

Dear Class of '55,

My name is Rachel Renaud and I would like to express my thanks for your help in furthering my education. I had the opportunity this year to take an off-campus trip to study in the Bahamas. I am currently a sophomore at Cornell. I am a Classics major, Anthropology minor. I love travel; my family takes trips to different places during the summer. This was the first time I had traveled out of country with my own power. While I had my class, I learned how to navigate international travel on my own.

I went to the Bahamas in the Anthropology of Tourism class, ANT 256. We spent roughly two and a half weeks in the Bahamas on two different islands. The first week was spent in Nassau, the capital, on the island of New Providence. In the capital, we looked at how tourists and locals interact and how the tourist economy impacts the Bahamian culture. We looked at historic landmarks and local art workshops. One of my favorites trips was to the national art museum. We got to look at art work made by the people of the Bahamas, which showed not only cultural pride, but social conflict currently happening within the Bahamas. There was one art installation that had gather sand from every island, showing the difference between the islands.

The second island we went to was San Salvador, which is famous for being the place Christopher Columbus landed on. The locals told us this several times. We also visited one of the locations where Columbus supposedly actually made landfall. On the island, we stayed at the Gerace Research Center, which is a research center of the University of the Bahamas. It was our base of operations, where we would go out and explore the island. We snorkeled, explored a cave with the Geology students, and visited many of the historic sites on the island. We also visited Club Med, the main resort on the island. There was a very stark difference between the

local buildings and the resort. It highlighted a difference in power I had never thought of. The Bahamas' economy relies on tourism to function, but to see more money being put into the resort than the local people was rather shocking.

I learned so much during this trip. I am a very nervous person; I like knowing exactly what will happen next. I had to learn very quickly to adapt and roll with what was happening. I relaxed more and more as the trip went by. I also learned how to take in an immense amount of detail. We were required to journal our daily experiences. My journals started off being about 2 or 3 pages (handwritten) in length, but by the end of the trip, they were 8 and 9 pages long, even though we were doing less. I also learned how to be a researcher and what that requires of a person. We had to go out and actively seek people to talk to and places to see. It was hard for me to be able to talk to people I did not know, but by the end of the trip, I was much more comfortable.

Thank you so much for helping me learn and grow as a person. I am so grateful for the chance to take this class. Not only was the class exciting, the trip has secured my love of travel and culture. I have attached a few photos from my trip.

Sincerely,

Rachel Renaud



This is was a brief visit to the beach while we got familiar with Nasau.



This is the Atlantis, one of the resorts we spent a day observing.



This is our friend at Tasty Teas, a local tea shop that makes their teas out of native medicinal plants. One of my classmates was researching bush-medicine.



This was taken while we were looking for sea turtles at night. This is the sunset behind the research station.



This is the kitchen at Watlings' Castle, an old slave plantation on San Salvador. It was on top of one of the mountains on the island, giving it a view of nearly the whole island.



This is my classmates on the way to location. The truck is from the research station, one of many. Our nickname for it was the "Banana Truck". More than once we rode around in the rain. The wind was extremely loud while riding around, but it allowed us to see all the beautiful landscape and coastline.