Greetings from the Department of History!

Historians measure success in many ways but it’s hard to argue with five books, three dissertations, prizes for undergraduate research, a broad array of articles and conference papers, public speaking engagements around the state and around the world, a college teaching award (congratulations, Dr. Dietzell!), an unusually distinguished array of visiting speakers, and the now-venerable tradition of hosting the International Graduate Historical Studies Conference in April. (Definitions of “venerable” are contested but we note with some satisfaction that our first graduate conference predates the Obama administration, which now seems so very long ago.)

Beyond our scholarship and teaching, I am also proud of the department’s direct, public, and deliberate engagement with our communities. For the five-hundredth anniversary of the Protestant Reformation Carrie Euler blanketed the lower peninsula with talks about Martin Luther; Brittany Fremion initiated a new collaborative oral history project on PBB contamination in the 1970s, soliciting participation and input from the large number of Michigan communities affected by a disaster whose debilitating consequences have yet to be sounded in full; Jay Martin and his students worked on projects all over the state, from northern Lake Michigan to Mount Pleasant and Winn; and the history department’s blog “[Re]Collection” published over 40 contributions from a remarkably diverse range of authors, including students and alumni, history faculty, the CEO of Michigan’s largest private company, and an Italian scientist with a well-documented flair for acrobazie in bicicletta. Please visit recollectionhistory.com early and often for both the longer posts and frequent updates about the department’s latest news: many of the accomplishments adumbrated in these pages are described there in more detail. (Among other things, it’s the best way to find out that Andy Wehrman is officially a GameChanger, or that Lane Demas scored an invitation to the Masters.)

We were also very glad to welcome Michelle Cassidy, who found time among her new preps and ongoing research to give a public talk in Mount Pleasant on the involvement of Native Americans from the Odawa and Ojibwa tribes during the Civil War. On the other side of the personnel ledger, John Robertson retired after 36 years of distinguished service, research, and teaching in ancient and modern Middle Eastern history. Warm thanks and congratulations to a colleague and friend: you will be missed!

Overall history enrollments saw some declines at CMU this year but we are encouraged by trends suggesting an increase in history enrollments nationwide. Smaller numbers in the history major and minor were mostly offset by renewed growth in history education programs as well as in Public History. Increasing both course and program enrollments will be a major priority for the department in 2018–2019 and beyond, as we look to draw more attention to our discipline and department inside and outside the university. Fortunately the task is made easier by the accomplishments and dedication of our remarkable faculty and students — and by the fact that the department is now the owner of the coveted Honors Program lifeboat paddle trophy (on which, and much else, see below).

Gregory Smith
Department of History Chair
Lane Demas published his second book, *Game of Privilege: An African American History of Golf* (University of North Carolina Press) in October. It has received positive reviews, and led to media appearances including the *Boston Globe*. It was also awarded the United States Golf Association’s award for the best golf book in 2017. Lane published book reviews in the *Journal of American History* and *Journal of African American History*. He also reviewed manuscripts for Vanderbilt University Press and West Virginia University Press. As editor of the *Michigan Historical Review*, Lane handled 36 article submissions.

This past fall, Brittany Fremion (along with Jay Martin) gave a talk for the opening of the Clarke Library’s exhibit on the university’s 125th anniversary. Brittany spent the fall semester working on an oral history project for an exhibition called “(dis)ABLED BEAUTY: The Evolution of Beauty, Disability, and Ability,” curated by Dr. Stacey Lim (CMU) and Dr. Tameka Ellington (Kent State University). This included training advanced undergraduate and graduate students in oral history methods, theory, and ethics, as well as collaborating with partners across campus. The exhibit opened in the Clarke Historical Library in February and runs through August 2018. She also co-authored the chapter, “Shards of the Glass Ceiling: How Individual Discrimination Still Exists in the Face of Legal Sanction,” for an edited collection, *The War on Women in the United States: Beliefs, Tactics, and Best Defenses*. In addition to this work, she recently started a new oral history project which will gather and preserve the stories of individuals connected to the contamination of livestock-feed with PBB in Michigan in the 1970s. This poisoning of people and places ranks as the largest episode of food contamination, longest running public health study, and among the costliest environmental cleanup efforts in U.S. history. Oral histories will be preserved in the special research collection at the Museum of Cultural and Natural History and create an inclusive and democratic historical record, accessible by future educators, scholars, and community members.

