

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

2020 NEWSLETTER

Greetings from the Department of History!

“Somehow history seemed unusually important this year,” wrote the young and naïve Dr. Smith at the end of his first year as department chair in June 2017. He also appears to have found that first year “busy and unpredictable.” It is my hope that three years later our friends, colleagues, and alumni will smile indulgently at how little we knew in 2017, how carelessly we threw around words like “unpredictable,” and remember with gratitude that we are not in the prediction business. But of course history was important then and it’s at least as essential now. I am just as pleased as I was in that first year to report that our faculty and students have revealed themselves up to the challenge. As you’ll see in the pages below, CMU history professors were especially active in public lectures, conferences, and other kinds of history produced for regular people as well as professionals: from history blogs that (regular) people read to ESPN, from an NIH-funded oral history project in Michigan history to conferences on Napoleon, Allied airmen in WWII, Tiananmen Square, underwater archaeology, women’s suffrage, game-based learning, and what it was like to be dead in late antiquity (I know, I know) — to name just a few. Andy Wehrman is the one who knows the most about epidemics; I am not sure whether to be alarmed or comforted when he reports that he has been feeling “like he’s seen this movie before.” His forthcoming book and other publications are only a small sample from a productive year by the department’s faculty and (notably) our graduate alumni.

This scholarly production is especially impressive in view of the fact that we taught the usual array of undergraduate and graduate students, right through and after the disruptions of Covid-19. But it wasn’t just the usual array: when the college assembled a crack team of experts in late March to teach a special one-credit pop-up course called “Perspectives on Pandemics,” two of our number stepped in with classes on the history of disease and public health. And our teaching won awards: Brittany Fremion added the Maroon Award for Excellence in Teaching from the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences to her impressive collection. We also continued our tradition of hosting more public talks than just about any other department at the university, although several notable events had to be cancelled in the spring. For details on talks and titles, please check the department’s active blog, [Re]collection (recollectionhistory.com) — with special thanks to this year’s expert graduate editors, Gillian Macdonald and Sean Scally.

This is the year that we also say goodbye to Eric Johnson, who retired at the end of the spring term. None of us would have picked this way to send him off, socially distanced and unable to spring all those surprise parties that he would have hated. But we have found — and will find — more than a few ways to express our gratitude and admiration for 44 years of distinguished scholarship, dedicated teaching, and student mentoring. It’s especially fitting that books by two of his former students appeared (or will appear) in 2020 and 2021. For an understated summary of a few of Eric’s contributions to the department and university, it’s hard to do better than the formal retirement resolution passed by the Board of Trustees in June 2020, which we’ve included below.

Many thanks finally to Annette and Katelyn, *sine quibus non*, and again to Dave Macleod for his assistance with editing the newsletter.

Gregory Smith
Department of History Chair

FACULTY NEWS

Michelle Cassidy contributed two pieces on Indigenous military service and the Civil War to the *Journal of the Civil War Era's* blog, *Muster: "Honoring and Remembering Indigenous Civil War Veterans in Public Spaces"* and *"The Contours of Settler Colonialism in Civil War Pension Files."* She is currently working on a book manuscript, *The Indian Company: Michigan Anishinaabeg, Citizenship, and the Civil War*, which explores the multiple strategies the Anishinaabeg deployed to remain in Michigan, including their service in Company K of the First Michigan Sharpshooters during the Civil War.

