

As an intern at the New England Historic Genealogical Society, also known as American Ancestors, I was assigned to the 10 Million Names project, which aims to recover the stories of an estimated 10 million men, women and children of African descent who were enslaved in the United States between the 1500s and 1865. It aims to provide their descendants with answers to their lost lineages through the creation of a searchable database, while simultaneously connecting institutions and individual researchers.

To contribute to these efforts, I first gathered a list of archival repositories with slave trader account books, which might hold valuable information in identifying enslaved persons. However, the bulk of my work this summer focused on the city of New Bedford, Massachusetts, a haven for enslaved persons fleeing from other states during the nineteenth century. My work was rooted in the Nathan and Polly Johnson Papers, which I digitized and transcribed in collaboration with the New Bedford Public Library. Nathan and Polly Johnson were prominent African American abolitionists who sheltered fugitives in their New Bedford home, Frederick Douglass among them.

From these letters and supplementary research, which included a visit to the New Bedford Historical Society, I learned about Betsey Gibson, her daughters Helen and Jane, and a girl named Margaret, who were also housed by the Johnsons in the 1830s. They were brought to New Bedford by their owner, Georgia planter Patrick Gibson, father to Helen and Jane. While their relatives remained enslaved on Gibson's southern plantation, Betsey and the girls lived in New Bedford, their room and board paid for by Patrick. This complex relationship and what happened to Betsey, the girls, and their family members served as the focus for an article that I wrote for the *American Ancestors* magazine which will be published later this year.

As an art historian, archival research is an instrumental part of my work, providing concrete evidence for more conceptual ideas. As an intern at American Ancestors, I was able to draw from my developing skillset as a graduate student to find relevant repositories and institutions, handle delicate original documents, and complete extensive supplementary research for my final article, even requesting books through the Mugar library. The writing skills that I have gained throughout my PhD program were essential for my work with the American Ancestors magazine, while working directly with the publication's editor, Lynn Betlock, gave me insight into the editing process of such a project. The internship also provided me with new tools and skills, such as online catalogues and databases I had not used before, how to create family trees, finding vital records, and learning about institutional relationships and resources that I most definitely will need in the future.

As a Caribbeanist, I am deeply interested in the African diaspora and the perpetual effects of colonization and empire in cultural production. By being able to find primary records, such as ship manifests, correspondence, and census data, I will be able to strengthen my research going forward. These resources and repositories will be essential to my upcoming dissertation, which will consider the relationship between art and politics in 1950s Puerto Rico under North American oversight. Given my goal to one day become a professor and

curator, I will draw from this internship experience to offer art history courses and exhibitions that may touch upon subjects like Caribbean emancipation, material culture in the United States, and cultural production throughout the Underground and Maritime Railroads.