. I am sure it’ll be fine in the long run but as soon as we have one system/method down another was is implemented. I completed the blurring and redacting assignments yesterday and I think they went fairly well. The blurring was easy and straight forward based off of the soft where I used however the redacting part was tricky and I am not sure if I did it right. But I still gained new skills. Something I did not expect working in this internship was learning how to cooperate remotely with a team. The few team projects I had as an undergrad I usually divided the work, and everyone had a specific assignment to do and we didn’t speak much start to finish. I realize I am more on a lone wolf and do not like relying on people to complete an assignment however I see the value in building that skill set and hope to become better at it. I am going to continue to curate today.

I finished my 20 curations today. I am planning to upload a submission with a “great description” to bring to light some recent events involving the military exposing their soldiers to Covid-19 by ignoring suggestions. I am pretty angry about it being my family has been exposed and will continue to be exposed due to the military practices. Hopefully these contributions are valuable and not just the bitter ranting of an army spouse. I am still having trouble gaining the trust of my fellow military families in regard to the archive, but I will slowly but surely contribute information.

Week 6:

I have just begun to work on adding items to my collection, but It appears that the site has crashed since I was unable to view it after a while and a fellow intern is having the same problem. So, for now I am going to review the readings instead.

I had been at work on the aggregation and it has been going okay. Many items I would like to add are either not curated or are from May26th era we are not supposed to touch. I have completed the CFS assignment.

I actually got my husband to submit to the archive and I am really excited. I have been asking him to since the beginning because I think it’s important for soldiers to put their perspective to the archive, but he was reluctant for fear of reprisal from his superiors. But I explained that it could be submitted anonymously, and he finally agreed! I plan to finish my hours today through reading and furthering my aggregation. I still am struggling for submissions and although I still feel strongly for my collection, I am having trouble getting others to participate. I have posted to social media so hopefully that makes a change in the upcoming weeks most of the collection I have are my own submissions. I finished the reading today also. The finding aids was exceedingly long and confusing and tedious to read. However, it did give me a little more insight into all that goes into an archive and its search functions. The Folksonomy reading was a little more interesting and I understand the importance of tags now. They are an expression by the submitter as well as a snapshot into what is trending at the time or their view of an object. This week was hectic as I had a final to do for my other class, but I completed all assignments and my hours.

Week 7:

I have looked over the week’s agenda and done the readings for the press release. I found the articles very helpful since I had no idea how to write a press release prior to reading them. My main take away is to keep it short and catchy to appeal to journalists. I plan to write a rough draft tonight so that I can have a basis for the meeting on Wednesday may or may not revise it before then depending on how my work goes tomorrow.

I browsed slack to catch up on the regularly put out information. I also added a few items to the archive. I curated a few items and only needed help on one of the three. Hopefully I get feedback on it soon and can finish that curation. I am still very slow at curating anything not a hundred percent straightforward. I think curation is not my strong suit and will continually be something I struggle with since there are so many what if situations that require different answers. I am trying to grow my collection more this week and have been working on making more contacts. The aggregation project last week made me realize how woefully small my collection is.

I curated a lot of items yesterday. Today my goal is to finish my press release. A couple of fellow interns and I have been sharing our rough drafts, so I feel a little more confident as to what is expected of it. I am no journalist, but I will do my best. I think exposure is the best way to grow the archive and have any hope of having a well-rounded and developed source of information for future generations. I finished my press release. I worked hard on it and am very excited for the picture I found to use. It is a historical picture from the 1940’s of Fort Bragg soldiers and I though it is fitting since the purpose of the archive is to document history, so I showed previously documented history. I have completed my hours now and plan to enjoy the holiday fun with my family.

