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Looking Ahead to the 2018 Pohanka Internship Program

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Looking Ahead to the 2018 Pohanka Internship Program

Abstract

This summer, 21 Gettysburg College students will head to the front lines of public history through the Brian C. Pohanka Internship Program. From Andersonville National Historic Site to Minute Man National Historical Park, these interns will carry forward the legacy of the late Brian C. Pohanka, while also developing their own skills in the field of public history. Brian Pohanka was an avid student of the Civil War who shared his love of the past through presenting and reenacting, as some of the interns who bear his name will do this summer. They will work at some of the sites most dear to him, including Gettysburg National Military Park, Manassas National Battlefield Park, and Richmond National Battlefield Park. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Manassas National Battlefield Park, Pohanka Internship, Special Collections

Disciplines

History | Military History | Public History | United States History

Comments

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THE GETTYSBURG COMPILER ON THE FRONT LINES OF HISTORY

Looking Ahead to the 2018 Pohanka Internship Program

By *Ryan Bilger '19*

This summer, 21 Gettysburg College students will head to the front lines of public history through the Brian C. Pohanka Internship Program. From Andersonville National Historic Site to Minute Man National Historical Park, these interns will carry forward the legacy of the late Brian C. Pohanka, while also developing their own skills in the field of public history. Brian Pohanka was an avid student of the Civil War who shared his love of the past through presenting and reenacting, as some of the interns who bear his name will do this summer. They will work at some of the sites most dear to him, including Gettysburg National Military Park, Manassas National Battlefield Park, and Richmond National Battlefield Park.

To preview this summer's experiences, I reached out to three of the 2018 Pohanka interns, each with different backgrounds and positions this summer. I asked them about what they expect to be doing at their sites, what they think they will gain from the experience, and how it will fit into their plans for the future.

Laurel Wilson '19

Site: Special Collections & College Archives at Gettysburg College's Musselman Library

Majors/Minors: History and studio art/Civil War Era Studies and public history

Past Pohanka Experience: Antietam National Battlefield, 2017

What will you be doing this summer?

Work in archival research, processing, and digitizing materials, including creating a finding aid for a collection and transcribing Vertical File Manuscript materials

What do you hope to gain from this experience?

“I hope to gain valuable archival skills and to learn how Special Collections takes care of its amazing collection of historical artifacts and other resources. I am also excited to have the opportunity to work with the artifacts and manuscripts directly, as it is not something that everyone gets to do every day.”

How will this internship fit into your plans for the future?

“I hope to go into some kind of curatorial or archival work in the future, so the experience that I will gain from working in Special Collections will definitely be incredibly valuable for that. This internship will provide me with a basis of knowledge to continue building upon in the future, which is incredibly exciting.”



*The author giving a walking tour of Henry Hill at Manassas National Battlefield Park last summer.
Photo by Cathy Bilger.*

Jared Barna '20

Site: Manassas National Battlefield Park

Major: History

What will you be doing this summer?

Working to orient visitors to the battlefield, through interpretive tour programs and answering questions at the Visitor Center desk.

What do you hope to gain from this experience?

“I will gain knowledge about how to engage individuals with major questions about history and become a better public orator.”

How will this internship fit into your plans for the future?

“This internship will help me decide as to whether I wish to work in the park service full time or if I want to become a high school history teacher.”

Cameron Sauers '21

Site: Harper's Ferry National Historical Park

Major: History

What will you be doing this summer?

Develop and deliver educational programs and activities to K-12 students and families at Harpers Ferry

What do you hope to gain from this experience?

“I think Harpers Ferry will give me the chance to see how the public, especially young people, interact with our nation's history.” The long and varied history of the site will also help in these observations.

How will this internship fit into your plans for the future?

“I have a desire to either work in the NPS system or continue on to graduate school. I would love to be able to teach students at the high school or college level.”

As for myself, I will be returning to the Pohanka program for my second summer as an intern, this year at Antietam National Battlefield. I expect that my duties will also include orienting visitors to the Antietam battlefield through programs and work at the front desk. I hope to continue refining my skills as a public historian and interpreter, and to bring the history of Antietam to the general public in an interesting and engaging way. This fits into my future goals of working in public history, whether in the National Park Service or at another historic site or museum.

This summer is shaping up to be an exciting one for the 2018 Brian C. Pohanka interns! Stay tuned throughout the summer, as we'll be posting reflection pieces from the interns on their individual experiences!