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AND INSPIRES LEADERS



College of Social Science
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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History Newsletter





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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:

Dr. Lisa M. Fine

Welcome to the History Department's 2020 Newsletter-- the Covid edition. We hope everyone reading this has had a healthy and safe year and has taken or is getting ready to take a vaccine. Like most of MSU, History classes went to remote learning in mid-March 2020 and have remained almost entirely remote to date. Our faculty, staff, and students have met this challenge with grace, intelligence, and generosity. I thank all of our faculty for their persistence and continued excellence throughout all of this. Our staff, Elyse Hansen, Jennifer Desloover, Marcia Sime, (helping while Elyse Hansen is on maternity leave) and Ashwin Kumar have been exemplary.

We as historians have a unique perspective on all of the events and challenges of the last year—global pandemic, racial injustice, political upheaval. It has been a fairly constant refrain from the media, pundits, and commentators that “history will judge,” “history will weigh in,” “history will decide.” Historians know that “history” is not a disembodied thing; it is a profession, a methodology, an interpretive and sometimes a creative endeavor. Historians debate, engage with, and often provide multiple interpretations on the past. Nevertheless, we strive to be thoughtful, deliberative, and accountable with facts and footnotes in our writing and in our classrooms. We pledge that our work reflects the very best values of our profession, communities, our institution, and our nation. We are all trained to do this and we will continue.

This was a year of loss and grief and this was true for many in our History community—faculty, students, and staff. We are historians but we are also a part of history and I was reminded of that this year. Everyone suffered some kind of loss during this year of sorrow; I will mention two instances here. In April 2020, my parents, both in their 90s, succumbed a few weeks apart from Covid-19. Our skilled and treasured office supervisor, Elyse Hansen, lost her beloved husband Matthew Hansen on September 11, 2020. On October 15, she gave birth to her beautiful son, Marshall Matthew Hansen, and at the same time lost his identical twin brother Joel Eric Hansen. We mourn the losses, celebrate the new life, and look forward to better days ahead.

Despite this year's challenges, History faculty and students reported on wonderful accomplishments and I am delighted to share them in this newsletter. We carry on. I look forward to returning to the office, returning to the classroom, returning to libraries and archives, and yes, even returning to in-person meetings!!! I hope all of you have a safe and happy 2021.

A Future Most Uncertain

Department newsletters are usually meant to highlight and celebrate the many accomplishments of faculty and students, but this has been no usual year. While faculty published books and graduate students won dissertation research awards—the typical happenings of our department—something much bigger loomed over our lives this past year. When the pandemic really started to disrupt our lives in March 2020, most of us had little idea how much would change. Now, almost a year into lockdown, we are beginning to understand that many aspects of life may be changed forever, or at least for the foreseeable future. Among these changes, we must acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to disrupt our work in ways that will have very serious long-term consequences for our profession.

As a fourth-year graduate student in the department, I feel particularly well-placed to articulate some of the problems graduate students are facing in our current moment. I might first start by stating that the disruptions I am currently facing are ones shared by a great deal of graduate students in our department and beyond, and I know many are dealing with much more precarious situations than I have had to confront thus far. While I cannot speak to all concerns that students are dealing with, I can highlight some of the major problems that are occupying the minds of graduate students here at MSU.

Like so many others, I was supposed to be away on dissertation research leave during the 2020-2021 academic year. I did everything right, or so I thought. I won a competitive grant, made plans to live in Kyiv, Ukraine for the year, and negotiated my lease to end early so that I could leave for research in late August 2020. As one may predict, none of this worked out. Like me, a number of MSU students faced similar problems as a result of the pandemic disrupting their research agendas. Instead of traveling to our research locations, we remained grounded. Instead of receiving outside grant money, we were forced to take assistantships that ate into our limited department funding. Instead of making progress on our dissertations, we were forced to sit back and wait.

Although graduate students in every year of the program have been impacted in some way, students in their fourth year face a unique problem. They are far enough along that they have completed coursework and necessary examinations, but they have not yet had a chance to conduct a long-period of research necessary for the dissertation. This means that those of us who were supposed to be away this year lack the necessary material to complete our writing in full. We do not all have the luxury of simply “pushing back” our research year while we wait out the pandemic. Those of us in our fourth year face the bleak reality that next year, should we still be around MSU, might be the last of our guaranteed funding from the department. With no promises of funding extensions and no possibility of foreign travel at the moment, the future of graduate research looks bleak.

As we march on into the spring semester, many of us are already stressing about next year. Will we be able to travel in fall 2021? Will our outside funding sources commit to the money they promised us, or will they cancel our grants altogether? Can our current dissertation projects, as proposed now, actually be completed in the current climate? After thinking, developing, and writing about our topics for years, graduate students are now deciding whether they might have to change their topics altogether to be able to finish their degrees. But what does this look like? Will students have to re-defend a new topic to their committee? Will faculty align with new dissertation standards and expectations? Is it even feasible for a student in their fourth year to change direction entirely? Many unresolved questions remain, but we must begin to engage with these questions seriously.

If students are able to travel to their research sites in the coming year, a number of hurdles remain. My colleagues in Ukraine recently told me that some of the archives that are open (many are not) have wait times of several months. Due to restrictions and budget cuts, archives and libraries now have limited seating, staff, and resources. It will be harder to find time slots as we compete with others who have also

experienced delays. This means that accessibility will be a real issue for those who of us who need to spend extended time in a certain location.

For those who are able to put together a dissertation while still on the funding clock, what are the prospects for historians outside of graduate school? It is hard to have a great deal of motivation to finish when the prospects of academic employment after the degree are almost nil. This is, of course, a problem that existed well before the pandemic, but the current situation has exacerbated the problem significantly. As universities grapple with enrollments and financial woes, humanities departments have proven to be the sacrificial discipline. Such targeting has cut tenure lines, thus reducing the number of available jobs (which was already miniscule) to almost nothing. Our own department should be lauded for its efforts to promote non-academic jobs through our AHA Career Diversity grant, which brought in folks from different employment sectors to talk with us about career options. While this was useful for some as it presented us with options for utilizing our skills outside of the university, the fact remains that many of us did not come here to earn a PhD to then faithfully abandon it for something else entirely. This is all to say that having to weigh such heavy future options while remaining critically engaged with a complex dissertation, of which we are expected to be engaged with full-time, is a heavy burden on current graduate students.

So, as we move forward—and we will all move forward—remember that the pandemic's effects will be with us for quite some time. Navigating the difficulties left in



the pandemic's wake will be challenging, but it will be easier if students, faculty, and administrators extend grace to one another, check in and communicate with each other more often, and find ways to ensure that our needs are met. Our department has the opportunity to be a leading example of how to respond to graduate student concerns during the pandemic. I hope we take it.