Lane Demas continues to thank God for a job, especially one with such supportive colleagues and beguiling students. A highlight of the year was an invitation to serve as historical consultant for *The Whipping Man*, a CMU theater performance led by one of his former students, Stephan Wilson. (Stephan made headlines soon after when he and his mother graduated together at CMU's commencement.) Lane also received a 2021 Fulbright Award to teach American history at National Chengchi University in Taiwan, although the pandemic may put an end to that. He was humbled by an audience of better teachers while "leading" a workshop on academic rigor at CMU's Excellence in Teaching and Learning Conference. Meanwhile, Lane's book *Game of Privilege: An African American History of Golf* received the North American Society for Sport History (NASSH) award for the year's best sport history book. He was also excited to be part of a CMU history sweep when he and Jennifer Vannette "tied" for the Delta College Humanities Learning Center Distinguished Scholar Award. (He thinks Vannette won soundly but was savvy enough to toss a bone to her former prof...) Lane also continued to discuss his research in various outlets. He appeared in *College Football 150*, an ESPN docuseries on the history of college football, and was featured commenting on race and golf in outlets like *CNN.com*, *NBCNews.com*, and *Axios*. As editor of the *Michigan Historical Review*, he handled 45 article submissions and 48 book reviews. One of the year's most meaningful experiences came when he was invited by the historical society of Lynchburg, Virginia, to support an application for a state historic marker commemorating Morris Alexander. Alexander – a black caddiemaster and golf coach who died in 1977 – received the honor and Lane delivered the keynote address at a unique ceremony unveiling the marker at Oakwood Country Club. He also presented a second public lecture on race and football sponsored by Lynchburg's Legacy Museum of African American History. In service, Lane published book reviews in *(continued next column)*

the *American Historical Review*, *Journal of American History*, and *Journal of African American History*, while Governor Rick Snyder appointed him to serve on Michigan's State Historic Preservation Review Board.



Lane speaking at the Morris Alexander ceremony in Lynchburg, VA.

In the spring of 2019, **Carrie Euler** published an article entitled "Education, Philanthropy, and Governance: A New Look at Lincolnshire Schools in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" in the U.K.-based journal *Midland History*. She has a book chapter coming out in 2021 entitled "Religious Reformers and Education in the Sixteenth Century." This will be published by Bloomsbury Publishing in volume two of a five-volume series, *A History of Western Philosophy of Education*.

Brittany Fremion continued to direct the Michigan PBB Oral History Project, a collaborative endeavor inspired by community members and researcher partners at Emory University and the University of Michigan. The project received funding from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Institutes of Health with additional support provided by the Museum of Cultural and Natural History and Department of History at CMU. Several undergraduates in history and public history programs, as well as graduate students in history and CRM, were involved with the project and participated in public presentations that showcased their experiences. Brittany has shared stories collected for the project at community meetings, a legislative event in Lansing, and most recently, the [From PBB to PFAS Symposium](#) at the University of Michigan, which she helped to organize. In addition, Brittany is a member of the advisory board for the Michigan Oral History Association. She is also a proud member and newly elected secretary of the Pine River Superfund Citizen Task Force (St. Louis, Michigan). In spring 2020 she received the Maroon Award for Excellence in Teaching from CLASS.

FACULTY NEWS

Solomon Getahun's article, "Italy's Ethiopian Mercenaries, the Forgotten Terenebulé," was published in *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (2019).

Although Grandparents University cancelled its on-campus event this summer, **Mitchell Hall** created some materials that the university made available online. Like most of his colleagues, his research this year was restricted by lack of access to archives and other key resources. He managed to get some writing done on a book manuscript, and completed two book reviews, one for the *Journal of American History* and one for the *American Historical Review*. In addition, he recently sent an article on American popular music to a journal for possible publication. He is spending most of his time trying to get courses ready for the Fall 2020 semester and beyond.

