



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

## **Narrative Section of a Successful Application**

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously-funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the current Institutes guidelines, which reflect the most recent information and instructions, at <https://www.neh.gov/grants/education/institutes-higher-education-faculty>

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: *Civil War Archives: A New Social and Cultural History of the Civil War*

Institution: Gettysburg College

Project Director: Jim Downs

Grant Program: NEH Institutes for Higher Education Faculty

## Civil War Archives: A New Social and Cultural History of the Civil War

Jim Downs, Program Director

### **Nature of the Request**

Drawing on the rich special collections at Gettysburg College, the Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College, and the Gettysburg community, this two-week residential institute for higher education faculty places Civil War and Reconstruction history within the context of the “the archival turn,” a scholarly intervention that explores how ideology, politics, bias, and history itself shapes the contents of archives. While scholars from Asian to European history have examined this question in relation to their fields, few Civil War and Reconstruction historians have probed this question, despite the overwhelming abundance of Civil War archives throughout the country. This new Level I institute provides an opportunity for 36 historians to investigate how the archival turn can generate new ways of looking at old documents in an effort to breathe new life into the social and cultural history of the Civil War Era, which spans 1830-1877. This Institute will pay particular attention to issues of race, gender, class, and sexuality.

### **Intellectual Rationale**

Albert Cashier, a Civil War veteran, did not have a wife, children or even any known relatives. When he died in 1915, efforts were made to track down any living relatives to provide them with the remains of his Civil War pension, which amounted to \$282. Since no relatives were named, money was deposited into the county treasury.<sup>1</sup>

In 1911, when Cashier was working as a chauffeur for Senator Ira Lash, he got injured. Lash took him to the Soldier’s home where the medical staff discovered that Cashier was born

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<sup>1</sup> National Archives Record Group 15: Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 1773 - 2007  
Series: Case Files of Pension Applications Based on Service Completed in the Years 1817 to Approximately 1903, ca. 1935 - ca. 2002 File Unit: Approved Pension File for Private Albert D. J. Cashier, Company G, 95th Illinois Infantry Regiment (XC-2573248) <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/36605129> Document 32-33

female at birth. News that he was passing as a man spread like wildfire. Newspapers from Kansas to Missouri reported on the fact that a woman disguised herself as a man and fought in the Civil War. The press sensationalized Cashier's story, added fictitious details, and questioned Cashier's military service. Despite the grandiose representation of Cashier in the press, evidence of Cashier's life appears in less histrionic form. Stored away among millions of decaying pieces of paper is a fragile collection of letters, documents, affidavits, and military records of Cashier's life in the National Archives. While Cashier was in the Soldier's Hospital, a friend he met in town helped to assemble the necessary documentation for Cashier to file for a Civil War pension. The pension application was intentionally submitted to help Cashier scrape by, but it has surprisingly surfaced as bona fide record of what we might call today "transgender."

Cashier's story can easily illuminate revelatory detail about the history of sexuality and gender but it is also fundamentally a story about the archive. Scattered newspaper clippings, rumors, and military records provide some detail and context for Cashier's life, but ultimately these are unreliable sources. The newspaper accounts sensationalized Cashier's story, fabricated certain parts, and embellished others. The military account includes few references to Cashier. The pension records, stored in the National Archives, offer the most complete information. The federal records offer the details that can make Cashier's story both authentic and accurate but cannot be treated like other military records. Questions about how the National Archives unwittingly collected material about Cashier transing gender matter as much as the details of their case. Consequently, the archive is an actor in this history and not just the repository that houses these documents.

Typically, historians' methods are not spelled out in their publications. At academic conferences, historians might, after a presentation has ended, explain how they found a source or

they might describe their method in the introductions to their books or hint at analytical process in their footnotes, but the archival turn calls for articulation of the process of research.