Graduate Studies and the Pandemic

Written by: John Vsetecka

Dr. Yulian Wu

For the 2019 – 2020 academic year, Dr. Yulian Wu was awarded a Henry Luce Foundation/ACLS Program fellowship in China studies to support primary and secondary source research for her new book project titled “Crafting Jade: The Construction of Objects and Empire in Eighteenth-Century China.” During this fellowship year, even though Dr. Wu’s research in mainland China was disrupted by the outbreak of COVID 19, she collected primary sources in Taiwan and through online databases, completed and submitted an article, presented new work at conferences, and edited a translation volume on gender studies.

Dr. Wu’s jade project examines the social life of nephrite jade in China’s last empire, the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). In 1759 the Qing army conquered the northwestern region of its empire and named it Xinjiang (meaning the “new frontier”). As the only legitimate miner in this new territory, the Manchu rulers collaborated with local Muslim nobles and laborers to mine the jade that abounded there. With these newly-mined stones, the court developed an empire-wide network for craftsman management and technical transmission to produce jade objects. By focusing on jade production and consumption, this project draws upon a wide range of textual and material evidence, to reveal how the Manchu rulers, local elites, and commoners on the frontier and in China’s heartland perceived and contested a Eurasian multi-ethnic empire by means of material practices.

In the summer of 2019, Dr. Wu wrote a paper titled “Transporting Jade: Objects, Ecology, and Local Bureaucracy in Qing Xinjiang” to be included in an essay collection *Making the Palace Machine Work: Mobilizing People, Objects, and Nature in the Qing Empire*. This paper explores the complex procedure of transporting jadestones 2000 miles overland from Xinjiang to Beijing in late eighteenth-century China and argues that Xinjiang officials’ management of jade delivery was developed closely around local ecologies. This collection received positive reviews and is currently in production with Amsterdam University Press. In the fall of 2019, Dr. Wu translated and analyzed previously collected sources from the First Historical Archive in Beijing and collected new

materials by digging into the online database “Qing court documents” sponsored by the National Palace Museum in Taiwan. Based on this, Dr. Wu gave an invited talk titled “Jade as Local Tributary Goods” at Washington University in St. Louis and presented a paper “The Emperor’s Stone: Regulating Jade Quarrying and Trade in Xinjiang in Qianlong’s Reign” at the AHA annual conference.

In January 2020, Dr. Wu collected documents from the Academia Sinica libraries and National Palace Museum in Taipei. There she also examined jade objects and other Qing court treasures. While the trip in Taiwan was fruitful, due to COVID 19, Dr. Wu had to end her research in mainland China and relocate to Berkeley, California. There she used sources from UC Berkeley before shifting her primary source research online in March. While using “Qing court documents,” she also collected documents from “The documents of the manufacture department in the imperial household department,” a database sponsored by Academia Sinica. Along with secondary source research, Dr. Wu initiated a new direction in her project by focusing on the craftsmanship and production networks for jade making. She presented a first draft on this theme at the annual conference of the Association of Asian Studies in Asia in early September. Moving forward, Dr. Wu plans to conduct archival and museum research in China over the summer of 2021 and early 2022. While her previous work focused on jade mining, her future research examines jade carving and technical transmissions, and will explore the consumption and circulation of jade objects as the next step for this project.

During this fellowship year, Dr. Wu also collaborated with three gender historians to translate and edit a volume titled *Gender and the Family in Late Imperial and Modern China: Selected Works of Susan Mann*. This collection aims to introduce Western theoretical concepts, frameworks, and methodologies of gender studies to a Chinese academic audience. This project was awarded with a Dr. Delia Koo Global Faculty Endowment from Asian Studies at MSU in early 2020. The book is currently in production and will be published by Fudan University Press, a prestigious Chinese publishing house, in 2021.



Top Left Photo:
Academia sinica in Taipei

Top Right Photo:
Dr. Yulian Wu

Left Photo:
Examining a jade object in
storage at the Saint Louis
Art Museum



Dr. Sharon Leon

Documenting Enslavement at
Colleges and Universities

Mr. Wm Digges Turkey hired at
 College at £10 per an. commencing
 March 27th 1792
 College Dr. to Mr. Wm Digges
 To three years hire of Turkey --- £ 30 0 0
 ending 27. march 1795 }
 To one year hire of Turkey ending 27 march 10

Statues are coming down. Buildings are being renamed. Monuments are being constructed. Conversations about the entrenched place of racism and white supremacy in the history of American higher education have been particularly voluble for the last five years. This outcry from students, staff, and faculty has gone hand in hand with a larger movement toward doing critical campus history that address racism, anti-Semitism, and homophobia. Central among these endeavors is a widespread effort among college and universities to acknowledge the ways they participated in and benefited from the enslavement of people of African descent in the past. For institutions established before 1865, the chances are high that proceeds generated from enslaved labor enabled their founding, that the institution itself owned, bought, sold, or hired enslaved people to build and support university operations, or that enslaved laborers attended to students or faculty. To frankly confront these histories of exploitation and abuse, schools are working to produce a full account of these injustices.

The On These Grounds project (<https://onthesegrounds.org/>) is one important initiative to further this work. A digital initiative to build a model to describe the history of enslavement documented in the archival materials at colleges and universities, On These Grounds received a grant July 2020 of \$550,000 from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to fund the project's initial phase of work. Directed by MSU historian, Sharon Leon, a collaborative of team from Michigan State University, Georgetown University, the University of Virginia, and the Omeka web publishing platform, On These Grounds will produce a freely available linked open data model that is robust enough to describe the lived experiences of the enslaved people who lived and labored in conjunction with higher educational institutions.

"So many people think of an agricultural context when they think about the history of enslavement in the United States. But in actuality, enslaved people lived and labored all over and in a host of different

contexts," explained Leon. "Unfree labor was essential to the founding and functioning of so many institutions of higher education, and we have an opportunity with this project to surface that history so that we can better understand the lives of the enslaved and the ways that these schools, their alumni, and students have capitalized on this history of exploitation."

Over the past two decades many institutions of higher education have begun to publicly examine and embrace their historical roles in the injustices and legacies of slavery. Despite the similarities of record types, information sources, and data elements, each institution is taking its own, often duplicative approach to its history. Producing a common, shared approach to documenting, describing, and organizing the data derived from the archival records relating these histories, On These Grounds will help expand researchers' understanding of the lives and experiences of the enslaved across these institutional contexts, and extend the possibility of search and discovery across collections.

Using the web and linked data technologies, On These Grounds will provide a method for historians, librarians, and archivists to represent their institutional histories more fully. They will be able to describe every day events related to labor, family life, health, recreation, enslavement status, resistance and violence. Each of these events is important in its own right, but by creating a standardized way of describing them, the project will make it possible for historians and members of the interested public to see trends and commonalities across institutions. Creating the descriptive model is the first step in a long process of surfacing and sharing this information. In subsequent years, schools will adopt the model to publish their own data. In the end, the work will form a basis for historians to achieve and communicate a better understanding of the experiences and conditions of enslavement, not in domestic, industrial, or agricultural contexts, but rather in the contexts of institutions such as schools, churches, and businesses.

