

**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
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**CREATING AN
ANTHROPOLOGIST**

An Ethnographic Perspective

Edited by Sarah
Riggs

First Edition

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The intentions of this paper are to explore how childhood and development shape one's perspective and contribute to their values and interests.

Using research on my subject, Sarah Riggs, I explore how her past and cultural context has impacted her values.

Sarah Riggs was born in Lincoln, Nebraska on October 29th, 1998. Her family moved to St. Mary's County, Maryland shortly after, where they lived for the next eight years. Growing up in Maryland shaped Sarah's perspective of the world and contributed greatly to her current interests and values.

From a young age, Sarah was always outside. Trees were her climbing posts, sticks and string turned into bows and arrows, and crabapples littering her front lawn became her currency. The location of St. Mary's County offered Sarah many opportunities to explore the outdoors as well as observe other cultural practices, and this is what I believe to be the most influential factor on her future interests. A Native American Powwow ceremony was hosted annually just forty minutes from her home, and as the public were invited to attend, she eagerly did so every year. An Amish community lived just outside of her city, and Sarah went with her family on monthly trips to the Amish Farmer's Market. Field-trips growing up in Maryland consisted of trips to Sotterley Plantation - a colonial plantation home re-purposed into an educational

program about Sotterley's history and culture - Historic St. Mary's City, annual canoeing trips, and explorations of wildlife through bird-watching at field sties.

While Sarah's cultural interests were developed in Southern Maryland due to local exposures, they were made global in Washington, D.C. School and family trips to D.C. were commonplace during Sarah's childhood, as her hometown was less than two hours from the nation's capital. This allowed her cultural interests to grow beyond a local level, as the plethora of museums displaying international subject exposed her to cultures beyond the borders of the United States.

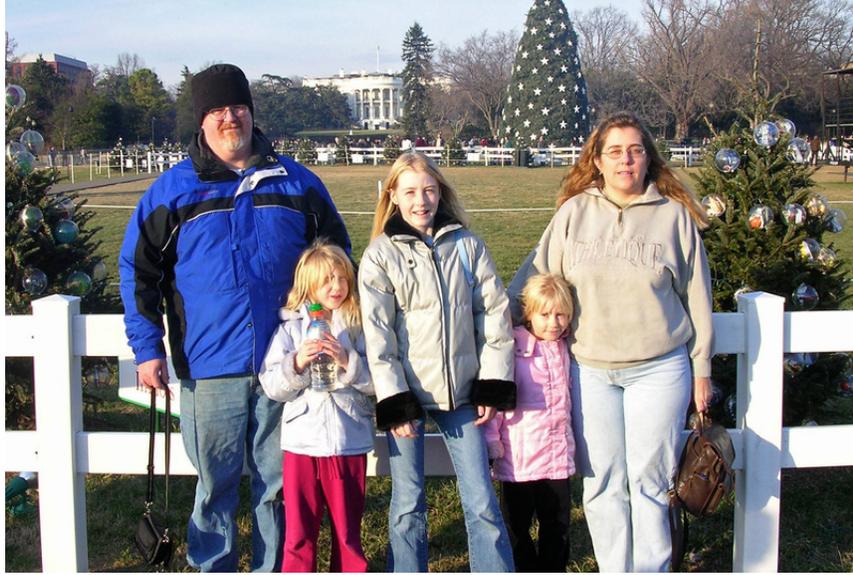
The setting of where Sarah grew up rooted the seed of cultural curiosity in her young mind. However, when Sarah was eleven years old, she moved to a suburban neighborhood in Warner Robins. She had no trees in her yard to climb; the pristine lawns of the neighborhood lacked sticks suitable for a home-made bow; crabapple trees were replaced with beds of pine needles. There were no more field-trips to historical sites or to the nation's capital. No more powwows, and no more Amish buggies strolling down the road alongside cars.

Sarah's first day in a Georgia middle school made her homesick and dampened her spirit. There were no windows in the classrooms overlooking forests of orange and yellow that were once traveled through by Harriet Tubman. There was no orchestra for her to continue her violin, nor a choir for her to use her voice as expression. Sarah clung to the one art class she had.

Moving on into high school, Sarah found her peace in choice: she could now begin to select which courses she wished to take. Naturally, her first self-registered class was AP World History. However, much of her schedule was still decided by the Board of Education. Although Sarah was able to take history and humanities classes that interested her, Sarah's grades did not seem to reflect her interests. It took her much more effort to do well in her history classes than in her math and science classes. Although she yearned to excel in the social sciences, her brain was more geared

towards success in the classic sciences. This shows the extent to which Sarah's environment impacted her at a young age, as her interests that developed with the aid of outside influences were not entirely consistent with her brain mechanics.

Although Sarah excelled more in STEM courses, her heart was set on humanities, and college became Sarah's saving grace. The copious options available to her filled her heart with excitement, and before she knew it, her schedule was filled with classes ranging from Classical Mythology to African Religion. Sarah had finally been given free-reign to truly explore her interests, and her heart chose Anthropology, a humanities discipline rooted in science -- the perfect balance.



MEET THE SUBJECT

Image 1: Sarah Riggs atop the tower of Pisa during a study abroad program, 2018

Image 2: Sarah Riggs, second from the right, on a trip to D.C., 2003

Image 3: Sarah Riggs, second from the left, enjoying nature, 2004