

Overview

The Oak Spring Garden Foundation (OSGF) with support from the Afro-American Historical Association of Fauquier (AAHA), is seeking expressions of interest for an experienced researcher to collect archival information. The purpose of this project is to create a family map of the landowners who once owned the land that would become part of Paul Mellon's 4,000 acre estate in the twentieth century. This will span landowners from about 1618 up until the early twentieth century.

The family tree is an important step in OSGF and AAHA's long term goal of knowing the names of all the African Americans who lived and worked on the property, and in Fauquier County. After the family tree is made, OSGF will be able to match wills, land deed transfers, and other archival information that will show where enslaved people lived and when.

The ideal researcher will have experience conducting research using archival materials. Preference will be given to candidates who can show a clear interest in early-American, Virginian, or local history.

Whenever possible, the family tree should include the following information:

- The timeline of the ownership and the general area of the land owned
- The names of children and marriages
- Birth and death dates
- Information about crops, job duties, or tasks that might illuminate how different land tracts or areas were used

The information for this project is expected to be found at the following:

- In the holdings at AAHA, or on AAHA's website
- ancestry.com
- Heritage Society at John Gott's Library
- Circuit Court of Fauquier County Record Room
- Diaries and family bibles

Qualifications:

- Ability to travel to various locations where archival materials are located
- Ability to read and translate cursive and rare, old documents
- Ability to stand and lift 50 lbs
- Ability to work independently, with periodic check-ins with OSGF and AAHA staff
- Attention to detail and strong writing and editing skills
- An interest in early-American, Virginian, or local history is stringy preferred
- Strong computer skills

Timeline: Review of applications will occur on a rolling basis, until June 15, 2024. The contract will begin with a 3-month period, with possibility of extension.

To apply: Please submit a cover letter indicating your interest and relevant experience, and resume to OSGF at hr@osgf.org and info@aahafauquier.org.

About the Oak Spring Garden Foundation (OSGF) The Oak Spring Garden Foundation is a private operating foundation, located a little over an hour west of Washington, D.C. in the rural Virginia Piedmont between the Blue Ridge and Bull Run Mountains, on what was once the private residential estate of Paul and Rachel Lambert "Bunny" Mellon. A devoted horticulturist, gardener and collector, Bunny Mellon cultivated an impressive collection of books and art objects over the course of her life that now form the core of the collections of the Oak Spring Garden Library.

While the Oak Spring estate has a long and interesting history, OSGF is a young organization that has only existed in its current form for about six years. The Foundation's mission is to inspire fresh thinking and bold action on the history and future of plants, horticultural practice, the art and culture of gardens and landscapes, and the importance of plants for human well-being. Its activities toward providing a public benefit include the sustainable management and stewardship of a 700-acre landscape, as well as the other legacies of Mrs. Mellon, which include a significant endowment, the formal garden, the library and substantial residential accommodation. The current President, Sir Peter Crane FRS, reports to a small but distinguished Board.

Oak Spring Garden Foundation is an equal opportunity organization and will not allow discrimination based upon age, ancestry, disability, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, race, religious belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, political belief, or veteran status.

About the Afro-American Historical Association of Fauquier County (AAHA) The Afro-American Historical Association of Fauquier County, Virginia serves as an invaluable resource for those researching their own family history or the history of the region. The 4,269 square foot museum on the lower level is home to 1,634 artifacts detailing the rich history of Fauquier County's Black residents. It provides an interactive experience for school and community groups. The AAHA's 2276 sq. feet auditorium hosts special events — a celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday for instance, or a family celebration, recognizing a family line.