MSU Alumnus David Blight Endows the Blight History Scholarship Award

Written by: Liz Schondelmayer

Dr. David Blight is a world-renowned historian, a critically-acclaimed author and a beloved professor at Yale University. He is also a proud Social Science Spartan, graduating with his bachelor's degree in History in 1971 and then a Master's degree in 1976.

Recently, Dr. Blight created the Blight History Scholarship Award to help students from working class families cover the cost of their tuition. Below, he discusses his inspiration for this incredible act of generosity, as well as his MSU experience and his current position as a Yale historian.

Dr. Blight came to MSU in 1967. A student-athlete for the first half of his college career, Dr. Blight balanced baseball with his history education, and later pursued his political passions.

"I was an undergraduate at Michigan State from 1967 to '71. These were very turbulent years, with the Civil Rights movement and the anti-Vietnam war movement. I had a special combination of experiences which included being a history major and a baseball player. The then coach was the legendary Danny Litwiler, a hall of fame baseball player, but we parted ways in the mid-winter of 1970 in part because I didn't have the talent."

"It wasn't easy to combine full-time serious academics and full-time serious sports, but some of us did it, proving it can be done. The third part of my experience there was in the Spring of 1970, when I got more involved in politics. I attended a lot of anti-war rallies that Spring, when there were student protests that were popping up all over the country. That was a politicizing process for me as a young man and a young student. My experience was a mix of loving history, loving baseball, and then getting out of it as a more politicized person and a broader thinker."

During his time at Michigan State, Dr. Blight recalls what it was like to be involved in the Vietnam War draft lottery.

"It was an extraordinary time to be an undergraduate. It was the peak of the war in Vietnam. I lived in Wilson Hall when the Vietnam lottery went into effect. I lived on the 5th floor of Wilson Hall when the lottery went into effect. I still remember the day that the lottery was televised - we all sat in front of the televisions in Wilson Hall, finding out what our draft status would be. I was very lucky, I got number 334. One never forgets that number. We took up a collection of money for the guy on our floor who had the lowest number, and I think we raised around \$200."

"It had been part of our lives then, from the moment we turned 18. It's caused a lot of anxieties and even guilt for many of us in that generation - I mean, we were the Vietnam generation. It had a lot of an impact on all of us."

Currently, Dr. Blight is a professor at Yale University, where he teaches and researches history.

"My job is extremely rewarding. I have multiple jobs here at Yale. First of all, I teach both undergraduates and graduate students. I also direct a research institute called the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition. Together with a staff of five people, we run conferences and panels, and give out fellowships."

"I also, of course, do research. A lot of my research focuses on the era of slavery, the civil war, and reconstruction. I became interested in this topic when I was at Michigan State, and then afterward when I had a job as a high school teacher. I spent 7 years teaching history at Flint Northern High School, which I believe is now closed. At the time, we were tasked with creating Black history courses for the first time, which was an extremely important project

to me. I came of age with the history and the story of the Civil Rights Movement, which sparked a passionate interest in the period of the Civil War and Reconstruction and the slavery period that lead up to it.”

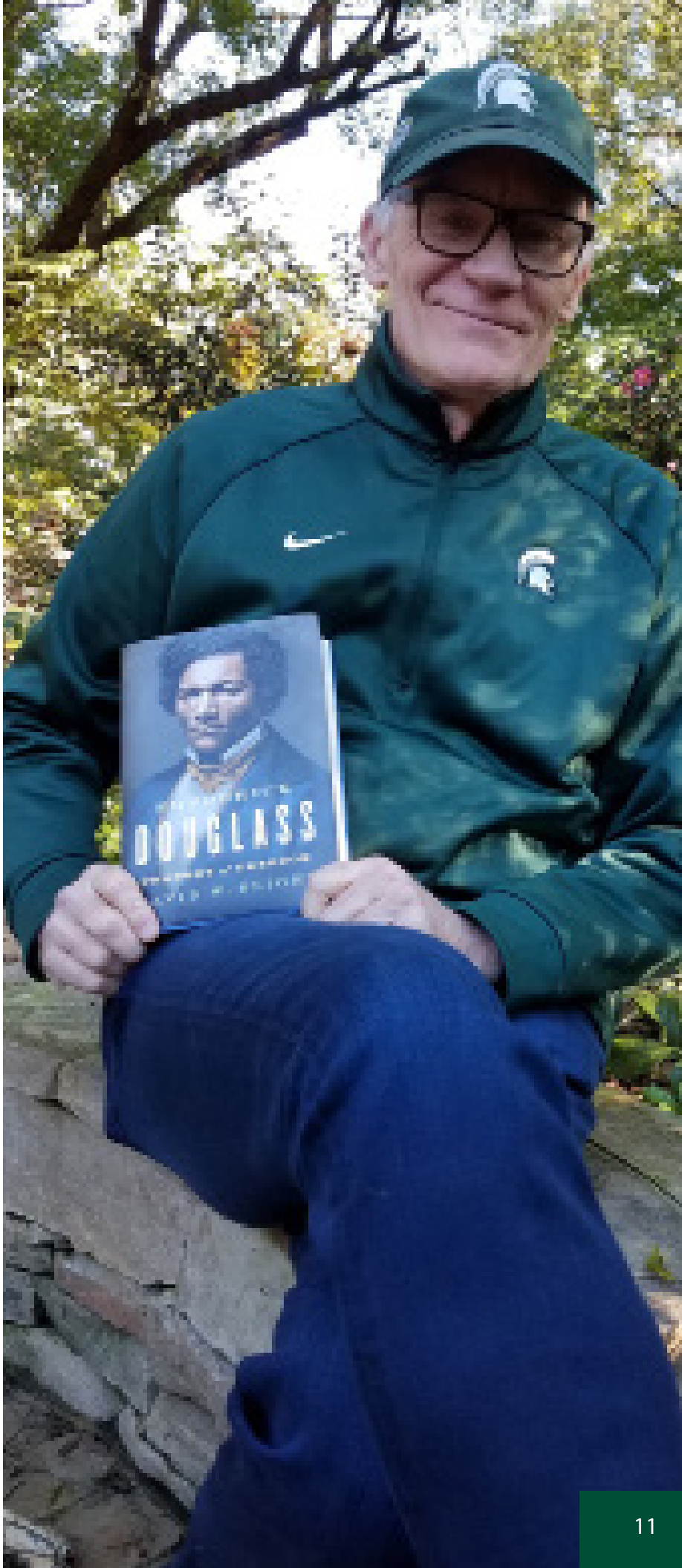
As a student from a working class family in Flint, Michigan, Dr. Blight hopes his scholarship will provide opportunities to current students with a similar background.

