

I sailed on the Thomas G. Thompson from Woods Hole, Massachusetts to St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands on the A20 leg for US GO-SHIPS. All of the crew members had to quarantine two weeks prior to boarding due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We boarded this ship eager to break our social isolation and collect samples from the Northern Atlantic on March 15th, 2021. I held the position of a CTD watch/stander for my first journey at sea. My duties included preparing the Niskin bottles and rinsing the sensors to the various instruments on the rosette prior to each cast, communicating with the winch operators to lower the rosette to ten feet above the ocean floor and then to each consecutive depth where we would close a Niskin bottle, ensuring that oxygen sensitive samples such as chlorofluorocarbon, oxygen, partial pressure of carbon dioxide, dissolved inorganic carbon, and pH, were sampled within 15 minutes of depressurizing each bottle, and taking samples for salinity analysis. This was the ideal position to introduce me to the world of oceanographic cruises. I learned valuable information about how samples are taken, what data is regularly monitored, and how to care for a Rosette, CTD, and Niskin bottles. I quickly realized it takes a village to make an oceanographic cruise successful and each person on ship has a vital job. It was also a great opportunity for me to learn about the field through masters and doctoral students, professional oceanographers, and the ship crew who spend a large portion of their time at sea.

Aside from the science, I enjoyed the serenity and easy-going nature of life at sea. We were very lucky to not have experienced much rough weather which made for an enjoyable journey. I spent much of my time disconnected from the internet and instead reading, playing solitaire and cribbage, and learning how to tie knots. Some of my favorite memories include visiting the bridge to watch the bow nod along with the waves, doing yoga outside on the stern on a sunny day, and playing the various records on the record player in the computer lab. Going to sea is an essential part of this career so I am grateful to have had the opportunity to sail on a US GO-SHIP leg this early in my journey. It solidified my desire to continue my pursuit as a chemical oceanographer. I hope that this is the first of many cruises that I take part in during my career.