



**COLLEGE OF
LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES**

Department of History

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Dear Friends of the UI History Department:

I hope this finds you well in these challenging times. It was quite a year even before COVID-19 arrived, so there is plenty of news to share.

The first item is an unhappy one: our wonderful colleague, Jeffrey Cox, died abruptly in February at the age of 72. At the crowded Quaker memorial service in West Branch, colleagues, former students, and other friends joined with Jeff's family to share memories of what he meant to all of us. For information about Jeff's scholarship and teaching in British social, imperial, and religious history, please see clas.uiowa.edu/history/people/Jeffrey-l-cox. Another article featuring Jeff was published by *The Gazette* on February 12: <https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/community/iowa-citys-jeff-cox-72-championed-candidates-and-his-kids-20200212>.

A month after Jeff's passing, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Schaeffer Hall, along with the rest of campus, was closed. On two weeks' notice, history instructors converted about one hundred classes to online delivery, whether in the form of live meetings using Zoom, or through pre-recorded lectures accompanied by interactive online discussions and activities. Students navigated the transition well and expressed great appreciation for these Herculean efforts. All other departmental business had to be conducted remotely as well. Faculty meetings and graduate student defenses, including three dissertation defenses, occurred virtually. So did our annual celebration of graduating history majors. Our creative staff helped make that event a resounding success—a record number of graduating seniors participated, many logging in from their homes with relatives at their side. The festivities included not only the usual awards and recognitions, but also a short graduation video made by the American Historical Association featuring Lonnie Bunch, secretary of the Smithsonian and formerly the director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Arguing that knowledge of the past provides invaluable tools for addressing the problems of the present, Bunch offered an inspiring message for our graduating history majors.

That message resonated even more deeply a few weeks later, when the murder of George Floyd ignited a national protest movement demanding racial justice. Our students participate in this movement, and they are eager to explore its historical roots. Our colleagues with expertise on topics such as slavery and emancipation, racist policing, social inequality, and protest movements have been very busy responding to media requests. In particular, Professors Simon Balto and Ashley Howard worked tirelessly to provide historical perspectives for local, national and international audiences—in early June, *both* appeared in the *TIME Magazine* feature, “10 Experts on Where the George Floyd Protests Fit Into American History.”

Here are some other notable faculty achievements of 2019-2020:

- Ari Ariel, jointly appointed with International Studies, was promoted to associate professor of instruction, and associate director of International Studies. Rosemary Moore, jointly appointed with Classics, was

named the CLAS distinguished associate professor of instruction for 2020-2022. Stephen Warren, jointly appointed with American Studies, was promoted to full professor and now chairs American Studies.

- Simon Balto's *Occupied Territory: Policing Black Chicago from Red Summer to Black Power* (UNC Press, 2019), won the Benjamin Hooks Institute's National Book Award. This award is presented annually to the book that "best furthers understanding of the Civil Rights Movement and its legacy." He also won two highly competitive and prestigious fellowships for his book project on "Criminal Minstrelsy in Jim Crow America," one from the American Council of Learned Society and one from the National Endowment for the Humanities.
- H. Glenn Penny was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship for 2021. He was among the 175 writers, scholars, artists, and scientists nationwide chosen for the award from almost 3,000 applicants.
- Sarah Bond's work to reach non-academic audiences was recognized with the Faculty Communicating Ideas Award for 2020 from the UI Office of the Vice President for Research and the Public Scholarship Award of the Women's Classical Caucus.
- Alyssa Park was awarded the Kyujanggak Fellowship at Seoul National University, for fall 2020, which was deferred due to the pandemic. She will conduct research on Korean repatriation in the post-1945 period and its relationship to decolonization in northeast Asia.
- Alberto Ortiz Díaz was named a 2020-2021 Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow. He will be based at the University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras' Institute of Caribbean Studies working on his book manuscript, *Raising the Living Dead: Rehabilitative Corrections in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean*.
- Sarah Bond and Rosemary Moore hosted the 2020 annual meeting of the Association of Ancient Historians in April—not in Iowa City, as planned, but via Zoom, across many time zones.
- Tyler Priest launched a multi-media website on the history of offshore oil development in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Historians played leading roles in campus-wide programming to commemorate the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment. The year-long initiative included visiting speakers on voting rights, including Stacey Abrams of Fair Fight and the historian, Lisa Tetrault, as well as an Old Capitol Museum exhibit created by history majors. For the spring 2020 Rapid Response History course, Leslie Schwalm organized a lecture series on the theme of "Hard Won, Not Done: Women's Fight for Voting Rights." COVID-19 disrupted Leslie's plan to bring together students and community members at the Englert Theater, but Leslie, Landon Storrs, Ashley Howard, and the IWA's Kären Mason gave lectures and met with students via Zoom.
- Colin Gordon deployed a team of history majors on a project called "Mapping Segregation in Iowa City." Their findings were featured in a June 19 article in the *Iowa City Press Citizen*.
- For other examples of our public history projects—created for, and sometimes in collaboration with, audiences and communities beyond academia—visit: <https://clas.uiowa.edu/history/public-history>.