The archival turn has many meanings but can be explained most generally as either a focus on practice—the historian’s methods—or as something more interpretative, which takes its cue primarily from Derrida, that probes the ideological underpinnings and innate contradictions of the sources. This framing suggest that the archive is an ideological space, persuaded by its own politics and history. The archival turn has raised an epistemological question—how do we know what we know and are we sure? It has animated groundbreaking work in U.S. historiography, especially among historians of slavery, but has been relatively silent among Civil War historians.

The focus of this Institute is to bridge the gap between the archival turn and Civil War history, a field that has deep tradition of scholarly interest and public engagement. According to Civil War Historian Drew Faust, “More than 60,000 volumes of Civil War history had appeared by the end of the twentieth century, more than a book a day since Appomattox.” Civil War historians are the beneficiaries of countless manuscript collections in conceivably every archive across the country. Raising the question of the archival turn will undoubtedly lead to an intellectual reckoning in the practice of Civil War history. It will generate new questions about these seemingly endless numbers of sources. What does it mean to read military records along the archival grain? How can we expose the tension between the nationalistic construction of the actual brick and mortar National Archives and scholars’ efforts to use those records in the service of writing a history about the formerly enslaved and dispossessed? How do we read against the plot of military records to find details and stories about women, Native Americans, or even transgender people, like Albert Cashier? What are the tropes that define military records;

what are the silences? How has the history of the Civil War privileged certain archives over others? How can coroners' reports to medical journals, which seem unrelated to the Civil War, actually be used to tell the history of the Civil War?

The archival turn will provide historians with a framework to consider their sources rather than simply rushing into an archive and scanning seemingly endless reams of documents. As Marc Bloch, an architect of the Annales School, explained in *The Historian's Craft*, "Documents do not suddenly materialize, in one place or another, as if by some mysterious decree of the gods. Their presence or absence in the depths of the archive or that library are due to human causes which by no means elude analysis."

The objective of this summer institute, therefore, is to investigate how archives provide meaning and context to historical analysis. By using archives as an organizing principle for this NEH institute, we hope to attract an ambitious group of Civil War Historians from multiple subfields while adhering to a core set of methodological practices and interpretative questions that will guide the institute. Further, both in and beyond the academy, there is a hunger for Civil War history. Part of the institute will also be devoted to offering participants with techniques to make academic research available to a wider public, including: academic publishing, curriculum development, and writing for non-academic audiences. By incorporating workshops on these topics, the Institute offers multiple ways for participants to share their knowledge and research. These sessions will be led by experts in each field. Further, any of the units or topics discussed during the Institute can be easily adopted into existing curriculum, especially courses on the Civil War and Reconstruction, slavery and emancipation, the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and more specialized seminars for history majors on methods.

## **Format and Program of Study**

The first part of this Institute is to introduce participants to the archival turn. Since this scholarly intervention can, in part, be traced to anthropology, global history and gender studies, the readings and the visiting faculty for this session are not Civil War scholars. I am extremely grateful that Professor Ann Stoler and Professor Jennifer Morgan have both agreed to participate in this Institute as visiting faculty. Their commitment to the humanities is evident by their willingness to participate in an endeavor not directly related to their research. In order to make their scholarship applicable to the Civil War, I will interview them. As opposed to a formal lecture, this format will allow for the faculty expert and me to make the archival turn most accessible and applicable to Civil War history.

The program will also be supported by a number of Civil War historians, who practice the archival turn in their scholarship. Since the participants will be a bit more familiar with the content and character of their subjects, these will be lectures that are then followed by discussions. There will be time each day devoted to reading, writing and reflection.

There will also be more tactile ways for participants to engage this topic, which take full advantage of the auspicious resources of the site. Special Collections at Gettysburg College and the Adams County Historical Society have both agreed to offer workshops. These will not only highlight their impressive holdings but also provide participants with an opportunity to learn more about the choices that archivists make and how certain collections developed. These workshops will allow participants to apply their theoretical knowledge about archives to the actual day-to-day operations of two repositories.