“I’ve always wanted to create a scholarship, but the thing is, I never had any money to get it started. I grew up a thoroughly working class kid in Flint. My dad worked for General Motors, and neither of my parents went to college. So, with a little bit of discretionary income now, I thought, Why not create a little bit of scholarship money in the history department for today’s version of kids like me, who may want to be a history major but may need some help?”

“This is a modest gift I gave, I’m hoping to add to it a little bit every year so there’s some kind of ongoing fund that the department can use at its discretion to help students.”

Lastly, Dr. Blight offers a message of hope to students who find themselves struggling this semester due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the political unrest over the past year.

“Keep a long view of history the best that you can. Frederick Douglas was very fond of saying that he took hope from times of affliction because that’s when people tend to learn the most. It may seem like the economy is a mess right now and that our political institutions are in a near permanent paralysis, so there are reasons to be deeply concerned about the future of the United States. But it’s in times of great difficulty and great affliction when history gets our attention, and it often makes us learn the most and think the hardest, and sometimes, do great things.”



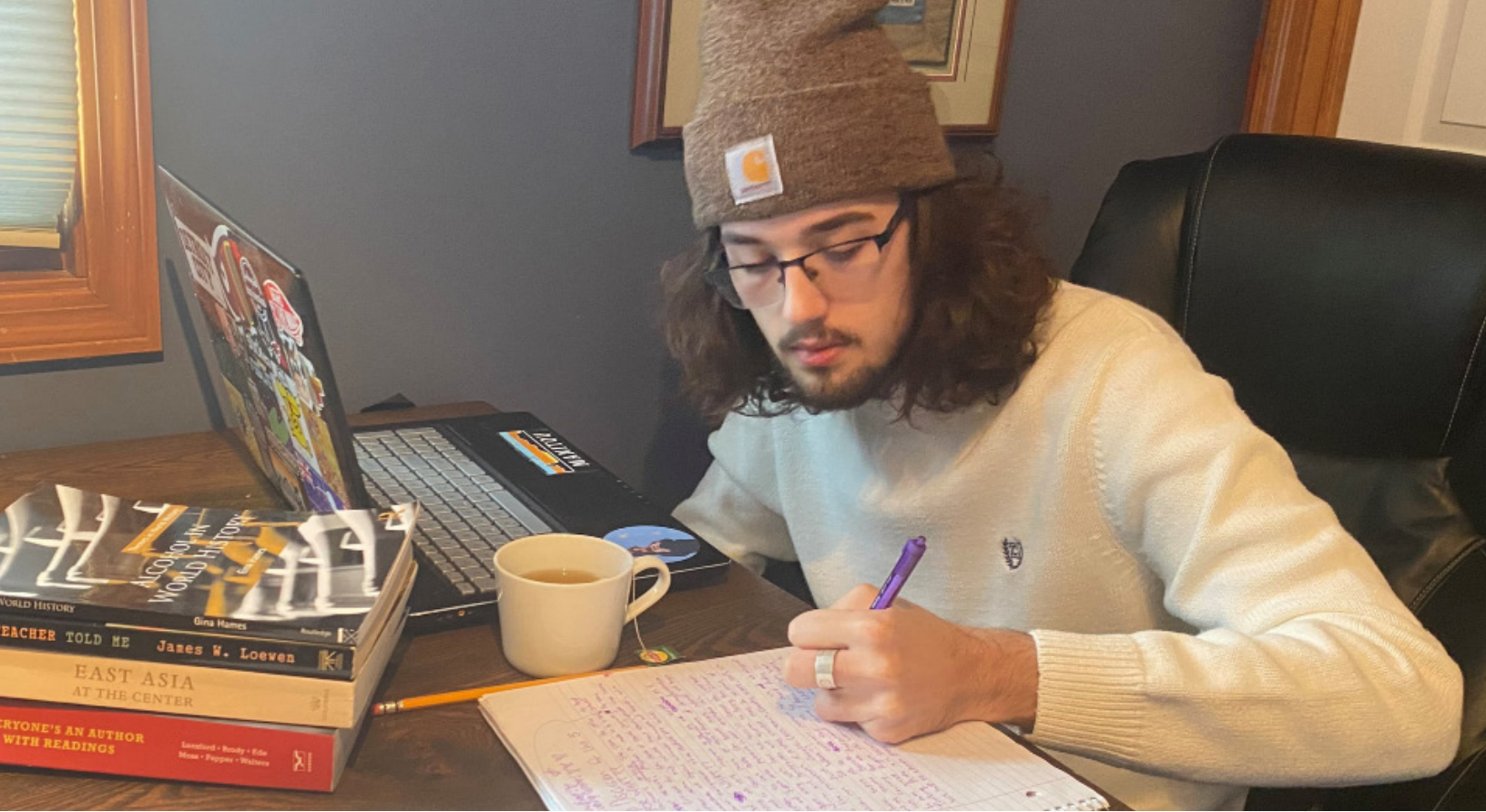


Photo credit: Kyle Schroeder

| Undergraduate Update

The study of history offers our undergraduates much more than insight into the past. It provides a means of improving and sharpening their research, writing, and analytical skills. Courses in our department introduce students to times and places as varied as the Roman Empire, the Soviet Union, Imperial China and Japan, and modern Mexico and South Africa. Courses on special topics cover concepts, ideas, and practices that include – but are not limited to – Catholicism, sports, film, food and alcohol, the history of the book, and the history of magic, witchcraft and the occult. In studying these places and themes, students also learn the fundamentals of research in primary sources, the construction of arguments and concise, persuasive writing. This set of skills prepares students for a variety of careers that rely on research and analysis while also providing them with the foundation for acting as engaged citizens in their local, national, and international communities.

The department offers three majors: the standard, very flexible History major; the History Education

major, for students interested in teaching History and Social Studies in secondary school; and the Global History major, for students particularly interested in a part of the world other than the United States. The department's relatively new minor is proving to be popular. The department also sponsors the minor on Defense Studies and Leadership, which is open to all undergraduates but popular primarily with ROTC students.

The calendar year 2020 was, of course, highly unusual. Classes went remote at noon on March 11 and remained so throughout the rest of the year. Judging by student evaluations, most professors made the adjustment to teaching online in fine style, though I think I am safe in speaking for all of us in saying that we miss the classroom and personal contact with our students.

The pursuit of history is not limited to the classroom at MSU. The Undergraduate Club under its president Ogechi Osuji coped well with the transition to social distancing. Before the Coronavirus hit the

Club hosted a graduate student panel, open for anyone to attend. The panelists gave insight on the application process, workload, and day to day life of graduate students. In Fall semester, the Club hosted trivia nights, had PowerPoint sharing events and a movie night, and went on a virtual tour of the British Museum.