In July 2019, **Doina Harsanyi** presented "David and Goliath: Local Negotiators and French Administrators, the States of Parma 1806" at the Seventeenth Congress of the International Napoleonic Society in Grenoble, France. Her article, "Brigands, Social Bandits, Freedom Fighters: The Portrayal of Anti-Napoleonic Rebels in the Historiography of Napoleonic Italy," will appear in the September/October 2020 issue of *Age of Revolutions*. It is a revised version of a paper she presented at the Consortium on the Revolutionary Era at Florida State University in February. Her essay "De la recherche de la liberté à la poursuite de la modernité: L'Amérique comme pays d'inspiration, désenchantement et inquiétude. Voyageurs français en Amérique du Nord de la Guerre d'Indépendance à la fin du dix-neuvième siècle" ("From the Search for Freedom to the Pursuit of Modernity: America as Land of Inspiration, Disappointment and Disquiet. French Travelers in North America from the War of Independence to the End of Nineteenth Century") is included in the public project *Patrimoines Partagés* (Shared Heritages) organized by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in collaboration with Harvard, Princeton, and NYU libraries. Scheduled to launch in summer 2020, the project has been postponed until January 2021. Doina also reviewed two manuscripts (one for Bloomsbury Press and one for the *Yearbook of Transnational History*) as well as Elizabeth C. MacKnight's book, *Nobility and Patrimony in Modern France* (Manchester University Press, 2018).

After 44 years in the History Department, **Eric Johnson** retired at the end of the spring semester. As an accomplished and internationally recognized scholar, (continued next column)

he has been a mainstay of the department's graduate program, attracting and mentoring numerous doctoral students. His many undergraduate courses introduced thousands of CMU students to the drama and complexity of modern European history. Engaged and engaging, Eric was a presence in the classroom and outside it in counseling and conversation with students. The decision to retire did not come easily. But his students' research and writing and his own will continue. In October 2019, he gave a lecture on Allied Airmen and Prisoners of War in World War II to a large audience at the Yankee Air Museum at Willow Run Airport in Ypsilanti, Michigan. He is now working with CNN on a six-part television documentary series on Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany to be completed in the fall of 2020. Of particular interest to the series are interviews he conducted in Germany with ordinary citizens who lived through the Third Reich as well as with Jewish survivors for his book *What We Knew: Terror, Mass Murder and Everyday Life in Nazi Germany, an Oral History* (Basic Books, 2005). He is also finishing a book on the fall of the Berlin Wall and another on captured American pilots in World War II.

Jennifer Liu Demas presented "Tiananmen Protest and Massacre: Reflections on the 30th Anniversary" at the Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs in October 2019.

Jay Martin was busy with public history projects during the 2019-20 academic year. He completed a contract with the American Chemical Society Midland Section for research and expertise resulting in a collaborative centennial exhibit displayed at the Doan Museum in Midland, May-December 2019. Grant funding from the Coastal Zone Management Program supported the statewide Underwater Cultural Resources Public Access and Research Conference he led at Central Michigan University in February 2020. The conference highlighted research by established scholars, supplemented by the work of students he mentored in both the Museum Studies and Honors Programs. MA candidates in the Cultural Resource Management Program introduced program speakers. His collaborative research with the Old Settlers—Mid-Michigan's pioneer African American settlement—identified Emma Norman Todd as Central Michigan University's earliest known Black student. Ms. Todd earned a teaching certificate at Central Michigan Normal and taught in the schools of Isabella County, Michigan. Temporary exhibits telling her story were created by Museum Studies students and displayed at the Chippewa River District Library and the CMU Museum during Black History Month. (continued next page)

FACULTY NEWS

An additional exhibit using his research was created by Janet Danek and displayed at Park Library. A preliminary review of sites potentially connected with the Old Settlers was completed by students in HST 580 (Public History) in December 2019.

In September 2019, **Tara McCarthy** delivered the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism's annual Hibernian Lecture at the University of Notre Dame. The talk was entitled "A Century of Suffrage: Catholic Activism, Class Consciousness, and the Contributions of Irish American Women."

In January 2020, **Jennifer Quick** invited the Michigan Holocaust Center to Powers Hall to host a training entitled "Echoes and Reflections" for History education teacher candidates. It was well attended by 23 teacher candidates and several History teachers from around the region.

