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### **ASECS Paula Backscheider Archival Fellowship Report**

I used the ASECS Backscheider award to fund a research trip to England from 19 February through 11 March 2013 in support of my dissertation, *Conduits of Justice: Magistrates and the British Imperial State, 1745-1834*.

As I proposed in my application, I spent two weeks in London, during which I worked at the UK National Archives and the British Library. At the National Archives, I surveyed the evidence of the Home Office's engagement with local magistrates preserved in its domestic correspondence, including a rich set of proposals to reform the magistracy from the periphery produced in the 1820s and 1830s. Here, as expected, I found local officials in dialog with central imperatives, struggling to produce more uniformity in local government while trying to preserve its non-professional and decentralized forms and traditions. I also discovered a rich set of sources chronicling the construction of a system of police for the small British settlement in Honduras. The colony was exceptional for its diminutive size and proximity to (and entanglement with) Spanish colonies, but several successive generations of magistrates worked to create a form of government that was adapted to local circumstances but remained true to British ideals. These efforts brought individual magistrates into conflict with each other and royal governors and produced a number of valuable records of the goals and political culture of those involved in local government in the colony. In 1809, the magistrates of Honduras even compiled a book to send to the Colonial Office in London, in which they defended their decision to defy new imperial policies by arguing that these regulations clashed with their responsibilities to the community as good magistrates. This material accords with my findings for India and will either provide the basis for a chapter in my dissertation or a standalone article.

I also spent four days working at the British Library. Here, I used a number of collections, including the Althorp papers, which offer a rare (and perhaps unique) opportunity to compare legal records of several generations of the Brockman family as justices of the peace with observations recorded in their private correspondence. In addition, I revisited discussions amongst Cambridgeshire justices of the peace in the 1770s preserved in the Hardwicke Collection as well as the extensive India Office Records. Here, the papers of Edward Strachey as a magistrate in Midnapore and Dacca in India during the first decade of the nineteenth century proved particularly useful for substantiating findings from earlier research.

The ASECS fellowship award will cover the cost of my flight, and I was able to use a research grant from Indiana University to pay for living expenses in London as well as travel to the North of England to use archives in Preston, Leeds, and Manchester. During these three weeks of focused and targeted research, I have been able to gather enough additional material that I now feel prepared to complete my dissertation.

Allow me to reiterate my gratitude to ASECS as well as the fellowship committee and all of the individuals involved in organizing and supporting the organization's research awards.

Sincerely,

Brendan Gillis