The History Scholars Program, directed by Dr. Helen Veit, took most of Spring semester off but were very active in Fall. In September, they had a get-to-know-you meeting where they chose a triumvirate of leaders for the year 2020-2021: Dane Clement, Cameron Crawford, and Makenzie Jacobs. In October, they held a virtual "Wax Museum," where students each chose a different historical figure in advance, set a picture of the figures as their different zoom backgrounds, and then took turns talking for 3 to 5 minutes each about that person and why they found them interesting. In November, they held an event called "Hot Tea and Hot Topics." In advance, students submitted topics of historical controversy or debate, and then the leaders moderated a discussion about the different topics in turn. In December, they hosted had a graduate student panel, where three current Ph.D. students (Amanda Haislip Brewer, Patrick O'Grady, and Joe Karisny) talked about graduate-school experiences ranging from applications to coursework to dissertation research and writing to the job market. In between the big monthly events, the students also held more casual monthly "Snacks and Chats" get-togethers where they convened on zoom to socialize.

Regrettably, because of the virus, the Department did not hold its usual awards ceremony in May nor was there an on-campus commencement for us to celebrate all our graduating seniors. Nonetheless, the Department has a number of students to honor. The following History majors and minors were invited to join Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest and premier liberal arts honor society in the United States: Camellia Landman, Nathan Niemann, Madison Pehringer, Nicholas Valderrama and Sarah Vamvounis. The following students were awarded our undergraduate scholarships: the David Bailey Scholarship was given to Mackenzie Jacobs; the Harry Reed Scholarship to Wisdom Henry; the Sandra Sageser Clark Scholarship to Jon-Claude Howd; the Irene Steindler Scholarship to Leah Welch; the Morgan Sweeney Scholarship to Even Coverly; the Anthony and Mary Joan Woods Scholarship to Jakob Myers; and the Robert and Catherine Workman Scholarship to Willem Conner. The David LoRomer Prize for the outstanding undergraduate history paper went to Brett Binkowski. Last, but not least, three students completed senior theses in May: Eric Baylis, "Strange Eons: Nuclear Waste, the Human Interference Task Force, and the Ethics of Applied Imagination," directed by Naoko Wake; Brett Binkowski, "Oenophile's Empire: Wine and the Struggle for Global Prominence in Nineteenth-Century America," directed by Emily Conroy-Krutz; and Allison Pail, "The Biography of Myrna Short: A Gendered Analysis of Federal Mathematicians, 1961-1993," directed by Georgina Montgomery.

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History Scholars at MSU

The following are profiles of four of the outstanding undergraduate History Scholars:



Jakob Myers

Jakob Myers is a senior history major from Naperville, Illinois, near Chicago, with additional majors in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Arabic, and minors in Linguistics and African Studies. His interest in his current research area, late precolonial East Africa, began in Professor Laura Fair's historical methods class, and he notes, "I learned from Professor David Wheat's example of careful archival research and deep analysis of global trade in his classes on Latin America, and I gained intellectual confidence and refined my thoughts about history in Professors Aminda Smith and Peter Alegi's graduate seminars, which they graciously let a curious Junior into. The History Scholar's Program has also been important to me as a community of like-minded people. I'm writing this from Massachusetts, the latest place history has taken me. Here, I am reading 19th-century ships' logs in order to write an honors thesis about the Sultanate of Zanzibar's interactions with Americans (with the kind advice of Professor John Aerni-Flessner). Vaccine permitting, I'd like to go to Tanzania this summer to improve my Swahili, after which I plan to take a gap year to travel, work, and apply to graduate schools. I hope to be a professor, but regardless of whether that works out or not I'm confident that the skills I've learned here will serve me well."



Willem Conner

Willem Conner is a history major in his third year of undergraduate studies. He loves the whole breadth of history, but his favorite class at MSU has been Russia in the 20th Century with Professor Matthew Pauly. He is proud to be the writer, producer, and narrator of the *Historia Dramatica* podcast, a podcast where he retells the stories of lesser-known or misunderstood people and events throughout history. Willem hopes to one day become a professor to pass his knowledge of and passion for the subject down to the next generation of students.

Elise Simerson

Elise Simerson is a junior from Traverse City, Michigan, studying Global History and Psychology. Elise writes, "One of my favorite experiences as a history major has been the senior seminar in modern European history I took in spring of 2019 taught by Dr. Ronen Steinberg. Our topic was the French Revolution and I loved the format of the course in that we could choose our own direction in writing our papers. This enabled students like myself to engage in our own unique way with the primary sources we gathered. For myself, I was able to utilize my background in psychology to understand more of the emotional and psychological aspects of the historical events the sources were describing. Besides being a student, I am also an undergraduate research assistant at the MSU Interpersonal Process and Psychotherapy lab and an avid runner." After Elise completes her studies at Michigan State, she hopes to continue her education in graduate school for social work where she plans to specialize in clinical social work and psychotherapy.



Makenzie Jacobs

Makenzie Jacobs is a third-year history major with minors in German and in Law, Justice, and Public Policy. Makenzie writes, "Studying history at MSU has been an incredible experience, and I am so glad to have discovered a program that caters to my passions. The history department has given me many opportunities to expand upon my education and accomplish multiple academic achievements. One notable experience has been researching peasants and crime in Medieval England in my Historical Methods and Skills course. I was later able to publish that research in the Great Lakes Journal of Undergraduate History, something I never thought I would be capable of. It has since inspired me to complete a senior thesis next year. I have also been the recipient of a history department scholarship, for which I am incredibly grateful. Being invited to the MSU History Scholars has also been an honor, and I have met many great individuals who are like-minded and share the same love for history as I do."





Photo credit: Ozibo Ozibo

Graduate Update

Katie Carline

Katie Carline is the recipient of a 2020-2021 Doctoral Fellowship from Canada’s Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Her project is titled “African women’s Christian self-help societies and the making of urban culture in a South African city, 1920-1981.” It traces the history of manyanos, the church-affiliated women’s prayer and service groups that attracted many Black South African women members from the early twentieth century until the present. Urban planners and the state saw Black women as unimportant or undesirable urbanites. But Katie Carline’s research uses archival records and oral history interviews with manyano members from the city of East London to show how manyano women were involved in the creation of urban communities and lifestyles during a period of rapid urban change and coercive government urban planning.

Chioma Uchefuna

Chioma Uchefuna was awarded a Social Science Research Council – International Dissertation Research Fellowship (SSRC-IDRF) for her project entitled

“Undressed Soldiers, Embodied Dualities: Igbo Women, and the Making of Communities During the Nigeria-Biafra War, 1967-1970.” The dissertation aims to be a comprehensive social and gender history that re-centers Igbo women’s voices and wartime experiences in the historiography of the Nigeria-Biafra War (1967—1970). It argues that, during the Nigeria-Biafra War, Igbo women acted as “undressed” soldiers, conscious participants, and combatants who fought side-by-side with Biafran men. Paying particular attention to Igbo women’s ability to take on dual cultural identities as well as the complex ways that they developed alternative sociocultural institutions like the Biafran Nurse’s Corps, Chioma’s research underscores how Igbo women collectively and individually shaped patterns and outcomes of the Nigeria-Biafra War. And, following from that, how the history of the war will remain incomplete without consideration for the roles that women have played in it.

