

# Meet a Museum Director! Video Transcript

**Instructions:** Use this video transcript to support you in completing the gallery walk activity.

## Transcript

My name is Ashley Rogers. I'm the executive director of the Whitney Plantation in Wallace, Louisiana. My background is that I majored in history in college, and I also got a master's degree in history. My mother worked in museums, and I started going to museums with her at work when I was two. So I've been around museums and history museums my entire life. And it's always been something that's interested me quite a bit.

When I was a kid, I used to go to a lot of different types of museums. I really loved going to the halls where they would have the birds and all of the animals and things like that. It's an environment where you learn something, but also you kind of get transported. It's really a whole experience. It's so different from everything else. So it's really different from learning in the classroom. You get to have your own thoughts about these things that you're seeing. And I really enjoyed having that more immersive, experiential type of learning. That was always really interesting to me as a kid.

I work in a plantation museum. Plantation museums are a type of museum that you see throughout the South. Usually, these were founded to kind of showcase the mansion where the enslavers lived and to showcase their lifestyle. Whitney Plantation is really fundamentally different from that because we are entirely focused on the history of slavery. Our mission is that we educate the public about the history and legacies of slavery in the United States. And so everything that we do in our operations and everything we do in terms of how we talk about this history to the public is linked to that mission.

I think that for young people who are interested in working in museums, internships are a really good way to get interested. But I think that there are so many entry-level jobs in museums. Oftentimes, you'll hear people say that they want to be a curator but maybe don't know all of the things that a curator does, but also maybe don't know all of the other jobs that there are in museums.

Museums have a lot of different departments. There's education departments in museums, and there's people who just do fundraising, and there are people who work in libraries. And there's people who conserve objects. All of those things are wildly different—or like me, who are administrators. There's a lot of different things you can do, and I think it's really important for folks who are interested to learn what everybody does in museums.

I would really like for young people to get excited about history. I know that sometimes history can seem boring. If history is nothing but dates and wars, that might not be interesting. But if you think that the people around you are interesting, and if you think that your world is interesting today, you can get interested in history too because that's all that history is. It's just everything that's happening now, in the past. There's all of these different aspects that can get really exciting and that are just endless sources of fascination for me. So I really want to encourage kids to get their curiosity piqued by history.