Students and Faculty in the Archives (SAFA) is an innovative postsecondary education program at Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) in which local undergraduates visit BHS’s Othmer Library to use and analyze primary sources on Brooklyn history and culture. Through this hands-on archival experience, students improve document analysis, information literacy, and critical thinking skills.

BHS has partnered with three schools within walking distance of our Brooklyn Heights building: Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus; New York City College of Technology (CUNY); and St. Francis College. During the 2011 - 2012 academic year, over 600 students and their professors made more than 60 visits to the archives to conduct research for courses in History, English, American Studies, Religious Studies, Art History, Photography, and Architectural Technology.

Over the past year, we’ve already seen that SAFA students are more engaged in coursework and perform better than their non-SAFA peers. We are also evaluating the impact SAFA has on faculty professional development and on student retention. BHS will share findings and replicable models with a wide range of audiences nationwide.

Students who participated in a SAFA class during the 2011 - 2012 school year were invited to apply to the SAFA Summer Fellowship, a rigorous four-week research program. This year’s fellows were selected from a competitive pool of applicants. They represent majors as diverse as English, Architecture, Radiologic Sciences, Advertising Design, and Political Science.

SAFA summer fellows engage in intensive primary source research, allowing them to build on the critical thinking skills they acquired during their class visits. Fellows also learn more about professional opportunities in museums and archives. By the end of the fellowship, these students produce a small group-curated exhibit, complete an individual scholarly or creative project, and deliver a public presentation.

This year, the fellows’ research in the Gabriel Furman papers (ARC.190) resulted in Exploring the Journals of Gabriel Furman, an exhibit that tells the story of one quirky and influential Brooklynite who kept a detailed journal for 40 years of his life. In the exhibit, SAFA fellows analyze Furman’s writings on the 1832 cholera epidemic; his commentary on the Mormon religion; his depictions of African Americans; and his documentation of the changing built environment of Brooklyn Heights.

You can learn more about the SAFA summer fellowship, the 2012 fellows, and their individual research projects in the following pages and at safa.brooklynhistory.org/fellowship2012.
VERONICA BENITEZ
St. Francis College
Being an English major, I am able to see the connection between a variety of themes (such as literature and history, or religion and the environment) just like Gabriel Furman himself. In the wide diversity of topics found in Furman’s journals, the cholera season appeared to be the most intense, and many citizens struggled with drug addiction. While researching the regulation of opium, I will also gain further knowledge of the remedies produced in the 19th century.

SASCHA EALEY
St. Francis College
Although I am an English major, I like Art History. Both offer an avenue in which we can communicate and express emotion. Yellow fever was a political concern that brought the bustling city to a standstill. I am creating a fictional 1800s pamphlet on the terrifying disease from Furman’s perspective. I want to leave this summer knowing I made a significant contribution to telling the story of Furman and his Brooklyn and that I shaped the way for future SAFA fellows.

SAMUEL GARVETT
City Tech
I am an artist and a designer. While researching who Gabriel Furman was, it deeply bothered me that there had never been an image of Furman. I am attempting to give him a face in a charcoal drawing. By gathering information on the era he lived in, digging for the few descriptions of his physical self, and looking deep into his journals to find his inner thoughts and feelings, I am able to render what Gabriel Furman could have looked like.

JOHN JOHNSON
City Tech
I am entering my senior year in Communication Design. My project is on the important role that New York, and Brooklyn in particular, played in the “Underground Railroad” during the 1800s. I am tying this subject to the abolitionist movement in general, and to Gabriel Furman’s evolving position on slavery. I am doing this project in the form of a movie which will be made using Adobe Photoshop and Aftereffects using text, images, and audio.

MIGUEL LANTIGUA
City Tech/Columbia University
I am an architecture student at Columbia University who previously attended City Tech. I also intern at Asymptote Architecture where I have worked on projects in Abu Dhabi, Ghent, and most notably and currently, a port terminal in Keelung, Taiwan. My research at BHS examines Gabriel Furman’s aspirations for the architectural development of the then Town of Brooklyn, particularly the Brooklyn Heights area. Through a series of abstract maps, I will point out key locations noted in Furman’s journals.

SHAKWAN MCRAE
City Tech
I am a liberal arts major. Through City Tech, I have had the opportunity to become a SAFA fellow and research an “unknown” but brilliant historical writer, Gabriel Furman. For my project, I have decided to explore Furman’s artistic view and interpretation of nature (specifically autumn) while comparing the similarities between Furman’s autumn and the expression of autumn in the popular jazz tune “Autumn Leaves.”
CLIFFORD PETIT
Long Island University/Hunter College
I am conducting research on natural cancer treatments based on specific entries in Gabriel Furman’s journals. I was born in 1993 at Manhattan’s Presbyterian Hospital and moved to Huntington, NY a few years after. During my freshman year at LIU, I was introduced to Brooklyn Historical Society via the SAFA program in my English and History courses. There I learned first-hand the significance of archival resources. I am transferring to Hunter College to study psychology in the fall.

KRYSRALT WILLIAMS
St. Francis College
I am twenty years old and I am majoring in Radiologic Science. One day I hope to become a Radiologist. Ironically, History is my favorite subject. I love reading and learning new things that I can relate to. Researching at Brooklyn Historical Society granted me the opportunity to learn more about the history of my hometown. In my project on the history of transportation of Flatbush, I will present the various types of transportation to and through Flatbush from 1800 until now.

TENZIN YESHAY
St. Francis College
I am originally from Tibet, currently residing in the Bronx, NY. My project gives a narrative of Gabriel Furman’s interest in venereal diseases and cholera. I trace the history of venereal disease in the 19th century and its parallels with cholera. I compare similar social attitudes of the 19th century towards cholera and venereal diseases. I also address medical misconceptions society had in the 19th century about the two diseases and contrast it with the actual reality that exists today.

GARY JEAN-JUSTE
City Tech
I’m working as a SAFA fellow to improve my skills in the field of biology. I’m a New Yorker born and raised and have great passion for the history of New York. In my project, I am recreating the cures and remedies of the early 1800s as Gabriel Furman documented in his journals. I will construct a pamphlet that will list each cure, the way it was developed, and its use.

JENNIFER JESSICA RAMOS
City Tech
For my project, I used passages from Gabriel Furman’s journals to paint a picture of his views on the marvelous and supernatural. During my free time I enjoy reading a good book or exercising my creativity by painting.

NORHAN AHMED
St. Francis College
I am an eighteen year old college student who lives in Brooklyn, NY. I love to read books and write poetry. I’m the type of person who loves to learn new information. My project is centered around the issue of race and ethnicity in 19th-century Brooklyn. It addresses different ethnic groups that lived near Gabriel Furman such as the Germans and the Irish. I also discuss their relationships with each other and with African Americans.

GLENYS RODRIGUEZ
St. Francis College
I am an English and History major interested in pursuing a career as an archivist. Gabriel Furman was a man who prophesied the future of Brooklyn and its rapid growth. He knew that change was coming which is why he took the time to record census data and street names and origins. My project makes Furman’s recordings visual and available in data and images—comparing how it was then in early 19th-century Brooklyn to how it is now.
The SAFA summer fellowship was conceived and led by:

**JULIE GOLIA**  
Public Historian  
SAFA Co-Director

**ROBIN M. KATZ**  
Outreach and Public Services Archivist  
SAFA Co-Director

**LAUREN ONIFER**  
SAFA Archives Assistant

This project is supported by grant #P116B100331 from the U.S. Department of Education. However, fellowship content and products do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.