Fall of 2019 saw the completion and publication of **Jonathan Truitt** and Stephany Slaughter's (Alma College) *Mexico in Revolution, 1912-1920*, with W. W. Norton. The book is the first targeting a Latin American History topic within the *Reacting to the Past* pedagogical game series. Over the past ten years the game has been tested and reviewed at more than twenty other institutions. In April of 2020 both authors were awarded the Edwin Lieuwen Award for the Promotion of Excellence in the Teaching of Latin American Studies from the Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies for the publication of the book (they will receive the award in 2021 when the conference is able to reconvene). In February, Jonathan Truitt with Daria Kluver and Wendy Robertson (both from CMU Earth and Atmospheric Sciences) were awarded an Internal Innovation grant from Central Michigan University to expand game-based learning at CMU. The grant will run for two years and aims to train additional faculty in game-based learning and to assess game-based learning that is already in place at CMU. Finally, May saw the completion of a two-year prototype video game project (*Mexica Decision Points: La Malinche*) on a moment in Spanish-Aztec conflict. The project was a joint collaboration between CMU History and Animation as well as the Narrative Systems Lab at the University of Texas, Dallas. A design workbook from the game as well as a short video of a research trip to Mexico can be found on the Center for Learning through Games and Simulations website.

Andrew Wehrman researches and writes about the politics of epidemics and has been feeling lately like he's seen this movie before. (*continued next column*)

His book *The Contagion of Liberty* is under contract with Johns Hopkins University Press and argues that popular demand for public inoculation during smallpox epidemics in the 1760s and 1770s infected Revolutionary politics and changed the way Americans understood their health and their governments' responsibility to protect it. He recently did an interview about Boston's 1764 smallpox epidemic with the Dr. Joseph Warren Historical Society, which is available on YouTube. He has authored a chapter entitled "Thomas Jefferson, Inoculation, and the Norfolk Riots" in a new collection of essays published by the American Philosophical Society entitled *The Spirit of Inquiry in the Age of Jefferson*. He is on the board of advisors for an exhibition at the Brooklyn Historical Society called "Sick: Seven Diseases That Changed Brooklyn," which opened summer 2019 and runs through at least 2022.

EMERITUS RESOLUTION

WHEREAS Eric Johnson has served with distinction since 1976 as a professor of history, writing books and articles and teaching thousands of undergraduate and graduate students; and

WHEREAS he has gained an international reputation as an award-winning scholar by publishing books with major publishers such as Cambridge University Press and Basic Books, based on his innovative research in modern German history; and

WHEREAS his reputation and his deep commitment to fostering graduate education helped the history department build a Joint MA/PhD program in Transnational and Comparative History, which has brought to CMU advanced students from partner institutions around the world; and

WHEREAS he has mentored many junior historians and advanced the work of countless scholars as an unfailingly generous colleague, an editor of books and special issues of journals, a diligent reviewer of books and manuscripts, a frequent visiting scholar in the United States and abroad, and an advisor of doctoral dissertations at CMU and elsewhere; and

WHEREAS through his innovative scholarship he has brought honor to himself and has enhanced the reputation of Central Michigan University; now be it therefore

RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees, on behalf of the university community, expresses its gratitude and heartiest congratulations and confers the rank and title of Professor Emeritus upon Eric Johnson.

GRADUATE PROGRAM NOTES

The 2019-2020 academic year began on a high note. Two of our MA graduates were accepted into R-1 programs, indicating that top universities around the country continue to recognize the talent of our graduates. Camden Burd (MA, 2014) accepted an Assistant Professor position at Eastern Illinois University. And our doctoral students continue to do well. Timothy Day and Shannon Kirkwood defended their dissertations in fall 2019 (see "Dissertations Defended" section for details). Dale Moler (PhD, 2018) landed an Assistant Professor position at Northwood University. David Papendorf (ABD) accepted a Permanent Instructor position at Moody Bible College. Kevin Hall (PhD, 2018) is now a post-doctoral researcher at Ruhr-Universität Bochum. His book *Terror Flyers* (Indiana University Press) will come out in February 2021. A book by Dallas Michelbacher (PhD, 2016), *Jewish Forced Labor in Romania, 1940–1944*, was published by Indiana University Press in May 2020.