This year, two Michigan State University history students received Fulbright Fellowships, providing funding for research in foreign countries for six to 12 months:

Clayton Oppenhuizen

Clayton Oppenhuizen was awarded a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA) grant for research in Chile. His research is a historical case study of the role of journalism and journalists in the construction of publics in Chile during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990). He will be examining how journalists and media organizations adapted to the arbitrary rule of dictatorship through innovative clandestine campaigns and careful coordination around themes of human rights and human dignity despite disparate approaches to achieving these ends. He seeks to better understand freedom of expression in the context of dictatorship, the importance of solidarity networks to the production of media, and the intellectual labor of journalism during a period of repression and misinformation.

John Vsetecka

John Vsetecka received a Fulbright IIE Dissertation Research grant to conduct research in Ukraine. John's dissertation, tentatively titled "In the Aftermath of Hunger: Rupture, Response, and Retribution, 1933-1947," focuses on the aftermath of the 1932-1933 famine, now commonly referred to as Holodomor, and the post-war famine of 1946-1947. Making use of archival documents, library materials, and oral histories, John will investigate the problems left in the famine's wake. He hopes to show that for many survivors, the famine caused a number of short-term and long-term problems that continued to affect people well after starvation officially came to an end.



Lyudmila (Lucy) Austin

Lyudmila (Lucy) Austin was awarded Academic Fellowship in Russia (AFR) from the American Councils for International Education to continue research in southern Russia and Moscow. Her dissertation explores social dynamics between titular and nontitular communities in the USSR's "southern tier," a region that faced a decline in investment, a labor surplus, and increased out-migration starting in the late Soviet period. Through a case study of the Northern Caucasus, a borderland in southern Russia, Lucy's research shows how the legacy of Soviet nationality policies in the region complicated the dichotomy between the communities.

Adam Coldren

Adam Coldren received a Japanese Studies Fellowship from the Japan Foundation Program, a competitive research grant designed to support outstanding scholars and academics in developing the field of Japanese Studies. With his grant, Adam plans to utilize the National Archives of Japan and the various memorial sites scattered across the country to research the ways in which the Japanese government mobilized the concept of "sacrifice" in pursuit of distinct nation-building goals, specifically national identity, during two pivotal moments in the country's modern history: the Meiji period (1868-1912) and the early postwar period (1945-1980).

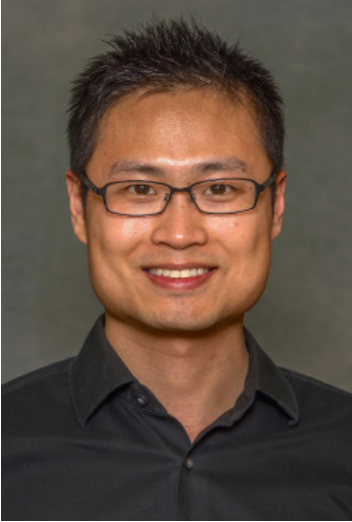
Christopher M. Shell

Christopher M. Shell is a recipient of the 2020-2021 TIAA Ruth Simms Hamilton Graduate Merit Fellowship. His work deals with twentieth-century West Indian migration and socio-political organizing in the Caribbean and the United States. His dissertation is a political narrative of the impact Black Leeward Islanders had on radical socio-political organizing during the interwar years, told through the lens of Antigua-born Richard Hilton Tobitt.

Moses Massenburg

Moses Massenburg was awarded this year's King-Chavez-Parks Future Faculty Fellowship from the Graduate School.

Faculty Promotions



Sidney Lu

Sidney Lu is an associate professor of history at Michigan State University. He is a social and cultural historian of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Japan, with research interests in the areas of migration, settler colonialism, indigenous rights, race, and trans-Pacific connections. He joined MSU in 2015. His first book, *The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism: Malthusianism and Trans-Pacific Migration, 1868-1961*, published by Cambridge University Press in 2019, is a study of the relationship between Malthusianism, emigration and colonial expansion in the history of modern Japan. The book wins the MSU TOME Award. He is currently working on his second book, *A Great Convergence: Japanese Migration to Brazil in the Age of Empire*, that explores the intersections in the histories of Japan and Brazil, and the historical convergence of Asia and Latin America in general, in the era of New Imperialism. This multi-lingual and multi-archival research utilizes a variety of primary sources in Japanese, Portuguese, as well as English. He has also published several refereed articles that appear in academic journals such as *Journal of Global History*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, *Positions: Asia Critiques*, *Japanese Studies*, and *Journal of World History*.

Kirsten Fermaglich

Kirsten Fermaglich received her Ph.D. from New York University in 2001, the same year she began teaching at MSU. Her first book, *American Dreams and Nazi Nightmares: Early Holocaust Consciousness and Liberal America, 1957-1965* (Brandeis University Press, 2006) explored American Jewish memories of the Holocaust in the 1950s and 1960s, looking at the lives and works of several intellectuals, including historian Stanley Elkins and feminist Betty Friedan. Fermaglich worked as co-editor of the Norton Critical Edition of Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (2013), with her MSU colleague and chair Lisa Fine, and she is also currently co-editor of the journal, *American Jewish History*, with Adam Mendelsohn and Daniel Soyer. Her most recent book, *A Rosenberg by any Other Name: A History of Jewish Name Changing in America* (NYU Press, 2018), is the first historical monograph to explore name changing in the United States. By analyzing a century of name change petitions in the New York City Civil Court, as well as Jewish organizational archives, films, literature, and oral histories, Fermaglich uncovered a phenomenon of name changing among middle class Jews in the middle of the twentieth century, as they sought upward mobility but faced severe antisemitic exclusion in white collar occupations and higher education. Name changing helped Jews in their search for upward mobility, but at a significant price: division within the American Jewish community and pain among individual Jewish families. *A Rosenberg by any Other Name* won the Saul Viener Prize for the best book in American Jewish history from the American Jewish Historical Society in 2019.



Dr. Chambers

Dr. Chambers is a Professor of History and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies in the Office of the Provost, Undergraduate Education. He received his Ph.D. in Latin American and Caribbean history from Howard University in 2006. Dr. Chambers focuses on the former British Caribbean colonies post emancipation, specifically the social and cultural history of the region during the period between the Spanish American War and WWII and the political and economic expansion of the United States into the region. The impact of such shifts on local populations, and the immigration/migration patterns that emerged as a result of the changing labor dynamics are persistent themes throughout Dr. Chambers' research. Initially, this work focused exclusively on West Indian immigrants to Honduras to work in the U.S. dominated banana industry. However, his work has transitioned in recent years to include West Indian and Central Americans on the U.S. Gulf Coast, specifically, New Orleans. Dr. Chambers is the author of two books: *Race, Nation, and West Indian Immigration to Honduras, 1890-1940* (LSU Press, 2010) and *From the Banana Zones to the Big Easy: West Indian and Central American Immigration to Honduras, 1910-1940* (LSU Press, 2019) in addition to a co-edited book and numerous articles.