Our emeriti have been busy, too:

- Linda Kerber was elected to the Council of American Philosophical Society. The American Philosophical Society, the oldest learned society in the United States, was founded in 1743 by Benjamin Franklin for the purpose of "promoting useful knowledge." She also continued her work on behalf of the Richard E. Kerber Heartsafe Initiative.
- David Schoenbaum published *The Lives of Isaac Stern* (W.W. Norton, June 2020).
- Shelton Stromquist, with Adjunct Professor John McKerley (08PhD), spoke on Iowa Public Radio's River to River program in September about "The Iowa Labor History Oral Project: History from the Ground Up."
- Paul Greenough traveled to Russia and Kazakhstan and gave a lecture at Nurbayev University in October.

Two new books by former colleagues were published posthumously:

- Kenneth Cmiel and John Durham Peters, *Promiscuous Knowledge: Information, Image, and Other Truth Games in History* (University of Chicago Press, 2020)
- Lawrence Gelfand and John Day Tully, *The United States and the Rise of Tyrants: Diplomatic Relations with Nationalist Dictatorships Between the World Wars* (McFarland, 2019)

To celebrate the long list of books published in 2019, we held a book party—with author remarks and an enormous sheet cake decorated with edible representations of the book covers—at the Prairie Lights Bookstore Café. Kudos to our staff for going above and beyond the call of duty for this joyous event.

Thanks largely to donor support for student research travel—as well as to energetic supervision by faculty mentors---History had more students presenting their work at the Fall Undergraduate Research Festival (FURF) than any other department. Ten history majors were nominated to the Phi Beta Kappa Society, and other undergraduate successes include:

- History honors student Sydney DeBoer won a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in the Czech Republic. She also won the department's Outstanding Service Award.
- Maggie Fischer, a History and German major, won a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Germany.
- Cameron Moeller was named the 2019-2020 recipient of the Kay Keeshan Hamod Scholarship.
- Emily LeFeber and Cameron Moeller were awarded the Stow Persons Award for Best Senior Thesis.
- Graduating senior, Michael Steffen, was awarded a Library of Congress Junior Fellowship for summer 2020 and the Daughters of the American Revolution Centennial Scholarship to support him next year at the University of Illinois MS program in library information and science.
- The following 2020 History scholarships were awarded to rising seniors: the Melissa Harmeyer Scholarship to Hannah Haack, the Alan Spitzer Scholarship to Nathan Bryk and Christian Lunsford, and the W.E. Wolters Scholarship to Megan McEvoy and Keagen Coates.

Our graduate students faced, and continue to face, extraordinary challenges because of the pandemic. Not only did their teaching responsibilities change with the emergency shift to online instruction, but travel to archives became difficult, if not impossible. Our four new PhD students graduated into a job market made all the more uncertain by the economic impact of the pandemic.

Since well before COVID-19, the department has been participating in campus initiatives that seek to help graduate students, and their programs, take a broader view of their career possibilities. One is the Obermann Center's Humanities for the Public Good initiative funded by a Mellon grant. In February 2020, the Obermann Center hosted a day-long event that brought three History alums back to campus to meet with current grad students to talk about their careers outside the academy: Karen Christianson (09PhD), director, Department of Public Engagement, Newberry Library; Sylvea Hollis (18PhD), National Park Service Mellon Humanities Postdoctoral Fellowship; and Eric Zimmer (16PhD), historian, Vantage Point Historical Services. We also had the great pleasure of welcoming Trudy Huskamp Peterson (75PhD) back to Schaeffer Hall in October 2019. A full house showed up for her compelling talk, "To Save or to Toss: What Every Historian Should Know about Archival Appraisal." While on campus, she also met with a group of our new history majors.

History grad students again achieved an excellent success rate in competition for internal fellowships from the Graduate College and CLAS. Two advanced graduate students also won Dwight and Hannelore Bozeman Fellowships, awarded this year for the second time:

- Michael Benson will use his Bozeman award to visit the archives of the Deutsche Frauenbewegung in Kassel, Germany, and the the Lette Verein, in Berlin, in order to complete research for his dissertation, “German Anthropology and the Making of Modern Mexico, 1876-1940.”
- John Yost will use his Bozeman Fellowship to support the final stages of writing his dissertation, which compares the thought of Sigebert of Gembloux (ca. 1026-1112) and the author known as the Norman Anonymous (fl. ca.1100-1105). Both were proponents of royal authority within the Church during the series of struggles between the papacy and the European monarchies known as the investiture conflict.