The international character of the graduate program remained strong. Dr. Lutz Budrass joined us in the fall as an exchange professor from Ruhr-Universität-Bochum. We welcomed several students from our partner institutions in Bochum and Jena and sent three traditional MA students to Germany on the Semester Abroad Track. A surge in paper proposals, along with a high-profile keynote speaker, Dr. Kenneth Pomeranz, promised to make 2020's International Graduate Historical Studies Conference highly successful and rewarding for all involved.

Equally exciting, the Department was actively expanding professional training opportunities for graduate students, incorporating more public history into the curriculum and preparing to launch the Summer Intensive, a residential MA program designed specifically for teachers.

Then COVID-19 hit. Graduate students suddenly found themselves initiated into the world of online learning and, in the case of our TAs, online teaching. Sadly, the IGHSC and the Summer Intensive both had to be cancelled for the year, and students on the Semester Abroad Track were called back.

But the graduate program continues to thrive even in these uncertain times. We will be welcoming a handful of students from Germany and France. Several students are hoping to participate in the Semester Abroad Track next spring. The IGHSC is on the books for next April. And the Summer Intensive is now scheduled for a summer 2021 launch. Here's hoping for a safe and productive new year!

Kathleen G. Donohue
Director of History Graduate Studies

INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE HISTORICAL STUDIES CONFERENCE

www.ighsc.info

The 2020 conference was canceled due to the pandemic but is slated to resume in 2021! Be sure to check out the conference website in coming months for updates and details.

*Join us at next year's conference April 16-17, 2021 as we discuss
"Controversy and Consensus: Shifting Places, Patterns, and Perspectives"*

SUPPORTING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

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

Albert Thomas & Brenda Jones Quick Graduate Study Abroad Award
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 Boulieuw History Prize (undergraduate)

STUDENT SCHOLARLY RESEARCH AND WRITING AWARDS

Gabriel Chien Memorial Fund Essay Prize

ENDOWMENTS

Dennis Thavenet Study Abroad Endowment
George M. Blackburn Endowment (lecture on American Civil War and Reconstruction)
William T. Bulger Endowment (lecture series in American Biography)

MATCHING GIFTS

Many employers match an employee gift. Please check with your personnel office for information on requesting matching funds. When you make your gift, complete a matching gift form from your personnel office and return it with your contribution to CMU.



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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Search "History" and a list of History scholarships, prizes and endowments to choose from will populate in the drop-down list.

DISSERTATIONS DEFENDED

During the 2019-2020 academic year, two graduate students successfully defended their dissertations:

Shannon Kirkwood

Advisor: Tara McCarthy

Title: *Mobilizing the Home: The Politics of Female Space, Women's Working Class Consciousness, and the Labor Movement in the U.S. and Britain, 1912-1922*

Timothy Day

Advisor: Doina Harsanyi

Title: *Confessional Pluralism and Civic Association in the Gallican and Anglican Churches, 1816-1829*

UNDERGRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Anna Reynolds, History Education major

2020 Provost's Award for Undergraduate Research and Creative Accomplishments

From CMU News (April 2020): "Senior Anna Reynolds was recognized by faculty member Brittany Fremion for her academic record, passion for historical research and exceptional growth as a developing educator. In addition to serving as president of Phi Alpha Theta/History Club, Reynolds has enthusiastically pursued opportunities for scholarship with faculty and peers. She contributed to the Michigan PBB Oral History Project, developed interactive projects requiring extensive research and integration, and completed oral histories with a level of professionalism usually reserved for graduate assistants. According to Fremion, Reynolds is a 'knowledgeable, driven and mature student who exhibits a genuine passion for learning and excitement for history.'"



