John William Wallace

Rutherford County Historic Courthouse Museum
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Current Appointment

Rutherford County Historic Courthouse Museum, Murfreesboro, TN 2024 - Present
Graduate Museum Assistant, Part-Time

- Serving as primary registrar for manuscript and artifact collections, managing accessioning, cataloging, metadata, and records in PastPerfect in accordance with AAM standards.
- Enhancing documentation and access through object digitization, photography, and condition reporting to support preservation and research use.
- Monitoring environmental conditions and authored a policy document for microclimate monitoring procedures and guidelines to strengthen long-term preservation of collections.
- Constructing object housings and rehouse collections using soft-and-cavity-packing techniques based on object material and condition.
- Authored a grant budget proposal supporting collections storage, environmental controls, and digitization initiatives.
- Selecting objects for interpretation and managed rotation of collection items to support exhibition updates and access.

Education

Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN 2026
Master of Arts, History with a Concentration in Public History, Museum Management

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Chattanooga, TN 2024
Bachelor of Arts, History, Minor in Historic Preservation

Research Interest

- 18th and 19th Century History
- African American History
- Appalachian Studies
- Death and Burial Practices
- Craftspeople
- Material Culture
- Museum Studies

Select Curatorial Projects

Museum of Appalachia, Clinton, TN 2026
Collections Management System and Policy Strategic Plan, Researcher and Author
Developed a strategic collections management plan to integrate a new CMS and outlining policies for documentation, access, preservation, and long-term stewardship in accordance with museum best practices.

Linebaugh Public Library System, Murfreesboro, TN 2026
“Revolutionary Legacies” 5-Panel Exhibit, Exhibit Curator and Developer
Curated a 5-panel exhibit by conducting collections-focused research to support provenance, documentation, and thematic interpretation while developing public-facing exhibit content to enhance educational access and engagement.

Tennessee State Parks, Vonore, TN 2025
McGhee-Carson Historic Site Preservation and Interpretive Plan, Developer
Developed a preservation and interpretive plan standardizing site histories, defining key interpretive themes and strategies, and establishing procedures to improve public engagement and ensure long-term stewardship of the site.

Tennessee State Parks, Vonore, TN 2025
Wayside Panels and Commemorative Panels, Curator
Researched and curated interpretive text and visual media for two wayside panels and a cemetery commemorative panel, translating the site's complicated and difficult histories into accessible narratives that enhance public engagement beyond guided programs.

MTSU Digital History Lab, Murfreesboro, TN 2025
"Death in Transition" Digital Exhibit, Curator and Designer
Developed a digital exhibit and interactive map analyzing the emerging funerary industry in East Tennessee, improving understanding of access, adoption, and regional deathcare transitions and challenging homogenized narratives in Appalachian scholarship.

African Methodist Episcopal Digital Archives 2025
"Though He May Die" Digital Exhibit, Curator and Designer
Produced a digital exhibit on Allen Chapel AME and Benevolent Cemetery in Rutherford County, interpreting African American deathcare through funerals, institutions, and cemetery stewardship, enhancing access to underrepresented community histories.

Stones River National Cemetery, Murfreesboro, TN 2025
Hallowed Grounds Program Update and Curriculum Packets, Developer
Researched Civil War soldiers to develop a new stop for *Hallowed Ground: Lantern Tours of Stones River National Cemetery*, incorporating narratives tied to death, burial, and hardship to strengthen program narrative and public engagement.

Center for Historic Preservation, Murfreesboro, TN 2024
Cannonsburgh Village Museum and Collections Condition Assessment, Assessor and Co-Author
Collaborated on a strategic plan for Cannonsburgh Village Museum collections to assess and evaluate collection holdings, and provide management, interpretation, and storage recommendations to improve documentation and access of collections.

Jeffrey Brown Institute of Archaeology, Chattanooga, TN 2024
Archaeological Collections Rehabilitation and Cataloging, Collections Assistant
Rehabilitated and cataloged archaeological collections through physical stabilization and ArchivesSpace data entry, improving preservation conditions, metadata accuracy, and research access.

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Chattanooga, TN 2023
St. Mark's United Methodist Church National Register Nomination Statements of Significance, Researched, Co-Author
Collaborated with other students to research and author statements of historical and architectural significance for St. Mark's United Methodist Church, situating the church within broader historical contexts to support National Register eligibility.

