

Les Bénévoles Philadelphia 2019

Arch Street Meeting House

4 volunteers needed

Arch Street Meeting House is a National Historic Landmark and has been a Quaker place of worship since 1682. They are seeking volunteers to perform condition assessments and plan for upgraded storage for their historic furniture collections. "I'd like to say up front that this would be a messy treasure hunt sort of project." Furniture will be brought upstairs from the basement, cleaned, inventoried, condition assessed, and upgraded storage will be planned.

Betsy Ross House

4 volunteers needed

The American Flag House and Betsy Ross Memorial, also known as the Betsy Ross House (BRH), is dedicated to the preservation, maintenance and administration of this historic site and acknowledges the significance of Betsy Ross in American History. The BRH is one of the most visited historic sites in the nation it is among the few that interpret the life of a middle class, 18th century tradeswoman. The museum collection holds exceptional objects such as flags created by Betsy Ross' daughters and granddaughters, furniture that Betsy Ross owned, and personal items such as Ross' eyeglasses, snuffbox, and bible. The Betsy Ross House requests assistance with documenting and rehousing a large number of textiles, mostly flags. The condition of these flags has not been documented and the current non-archival artifact tags that are currently on them need to be replaced with archival quality tags.

Burlington County Historical Society

3 volunteers needed

The Burlington County Historical Society (BCHS) was founded in 1915, as the Women's Historical Society. BCHS is comprised of the Corsen Poley Center and three historic houses: Bard How House (c. 1740); Captain James Lawrence House (c.1741); and James Fenimore Cooper Birthplace (c.1780). The project consists of object re-housing, deinstalling large quilts (requiring the use of a ladder), inventory and photography (if feasible), labeling boxes, and moving collections between buildings (requires going outside and the possible navigation of stairs).

Center for Art in Wood

4 volunteers needed

The Center for Art in Wood is a non-profit museum that advocates for creative engagement in the material of wood. Since 1986, it has presented an increasingly ambitious roster of exhibitions and publications to document the field and its artists and built a museum collection of 1200 works in wood. The Center for Art in Wood is seeking 3-4 volunteers to add exhibition history to its collection management database.

Chester County Historical Society

4 volunteers needed

CCHS has been collecting materials about the history of the region since 1893. More than three hundred years of local history are represented in the permanent collections which contain over 80,000 museum objects, 750,000 manuscripts, 100,000 images in the photo archives, and 20,000 reference books. The specific group of materials to be addressed during Les Bénévoles are the are shawls, primarily 19th century, that number 326. They reflect fashion of the 1800s and Quaker traditions. The tasks that CCHS would like to accomplish include: 1) inventory, 2) upgrading catalog records, 3) photodocumentation, and 4) rehousing if necessary.

Darby Library Company

3 volunteers needed

Benjamin Franklin said the Library Company of Philadelphia was “The mother of all subscription libraries.” The Darby Library Company became its first offspring on the tenth day of March, 1743. Nicknamed "The Gateway to The South" because of its status as a popular way station for travelers between Baltimore and Philadelphia, Darby was also an important stop for many freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad. Records include those of other organizations that merged with the Darby Library Company, including the Delaware County Society for the Detection of Horse Thieves and the Recovery of Stolen Horses and the Darby Home Protection Society. The collection needs to be evaluated and condition reported. Volunteers will create recommendations for storage and a detailed recommended supply list of materials needed for collections care and housing.

The Elfreth's Alley Association

5 volunteers needed

Elfreth's Alley is our nation's oldest residential street. Nestled between Second Street and the Delaware River, thirty-two Federal and Georgian residences stand as reminders of the early days of Philadelphia. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1966. The Elfreth's Alley Association operates a small museum with a staff of one. They request five volunteers to help with inventory, cataloging, numbering, photodocumenting, and rehousing of collection objects.

Robert and Penny Fox Historic Costume Collection at Drexel University

6 volunteers needed

The Robert and Penny Fox Historic Costume Collection at Drexel University (FHCC) is a university research collection of historic dress that serves as an important educational resource for students of design, history, and culture. The collection houses an estimated 15,000 objects. The FHCC welcomes volunteers to assist in the rehousing of archival materials related to the fashion designer James Galanos. These materials encompass about 20 linear feet and range from sketches and photographs to archival documents. One of the most challenging aspects of the project will revolve around the rehousing of an estimated 2,500 sketches on tracing paper, many of which have fabric swatches attached. These sketches will be stored in folders, lying flat, with interleaving tissue between each sketch to protect from the fabric swatches catching and tearing. The remaining materials will be rehoused in folders and stored in document cases, allowing for proper storage and easier access.

Founder's Hall, Girard College

8 volunteers needed

Founder's Hall is a museum operating within Girard College, a school for academically capable, economically disadvantaged students in grades 1-12. The school was established through a bequest by Stephen Girard, a self-made multi-millionaire merchant and banker who died in 1831 as one of the wealthiest Americans of all time. Since classes began on January 1, 1848, the school has provided entirely free residential education for more than 22,000 children. The museum preserves and interprets historical collections associated with Stephen Girard and Girard College, including the National Historic Landmark building of Founder's Hall itself. They invite Les Bénévoles to help rehouse their collection of historic photographs, including glass plate negatives and prints. There are 15 boxes of glass plate negatives which will be placed in individual enclosures, labeled, and stored vertically in archival boxes. There are approximately 25 boxes of prints which also need to be rehoused.