Nwando Achebe is awarded the William J. Beal Outstanding Faculty Award

Written by: MSUToday

Nwando Achebe, the Jack and Margaret Sweet Endowed Professor of History, is an internationally recognized scholar of twentieth-century African history, who utilizes oral history in the study of women, gender and sexuality in Nigeria. In the last fifteen years, she has pioneered and redefined African historical gender scholarship.

Her second book, *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria: Ahebi Ugbabe*, a critical biography of the only female warrant chief and king in all of colonial Nigeria, won three book awards. Her sixth book, *Female Monarchs and Merchant Queens in Africa* documents elite females, female principles and female spiritual entities across the African continent, with attention to female power and authority in Africa from the ancient past to the present. The Wellness Feed selected it as one of seven books to celebrate and learn about black history.

Achebe founded the *Journal of West African History*, the first journal to recognize and to promote an understanding of West Africa's historical distinctiveness. She was featured in The History Channel documentaries, *Roots: A History Revealed* and *Roots: A New Vision*, and has been interviewed and featured in documentaries and news programming on four different continents. Achebe has received grants and awards from the Rockefeller, Woodrow Wilson, Fulbright-Hays and Ford Foundations, the World Health Organization and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Achebe is a popular teacher and has contributed to MSU's top-ranked African History program

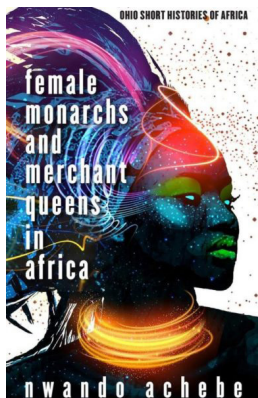


through her mentorship of students from around the world. She spends generous amounts of time with her students, helping them with writing; research methods, particularly in archives; and providing technical insight for conducting oral interviews. Currently serving on a host of graduate committees, Achebe employs students as editors at the *Journal of West African History* and as research assistants to help orient them to professional history practices.

Additionally, Achebe serves as the faculty excellence advocate for the college and as a member of the executive board of the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora. She was recently promoted to associate dean of diversity, equity and inclusion in the College of Social Science.

For her many accomplishments as a pioneering scholar in the field of African history and pedagogy, and her university, community and global outreach, Nwando Achebe is richly deserving of the Michigan State University William J. Beal Outstanding Faculty Award.

New Books in 2020

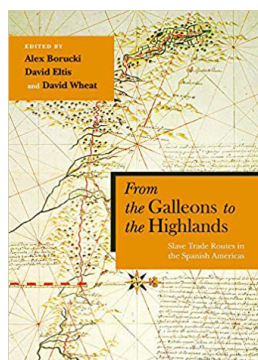
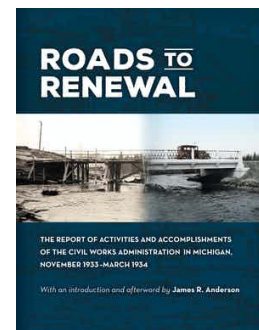


Female Monarchs and Merchant Queens in Africa

Nwando Achebe's book, *Female Monarchs and Merchant Queens in Africa* is an unparalleled study documenting elite females, female principles, and female spiritual entities across the African continent, from the ancient past to the present. Achebe breaks from Western perspectives, research methods, and their consequently incomplete, skewed accounts, to demonstrate the critical importance of distinctly African source materials and world views to any comprehensible African history. This means accounting for the two realities of African cosmology: the physical world of humans and the invisible realm of spiritual gods and forces. That interconnected universe allows biological men and women to become female-gendered males and male-gendered females. This phenomenon empowers the existence of particular African beings, such as female husbands, male priestesses, female kings, and female pharaohs. Achebe portrays their combined power, influence, and authority in a sweeping, African-centric narrative that leads to an analogous consideration of contemporary African women as heads of state, government officials, religious leaders, and prominent entrepreneurs.

Roads to Renewal

James Anderson's book, *Roads to Renewal*, makes available to historians and general readers a little-known document mapping the achievement of a crucial initiative in the plans for recovery from the harshest blows of the Great Depression, in one of America's hardest-hit states. It presents a historically unique case history of the Federal Civil Works Administration, established by Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. The CWA addressed the issues of unemployment and destitution brought on by the Depression, specifically in Michigan. With a contextualizing introduction and afterword by historian James R. Anderson, the republication of this report—with its wealth of data and statistics, and its compelling information about the extent of the crisis and of the government's initiatives—brings to light fascinating aspects of how critical (and impactful) such interventions were in the context of unprecedented economic challenges.

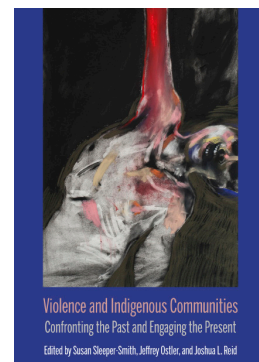


From the Galleons

Edited by David Wheat, Alex Borucki and David Eltis, *From the Galleons*, demonstrates the importance of transatlantic and intra-American slave trafficking in the development of colonial Spanish America, highlighting the Spanish colonies' previously underestimated significance within the broader history of the slave trade. Spanish America received African captives not only directly via the transatlantic slave trade but also from slave markets in the Portuguese, English, Dutch, French, and Danish Americas, ultimately absorbing more enslaved Africans than any other imperial jurisdiction in the Americas except Brazil. The contributors focus on the histories of slave trafficking to, within, and across highly diverse regions of Spanish America throughout the entire colonial period, with themes ranging from the earliest known transatlantic slaving voyages during the sixteenth century to the evolution of antislavery efforts within the Spanish empire.

Violence and Indigenous Communities

Edited by Susan Sleeper-Smith, Jeffrey Ostler and Joshua L. Reid, *Violence and Indigenous Communities*, an interdisciplinary collection of essays takes a cutting-edge approach to the crucial issue of violence and Indigenous communities. In contrast to past studies that focus narrowly on war and massacre, treat Native peoples simply as victims, and consign violence safely to the past, this volume opens up important new perspectives.