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A HISTORY MOMENT



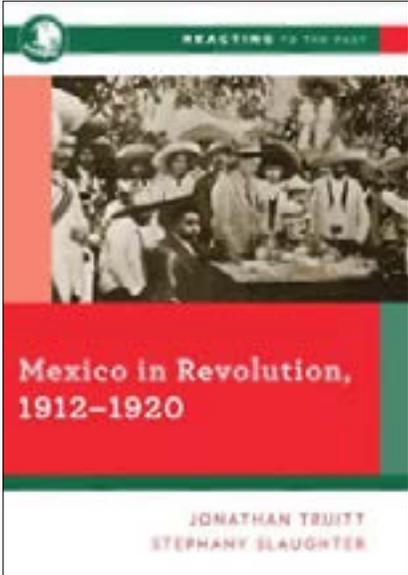
From the *Morning Sun* newspaper, Monday, May 14, 1979: "Stephen Scherer (right) an associate professor of History at Central Michigan University adapts his traditional graduation ceremonial dress to his own tastes by removing his mortarboard and replacing it with a cap of his personal choice. Scherer stayed within traditional bounds, however, by wearing the tassel on his headgear. The professor next to Scherer wore his cap and gown in the traditional manner. Both professors marched in the spring commencement exercises at Perry Shorts Stadium Saturday."

[RE]COLLECTION HISTORY

During the 2019-2020 academic year, the [Recollection History blog](#) was maintained and edited by Graduate Assistants Gillian Macdonald (Fall 2019 semester) and Sean Scally (Spring 2020 semester). Both editors were prolific in their efforts to gather submissions from a variety of historians. Posts featured a range of topics including digital history (Ed Ayers), writing historical fiction (Mara Dougall), how natural disasters affect university students (Jonathan Truitt), and many others.

If you are interested in submitting a post for consideration, please visit the [Submissions page](#) of the [Re]collection website.

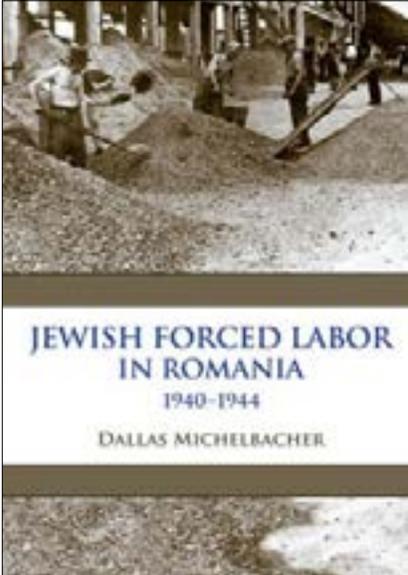
RECENT AND FORTHCOMING FACULTY AND ALUMNI BOOK RELEASES



Mexico in Revolution, 1912-1920

Jonathan Truitt (Professor of History) and Stephany Slaughter (Alma College)

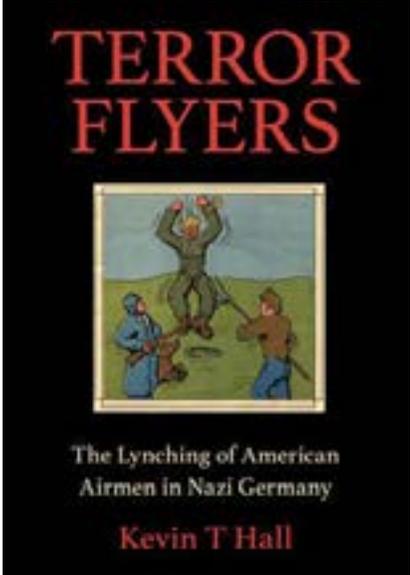
W.W. Norton, October 2019



Jewish Forced Labor in Romania, 1940-1944

Dallas Michelbacher (PhD, 2016)

Indiana University Press, May 2020



Terror Flyers: The Lynching of American Airmen in Nazi Germany

Kevin T. Hall (PhD, 2018)

Indiana University Press, February 2021

ALUMNI NEWS

Keep in touch! We'd love to include news about you in our next newsletter. Send us the following information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Graduation Year: _____ Degree: _____

News: _____

 News can be mailed to:

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