

Scholar

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Title of Scholarship Project:	Colonial subjects in the French Resistance

Please describe the research you have conducted this period

The first part of my research was using French war databases. I firstly familiarised myself with how to use the websites and what the French acronyms that are commonly used throughout the websites, as well as in my further research, stood for. I used these websites to find names of the resistance fighters relevant to my research (from Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana and La Reunion), as well as additional information like place of birth, date of birth, resistance network, date of death and other information which would help paint a picture of their lives before the war, during the war and even after the war. I also carried out additional reading to supplement my research of specific resistance fighters. By reading, I gained broader understanding of the context and learnt about key individuals who were part of the French Internal Resistance during the war. I then completed a spreadsheet which compiled together all the information I had found across all the many databases, as well as genealogy websites I had found which sometimes provided extra interesting information, especially information about lives after the war. I referred back to and added to this spreadsheet throughout the rest of my research period. With all this information, I also created fact files of people who I had found enough information to create a kind of story, for example of their background, their wartime experience and then what happened to them after the war if they had survived (this information was harder to get so this wasn't always something I could include in the fact file.) I researched and created a bar chart, highlighting the disparity in the age groups of the resistant fighters from each of the 4 islands. I also did further research, reading into specific resistance networks during the war, which enabled me to sometimes find out more about the people's reasons for joining, as well as being able to know where some of these people lived and fought. In addition, although we weren't able to make it to the national archives in Caen and Paris this summer, fortunately through Nina's photos she had taken on previous visits to the archives, we were able to access some of the information from the files. I then went through these photos, adding the new information to the spreadsheet and fact files I'd created.

How is the research work you have been undertaking impactful or important?

The entire research period, especially finding the information and building the profiles was very rewarding and important. It has been impactful due to many reasons but overall due to the fact many of these peoples' stories would have otherwise been forgotten and actually still remain unknown to the vast majority of people (hopefully this can change, and hopefully people doing research like I have done will help to implement and accelerate this change). The war is a period of history well known to many people across the globe and is widely taught. However, the stories of non-white Resistant fighters are not well-known or well-taught ones. Due to the colour of their skin or where they were born, these people are not recognised, and their voices and stories have been lost, even in an event that is as famous and impactful as the Second World War. Therefore, I hope with my research period I have given a voice to at least some people who played a key role in the French Internal Resistance and that the importance of their roles will be more widely taught in the future. In today's society, fortunately there is more and more emphasis being put on the importance of broadcasting and recognising everyone's stories no matter who you are and where you come from, therefore this period of research is important in allowing that to happen and showing that these people have impacted today's society. I also hope my research has allowed these people, who may just be seen as file numbers or forgotten unimportant stories in the history books, to now be recognised as people who had impactful wartime experiences that enabled the allies to win the war and enabled us to have the lives we have today.

What impact has conducting research had on your degree course and university experience?

Firstly, conducting this research has had a positive impact on my degree as I have been reading and using the French language throughout the summer. The level of French being used in the books I have read, in the files from the national archive and on the databases, has sometimes pushed me out of my comfort zone which has meant my language abilities and my understanding has improved. I have also improved my knowledge of specific wartime vocabulary which will help me in my degree course, as over the next couple of years I will be taking French cultural history modules. My modules this year include one about French society after the war, therefore my research project will be beneficial for my studying in this module as it has meant I have an even better understanding of the context of France around these years, especially about overseas France which I researched. This means I will be able to get even more out of my modules and enables me to progress further with learning about French history. Additionally, this research project has enriched my university experience due to the people I have met throughout the summer (even online) and means that I can socialise with people more easily in the upcoming year. This is very key for me due to the difficulties of the last university year in terms of making friends and socialising.

