

Special Collections Library Internship Reflection

During my internship with the Cal Poly Humboldt Library Special Collections, I gained practical experience in digitization, metadata entry, transcription, and archival organization. My responsibilities included scanning photographs and documents, uploading files to Digital Commons, transcribing audio, and processing a collection from start to finish using standard archival methods.

For my final project, I rehoused the Connie Stewart/CCRP files from beginning to end, which I found to be the most rewarding part of the internship. It gave me insight into the decision-making involved in organizing a physical collection and allowed me to create a finding aid—a key document that outlines the contents and structure of the collection to help researchers locate materials. Being involved in this final step of the process helped me understand how all the earlier tasks come together to support access and usability.

The internship met my expectations by offering hands-on experience with archival tools and workflows. I especially appreciated working directly with historical materials and learning how collections are prepared for public use.

One of the main challenges was managing my time. I was taking 18 units and also completing the 120-hour requirement for my Museum and Gallery Practices certificate, which limited the time I had to explore additional aspects of the department.

Overall, this was a valuable introduction to archival work. I came into the internship open to learning anything and everything, and I left with a strong foundation in behind-the-scenes practices in special collections. I would recommend it to other students interested in libraries, museums, or public history. My advice: be patient, ask questions, and stay organized—each task contributes to making collections accessible and meaningful to others.