Taking full advantage of the location of the Institute, there will also be tours of the Gettysburg battlefields. These tours will engage a range of rigorous questions that are directly

rooted to the question of the archive, namely how the popular memory and public history of the Civil War informed the archives and vice versa.

This Institute also remains deeply invested in offering a range of opportunities for participants to share their work once they leave the Institute. There will be workshops that will provide practical steps on how to submit an article to an academic journal; how to write a book proposal for a commercial press; how to design a lesson plan for a high school curriculum; and even how to develop ideas for film and television. I should note that Civil War historians, more than many other subfields, are constantly in demand to make their research available to larger audiences, which is why there is section on film. Also, the New York Department of Education regularly hires college faculty for curriculum development. This has exponentially expanded in the move to digital platforms in response to the pandemic.

### Institute Readings

Prior to arriving to the Institute, participants will be sent a collection of books that will guide our study of the archival turn. They will be required to read the following books before arriving at the Institute: Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*; Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*; Marissa Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*; and Carol Reardon, *Pickett's Charge in History and Memory*.

During the first week of the Institute, I will lead discussions on each of these books. Prior to that, I will provide a short description of how these books relate to our study of the archival turn on the website.

*The Historian's Craft* is universally recognized as an introduction to historians' methods. Bloch's meditation particularly on "evidence" and the meaning of archives has direct application to the Institute's investigation of the archival turn. Carolyn Steedman's *Dust: The Archive and*

*Cultural History* provides the ideal sequel to Bloch. Steedman smartly puts into dialogue the larger theoretical work that undergirds the archival turn with a clear set of practices that underpin the mission of social history. Marisa Fuentes advances Steedman's analysis of the archival turn by powerfully interrogating how it plays out in the context of slavery in *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence and the Archive*. Since this Institute will engage questions about race and gender, it is imperative to explore how the archival turn hues differently in the context of analytical categories. Fuentes offers a theoretical intervention on how to read the sources that can be applied to the study of the Civil War. These books offer a theoretical and interpretive map to grapple with the meaning of the archival turn and the writing and researching of social and cultural history.

Meanwhile, Carol Reardon's book, *Pickett's Charge*, shows how the creation of specific archives changed how people remembered the Battle of Gettysburg, but it also unwittingly illustrates many of the theoretical conceits that underpin the archival turn. This book will provide participants with familiar archives but in the context of the archival turn. Further, since this book is on Gettysburg, it will provide an ideal companion for the trips scheduled to the battlefield and to the local archives.

Other readings illustrate how a deep engagement with the meaning of the archive has led to new understandings of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Examples include:

Jim Downs and David Blight, eds. *Beyond Freedom: Disrupting the History of Emancipation* and Martha Hodes, *The Sea Captain's Wife: A True Story of Love, Race, and War in the Nineteenth Century*. In fact, Hodes, who will also be a faculty participant, is one of the few Civil War historians, who has considered the archival turn. She published "Fractions and Fictions in the United States Census of 1890" which appears in Stoler's



anthology, *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*. She also spells out the use of the archival turn in its relation to the ideological construction of race in an article, “Fractions and Fictions in the United States Census of 1890” which was published in the *American Historical Review*.

As Director, I will provide short overviews of each book, offer brief lectures and facilitate discussions on each. The pedagogical focus will be on the discussion of this material. Since some of these books are not part of Civil War historiography, I will frame our engagement of this material as a conversation in order to ensure that participants grasp the significance of each book.

#### Format

While there will be overlap between the weeks, the first week will be focused on theory and the content of Civil War archives and the second week will focus on practice and making research accessible.

#### **Week 1: Theory (June 5 – 11, 2022)**

The Institute will host an opening presentation on Sunday evening, June 5 at the Visitor’s Center of the Gettysburg Museum. Dr. Jim Downs will give a brief overview of the upcoming two weeks and lead a discussion on the life and legacy of Albert Cashier. The exhibits will also be available, especially important for participants who have never visited Gettysburg before. This event will set the tone for a collegial environment.

