

# Volunteering at the Sarasota County History Center

The History Center is your one-stop shop for books, maps, photographs, archival records, and other resources documenting the history and culture of Sarasota County, its communities, and its people. If you love local history, consider supporting the History Center as a volunteer! The following are some of the most common tasks History Center volunteers do. Individual volunteers may be assigned to a specific task, or they might rotate between tasks depending on the needs of the staff and the skills and interests of the volunteers. Volunteers typically assist from two to four hours per week on a schedule arranged with the staff.

## At the History Center

**Scanning** – Digitizing photographs, maps, and other historical records makes it easier to share them with the public. Previous experience with scanners and image handling software is helpful but not a requirement.

**Refiling** – Researchers request all kinds of maps, photographs, books, and historical records on a regular basis. Volunteers can help by making sure these valuable materials get back to their proper homes once a researcher is finished with them.

**Data Entry** – The History Center’s collections are large, and they continue to grow each year. One of the staff’s critical responsibilities is to catalog each item and regularly update existing catalog records with new information as it becomes available. This makes it easier for researchers to quickly find exactly what they are looking for when they visit. Volunteers can help with this process in a variety of ways. Formal training in library or archival cataloging is not necessary, but experience with spreadsheet programs like Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets can be useful for these tasks.

**Archaeology Lab** – The History Center is home to an extensive collection of archaeological specimens and artifacts, which help us better understand the earliest inhabitants of what we now call Sarasota County. Cataloging and exhibiting these items requires careful documentation. Volunteers assist the County Archaeologist with this important work by entering information into databases, labeling artifact boxes and bags, and refiling records.

**Collection Maintenance** – The History Center and the Sarasota County Historical Commission have been collecting historical records and artifacts since the 1930s—almost a century! Keeping these invaluable materials in top condition for research and exhibition means regular maintenance for both the materials and their containers. Volunteers can assist the Collections Curator by labeling or relabeling boxes, folders, or other containers; replacing older containers with new ones; flattening rolled maps for more efficient storage; and similar tasks.

## Location Flexible

**Obituary Database** – The History Center maintains an extensive database of local obituaries going back more than a century, which provides a wealth of information for genealogists and other researchers. Volunteers can help with this project from home, a library branch, or anywhere with a reliable Internet connection by indexing the obituaries in our web-based system.

**On This Day in Sarasota County History** – This is an extensive project to build a detailed timeline of important events in the history of Sarasota County and its communities. Volunteers help by researching important dates, fact-checking sources, and identifying visuals to accompany each timeline event. This work can be done anywhere with a reliable Internet connection.

**Interested in volunteering at the History Center? Contact Assistant Manager Jon Sexton at 941-861-6090 or [jsexton@scgov.net](mailto:jsexton@scgov.net) for more information on how to get started!**