

# Impressed American Sailors in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries

*Jacob Nelson, Dr. Christine Sears*  
*Department of History*

## Overview

- This project mined a variety of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century documents, the vast majority handwritten, including personal letters, government records, shipping lists, ships' logs, and court cases.
- Sources were read and analyzed, then compiled into a database housing the stories and descriptions of more than 150 American sailors who were taken from their own ships and impressed into the service of other countries, primarily Great Britain and France, during the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and reaching into the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup>.



## Impact

- Research like this offers a more complete picture of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century American sailors and how they lived in a world much different in many ways from that of today.
- Put in context and combined with other research, this project helps add a layer to the maritime history of the United States.
- Historians obtain a deeper glimpse into the diverse but profoundly human lives and minds of people from another time and setting.

## Results

- A sizable historical database with names, descriptions, and accounts of more than 150 American sailors.
- Experience with one of several different and valuable historical methodologies.
- Exposure to and work with the complex handwritten script of earlier centuries that is far different in many ways than modern written English.

## Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank the RCEU staff, the UAH Office of the Provost, as well as the UAH Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development.