

Nicola Barnes, *student*

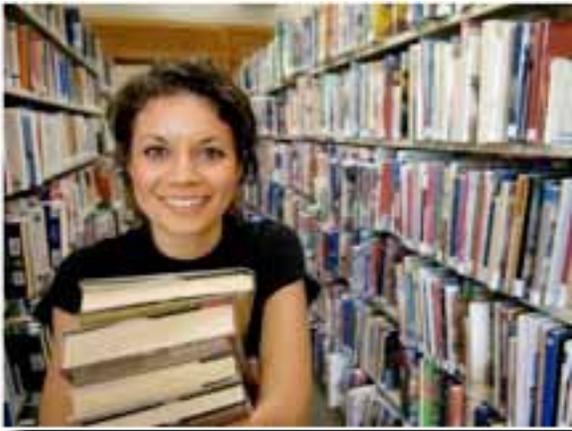


Image source: <http://gse.buffalo.edu/gsefiles/images/Caucasian-Female-Library-Holding-Books-Small.jpg>

“*Having access to primary resources that aren't in my university's library is great for my research.*”

Hometown: Buffalo Gap, TX

Age: 26

Gender: Female

Education: BA History from University of Texas, Austin

Occupation: PhD Candidate in American Studies, Texas A&M University

Marital Status: Single

overview

Nicola is a PhD student in the American Studies program at Texas A&M. A native Texan who has always been interested in the history of the American Southwest, Nicola is currently conducting preliminary research for her doctoral dissertation, which focuses on the role of women in the Mexican-American War. In addition to her research, Nicola enjoys her role as a TA for an undergraduate American history class, and she hopes to become a professor after completing her PhD. In her spare time, Nicola enjoys cooking, painting, and taking in the local music scene with her boyfriend.

Nicola is a very dedicated student and wants to make sure she consults the best available resources before she begins drafting her dissertation. Although she feels more comfortable with books in their physical form, Nicola recognizes that there are a variety of resources available to her outside her university library and is becoming a resourceful online searcher

knowledge and skills

- PC user.
- Experienced at conducting research in libraries, but finds reference librarians helpful when she gets stuck.
- Has an Android phone, but does not use it for research.

challenges

- Location primary resources that pertain to her dissertation.
- Navigating libraries and online repositories.

needs

- Access to primary resources from the Mexican-American war era.
- The ability to download and print resources so that she can easily consult them during the writing process.

Scenario

Nicola sits down at her desk to do some research for her dissertation. She goes to the Texas A&M University library website, where she usually starts looking for materials, and searches the catalog for “newcom mexican war,” hoping to find resources about Elizabeth Newcom, a woman who disguised herself as a man and enrolled in the volunteer infantry during the Mexican-American War. While browsing her search results, she is disappointed that none of them appear to be about Elizabeth Newcom. However, she notices that her seventh result is *The Mexican War, by an English Soldier*, which appears to be an account of the war.

Interested in an English perspective of the war and thinking that the book might contain some reference to the role of women in the war effort, Nicola clicks the link to view the book’s metadata. There is no description of the book and it is not available in the Texas A&M University library. The book itself is housed in the Library of Congress; however, Nicola sees that it is available online through HathiTrust Digital Library. She clicks the “full-text” link under the “Holdings” section of the page, which opens a new tab to the HathiTrust website displaying the cover page of *The Mexican War, by an English Soldier*.

Nicola begins reading the first few pages of the book, scrolling from page to page using the arrows on the upper right-hand corner of the site’s PageTurner feature. Finding the material interesting, she decides that this is a resource she would like to be able to come back to. She notices that in the sidebar at the left of the PageTurner feature, there is a link that says “Download PDF - whole book.” After she clicks the link, a message comes up explaining that she can only download the PDF to her computer if she logs into the site. She presses “OK” on the message, then clicks the “login” link in the top right-hand corner of the page. She chooses Texas A&M University from the drop-down menu on the login page, logs in with her Texas A&M username and password, and is automatically directed back to the full text of *The Mexican War, by an English Soldier*. This time when she clicks “Download PDF - whole book,” she gets a message letting her know that the website is preparing a PDF for her. When the PDF is ready, she downloads it to her computer for future use and goes back to her results page at the Texas A&M University website to continue searching for materials.