

David Fleming-Brown Travel Scholarship Report

My name is Danielle Fleming and I am a second year PhD candidate in the Andrew Hook Centre for American Studies at the University of Glasgow. I was awarded the David Fleming- Brown Travel Scholarship to facilitate a research trip to the *Mathers Museum of World Cultures* (MMWC), Indiana and to the *Historical Society of Pennsylvania* (HSP), Philadelphia in October 2019 having been allocated the Albert M. Greenfield fellowship for twentieth century research at the HSP. This funding did not cover international travel, nor travel to the MMWC. The David Fleming-Brown Award not only contributed to travel to the US, but also meant that I could visit other research institutions whilst there, including the National Archives in D.C and the Penn Museum archive. The David-Fleming Brown Scholarship meant that I could get the most from my travel to the US and visit a number of research institutions, which was crucial to my overall project.

My PhD thesis is entitled: *Not from the Land Side but from the Flag Side: Wanamaker, Dixon and the American Indian*. I focus on the role that John Wanamaker, Rodman Wanamaker and the Wanamaker Department store played in redefining the image of the American Indian to American culture, and also the way in which this impacted on the political status of Americas Indigenous people. The Wanamaker store imagined itself as America, which it marketed with 'Wanamaker Fidelity' and is central to this work: it was here that the view of the American Indian was depicted to the masses. Joseph Kossuth Dixon was employed as Educational Director from 1908 until his death in 1926. Research to date has shown that Dixon transformed from a self- styled Indian 'expert' to one of the era's greatest Indian Rights champions, lobbying for the protection of the American Indian through citizenship rights. Crucial to my research are the John Wanamaker Papers, which are held at the HSP and the papers of Joseph Dixon, which are held at the MMWC. Dixon was heavily influenced by both Rodman Wanamaker and John Wanamaker and he was employed to carry out many projects involving the American Indian, all of which influenced his opinions of the place of the American Indian in an increasingly xenophobic American society.

Details of Visit

My research visit began by flying to Indiana, Bloomington to commence research at the MMWC, which is part of the Indiana University Campus. I had been here fleetingly in the past, so I was very excited to return as Bloomington is such a vibrant and cosmopolitan town. The curator at the MMWC, Ellen Sieber, was incredibly helpful. She went above and beyond to assist me, even going as far as opening up the archive for me at the weekend, which was so kind of her: I only had five days in

Bloomington so time really was of the essence! I thoroughly enjoyed discussing my project with Ellen and she gave some really good insight into both the collection and Dixon himself. For instance, Dixon's life prior to starting work at the Wanamaker is shrouded in mystery- very little is known about him. However, Ellen has meticulously picked through his ancestry line which has shed light on where he was born, the children he had and his marital status. She also uncovered photographs of when his children were young and his travels through Europe as a photographer prior to employment at the Wanamaker Store. Whilst such information has not hugely influenced my research, it has been beneficial to have an insight into Dixon's past.



Exterior of the Mathers Museum of World Cultures and a photograph of the beautiful Indiana University campus.

Whilst at the MMWC, I was particularly interested in a project that underpinned most of Dixon's career working at the Wanamaker Department store: *The Expedition of Citizenship to the North American Indian*. Dixon was commissioned to travel to every reservation in the US with the objective of having every Native American Chief sign the *Declaration of Allegiance to the American Flag*, which stipulated the American Indian's patriotism and allegiance to America, accepting their demise was due to 'the great waves of Caucasian civilization' and that the American Indian people should 'bury all past ill feeling'. By articulating this document and having a representative from each reservation sign it, Dixon, John and Rodman Wanamaker collectively believed that they had eradicated the 'Indian Problem' in one swift move. America had never before seen a project of this type or magnitude: Dixon travelled to 169 tribes over the course of six months. I was particularly interested in Dixon's response to this expedition. Research at the MMWC showed that for Dixon, the expedition started off as a selfish endeavour to showcase the American Indian as a vanquished savage, doomed for extinction but ended with the transformation of Dixon into a leading Indian rights activist. This is a pivotal point in the discourse of my thesis: evidence from Dixon's personal papers shows that it was the expeditions to each reservation that shaped the change in Dixon's opinions and attitudes about the American Indian and their place in wider society. His own perception of the American Indian was

completely transformed and he publicly articulated his opinions and criticisms about the way that America's 'first Americans' were victimised by a corrupt Federal Indian policy. Not only this, at the MMWC I was able to access photographs taken by Dixon at each reservation which was particularly interesting, and really brought my research to life.

