Dear Erika & Committee,

I am submitting the following re-cap report of my research trip to Britain this past summer, using my IU Faculty Research Grant. Thanks for everything!

Tim

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Tim Willig’s post-summary of Research Visit to the United Kingdom, Summer 2011

I am very grateful for the IU Faculty Research Grant ($8,500.00) which enabled me to conduct successful research in Great Britain this past summer, and helped me to make substantial progress towards laying the foundation of my current biographical study on Major John Norton, a key figure in Canada during the War of 1812.

I arrived in the UK late in the day on Thursday, the 16th of June, and began my research the following day. For the next three weeks I stayed in Richmond, a suburb on London’ SW side, and I split my time from there, platooning between the U.K.’s National Archives (in nearby Kew Gardens) and the British Library, the latter in the heart of London. Some days I would manage to be able to actually research at both places, since the Archives was open until 7:00 p.m. two nights a week. In addition to these, I also made two brief research visits to the National Army Museum, also in a London Borough. After three weeks at the three places, I spent a week in the North at the Archives of Alnwick Castle, not far from Scotland, before returning for a final week at these greater London sites. The following are the principal collections or manuscripts that I viewed at the four sites:

National Archives:

--War Office Records
--Colonial Office
--Proceedings of the Privy Council
--Admiralty Records
These are vast collections, but I focused on the records pertaining to the times & places associated with Major Norton during the War of 1812 era, and specifically to his time in Britain, 1804-05.

British Library:

--Duke of Northumberland Papers

Most all of my days at the British Library were filled with hours spent viewing the seemingly endless microfilm reels of the Northumberland Papers. This collection contains records stretching nearly back to the 13th century, most all pertaining directly to the Percy family --i.e., the Earls & Dukes of Northumberland. But again, my focus was the turn of the 19th century and specifically the friendship that the 2nd Duke had with my subject, John Norton. I originally received permission to view this collection from the 12th Duke in December of 1999, and the British Library still honors this permission, since this particular Duke remains the current holder of the title. Although I have now generally mined this collection for most of what it can give me on the current project, I anticipate that I may very well return to the Northumberland Papers at some point in my life.

National Army Museum:

--Shadrach Byfield Manuscript

In addition to my research at the Archives & the British Library, I also spent two half-days--the 30th of June & the 6th of July--at the National Army Museum in the Borough of Chelsea, part of London. Here I was able to obtain a photocopy of the complete manuscript--something like 42 pages--of the account of Shadrach Byfield, a British soldier in a regiment that was engaged in Canada & Niagara region of the U.S. at certain times & places that overlapped with Norton's service there. Moreover, during my visit to the National Army Museum, I found & photocopied two articles regarding Britain's goals, strategy, & tactics during the War of 1812.

Alnwick Castle (11th-15th of July)

After three weeks in the London area, I ventured northward to Alnwick, near to the Scottish border. Alnwick Castle is the seat of the Duke of Northumberland, and after more than seven centuries it yet remains the principal northern home for this family, the Percy's. My purpose in directly visiting the Duke's home was that the private holdings in his collection are more extensive than the collection & microfilm that I had permission to view at the British Library. Most notably, in his private study & library archive, the Duke has many years' worth of letter books from the period of my concern, that are now bound into several dozens of volumes. Most of these have never been reproduced or circulated in libraries elsewhere. I was able to make good on this
endeavor, finding another dozen letters or writings that I could not obtain in London. Moreover, the authorities at Alnwick permit the use of digital cameras (whereas the British Library still does not!). This saved a tremendous amount of time, and I was thus able to get most of what I needed from Alnwick. However, I still was not able to view every letter book during my limited time, and I am anticipating a return. Nevertheless, I am very pleased to report that my time at Alnwick was a striking success, and I came away with 45 digital photos of important pages. This felt very rewarding, particularly when considering the previous uncertainty of not knowing whether Alnwick had any additional pertinent documents or not, and also taking into account its great distance from London (roughly 350 miles and approximately seven hours driving!). Thus, I was taking a risk to give up precious research time in London to make the hike northward to Alnwick for that week, but it paid off!

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It was then back to Richmond / London for the final week, the 18th-22nd of July, for a few more days of work at the National Archives & British Library. I regard this total, collective time in England as a big success, but there are at least four other archival repositories in the UK pertaining to two other chapters in my present biographical study on John Norton that I was unable to visit on this occasion, and for which I will be seeking subsequent additional funding.

Thank you again for this initial Faculty Research Grant and for the opportunity that it gave me!

sincerely,

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