Faculty Awards in 2020



Dr. Nwando Achebe

Dr. Nwando Achebe wins MSU's 2020 Inspirational Woman of the Year Award. Created in 2014, the Inspirational Woman of the Year Award celebrates and features the accomplishments of women-identified faculty and staff at Michigan State University to highlight and recognize the achievements of woman-identified individuals who demonstrate integrity, leadership, quality performance, integrative and inclusive action, and influence on campus and in the community. In 2020, Dr. Nwando Achebe won this award for the category of MSU Professional Achievement. Professor Nwando Achebe is a prolific and esteemed scholar, a dedicated and engaged administrator, and a skilled and celebrated teacher. An internationally recognized historian of Africa, Achebe is recognized as one of the leaders in the study of twentieth-century African history. She is the founding editor-in-chief of the *Journal of West African History*, and the Jack and Margaret Sweet Endowed

Professor of History. She is the author of award winning books, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings: Female Power and Authority in Northern Igboland, 1900-1960*; *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria: Ahebi Ugbabe*, and the recently published, *Female Monarchs and Merchant Queens in Africa* as well as many articles, co-edited volumes, referred book chapters, and other scholarly products. Her scholarship is impeccable, engaged and engaging, methodologically innovative, and interdisciplinary. She is an important and popular teacher of African history at all levels and has contributed to the distinguished legacy of the top-ranked African History program through her mentorship of many graduate students from around the globe. Dr. Achebe has also taken a leadership role in promoting these values institutionally here at MSU. Dr. Achebe has served as the College of Social Science Faculty Excellence Advocate and was recently hired as the Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the College of Social Science.

Dr. Naoko Wake

Professor Naoko Wake has been awarded a DRN-LAP award for 2021/2022. The author of forthcoming *American Survivors: Trans-Pacific Memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (Cambridge, 2021) and *Private Practices: Harry Stack Sullivan, the Science of Homosexuality, and American Liberalism* (Rutgers, 2011), Prof. Wake plans to use the funds for archival research in Berkeley, CA, and Seattle, WA, for her new project "Toward a History of Disability in the Asian Pacific Islander American Diaspora." The project explores the history of APIA people's disabilities relying on sources found at unexpected places both in and out of historical archives, using a relatively under-explored intersectionality—of race and ability—in the field of immigration history as a theoretical ground. The Diversity Research Network Launch Awards Program (DRN-LAP) is a competitive award under the auspices of the Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives. The DRN-LAP is intended for faculty of color and diversity scholars at MSU. The award is intended to aid scholars in launching new research through pilot study, creative projects of scholarly merit or the enhancement of a measure or technique.



Dr. Pescador

As a Professor in the Department of History, Dr. Pescador actively makes an effort to ensure that diversity is at the forefront of Spartan culture. Through mentoring and intentional outreach, he plays a role in increasing the representation of Latino graduate students in the department. As an instructor of American Sports history, college sports history and American Film history, Dr. Pescador took his passions a step further and created a website dedicated to the history of Spartan sports. While his reputation as a professor precedes him, his reputation as a filmmaker is just as impressive. Since 2011, he has produced five documentary films, *Determined 2 Make It*, his most recent film, was selected by the International North American Film Festival. This documentary focuses on the oral histories of incarcerated youth in the state of Michigan. For his commitment to being an agent of change using the channels of teaching, filmmaking and art, Dr. Pescador is recognized with the Individual Award for Sustained Efforts toward Excellence in Diversity.

Dr. Emine Ö. Evered

Dr. Emine Ö. Evered was awarded support from the Diversity Research Network's Launch Awards Program (LAP). The award supports her continued research and analysis of American prohibitionists' activities in the lands of the late Ottoman Empire. A new dimension in her ongoing work on histories of alcohol and its regulation in Ottoman and republican Turkey, this component adds to existing accounts of American influences on temperance movements in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere in the world. Thus far, there are no works on US-backed anti-alcoholism in the Muslim-majority nations of the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia. American activists regarded societies with Islamic proscriptions of alcohol as curiosities, on the one hand, but also as ideal targets of opportunity as they strived to enact America's nation-scale Prohibition at a global scale, on the other hand. Thus far, in addition to the LAP award, Dr. Evered's work has been supported by other sources at MSU and by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) through the American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT). This work also supports Dr. Evered's regularly offered comparative history and historiography seminars (H-201 and -487) that engage with histories of alcohol and American temperance and Prohibition, respectively.



HISTORY AWARDS

GRADUATE AWARDS

FRED WILLIAMS AWARD	Alyssa Lopez
HARRY BROWN FELLOWSHIP	Jen Andrella
DONALD LAMMERS AWARD	Caitlin Barker
JEFF ROONEY PAPER PRIZE	Ablie Jabang
MILTON E. MUELDER FELLOWSHIP	John Vstecka
MADISON KUHN AWARD	Dani Willcutt
MUELDER-LOWE AWARD	Lucy Austin
KWAN-WAI SO AWARD	Patrick Buck
SINCLAIR AND S. SUZANNE POWELL SCHOLARSHIP	Ramon Miranda-Beltran
JAMES WALTZ FELLOWSHIP	Yun Zou

FACULTY AWARDS

RICHARD E. SULLIVAN AWARD	Dr. Ronen Steinberg
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UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

DAVID T. BAILEY SCHOLARSHIP	Makenzie Jacobs
ROBERT AND CATHERINE WORKMAN SCHOLARSHIP	Willem Connor
IRENE STEINDLER AWARD	Leah Welch
J. MORGAN SWEENEY SCHOLARSHIP	Evan Coberly
SANDRA SAGESER CLARK SCHOLARSHIP	Jon-Claude Howd
HARRY REED SCHOLARSHIP	Wisdom Henry
ANTHONY AND MARY JOAN WOODS SCHOLARSHIP	Jakob Myers
DAVID LOROMER SCHOLARSHIP	Brett Binkowski
ROUT-WILLIAMS AWARD	Leah Welch & Evan Coberly

| Congratulations Graduates!

A heartfelt congratulations to all of our 2020 graduates! You earned it.

David Bennett

Advisor: Dr. Michael Stamm

Title: "Framing Atlanta: Local Newspapers' Search for a Nationally Appealing Racial Image (1920-1960)"

David Glovsky

Advisor: Dr. Walter Hawthorne

Title: "Belonging Beyond Boundaries: Constructing a Transnational Community in a West African Borderland"

Alyssa Lopez

Advisor: Dr. Pero Dagbovie

Title: "Screens, Seats, and Picket Signs: New York City's Blac Film Culture, 1896-1935"

Shelby Pumphrey

Advisor: Dr. LaShawn Harris

Title: "Finding Asylum: Race, Gender and Confinement in Virginia, 1885-1930"

Tara Reyelts

Advisor: Dr. Nwando Achebe

Title: "Law, Justice, and Gender: (Re)gendering the Legal System in Ogidi, Igboland"

James Blackwell

Advisor: Dr. Nwando Achebe

Title: "Igbo Migration, Entrepreneurship, and the Creation of the 'Igbo Scare' in British Southern Cameroon 1900-1975"

Russell Stevenson

Advisor: Dr. Nwando Achebe

Title: "The University of the Village: The University of Nigeria, Nsukka and the Making of Post-Independence Nigeria"