Glen Foerd on the Delaware

7 volunteers needed

Glen Foerd on the Delaware is an 18-acre historic estate located in Northeast Philadelphia. The estate, established in 1850, has numerous outbuildings and a 30,000 sq. foot mansion. Volunteers will assist with two projects. One is to clean the rare books, create fitted acid free housing for approximately 20 titles, provide basic condition reports, and assist our staff with covering the book storage areas with acid free paper. The second project is the rehousing of prints and framed works of art. Many of the paintings on site are currently housed in closets throughout the building. We would request assistance in consolidating the collections into fewer areas, adding foam blocking and supports for the paintings, the creation of a finding guide for the paintings in storage, and the possible installation of a dowel system into shelving to allow us to properly store the most notable paintings on site by artists such as Thomas Sully and Violet Oakley.

Hill-Physick House, Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks

5 volunteers needed

The Hill-Physick house was built in 1786 and is an exceptional example of the Federal style. Its collections include period specific objects, furniture, and documents. Their project is to digitally photograph small and medium sized objects in their collection on a white paper background with a tripod/light setup. There are many (100+) small and medium objects, and they would like to photograph as many as possible. They will prepare tables for staging objects pre and post photography. As a team photographs the objects, the photos can be directly uploaded to a laptop and saved under the collections number. They would also like to have a team condition reporting these objects as they wait "on deck" to be photographed.

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania

25 volunteers needed

Founded in 1824 in Philadelphia, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP) has long been one of the nation's principal centers for historical research. HSP has tremendous holdings documenting the greater Delaware Valley and is particularly strong in the early national period, when Philadelphia was the capital city of the new nation. HSP's Director of Archives, has identified collections in dire need of rehousing. They all need relatively similar treatment with small specific adjustments for each collection. One is in boxes believed to date from the 1880's when HSP received the collection (the boxes are actually labeled *the papers of President Buchanan*). Some are in what are ubiquitously groaned about as "the green boxes." These date

from the 1930's when the Works Progress Administration surveyed and rehoused some HSP collections. These collections desperately need to be moved to new document boxes and require new folders which need stamping and labeling by hand. Other wishes would be box labeling and box level inventory. Other collections are currently housed in large cartons. Rehousing them into regular document boxes will greatly improve accessibility for library staff and researchers. Please note that transportation to this site will be on foot, an approximately 7-minute walk.

James A. Michener Art Museum

10 volunteers needed

In 1988 the James A. Michener Art Museum opened as an independent, non-profit cultural institution dedicated to preserving, interpreting and exhibiting the art and cultural heritage of the Bucks County region. The museum is named for Doylestown's most famous son, the Pulitzer-Prize winning writer who first dreamed of a regional art museum in the early 1960s. Surrounded by historic prison walls, the Patricia D. Pfundt Sculpture Garden and terraces, and a landscaped courtyard, the Michener Art Museum encompasses 40,000 square feet of public space. In the thirty years that the Michener Museum has been open, they have presented an average of ten exhibits a year. They would like to have the help of 8-10 volunteers who can help to condition report a selection of works with either out of date or no condition documentation. They plan to target about 150 pieces in their permanent collection, both in their galleries and collection storage, which need up to date, detailed condition reports. They will prepare condition reports with images ahead of time that volunteers can use to note condition issues. All works chosen will be accessible without the use of a ladder.

Rose Valley Museum and Historical Society

4 volunteers needed

The Rose Valley Museum and Historical Society preserves artifacts and honors the history of Rose Valley, Pennsylvania, an intentional community founded in 1901 by the nationally renowned architect William Lightfoot Price to embody the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement. The achievements of the community include unique and historic architecture, Arts and Crafts furniture and pottery, a theater, publications, and works of important artists such as Alice Barber Stephens. The project will consist of 1) providing advice on collections management databases to consolidate collection documentation and 2) providing advice on materials for rehousing historic documents and photographs including specific sources, catalog numbers, and quantities 3) organizing and cataloging collections.

The Rosenbach

4 volunteers needed

The Rosenbach collection contains nearly 400,000 rare books, manuscripts, and fine and decorative arts objects. Their site includes three exhibition galleries, Dr. Rosenbach's rare book library, Philip Rosenbach's decorative art collection, and a re-creation of modernist poet Marianne Moore's Greenwich Village living room, in the Rosenbach brothers' 19th-century townhouse in beautiful Rittenhouse Square neighborhood. They have identified three projects with which they need assistance. 1) Map Inventory: The Rosenbach has approximately 220 maps in its archival collection. They would like 2 volunteers to help inventory this collection, updating an existing spreadsheet. This would also include sorting maps according to size; adding a printed label the exterior of each Mylar sleeve; and inserting a blue-board (or similar type acid-free, thin and yet supportive material) support between every 10 mats. 2) Marianne Moore Periodicals Guide: The manuscript materials that comprise the bulk of the Marianne Moore collection periodicals guide are only accessible to the public via hard-copy collections guide. We would like one volunteer to type the guide in an electronic format. 3) Marianne Moore Collection Scanning: The Marianne Moore Collection is the most heavily researched area of the Rosenbach collection. We'd like to have one volunteer assist in scanning a discrete selection of frequently requested material, likely correspondence with another author or a specific poem. We would endeavor to have all volunteers working in one space to maintain the level socialization that always comes with Bénévoles projects!