UTC Special Collections, Chattanooga, TN 2023
"Sandy Sandlin Chattanooga Lookouts Photographs" Finding Aid and Item Descriptions, Archives Assistant
Created a DACS-compliant finding aid and 170-item cataloged photograph collection using controlled vocabulary and ArchivesSpace, enhancing discoverability, documentation standards, and long-term access.

Public History Experience

Rutherford County Historic Courthouse Museum, Murfreesboro, TN 2024 - Present
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Fort Loudoun State Historic Area, Vonore, TN 2025
Preservation and Interpretation Planning Intern, Full-Time

- Researched and authored historical narratives and 28 biographical profiles to support interpretation and documentation.
- Developed preservation and interpretive plans for the Toco Cemetery and Tuskega homesite aligned with State Parks interpretive and education missions
- Designed and produced two interpretive panels and signage, translating extensive historical research into accessible public-facing content, as well as supporting park staff with programming logistics and educational outreach.
- Supported educational programming setup and coordination during the park's Junior Ranger Camp.

Franklin Associates Architects, Chattanooga, TN 2023 - 2024
Collections Manager, Part-to-Full-Time Contractor

- Managed and organized a collection of 5,200+ architectural drawings and documents, improving access through the development of a searchable database and standardized metadata.
- Established consistent cataloging practices by integrating legacy records into a unified database system.
- Conducted condition assessments and recommended storage strategies to improve long-term collection care.

Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum, Chattanooga, TN 2024
Museum Intern, Part-Time

- Supported collections management through cataloging, digitization, and object handling, ensuring digital preservation and documentation of collections.
- Prepared, packed, and transported donated exhibit objects and purchased publications.
- Developed an exhibit plan for "Lights Camera Track-tion," identifying key themes, objects, and interpretive strategies.
- Assisted in restoration efforts by assessing and cleaning historic equipment to support the museum's preservation mission.

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Chattanooga, TN 2023
First-Year History Student Mentor, Part-Time

- Co-developed and delivered lesson plans on UTC's history program, campus and community resources, and the process of historical research.
- Coordinated with campus faculty and staff to plan out-of-class events, site tours, and guest lectures.
- Communicated deadlines, assignment expectations, and local professional development opportunities.

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Library Special Collections, Chattanooga, TN 2023
Special Collections Undergraduate Fellow, Part-Time

- Produced a DACS-compliant finding aid for a 170-item photograph collection, enhancing discoverability and research access.
- Applied controlled vocabularies (Getty AAT) to standardize object descriptions and improve metadata consistency.

- Created digital object records in ArchivesSpace, strengthening online access and internal management through connected databases.
- Delivered reference services by retrieving and managing rare materials for researchers in a controlled environment.

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Library Special Collections, Chattanooga, TN 2023
Special Collections Assistant, Part-Time
- Digitized and processed archival materials, improving long-term access and preservation through high-quality scans and file management.
- Supported research access by transcribing oral histories and linking digital objects within ArchivesSpace.
- Provided reference services, ensuring proper handling and tracking of rare books and archival materials.

Select Public History Publication

Professional Reports
- Author, *Toco Cemetery and the McGhee Plantation Homesite: History, Biographies, Interpretation, and Cemetery Preservation Planning Report* (Center for Historic Preservation, 2025). [Pending Publication]
- Contributor, *Cannonsburgh Village Museum and Collection Assessment Report* (Center for Historic Preservation, 2025). Link.

Technical Documents
- Author, *Collections Management System and Policy Strategic Plan* (Museum of Appalachia, 2026).
- Author, *Environmental Standards and Guidelines* (Rutherford County Historic Courthouse Museum, 2025).

Public History Skills

Collections Standards and Controlled Vocabulary
- Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS)
- Getty Art & Architecture Thesaurus (AAT)
- Nomenclature for Museum Cataloging

Collection Management Systems Proficiencies
- PastPerfect
- ArchivesSpace
- CatalogIt
- Omeka

Basic Digital Software Competencies
- Adobe Acrobat
- Audacity
- Google Suite
- Microsoft Office
- WordPress

Collection Management Proficiencies
- Accessioning/Deaccessioning
- Records Management
- Collections Condition Assessment
- Database Management
- Metadata Creation
- Exhibit Support
- Microclimate Monitoring and Control

- Object Photography

Interpretative Proficiencies
- Exhibit Development
- Interpretive Text Writing
- Program Development and Delivering
- Interpretive Planning
- Event Planning
- Tennessee Social Studies Standards

Other Proficiencies
- Grant Budgeting
- Historical Research and Writing
- Preservation Planning