The program will begin with a discussion organized by Institute Director Jim Downs on Marc Bloch’s *The Historian’s Craft*. Downs will focus attention to Bloch’s sections on evidence and his descriptions of the archive. In the afternoon, Carolyn Sautter, Director of Special Collections and College Archives, will provide a workshop on the Gettysburg Archives. Her

discussion will not only feature the impressive holdings but also, more importantly, provide insight on the operation of the archives (including undergraduate teaching), its politics on acquisition, and its history.

Ann Stoler, Willy Brandt Distinguished University Professor of Anthropology and Historical Studies at The New School for Social Research, one of the world's leading scholars on the archival turn, will be featured as the guest faculty early in the week. Downs will interview her about her scholarship and how her ideas can be applied to Civil War History. As follow-up, Downs will lead a discussion that places Stoler's comments in conversation with Steedman's *Dust*. This session will provide a crucial theoretical context to further explore the meaning of the archival turn in Civil War history

Mid-week, Stephen Berry, Gregory Professor for the Civil War Era and Co-Director, Center for Virtual History at the University of Georgia, will provide a lecture and discussion on how he created an award-winning archive based on coroner's reports. This unit is purposely sandwiched between some of the more theoretical discussions in order to ground participants in the material realities of archival collections and to provide them with access to a database of Civil War documents.

On Thursday, we will return to our discussion of theory of the archives. Downs will lead a morning discussion on Marissa Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*. This will provide a useful historiographical context to the afternoon faculty presentation, which will be an interview with historian Jennifer Morgan, Critical Analysis, New York University. Morgan is at the cutting-edge of blending deeply theoretical ideas with social archival practice. Her first book, *Laboring Women: Gender and Reproduction in New World Slavery*, is brilliant examination of how to read archival sources and how to uncover the lives of enslaved women in the surviving primary

sources. The interview will be an opportunity for Downs to discuss with her both the meaning of the archival term as it relates specifically to race and gender, but also how it can be applied to Civil War history.

To wrap-up the first week, Downs will lead a discussion of Carol Reardon's book, *Pickett's Charge*, which explores how ideology led to the creation of specific archives in the South and the emergence of the history of the "Lost Cause." We will also get off campus to include a tour of the battlefield with Pete Carmichael, Director of the Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College. This tour will focus on two different areas: the location of Pickett's Charge as well as the recently discovered area of Black participation during the Battle of Gettysburg. Carmichael will highlight the virtual silence of Black people in the archives during the battle but highlight the actual areas on the land where enslaved Black people lived and labored during the battle. We will also offer an optional experience at the Adams County Historical Society.

### **Week Two: Application (June 12 – 18, 2022)**

To start the second week, Yael Sternhell, a professor of history at Tel Aviv University, will provide a morning lecture based on her forthcoming book, *War on Record: The Archive and Making of Civil War History*. Sternhell's research draws directly on the theoretical interventions surrounding of the archival turn and applies to the making of Civil War archives. She focuses particularly on the creation of the multivolume series, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records*, as well as other government collections housed at the National Archives.

Downs will also lead a workshop that will promote collaborative research and encourage discussion of undergraduate teaching. Participants will be divided into small groups to examine major published archival sources, namely *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records*; *Military Order of the Loyal Legion*; *The Confederate Veteran Magazine Rare*

*Civil War Book Set*; and the *Freedom Series* volumes from the Freedmen and Southern Society Project. Downs will also lead a discussion of the anthology, *Beyond Freedom: Disrupting the History of Emancipation*, which includes his essay on the archival turn, “Emancipating the Evidence: The Ontology of the Freedmen’s Bureau Records,” which employs the archival turn in the study of these documents.