After my time at the MMWC, I returned to Philadelphia early on a Sunday morning, ready to start my fellowship on the Monday. I arranged to stay at the fellow's residence, named Cassatt House and it was located a mere two doors down from the HSP which was absolutely ideal! I met a number of other fellows from the US, France and China. A colloquium was held each week where we each presented our work. This was beneficial to my research and I found it interesting to hear about other PhD candidates' projects.



Cassatt House



Exterior of the HSP

Whilst researching at the HSP, my initial intention had been to concentrate solely on the Wanamaker Papers to determine several key points:

- 1) the complex relationship between Dixon, John and Rodman Wanamaker
- 2) the link between the Wanamaker's and Congress in regard to the American Indian as all of the projects that involved American Indians and the Wanamaker department store were federally endorsed
- 3) the role that the department store had in the dissemination of ideas and notions about the 'vanishing' American Indian and the ways in which this may have influenced a larger societal redefinition of what it meant to be American
- 4) the role in which Wanamaker and Dixon played in arguments in favour of American Indian citizenship

I thoroughly enjoyed working with the Wanamaker Papers and I met a number of wonderful people whilst at the HSP, most notably Joaquin Moreland Sender, who helped me immensely with the collection. I spent time focusing on John Wanamaker and the way that his interest in the American Indian evolved. I also travelled to the Penn Museum Archive as my research at the HSP showed that Wanamaker was vice-President there, and that he funded expeditions to Alaska as early as 1906. The curator at this archive, Alessandro Pezzati, assisted me in my research and directed me to specific documents that he thought may be useful- and they most certainly were! This visit was hugely beneficial to my understanding of John Wanamaker and his philanthropic interest in America's indigenous people.

The HSP also hold the *Indian Rights Association Papers* (IRA), something that I was aware of but had no real intention to research. However, towards the end of my fellowship and after I felt that I had more or less completed research of the Wanamaker Papers, I decided to have a look at the microfilm reels. I am delighted that I took the time to look at this collection because it shed light on why Dixon was so heavily criticized by others and demonstrated the way that he was perceived by those within the IRA.

The HSP was closed on a Monday, so I decided to utilise my time and travel to Washington D.C to research at the National Archives. This trip was especially beneficial, and I found a number of key documents from Dixon to Congress, highlighting his dismay at the condition of

the American Indian people as a result of corruption within the Bureau of Indian Affairs. When I first arrived, the index that I used to call all the documents I was using did not correlate with the collection, which was very frustrating. However, the archivist there, Rose Buchanan, went over and above to ensure that a number of the relevant documents I wanted access to were found for me. This did mean that I had to return for another visit, but as the documents were so rich, an additional Amtrak train ride was absolutely worthwhile!

Impact of the Travel Scholarship

My research trip to MMWC and the HSP was an incredibly positive experience. Without the Travel Scholarship awarded to me, I would not have been able to encompass my visit to the archive at the MMWC, nor travel to the National Archives in D.C (twice!).

Being in an environment working with other fellows and academics was a truly great experience. Conversations we had about our research - whether within in a formal setting or over an evening glass of wine - made me consider my thesis in a completely different light. I also really benefited from presenting my work at a seminar: it was beneficial to have others ask questions about my research and offer advise on other collections which may be useful to my work.

Allocation of the David Fleming-Brown Travel scholarship enabled me to immerse myself in research material. As a mother to a toddler and a teenager, time management can be extraordinarily difficult. Despite missing my children immensely, to have several weeks to work independently was truly invaluable and would not have been possible without such a generous contribution from this fund, and for this I am extremely grateful.