Mitchell Hall had two new publications come out this year, *Opposition to War: An Encyclopedia of U.S. Peace and Antiwar Movements*, 2 vols. (ABC-CLIO, 2018), and *The Vietnam War*, 3rd edition (Routledge, 2018). He is thankful to be undertaking his next project without having to meet a deadline. Mitch spent most of the academic year revising his courses, completely revamping his course on U.S. Diplomacy for spring 2018. (continued next column)

(continued from previous column) He was pleased to hood his third PhD student, Jennifer Vannette, as she graduated in December. In February, his comments appeared in an article in *Mother Jones*, and on March 24, he was a speaker at the Mt. Pleasant March for Our Lives rally. In the past year, Mitch and his wife, Ann, enjoyed a vacation in St. Barts and a long weekend trip to Boston, and took in a James Taylor concert last spring.

Doina Pasca Harsanyi spent the spring semester teaching at the University of Groningen - a Napoleon course at the advanced undergraduate level, and a Master’s level seminar called “America Seen from Europe.” She completed research in Parma over spring break in April and presented a paper titled “Beyond the Grand Tour: French Administrators and Italian Subjects” at a two-day colloquium on Napoleonic Italy held at the Historical Museum of Castiglione Fiorentino, near Florence.

Eric Johnson was named an Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award winner by Marquis Who’s Who.

Jay Martin’s article, “Scows, and Barges, or Other Vessels of Box Model: Comparative Capital Investment in and the Sailing Scows on the Great Lakes of North America and in New Zealand,” was published in the *International Journal of Maritime History*. Public History and Cultural Resource Management students participated in several of Dr. Martin’s research projects, including a summer 2017 maritime historical study involving archaeological fieldwork on the wreck of the brig James McBride in northern Lake Michigan and a fall 2017 study of the suitability of a factory tour, visitor center/museum, and gift shop for Morbark, LLC, in Winn, Michigan. They also helped the CMU Museum of Cultural and Natural History prepare an operating 1920 Transport Truck (built in Mt. Pleasant) for its August 2017 debut and developed K-12 educational programs to support it. The museum has achieved record attendance this year, plus a substantial increase in both the natural history and cultural history research collections, including oral histories created in a project led by Dr. Brittany Fremion. Dr. Martin began a new oral history project to document the experiences of CMU and local community members during the March 2, 2018, active shooter incident. The museum is currently leading a healing community art project in cooperation with the CMU Counseling Center.
FORMER FACULTY NEWS


After 36 years as a member of the CMU Department of History, John Robertson will be retiring, effective August, 2018. Meanwhile, a revised version of his “Social Tensions in the Ancient Near East” - a chapter in the forthcoming second edition of the Blackwell’s *Companion to the Ancient Near East* - will be appearing soon. In December, 2017, Prof. Robertson served as a member of a National Screening Committee for Fulbright Student Awards for the Middle East. He will be continuing his scholarly endeavors into retirement, beginning with completing his commissioned article on “Modern Iraq” for the *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*.

Jonathan Truitt has spent the year working on a number of different projects related to teaching and research. His book *Sustaining the Divine in Mexico Tenochtitlan: Nahua and Catholicism, 1523-1700* will be released this summer with the University of Oklahoma Press and the Academy of American Franciscan History. This past January he signed a contract with W. W. Norton for his *Reacting to the Past* pedagogical game *Mexico in Revolution, 1912-1920* (co-authored with Stephany Slaughter) and due out in May 2019. This game benefitted from research assistance from two History Department alumni, Ben Harris and Trent Wolf. Additionally, in July, Truitt will be taking on the role of chair for the newly formed Center for Simulation and Game-Based Learning at CMU.

