

Alexandra (Alexi) S. Garrett
2016 UELAC Loyalist Scholarship Award Recipient

The United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada in partnership with Dr. Taylor Stoermer, Harvard University extends congratulations to Alexandra S. Garrett as the first recipient of the Harvard-UELAC Loyalist Studies Scholarship. During the 2016 UELAC Scholarship Fundraising Campaign, Dr. Stoermer personally donated and raised funds in the amount of \$5000.00 which has been set aside in an account at Harvard marked for Loyalist research. Our 2016 award recipient, Ms. Alexi Garrett is a third year PhD candidate at the University of Virginia, Corcoran Department of History.

Alexi's PhD research considers the connections among gender, political affiliation, wealth distribution, and entrepreneurship of Loyalists' progeny in the early Republican United States. In May 2016, Alexi was awarded a MA degree in History by the University of Virginia with a thesis entitled, " 'I have yet much to say about the Negroes': Catharine Flood McCall's Slave Enterprises in Early Republican Virginia." In this thesis, Alexi examined Catharine Flood McCall's nail manufactory and slave renting enterprises to analyze female mastery during a period of expanding urban enterprise in early national Virginia. McCall was the richest woman in Essex County, Virginia for much of the early national period, owned over twenty-nine slaves, and never married.



Catharine's heritage as the daughter of Scottish Loyalist Archibald McCall framed her family history, her career, and her identity. With the UELAC grant, Alexi will connect her biographical study of slavery and gendered enterprising in Virginia to the study of loyalism by extending the temporal frame to the next generation of loyalists. She will examine how loyalists' progeny—especially *feme sole* daughters—fared in the burgeoning American republic.

Following is an excerpt from Alexi's research proposal, provisionally titled "The McCall Family and Second-Generation Loyalist Reintegration in Virginia, 1722-1828":

My dissertation research this summer examines the roots of Catharine's entrepreneurial success in her Loyalist background. Her father Archibald, a successful merchant in Essex County, remained loyal to the Crown during the Revolution. As a consequence, he lost his business interests in Virginia and turned to the West Indian sugar trade. In 1772 he had sent Catharine to England, where he joined her a few years later. Catharine's grandmother on her late mother's side remained in Virginia, and in 1782 petitioned the Virginia General Assembly to allow the then sixteen-year-old Catherine and her father to return (the Assembly granted their request). I seek to understand how Archibald's merchant activities in the colonies suffered because of his allegiance to the Crown, and how he recovered after the war to help his daughter fund her slave-manned factories.

This research examines how the “loyalist legacy” contributed to the careers of daughters in the New Republic. I want to build upon loyalist studies scholarship to examine the experiences of Virginia’s returned loyalists, and the gendered elements of second-generation social reconciliation and economic reintegration. I want to know how the daughters of Loyalists who returned to the United States fared in a nation that experienced legal, political, economic, and gendered upheaval in their families’ absence.

Catharine’s entrepreneurial success illuminates how the second generation of Loyalists in America could re-establish economic and social dominance in their communities after the war. Catharine certainly made an impact on Essex County as its wealthiest woman and largest female slave-owner. What role did her father’s capital and mercantile network play in her success? What did she learn during her formative years in England to develop her future business acumen in Virginia? This exploration will contribute to my larger dissertation project on female entrepreneurs in the early Republican South.

Alexi has taught undergraduate level courses at the University of Virginia in the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program. She is an active member of her department’s Early American Seminar and Movements and Directions in Capitalism reading group.

In 2015-2016 Alexi enjoyed presenting her work on the McCalls at a number of venues, including the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation’s Virginia Forum, the annual meeting of the Virginia Consortium of Early Americanists, UVA’s Huskey Graduate Research Exhibition, and her department’s Early American Seminar.

In the summer of 2016, Alexi will attend the “History of Capitalism Summer Camp,” hosted by Cornell University’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations. At “camp,” historians will learn how to use economic methods in their research, such as finance and data analysis, statistical modeling, and micro- and macroeconomics. She will also attend the Digital Mitford Coding School, hosted by the Center for the Digital Text at the University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg. There she will learn text encoding methods, such as encoding the markings on manuscript material and autotagging complicated texts with regular expression matching, for large-scale digital nineteenth-century archive projects. She hopes these two programs will provide her with increased skills in economic methods and Digital Humanities, which she will apply to her work on the McCalls with UELAC’s support.

Alexi plans to use the UELAC Loyalist Scholarship to enable visits to archives in Canada, Philadelphia, Richmond, and Glasgow to conduct primary research on the McCalls and other loyalist families who successfully petitioned to return to the States. In particular, she hopes to find family records that will likely reveal Catharine’s entrepreneurial origins, and how the commercial choices of her grandfather, who served as a merchant and Dean of Guild in mid-eighteenth century Glasgow, affected his granddaughter’s post-Revolutionary future. She is grateful to be a recipient of this award, and looks forward to working with the UELAC community.