

Dianna Dames

Finding Beauty in New Orleans

Samantha Taylor, Asheville native, will be conducting research in New Orleans for her directed independent study on Kate Chopin. Chopin stood out to Samantha because of her original technique concerning the focus women in her stories.

“They are always searching for independence and they aren’t traditional. When they are traditional, she shows the downfalls of them conforming,” is how Samantha describes Chopin’s depiction of females. Picking New Orleans as her study site was not difficult since it is where Chopin lived for several years after first getting married. Many of Chopin’s stories describe the culture of the New Orleans’ French Quarter, which is where Samantha will be spending four days experiencing the food, music, museums, and walking tours.

Samantha believes that what stood out about her proposal to the Wentworth Organization was how she connected Chopin with New Orleans. This is an idea that probably had not been offered prior. In her application, Samantha expresses her plans to “mimic the walks that Kate Chopin took through the city and immerse myself in a culture that is unlike anything I’ve experienced before.” Another characteristic that Samantha saw as helpful was keeping in touch with her English teachers, which made it easy for her to get a great recommendation.

Samantha is excited for this new experience because it will be her first time traveling alone. She is most nervous about connecting to New Orleans on a level similar to Chopin after only being there as a tourist for a few days. It is clear Samantha hopes to get all she can out of this trip and see the beauty that Chopin saw in New Orleans. This may not prove a difficult task with the specialties New Orleans has to offer like Cajun food, voo-doo museums, and jazz music. Immersing herself in this culture will help Samantha better understand Chopin and a facet of the history of American literature.