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## A Conversation with Maleah Wells, OhioLINK Library Leaders Intern

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**WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 14, 2020**

# A Conversation with Maleah Wells, OhioLINK Library Leaders Intern

By Kayla Harris

Maleah Wells, a junior history major, is in the second semester of her internship program in the University Libraries as part of the OhioLINK Library Leaders program. The program introduces students to different aspects of librarianship as they complete six-week rotations through different departments. I sat down with Maleah over Zoom to reflect on her latest rotation in the Marian Library and about her experience in the University Libraries so far.

## THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

KH: What made you interested in this internship opportunity?

- MW: I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my degree. It's a very versatile degree; you can go anywhere with a history degree. I saw it as an opportunity to expand my horizons. I had no idea, for example, that you have to go to graduate school to be a librarian. I didn't realize how much work actually went into that job.

KH: You rotated through a couple of departments already this year, back in the spring semester. Can you tell me what those were and what you liked the most or learned during your time there?

- MW: My first round was in access services. My job there was to observe and shadow many of the people in the department. I got to meet a lot of people and see the behind-the-scenes aspect of some of the library work. I really liked meeting all the people and talking with the student employees in that area. My second rotation was in University Archives. There, I had free rein to direct my work and do some historical

PREVIOUS  
POST

'The Considerable Number of Students': A Response to W.E.B. Du Bois

'The Crisis' sought information on Black enrollment at U.S. universities in 1930; a reply from UD in W.E.B. Du Bois' papers in the archives at University of Massachusetts Amherst provides a telling example of racial segregation.

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Citizen Web Archiving: Preserving

research on Black students who had studied at the University of Dayton.

[Note: Maleah wrote a blog post on this research: [“Searching for Myself: Black History Majors at UD”](#)]

KH: The pandemic has meant that you have been completing your internship rotations remotely this semester. What have been some of the challenges of that?

- MW: The biggest challenge is that when I was in University Archives, I had physical access to everything. During this rotation with the Marian Library, learning about digital archiving, I really had to search for things and had to stare at a computer screen. I didn't like that part; I missed the physical access to unique items.

KH: What about positives or opportunities? Have there been any aspects of the remote internship experience that may have been better than the physical counterpart?

- MW: I think social distancing is going to be a common thing for the next few years, and it will change how we view archiving and what we do in the future. I'm glad I got a taste of that now.

## WEB ARCHIVING AND THE MARIAN LIBRARY

KH: To start your time in the Marian Library, you did some reading both about the history of the Marian Library and about the basics of web archiving. Was there anything that stood out to you as particularly surprising or interesting?

- MW: All my life, everyone always told me to be careful what you put on the Internet because it will never be erased; it will be there forever. Now, I learned that isn't completely true. I was also really surprised by how this issue affected lawyers. One of the [articles](#) mentioned how lawyers will prepare their court materials, and they go back to find something, and it isn't there anymore. It made me feel better that maybe

## Websites for the Common Good

Web archiving is the process of collecting, preserving and providing access to the content of the Internet. The articles we share, the social media posts we like — these are the things from today that will make up the historical record of tomorrow, but only if someone actively saves them.

[Read More](#)

in 10 or 20 years some of my earlier social media posts may not be there.

KH: As part of your project, you learned about the entire process to archive websites, from finding the content on the Internet to crawling the site, then adding descriptive metadata so that users can access it. You found some really interesting stories about Mary. Can you tell me a little bit about one of them?

- MW: I think the most interesting one was about the [Vatican vs. the Mafia](#) and their rights over Mary — the cultural representation of Mary. It makes sense; we see mafia movies, and it can be very common to have this Catholic representation. We see Mary there a lot. I just didn't realize it was this ongoing battle with the Vatican.

KH: Has learning about web archiving changed the way you view content online as a future historian?

- MW: It does. Now I realize that there are so many things out there that have probably not even been saved that could have been useful now. That changes my perspective, I will try to save as much as possible to be able to reference in the future. There's an erasure of culture, and web archiving is a way to save those narratives and stories the proper way so that future historians can access them.

KH: What about personally? Has it made you think about how you tell your own family's story and history now that so much of our lives is online?

- MW: Absolutely. I think about Ancestry.com and how you can find census records, for example. It's made me think about archiving my family's social media profiles to keep track of family history and stories.

KH: And finally, could you tell me a little bit about your future plans, post-UD?

- MW: I hope to go to graduate school, and I am considering Texas A&M, looking at a master's degree in library science. I'm interested in working in higher education — maybe advising, working in libraries or doing both.

— *Kayla Harris is a faculty librarian and archivist in the Marian Library.*

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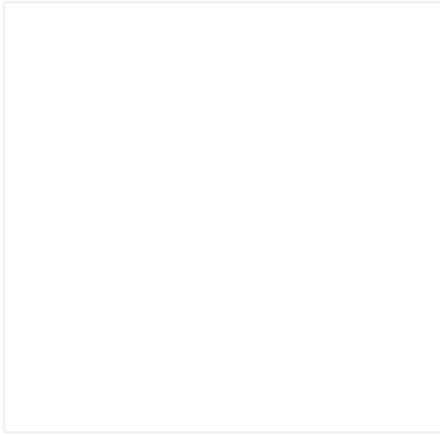
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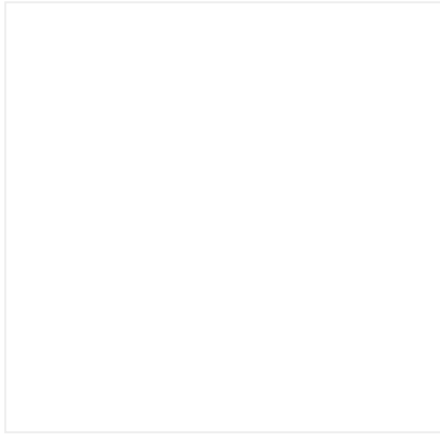


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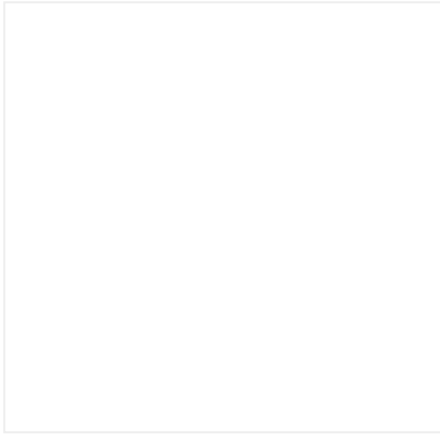
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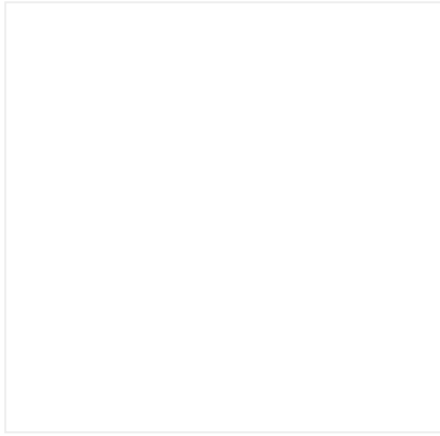
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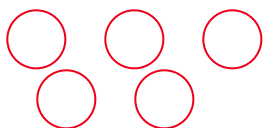
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