

# Oakland University

## HISTORY DEPARTMENT

### NEWSLETTER *Spring 2014*

#### DEPARTMENT HONOR ROLL

The Department of History has a well-established track record of success in winning the most coveted prizes awarded by Oakland University.

##### University Distinguished Professor

2007 Ronald Finucane

##### Research Excellence Award

1985 Charles Akers  
1992 Richard Tucker  
1998 Ronald Finucane  
2007 Linda Benson

##### Teaching Excellence Award

1989 Carl Osthaus  
1991 Anne Tripp  
2001 Todd Estes

##### New Investigator Research Excellence Award

1996 Geoffrey Wawro  
2008 Matthew Sutton  
2011 Craig Martin

##### President's Colloquium Award

1999 Geoffrey Wawro  
2001 Linda Benson  
2003 Sean Farrell Moran  
2006 Sara Chapman  
2009 Todd Estes

##### College of Arts and Sciences Engagement Award

2013 Dan Clark

##### Outstanding Thesis Award for Graduate Students

2008 Jennifer Laam  
2010 Ann Marie Wambeke

#### VIEW FROM THE CHAIR'S DESK

By: Todd Estes

Being the chair of a very good, highly productive, and friendly department makes my job relatively enjoyable—especially compared to the tales of horror I hear from some of my fellow chairs. It also makes this column, which reflects on a highly successful and significant year in the life of the History department, a pleasure to write.

This newsletter profiles our faculty and student activities, highlights key events and successes of the year past, and provides updates and a record of our unit this year. I hope you will enjoy reading the contents. By far the high point of the year was the successful conclusion of two faculty searches that bring us Liz Shesko as our new historian of Latin America and Erin Dwyer as our Civil War era historian. Both searches went extremely well this year and concluded with the hiring of two hugely promising scholars whom we are pleased to welcome as our new colleagues. Individually, each will bring a great deal to the department. Collectively, they bring an infusion of energy and enthusiasm and the promise of new beginnings to the department. We are very fortunate to have Liz and

Erin with us and anticipate great things from them and for us upon their arrival.

The pages that follow document a year in the life of our department—its students, staff, faculty, and alumni. They chronicle tremendous individual achievements that add up to the collective success of the department as a whole. I'll let those stories speak for themselves but, taken together, they illustrate why I am exceptionally proud of my colleagues and privileged to be their chair. This has been a busy and challenging year (they all are) but we benefitted from the willingness of all to pitch in and do the work required. I thank all of my colleagues for their contributions in ways large and small this past year. I also salute and welcome our new Dean, Kevin Corcoran, who proved strongly supportive of the department this year and engaged in several of our activities with us.

Our end of the year dinner held at Rochester Mills restaurant was a relaxed, fun event that mixed tenured and untenured colleagues, full-timers and part-timers, grad students and undergrads in a casual setting. We enjoyed drinks, dinner, lively conversation, and each other's company for several hours at the end of a long semester. It was a wonderful indication of the healthy, collegial, high-functioning department that we are and continue

to be. Next year will bring more work and responsibilities to be sure. But it will also bring the anticipation of a new year of PAT activities and events, guest lectures, a new season of "History Comes Alive," and much more. May it also bring more opportunities for informal socializing along the lines of our recent dinner and also for continued collaboration and collegiality.

As we pause just now to look back at the year past and anticipate the next year to come, I hope you will agree that we are in a good place as a department. Once we've all had a chance to rest a little over the summer, I look forward to starting in again together with all of us, old and new, next fall.

## **ELIZABETH SHESKO JOINS DEPARTMENT AS NEW HISTORIAN OF LATIN AMERICA**

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The department is delighted to announce that Elizabeth (Liz) Shesko, currently a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, has been hired as our new tenure-track Assistant Professor of Latin American history. Liz earned her Ph.D. from Duke University in 2012 and her dissertation, supervised by John French, is entitled "Conscript Nation: Negotiating Authority and Belonging in the Bolivian Barracks, 1900-1950." Liz's research explores the effects of obligatory military service in Bolivia on ethnic identity and state formation. She further examines and helps to redefine debates about the meaning of citizenship in such a multiethnic, multilingual, and regionally diverse nation as Bolivia.