Other recent achievements by History grad students:

- The UI Council on Teaching named Luke Borland and Joseph TenHulzen as recipients of the 2019 Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award.
- Dwain Coleman won three awards in support of his research on African Americans in Iowa: one from the Library Company of Philadelphia, one from the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, and one from the State Historical Society of Iowa. Dwain also was awarded the George F. Garcia History Scholarship.
- Alison Steigerwald (20PhD) accepted a position at Colorado Mesa University as an advisor for TRIO-Student Support Services (a federally funded program that supports students with disabilities, first-generation students, and low-income students).
- The UI Office of the Vice President for Research featured Johanna López Velador in the "Dare to Discover" downtown banner campaign, for her research on Latinx community-building in Iowa.

Some highlights of alumni activities and publications include:

- John Eicher (15PhD) saw publication of his first book, *Exiled among Nations: German and Mennonite Mythologies in a Transnational Age* (Cambridge, 2020). John also was awarded a Marie Curie Junior Fellowship at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies, a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend, and an American Council for Learned Societies Project Development Grant. His new research project concerns rural and religious interpretations of the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic in Europe.
- Caroline Radesky (19PhD) was awarded the 2020 John D'Emilio LGBTQ History Dissertation Award by the Organization of American Historians.
- Noaquia Callahan (18PhD) won the 2019 Obama Dissertation Prize for Transnational American Studies at the Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz.
- Josh Cochran (14PhD) is now the archivist for American diplomacy at Yale University Manuscripts and Archives.
- Katherine Massoth (16PhD) accepted a position at the University of New Mexico as assistant professor in American West and borderlands history.
- Joseph Murray (07PhD) was elected president of the World Federation of the Deaf at the XVIII World Congress in Paris, France.
- Michael Innis-Jiménez (06PhD) was promoted to professor of American studies at the University of Alabama.
- Paul M. Renfro (16PhD) published his revised dissertation, *Stranger Danger: Family Values, Childhood, and the American Carceral State* (Oxford, 2020).
- Jake Altman (16PhD) published his book, *Socialism before Sanders: The 1930s Movement from Romance to Revisionism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).
- Jennifer Harbour (08PhD) published *Organizing Freedom: Black Emancipation Activism in the Civil War Midwest* (Southern Illinois, 2020).
- The latest book by Kim Nielsen (16PhD), *Money, Marriage, and Madness: The Life of Anna Ott*, was featured in the June 2020 *Ms. Magazine*.

- Steven Bucklin (93PhD) won the 2020 Herbert S. Schell Award for best article in the previous year's *South Dakota History*, for his article, "Working on the Railroad: A History of the South Dakota Core Rail System."
- Kristi DiClemente (15PhD) won the Humanities Teacher of the Year Award at Mississippi University for Women.
- Alan January (76PhD) received the Eli Lilly Lifetime Achievement Award from the Indiana Historical Society.
- Jon Lauck (97PhD) was the winner in the History-General category of the 30th-annual Midwest Book Awards for his edited work, "The Interior Borderlands: Regional Identity in the Midwest and Great Plains," published by Augustana's Center for Western Studies. He also published, with Catherine McNicol Stock, an edited volume, *The Conservative Heartland: A Political History of the Postwar American Midwest* (Kansas, 2020).
- Angela Wright (13MA) received a research and creation grant from the Canada Council for the Arts to complete the manuscript for her first book on trauma and space.
- Janice Larson (77BA) received a 2019 Lifetime Achievement award from the International Association for Healthcare Textile Management.
- Chris Liddell-Westefeld (07BA) published, *They Said This Day Would Never Come: Chasing the Dream on Obama's Improbable Campaign* (Public Affairs, 2020). Chris spent five years on the Obama White House staff.

To keep up with the full list of alumni achievements and departmental happenings, please sign up for our weekly newsletter by emailing our wonderful staff member, Kathleen O'Neill (kathleen-c-oneill@uiowa.edu).

I close with heartfelt thanks. COVID-19 is exacerbating longer-term budget problems for public universities, making student enrollments, tuition revenues, and state appropriations less predictable than ever. Support from our donors makes a huge difference and is critical for the success of our students, our faculty, and the historical mission more broadly. The entire department appreciates your ongoing dedication.

Sincerely,



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P.S. We always enjoy hearing from our alumni and other friends, so keep us posted on your activities, by going to the "Alumni" link on our departmental webpage: <https://clas.uiowa.edu/history/about/alumni>.