



Vacancy: British American Nineteenth Century Historians (BrANCH): Creating a Digital Collection

BrANCH is seeking a talented PGR or ECR to create a digital collection for BrANCH. This is a **paid** opportunity to complete a project over the summer and create a fantastic resource for BrANCH. We are grateful to the BAAS-US Embassy fund for their financial support of this exciting initiative.

BrANCH's 30th anniversary in 2023 allows us to reflect on our organisation's development and changing nature. Our new digital collection will help ensure our digital sustainability and constitutes an important part of our mission to promote the study of nineteenth-century America in the UK.

The successful candidate will create a publicly accessible digital collection for BrANCH, as part of our initiatives to develop a more open, inclusive, and accessible organisation. They will liaise with BrANCH members to collate materials and create the digital collection thereafter. We intend for the digital collection to be a tool to strengthen ties within our scholarly community and to help us reach out to wider audiences by enabling opportunities to see more clearly what we do.

The digital collection will be hosted via a link on the BrANCH website, and is inspired by ideas about archives, collections and accessibility. It will likely contain:

- Results from our 30th anniversary member survey
- Photographs from past BrANCH events (due attention will be given to permissions and intellectual property rights)
- Oral history interviews with members (recorded via teams/zoom, with transcripts, undertaken during one week of the project, following ethical guidelines)
- BrANCH's institutional history, written by the successful applicant
- Contact details/research specialisms of willing members to enable networking/connections (eg: when travelling in US or for prospective PGRs seeking supervision)
- A dedicated feedback/interaction section to maintain the collection's active nature (to be tasked to a committee member alongside the biannual updates)
- Records of BrANCH's formal meetings with any sensitive issues redacted
- Past programmes from BrANCH conferences and events

Essential criteria for this position are as follows:

- Studying for a PhD (or PhD recently awarded) in nineteenth-century American history
- Existing involvement/interest in BrANCH
- Technical skills in designing webpages
- Communication skills for conducting oral history
- Research skills in sifting information
- Writing skills for completing the institutional history
- Oral skills for liaising with members and presenting at the formal launch at Oxford

The creation of the digital collection will provide **six weeks** of paid work as an educational opportunity for the successful applicant. The financial model for this project draws upon the 'Undergraduate Research Opportunities Scheme' offered by the University of Reading (and many other HEIs) which provides students at the end of their second year to partake in a placement over the summer vacation to develop a research project with a member of staff.

Payment will be made via a lump sum bursary (in two parts, the first halfway through the project, the second after the project's completion). The placement is not 'employment' as such, but an educational opportunity to develop valuable research skills, including one week of virtual oral history interviews.

There is some flexibility with the dates depending on the successful applicant's preferences, with the successful applicant undertaking **six weeks of full-time work on the project, between June-August 2023**. All work needs to be completed before August 2023 so the collection can be launched at the BrANCH annual conference in Oxford (22-23 September 2023).

The total payment for the six weeks of full time work will be **£3,990** with an additional **£400** to travel to Oxford and attend the 30th BrANCH annual conference at the University of Oxford (22-24 September 2023) to present on the digital collection. Because of the nature of the funding, this opportunity is only open to those based in UK HEIs or otherwise resident in the UK.

If you are interested in applying please submit a letter of no more than one page outlining your interest in the role and evidencing how you meet the essential criteria along with a one page cv to Emily West (e.r.west@reading.ac.uk) to whom any informal enquires should also be addressed.

The closing date is **Friday 31st March 2023**.

The interview panel will include Emily West (BrANCH chair/project lead) and at least one other BrANCH committee member. Virtual interviews will take place in **May 2023**.