FORMER FACULTY NEWS

Gregory Smith published his article “Augustine On Demons’ Bodies” in *Studia Patristica* LXXXII (2017). He was also invited to contribute to the inaugural meeting of a three-year seminar called “Religion and Philosophy in Late Antiquity,” organized by Roshan Abraham and Todd Krulak. The result was “What Kind of Problem Do Demons Solve?”, a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Biblical Literature (SBL) in Boston in November 2017. This project continues with an invited paper for 2018 and a follow-up in 2019, with plans for publication of seminar contributions in a special issue of *Studies in Late Antiquity*. In the fall he was invited by Margo Kitts and James Lewis to write a book on demons in classical antiquity for the Cambridge series “Elements of Religion and Violence.” The resulting proposal for a book with the provisional title *Demons and Power in the Ancient World* was accepted by the editors in February.


David Goldberg (2005-2007) is currently Associate Professor at Wayne State University in Detroit. His book, *Black Firefighters and the FDNY: The Struggle for Jobs, Justice, and Equity in New York City*, was recently published by the University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

Ben Weinstein (2009-2014) is now Teaching Fellow in Modern British History at the University of Edinburgh. *The Historical Journal* 61;1 (2017) recently published his article, “Liberalism, Local Government Reform, and Political Education in Great Britain and British India, 1880-1886,” part of an ongoing study of the influence of experience in India on leading British civil servants.

PHI ALPHA THETA

It was a busy year for the History Club/Phi Alpha Th-eta. Several graduate students and faculty members presented their research to the club. Members participated in two service projects including a fall cleanup of the Chippewa River alongside other CMU student organizations. During the spring semester, the History Club hosted its annual Humanities Charity Ball where over $250 was fundraised for the Freedom House of Detroit. Participation in the Phi Alpha Theta regional conference was a priority of the club’s this past year. Four members: Daniel Bean, Cassie Olson, James Ford, and Jonathan Korpi presented at the conference held at Ferris State University. Members also presented at the International Graduate Historical Studies Conference at CMU where Daniel Bean received an award.

ALUMNI NEWS

Justin M. Bannister (2009) is a piano instructor at a school of music, and plays keyboard and sings in several different venues around the east coast of Australia. He notes: “There is much history learned in my travels!”

Joffrey Bywater (2007, BS) has been named Assistant Principal of Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology at Mother McAuley Liberal Arts High School in Chicago. Mother McAuley is the country’s largest all-girls high school with approximately 1,000 students. Prior to joining Mother McAuley, Joffrey served as the Assistant Principal at Urban Prep Academy in Chicago from 2010-2017.

John Phillips (2012) earned his PhD from the University of Tulsa in May 2017, and has begun a postdoctoral fellowship at Michigan State University.

Geoffrey Reynolds (1989, BSEd) is the Mary Riepma Ross Director of the Joint Archives of Holland, Hope College, and was promoted to the rank of full professor at Hope College in May 2016. His book chapter, “Plastic Fantastic: The Fiberglass Boatbuilding Industry in Holland, Michigan,” was published in Michigan Modern: Design that Shaped America (2016), a Michigan Notable Book choice for 2017.

Dan St. Laurent (2002, BS) is an American History teacher at Lake Shore High School in St. Clair Shores, Michigan. He was selected for a two week study tour of Germany by the Goethe Institute and the Transatlantic Outreach Program.

IT’S OFFICIAL: HISTORY IS (REALLY) USEFUL

In November CMU Honors students decided that history is the most important discipline in the world — or at least the field that would be most useful for survivors of a global catastrophe. Each year the Honors Program hosts a debate featuring faculty from departments across the university, with the aim of figuring out who gets the final seat on the life boat for survivors of a hypothetical disaster. After a fierce debate in which substantive arguments were almost as important as zingers, History came away with the prize, besting Biology, Psychology, Philosophy, and even a well-funded attack from Recreation, Parks, and Leisure.
Please consider supporting and encouraging our current CMU students as they prepare for their future. Your financial assistance will help provide scholarships for study at CMU and abroad, essay competition prizes, the opportunity for students to hear guest lecturers, and money for student research and conference attendance. The following are some of the opportunities available:

**STUDY ABROAD SCHOLARSHIPS**
- Dennis Thavenet Study Abroad Scholarship
- Dennis Thavenet Study Abroad History Department Scholarship
- Howard Evans Study Abroad Scholarship

**SCHOLARSHIPS**
- J.D. Smith Award (graduate)
- The Mae Teeter History Prize (undergraduate)
- Duane Mark Bouliew History Prize (undergraduate)

**STUDENT SCHOLARLY RESEARCH AND WRITING AWARDS**
- Gabriel Chien Memorial Fund Essay Prize

**ENDOWMENTS**
- George M. Blackburn Endowment (lecture on American Civil War and Reconstruction)
- William T. Bulger Endowment (lecture series in American Biography)

For further information about ways to give, please contact the History Office in Powers 106. Call 989-774-3374, or email history@cmich.edu.