Week 8:

This week we are learning how to do oral history. I have heard of this before but never taken a class or really understood it. While I recognize that this week is merely allowing us to dip our toe into what oral histories are and how to do them, I still appreciate the new knowledge. I also realize I would not like to take it as a class. I feel much more comfortable researching history than talking to people about it. My people skills are fairly lacking in this area and I don’t think I have the exuberance or persuasive ability needed to perform interviews with strangers well. Essentially my people skills suck. I do appreciate the knowledge though so in the future I can avoid this type of class. It is interesting idea and I love listening to these types of interviews but wouldn’t want to partake. My partner for the assignment is very nice and we have been able to effectively communicate and plan our interviews this week. I do feel bad that most of our planning has to go around when my husband is home to watch my children since a recorded interview would be interrupted many times otherwise. But I suppose that is part of the work/life balance that most mothers have to deal with. Cody doesn’t seem to mind but who knows what he really thinks. I am looking forward to interviewing him. I feel like I rambled a lot in my interview that we already did so it will be interesting to be on the other side of the interview. I am slightly struggling to find a time commitment balance since I started my new class, but I think I am doing okay. Luckily this class is very flexible about how one spends their hours so there is not as much pressure to finish assignments early as in other classes.

Today I interviewed my partner. The recording equipment was tricky to figure out, but I was finally able to figure it out. I realized interviewing for this type of assignment is very hard. By trying not to lead my narrator I felt cold and uncaring. I didn’t realize the significance of the free back and forth that normally occurs in a conversation. We spoke after the interview about how award it was for both of us because you can’t really build a report with someone without potentially leading and biasing them. I had thought oral history was similar to journalism, but it is much more structured than that. I hadn’t liked how similar it was on paper to journalism but having participated in an oral history project I think I would’ve preferred the back and forth dynamic of a journalist interview than the cold scientific process an oral interview seems to follow. This is obviously just my own experience and perhaps misunderstanding of oral history, but I still feel it is not for me. Although I am glad for the experience as it gives me a new perspective from which to view documentaries and other forms of oral history in my research. I am working on producing a flyer and hope to be able to get some out next week since we are getting closer towards the end of the internship and I have not been able to substantially grow my collection as I want. In order to finish up my hours I plan to curate tonight and tomorrow.

I added some documents to the archive today for my collection which I am fairly excited for because they show the discrepancy between policy and actual day to day actions in the military. I curated some items to complete my hours. I am still slow, but I am finally getting the hang of it.

Week 9:

So, this week I was able to partially make it to the Monday meeting which was exciting. Juggling two kids in a car during a meeting is difficult but worthwhile since I was able to get good information. I also found some good articles for my collection and was able to convince to associate military wives of mine to agree to an interview for next week. They seem very excited. One is in Florida and the other is in Hawaii so it will be interesting to see how the military was affected in other states. Today’s meeting went well I think it was more personal than the meetings usually are, and people were actually able to discuss their feelings during this time not just the details of the class. Apparently, I am not the only one who feels these meetings are the floating life rafts to cling to in this sea of uneasiness and chaos.

So fun thing happened on my birthday I had a crazy allergic reaction. The result was lots of Benadryl as well as oral steroids to deal with the hives. It made my work crazy slow and much more difficult to complete since I was having trouble concentrating due to the medication. I did finish my oral transcript and sent it to my partner to peer-review. He sent me his and I finished that today. I commented on a couple of people’s oral history questions in slack and revised my own questions in response to some feed-back I received. I am literally dragging myself to the finish line this week due to this health issue and it is currently Saturday, and it is the fourth day I have woken up broken out in hives even with the medication. Also, my husband happens to be out of town so between that and the hives it has been a difficult week. So far, I have thankfully completed all of my assignments to the best of my abilities given the circumstances and I am hoping to fully recuperate from this health incident by next week. I have learned a lot about oral histories these last two weeks and can appreciate their value although I completely understand why some people pay others to transcribe because it was exceedingly difficult and tedious and I do not feel comfortable with the process or feel that I did it right at all. Also trying to coordinate with my partner has been slightly difficult he had a work heavy work week so between that and my health issue we both are moving slower to respond than last week. I have completed my hours and am only waiting on my partner to send me his peer-review of my transcript to turn in in order to finish out my week.

Week 10:

This week has been hectic. I attended Monday’s meeting and unfortunately my baby got sick which set me back on my hours a little bit. I had to take her to the urgent care, and she ended up having a viral infection of some sort. I did manage to do the readings and also to upload and curate the interview I did for my collection with a military spouse. I plan to try an oral curation tonight and hopefully catch up on my hours in the next view days not that my daughter is beginning to feel better. I am very nervous about the blog since it has been a very long time since I wrote informally or with any kind of pizazz. Historical writing is notoriously dry, and I have been doing it so long I fear I forgot how else to write. I did not find the guinea pig blog as shocking as it seems the other interns did however I am Hispanic and my family has slaughtered a goat for a special occasion and roasted it and when my husband was in Korea he ate dog which is apparently a specialty so eating weird or unusual foods is not that big a deal in my opinion it’s just part of different cultures.