Tuesday will focus on Martha Hodes’ book, *Sea Captain’s Wife*. This book provides an excellent example of how to incorporate one’s research methods into the actual writing of a book. Further, this book brilliantly highlights how family members may have purposely destroyed letters in order to erase any evidence of an interracial relationship within a family’s history. Using this book, participants will grapple with the purposeful erasure of records and the concerted efforts to create silence within the archives.

Mid-week, Crystal Feimster, Yale University, will provide a morning lecture on how to read military records for evidence of race and gender. This talk will draw on her forthcoming book and published articles. Discussion sessions will include how to submit proposals and articles to academic journals, particularly *Civil War History*, which Downs and Feimster edit.

On Thursday, Sarah Gardner, Mercer University, will provide a lecture on how novels function as archives, particularly how literature can be mined as a repository of clues about the Civil War. While literary scholars and historians have engaged this subject in the past, Gardner not only reminds us of the significance of sources and adds new important ones to consider but she also applies newer theoretical tools to uncover historical meaning from published sources. In the afternoon, Joe Schmidt, New York City Department of Education, will host a workshop on how to turn research into educational videos and lesson plans for high school curricula.

To conclude the Institute, Catherine Clinton, University of Texas at San Antonio, will discuss her many efforts in making archival history available to the public, particularly her work as an author, children's book writer, historical consultant for film, curator, and public history expert. Clinton will explain how to make academic research legible to journalists, filmmakers, editors, public historians, and others. Finally, participants will offer short presentations about their research and how they plan to incorporate the archival turn into their research, undergraduate teaching, and public interactions.

### **Project Team**

The Project Director is Dr. Jim Downs, The Gilder Lehrman-National Endowment for the Humanities Professor of Civil War Era Studies and History at Gettysburg College. Downs's research has been invested in the question of the archive both directly and indirectly. In his first book, *Sick From Freedom: African American Illness and Suffering during the Civil War and Reconstruction*, which uncovered the smallpox epidemic that left 60,000 freed people dead, Downs provided the first account of the Medical Division of the Freedmen's Bureau by drawing on the overlooked medical archives housed at the National Archives. In his second book, *Stand By Me: The Forgotten History of Gay Liberation*, though unrelated to the Civil War, uncovered how gay community centers established their own archives since local, state and federal archives refused to preserve material from LGBT people.

Additionally, as a member of the 2014 program committee for the Society of Civil War Historians, Downs organized the opening plenary, "Dwelling in the Archive," in an effort to introduce Civil War historians to the archival turn. In 2019, he co-organized and chaired a panel, "American Historians and the Archival Turn," to further encourage a broader audience of historians to consider the methods and theories. In 2015, he received a Mellon New Directions

Fellowship to gain training in anthropology at Harvard University, where he interrogated how anthropologists conceptualized the meaning of evidence, a question that has animated the founding generation of social historians in European historiography.

Downs will attend all sessions and serve as the main contact person for the Institute. In the unfortunate event that it should become necessary, Robert C. Fluhrer Professor of Civil War Studies Dr. Peter Carmichael has agreed to serve as the replacement director. His resume, along with those of the visiting scholars, is included. The visiting faculty represent a truly brilliant cast of interdisciplinary scholars from a range of subfields and disciplines. In addition to the faculty, a stellar group of experts has also agreed to share their insights in order to provide practical knowledge about how the participants can make their research available.

### **Institutional Context**

Having the Institute at Gettysburg College offers a number of excellent resources. Gettysburg College is a highly selective, national, four-year residential college of liberal arts and sciences, and is ranked as a top national liberal arts college. Founded in 1832, the College has a long and distinguished history, including serving as a field hospital for hundreds of soldiers during the American Civil War. On November 19, 1863, Gettysburg College students and faculty were among those who walked with President Abraham Lincoln from the College to the newly opened Gettysburg National Cemetery, where Lincoln delivered one of the most well-known speeches in history.