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The Department of History hosted the 2018 International Graduate Historical Studies Conference on April 6-7 in the Bovee University Center. This year’s theme was “Real and Imagined Borders: People, Place, Time.” The conference built on the success of previous years and continues to attract exciting and innovative research from graduate students around the world.

This year’s participants came from a variety of disciplines and institutions, including several North American universities as well as universities in the United Kingdom, Germany, and France. Presentations ranged from exploring female African American high school activism in New Jersey, to examining forced labor in the Soviet Union and the New South, as well as discussing Johann Sebastian Bach’s view on coffee addiction in his *Coffee Cantata*.

Dr. Alan Taylor, the Thomas Jefferson Chair in American History at the University of Virginia and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, delivered the keynote address, “Transforming North America: Empires and Republics in War and Peace, 1800-1850.” Dr. Taylor’s talk explored the War of 1812 and its lasting impact on the North American continent. His fascinating talk was followed by a lively question-and-answer session.

The conference organizers would like to extend their thanks to graduate students, faculty, and the history department’s office staff who assisted in a variety of capacities: judging papers, chairing sessions, helping out with the logistics, and making all of our guests feel welcome.

Join us at next year’s conference March 29-30, 2019 as we discuss “Transcending Boundaries.”
During the 2017-2018 academic year, three graduate students successfully defended their dissertations:

Jennifer Vannette  
**Advisor: Mitchell Hall**  
“Aftermath of Genocide: The World Jewish Congress and the Fight for Human Rights”

Kevin Hall  
**Advisor: Eric Johnson**  
“Allied ‘Luftgangster’ and the German Population: The Mistreatment of Downed American Airmen in Germany during World War II”

Hugo Zayas  
**Advisor: Jonathan Truitt**  
“Makers of Knowledge: Seventeenth-Century Jesuit Intellectual Culture in the Spanish World”

This last year has been quite an eventful one for the History Graduate Program. On a bittersweet note, we bade farewell to three of our doctoral students, Jennifer Vannette, Kevin Hall, and Hugo Zayas, all of whom defended their dissertations this year. We continued to strengthen our international profile, adding two new partners, Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès and Ruhr-Universität Bochum. We launched a new initiative, the Semester Abroad Track in the MA, which allows traditional masters students to spend a semester abroad in either Toulouse or Bochum, completing history coursework while deepening their language skills through intensive language instruction. And we were awarded an Erasmus Grant, which funded an exchange that included three CMU MA students, Jordan Evans, Tyler Shields and Ethan Veenhuis, two RUB MA students and two faculty members, Dr. Carrie Euler and Dr. Andrzej Michalczyk.

Notable scholars continue to make the trip to Mount Pleasant to share their expertise and spend time with our graduate students. In addition to two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Alan Taylor, who gave the Keynote at the International Graduate Historical Studies Conference, the Department welcomed Edward Ayers, a National Professor of the Year, finalist for both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize, a Bancroft Prize winner and one of the historians on the history podcast Backstory. Dr. Ayers delivered the Blackburn Lecture and during a brown bag for graduate students recounted his experiences as a pioneer in the field of digital humanities. Dr. Susan Ware, a noted biographer and expert in women’s history, was this year’s Bulger speaker, while Dr. Michael Dreyer, a political scientist at Friedrich-Schiller-Universität, served as the Constitution Day speaker.

Finally, we continue to move forward with the History MA Summer Intensive, our initiative designed primarily for teachers, which will allow them to earn their MA by taking coursework in the summer.

Kathleen G. Donohue  
Director of History Graduate Studies
Keep in touch! We'd love to include news about you in our next newsletter. Send us the following information:

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