Yesterday I tried my hand at an oral history. My team and I have cut up our block of oral histories into 3 so everyone gets to try their hand at them. This seemed feasible yesterday prior to actually trying to do one. When I uploaded my oral history interview it was much easier since I already had a transcript and was familiar with what the interview covered. This curating of someone else’s oral history was terribly difficult I had trouble using otter, I had trouble figuring out how to get the transcription and what to do since my transcription was only a partial one due to the length of the interview. Then I was taking too long to curate the item and it was not letting me save my work and erased my curation several times which was extremely curating. Finally, after two days of working for several hours I finally did one curation so hopefully the next ones go faster. The amount of time waiting to download the video and wait for it to upload to otter and generate a transcript is very annoying and tedious. I am so thankful we only have to do 3 oral histories this week. The second oral history went much faster except for waiting for the transcription. The interview is over an hour and otter is having trouble downloading I have had to try and download each interview several times before it actually is able to be downloaded.

Week 11:

So last week I forgot to turn in my journal, so I am just going to add onto it for this week. My husband came home over the weekend right when a tropical storm hit the North Carolinas and we had bad weather and tornados. In addition to this my mother had emergency surgery and a family friend died from the coronavirus. My final for my other course is due this week so all of these incidences caused me not to finish my 12 hours last week. I hope to make them up this week or next week.

I curated last night for a few hours and plan on doing so again tonight. I also read the sources for our resumes.

I have been diligently curating the last few days to try and finish my team’s assignment. We split the work, so the guys took over the oral histories since they have subscriptions to otter and us girls curated the regular items. It went well and we have almost finished our assignment I will probably curate some more tonight. I am also tackling the blog post and resume today so hopefully I get those turned in. I am nervous about the resume assignment since I have no work history, but I will do my best on it since it is an assignment that will be valuable to my future endeavors.

Week 12: sick baby no journal entry.

Week 13:

This week has been hectic. I am packing up my house to move across country for a few months while waiting for my husband to receive orders for the great unknown. I missed both the meetings for interns but have kept in contact with my fellow interns. I finished my 3 submissions for my collections and plan on trying to finish my work over the weekend. We embark on our cross-country road trip Monday and it should take 3-4 days depending on how my kids handle the drive. I am hoping to be able to continue my intern work on the drive via hotspots but if not, I can try and make it work at hotels we plan on stopping at in route.

I am working on revising my blog today. I have looked over the notes you gave me and hope to apply them. I am extremely frustrated since I have been logged out of the slack channels and cannot figure out how to log back in. I am working on it and hopefully can figure it out soon since I was planning on curating tonight which is almost impossible to do without access to the workflow.

I finally was able to log back in and plan to curate to finish out my hours.

Week 14:

This week is hectic! Monday, we embarked on our cross-country road trip with the three little ones and it is crazy so far! I was able to do a bunch of curations and intern work yesterday more than I have ever done in one session. Luckily my dad was able to hotspot his phone to my computer so as long as we have service I have internet access unfortunately that is frequently interrupted and the service is much slower than what I am used to but at least I am able to do some work while driving in the car for 12+ hours a day. I am relatively sure my team finished our assigned curations this week I had almost finished them when a fellow intern logged on and began curating so with luck those are done. We had our weekly meeting today and it was tear-filled and bittersweet. Everyone is surprised by how quickly this internship seems to be finishing up even though some parts were tediously slow. I fill like I learned a lot from it and the best part was the community of fellow history lovers we were able to build. Many of the fellow interns all text each other and are in new classes together for the fall. I am hoping to stay involved with the archive throughout the fall as an unofficial intern of some sort and continue building my collection and curating. Today I am hoping to finish my 12 hours while driving since my fall classes officially start tomorrow and I am anxious to jump into those. I plan to do the portfolio assignment and then curate if necessary, to finish my hours.