

While interning at the Concord Museum this summer, I worked primarily as a research assistant for the museum's next two exhibits celebrating the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. I consulted primary sources at the Concord Free Public Library and American Antiquarian Society to study the Concord Female Charitable Society and Shays' Rebellion, and online I studied the minutes of the General Court to calculate tax burdens during the war. Aided with this research, I wrote, edited, and proofread drafts of wall text, railing text, and labels for the next exhibit opening in October. On the side, I worked with the Advancement department to prepare grants with governmental organizations, including NEH and Mass Humanities, and with their Marketing, Communication, and Media Relations specialist to create a digital exhibition for their website and a video for their social media pages.

The preparation for my qualifying exams this past spring primed me for this, sharpening my research skills. I was already familiar with several relevant websites and had a list of keywords top of mind. In line with my dissertation topic, I always had an eye to understanding how social institutions fit into the stories I was researching. My work as a teaching assistant helped me prepare for my social media video. Drawing on how I prepared to give lectures, I prepared scripts that were free from jargon and addressed the questions I anticipated a lay audience might have.

While preparing for my qualifying exams in the spring, I saw how my dissertation topic, centered around events in the 1960's and 70's, is deeply connected the culture and events of Colonial, Revolutionary and early Federal American history. I requested to intern at the Concord Museum specifically because they requested someone to work on their semiquincentennial exhibitions. It has been extremely useful to be surrounded by so many colleagues with a wide knowledge of American history to query and receive feedback from on my ideas about American history. The research work I was assigned has also given me a strong familiarity with the nature and locations of colonial sources and archives which I have already begun to apply to my dissertation work.

I am grateful for the experience of interning at the Concord Museum this summer. For several years, I have been interested in working in museums and/or historic sites, but the work seemed so different from my work as a musicologist. I struggled to find an opening into the field, and the BU Center for the Humanities internship seemed the like perfect opportunity. With my colleagues at the Museum, I found that passion for storytelling is the common goal of any historian, across disciplines and across topics.