

DAVID GAIDAMAK ('18)

HISTORY

Project

*“The Nobles are Finished”:
Gender, Race, and Citizenship
in Postcolonial Nicaragua
through the Eyes of Aristocratic
Women 1807-1847*

Faculty Mentor

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Personal artifacts are hard to come by in Central American archives; their society is generally not as liberal in divulging their personal lives. The Cesar family was high-ranking before the Latin American independence movement and kept in contact with Spanish elites on the Iberian Peninsula. When the Central American states gained independence, elites had to make a choice that could cost their lives – stay with old elites or lead a new generation. We tend to overlook the women’s perspective in this context; we often teach narratives that we know, and in Nicaragua, this is the men’s story. Professor Wolfe’s project, “The Nobles are Finished: Gender, Race, and Citizenship in Postcolonial Nicaragua through the Eyes of Aristocratic Women, 1807-1847,” serves to educate and give resources to not only the academic community but to a broader range of public interested in the changing lives of elite women during a massive civil change.

My part in this project was transcription. Not Spanish to English, but Spanish to Spanish. The letters, written in an older style, are all in cursive with altered grammar and spelling than I am used to in class. We used Google Drive and Zotero to collaborate and share the documents. The process of transcription was hard for me at first. One letter, only three or four pages, would take an hour for me to go through and convert to a word document. After I slowly learned the personal styling for each person, the process became easier. Over the course of a semester and a half my transcription is not yet complete, though I hope to have this done by the end of the academic year. The collective letters may be published as a standalone piece for future researchers and academics, but they can also be used to add to a neglected part of Central American history.