

Proposed Panel Title: Collaboration Across Disciplines to Make a Path Where None Existed; **Title of Paper:** Digitizing the Barbados Mercury Gazette, and how “Connectors” Make Projects Work

Theme: Multidisciplinary Research in the Caribbean: A Collaborative Approach
Track: Caribbean Libraries, Archives and Museums in the Digital Environment

Abstract (200-500 words)

In *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell (2000) argues for the value of “connectors” as he calls them, as people “with a special gift for bringing the world together” (38). The “super connector” on our panel is the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC), and the story we will tell involves the four people brought together, from different disciplines, to develop an application by the National Archives in Barbados to the British Library Endangered Archives Programme (EAP) to fund the digitization of the *Barbados Mercury Gazette* (1783-1839).

With the diazo microfilms of the *Barbados Mercury Gazette* disintegrating and the paper copies locked away, the extraordinary accounts it offered—especially of the identities of the enslaved people who lived, worked, and resisted on the island in the late 18th and early 19th centuries—were in danger of being lost forever. At the time of writing this abstract, the proposal, submitted by the acting archivist at the Barbados National Archives, had passed the initial (EAP) application phase and was in the process of second-phase development.

The paper we will be presenting jointly will be set as an account of the multidisciplinary collaboration between archivists, digital scholars and literary scholars from the United States, Canada and Barbados who brought the project to the development stage. With a digitized version of the paper it will be possible to trace patterns of resistance otherwise all but impossible.

Name of the presenters (alphabetical order):

Lissa Paul
Amalia Levi
Laurie Taylor

Bio-data of presenters (150 words each):

Lissa Paul, professor in the Faculty of Education at Brock University, Ontario Canada, has been working on the life and literature of British author and teacher, Eliza Fenwick (1766-1840) for several years. As Fenwick ran a school for girls in Barbados between 1815 and 1822, Lissa read microfilm copies of the *Barbados Mercury Gazette* in the course of her research. She quickly realized how valuable the material in the papers would be for scholars attempting to recover the identities of enslaved people from the period, and their patterns of resistance. Lissa starter book on Eliza, *The Children’s Book Business: Lessons from the Long Eighteenth Century*, was published by Routledge in 2011. Her biography of Eliza Fenwick is tentatively scheduled for publication by the University of Toronto Press in the fall of 2017. Her research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Position/title of presenter: Professor in the Faculty of Education

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Amalia S. Levi is a free-lance archivist and cultural heritage professional, with a particular interest in the dispersion of archival records and archival “silences” in relation to minorities and diasporas. Most recently, Amalia was the project archivist for the Barbados Synagogue Restoration Project (BSRP). During this project she arranged, described, and digitized the BSRP collection of records. At the end of this project, digitized files were uploaded to the Digital Library of the Caribbean. Amalia holds a Master’s in Library Sciences and Archives; an M.A. in History, with a focus in Jewish Studies, both from the University of Maryland; an M.A. in Museum Studies from Yildiz University in Istanbul, Turkey; and a B.A. in Archaeology and History of Art from the University of Athens, Greece. Amalia has worked in museums, developing exhibits, and conducting archival research. She was the founding curator of the Jewish Museum of Turkey in Istanbul. She was the co-editor of the book *Identity Palimpsests: Archiving Ethnicity* in the U.S. and Canada. She has presented extensively on augmenting historical scholarship on diasporas and minorities through linking and enriching dispersed collections.

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Laurie N. Taylor, PhD, is the Digital Scholarship Librarian at the University of Florida where her work focuses on socio-technical (people, policies, technologies, communities) needs for scholarly cyberinfrastructure. She works heavily with the [Digital Library of the Caribbean \(dLOC\)](#) where she is the Digital Scholarship Director, [Digital Humanities Working Group](#) where she is a member of the Board for the DH Graduate Certificate, [LibraryPress@UF](#) where she is the Editor-in-Chief, and [Research Computing](#) with these and other activities geared towards enabling a culture of radical collaboration that values and supports diversity and inclusivity.

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