Gettysburg College is home to the world-renowned Civil War Institute (CWI), one of the few academic institutes connected to a College curriculum, an active research institute and a public history forum. To that end, participants will benefit from having access to both the faculty

at CWI as well as the large community of Civil War experts in the area, namely at the National Park Service, local historical societies and art galleries both on and off campus.

Special Collections and College Archives collects, houses, and preserves rare books, manuscripts, maps, artworks, sound recordings, video recordings, photographs, College history records and other unique primary source materials that support the curriculum. Because of the College's ties to the Battle of Gettysburg, Special Collections contains a wide variety of books, manuscripts, digital collections, and special exhibits related to the U.S. Civil War. This includes 500 regimental histories, 2000 titles related to Civil War topics, 500 pamphlets of the era, 50 maps of Union and Confederate locations, 600 political cartoons, 100 newspaper issues of key Civil War dates, 39 Manuscript Collections created by Civil War witnesses and/or soldiers, and 107 Civil War Vertical File Manuscripts containing diaries, letters, and documents.

Campus housing will be made available for all participants in Gettysburg's Quarry Apartments, a suite-style facility located within a short walk of on-campus workshop activities. The layout of these facilities will allow participants to work collaboratively using common lounge areas. In addition, all participants will receive vouchers for a buffet-style meal plan in Gettysburg's nationally recognized dining center and multiple snack breaks throughout the day. The Dining Center provides vegetarian and vegan options, and is able to accommodate individual dietary needs such as lactose or gluten intolerance. The College estimates a combined fee of \$1,050 per person for room and board.

The presentations and discussions will be held in comfortable classrooms on campus that are properly equipped with technology. Throughout the workshop, participants will have access to computers, media, and print resources at Gettysburg College.

## **Cultivation of the Participating Group**

Thirty-six program participants will be selected by a four-person committee comprised of the Institute Director, the replacement director, Jill Titus from the Civil War Institute, and Catherine Clinton, a member of the Institute faculty. In order to recruit faculty to apply, we will use social media campaigns that advertise the program, place announcements in the journal *Civil War History*, and send information about it to the Society of Civil War Historians, Association of Black Women Historians, and the Southern Historical Association. We will use a website and an email listserv to communicate with the participants before, during and after the Institute.

In the selection process, preference will be given to applicants interested in developing new methodological tools to their study of the Civil War, and who show evidence of innovation and undergraduate teaching excellence. Participants will need to also show evidence of teaching courses related to the Civil War and nineteenth-century America. Selection will also be determined on a broad definition of diversity. Preference will be given to diverse applicants (race, gender, sexuality and disability) but also to faculty from community colleges, small liberal arts college and especially those who do not have institutional support for their research. As required by the guidelines, five spaces will be reserved for non-tenured/tenure-track faculty and three for advanced graduate students.

In sum, the Institute be an engaging opportunity to generate ideas and to pursue research questions about the Civil War and “the archival turn,” and it will also be an opportunity for participants to consider the many different ways that they can make their research and teaching accessible to wider audiences.







**Civil War Archives: A New Social and Cultural History of the Civil War  
Summer Institute Work Plan**

Date	Activity
October, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice of Award</li> <li>• Hire student employee to design and launch the Seminar website</li> <li>• Director Downs attends the NEH Summer Seminars directors meeting in Washington, DC</li> </ul>
December 2021- January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive applicant submissions</li> </ul>
February, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant Selection Committee reviews all applications submitted and makes selections</li> </ul>
March, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepted applicants are notified</li> <li>• Open Seminar registration</li> <li>• Request that all applicants respond by the end of the month</li> </ul>
April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate with any wait-listed applicants should spaces be made available by April 15</li> <li>• Communicate book purchases and readings required prior to arrival by the end of the month</li> </ul>
May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate final travel and lodging options to all scholars</li> <li>• Prepare packets of materials for all seminar attendees</li> </ul>
July-August 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Director contacts all participants to assist with integrating recent principles learned at the Institute into future curricula or to share projects and resources</li> </ul>