What leadership skills do you believe you have gained from the research period? (please refer to the leadership attributes below)

I believe I have gained or developed many leadership skills throughout my research project. Firstly, I think I have gained the ability to lead without authority, for example I have conducted most of the research on my own and have had to learn to be confident and trust my own instincts on what I'm doing. Sometimes I struggle with believing in myself and not always being able to keep asking for reassurance on what I'm doing. This has also allowed me to honestly assess my own knowledge. I also think my cultural intelligence and capacity for empathy has developed throughout the project as learning and understanding different culture has been key to my research. I have read about different people's lives and experiences from around the globe and have empathised with the resistance fighters or their family members who were trying to gain recognition for them. Furthermore, in the conferences I attended as part of the scholarship, my ability to assess my own leadership style and act accordingly to my own limitations was developed as well. The personality test that I completed as part of the scholarship enabled me to do this and meant that my understanding of myself and what my leadership weaknesses and strengths was improved. Due to the fact that I've had to communicate with my supervisor, as well as the Laidlaw staff and other scholars throughout the summer, my ability to listen with understanding, as well as my ability to speak and write clearly has improved. It has been very important that I have communicated clearly and set across my ideas well so that everyone can understand exactly what I'm trying to express. I have also worked and thought independently throughout my research project - my supervisor has been amazing and guided me throughout, but it has been important to my research that I have had to work on my own and think about what I'm trying to complete on my own, this was sometimes a challenge if I found things difficult or have not always known what something meant. Working independently has also meant I have time managed myself and prioritised my activities throughout the research period.

Please talk about activities you've been involved in to disseminate your research, including but not limited to attending conferences, producing research posters, and promotion of the scholarship

I have attended conferences throughout the summer, talking about and explaining the importance of my research project. I have also further communicated with Laidlaw scholars on the Laidlaw network, as well as in group chats, which has further disseminated my research. The research poster I have completed has enabled this to happen further as it is accessible on the Laidlaw network, meaning anyone on there can read about my research. I have also told all my friends and family, as well as my university peers about my research project in order to spread awareness about these people's stories and their importance. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I haven't been able to travel to Paris this summer, but I intend to further publicise my research project by promoting it to the staff who work in the museum I will work in next summer (as part of the second scholarship summer period).

What are your future career or educational plans?

After university I would like to go onto further studying whilst working. I am keen to gain working experience but need to complete further studies to achieve my career goals. I have a strong interest in history and would like to explore this whilst using my languages. My ideal plan would be to complete a master's degree or a PHD in history, allowing me to eventually work for a university researching and teaching French or Spanish cultural history (I haven't decided on what country's history and what time period yet). I want to continue to use and implement my language skills as I love speaking and engaging in different languages, as well as learning about those countries' culture, but I also want to develop and use my interest and future knowledge in history. I think learning and understanding history and different cultures is key to understanding today's society, as well as accepting and encouraging other cultures than solely your own. I have loved conducting this research so I know I would like to do that in the future, and I have always wanted to teach in some way, therefore doing this project has confirmed my desire to be a lecturer and researcher at a university in the future.

Supervisor

Please comment on your scholar's research period, what you consider to be your scholars' strengths and which leadership attributes (please refer to the leadership attributes below) you feel your scholar has demonstrated and is particularly skilled in. You could also identify areas which your scholar can develop further.

Eleanor has worked incredibly hard this summer on her research project. Continuing remote working has meant that we have only met up twice so she has had to demonstrate that she can organise her own research and working schedule independently. She has also taken responsibility for updating her knowledge about the historical period and using archives. She knows her own limitations and does not hesitate to ask for help and guidance when necessary. I have learnt a lot from Eleanor, especially her ability to analyse data and her digital connectivity skills, for example her use of genealogy websites to find out what the fighters did postwar. Eleanor has clearly communicated her research findings through a series of interesting and well written fighter profiles. Her intellectual and academic ability shines through.

Unfortunately, we were not able to get to the archives in France this summer due to COVID, but will be travelling in early November. This visit will allow Eleanor to build relationships with foreign collaborators, to negotiate new situations (in a foreign language) and to further demonstrate the knowledge that she has acquired. I know that she will manage all of these situations and tasks with great skill and I hope that this will further develop her confidence and self-belief.

It has been a pleasure working with Eleanor this summer and I look forward to our continuing collaboration.

Signature of Scholar: E Dufton Date: 06 / 09 / 2021

Signature of Project Leader N.A.Wardleworth Date: 17/09/2021