Shesko's work further demonstrates how soldiers appropriated patriotic discourse to give multiple meanings to their military service. Liz argues that in the years following the 1932-1935 Chaco War, conscription became a leading force in unifying a

diverse and unequal nation. Her work uses these matters as a way to examine larger questions of authenticity, power, identity, cultural change, citizenship, and inclusion and does so by focusing on the relations between local politics and power relations and the ways they interacted with larger structures.

An outstanding young scholar and teacher, Liz earned her B.A. at Bowdoin College before moving to Duke for graduate study. She has taught classes at both those institutions and has earned numerous fellowships, grants and other awards that suggest her great promise as a very talented up and coming historian. At Oakland she will teach a variety of courses in Latin American history including courses on Slavery and Race Relations in South and Central America, the History of Southern South America, and the History of Mexico as well as other specialty courses tied to her areas of research. A hat tip to the search committee chaired by Don Matthews and joined by Derek Hastings and Getnet Bekele who did a great job winnowing a strong field of applications.

Liz looks forward to joining the faculty at OU and she, her husband Adam, and their daughter Rebecca are excited to be moving to the area to take up the position. We are very excited to welcome all three of them to Michigan and look forward to having Liz as a new colleague.

## **ERIN DWYER JOINS FACULTY AS U.S. CIVIL WAR HISTORIAN**

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The department is delighted to announce that Erin Dwyer, currently a visiting assistant professor at Tulane University, has been hired as our new tenure-track Assistant Professor in U.S. Civil War history. Erin earned her Ph.D. from Harvard University in 2012 and her dissertation, supervised by Walter

Johnson, is now under contract as a forthcoming book, *Mastering Emotions: The Emotional Politics of Slavery*, to be published by the University of Pennsylvania Press. Erin's research concentrates in the newer field of emotional history and her scholarship explores the daily interactions between slaveholders and slaves and the contestations and negotiations that took place between them. These interactions, revealing the very different and highly charged aspects of power between them, form the basis of what she calls the "emotional politics" of slavery.

She argues that emotions were fundamental to the ways that slaveholders perpetuated slavery politically, legally, and culturally. But she finds also that emotions were just as central to the ways that enslaved men and women challenged, survived, and sometimes escaped bondage. By examining these myriad interactions, we can better understand the ways that power operated through emotions. Her significant new work is a contribution both to the history of slavery and to the history of emotions.

An outstanding young scholar and teacher, Erin earned her B.A. and M.A. degrees from Tufts University before moving to Harvard for doctoral work. She has earned a raft of fellowships and other awards that mark her as a very talented up and coming historian. At Oakland she will teach a variety of courses in U.S. Civil War era history including courses on the American South and ones that focus on gender, race, and the Civil War, the history of emotions, slavery and abolition, and public history. A word of thanks to the search committee chaired by Karen Miller and joined by Dan Clark and Craig Martin which did excellent work in securing outstanding candidates from a strong pool of applicants.

Erin is excited to be joining the faculty at OU and she and her partner Roger, a high school science teacher, are excited to be moving to

the area to take up the position. We are very excited to welcome them both to Michigan and look forward to having Erin as a new colleague.

## **10TH YEAR OF HISTORY COMES ALIVE LECTURE SERIES A SUCCESS**

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The tenth season of the department's acclaimed "History Comes Alive" lecture series was a great success. Begun in 2004 as a way for Oakland historians to present their research and work to a broad audience, the series has grown into a much anticipated event, drawing a core group of regulars. A total of 605 people attended the six lectures in 2013-14, held monthly in the Fall and Winter, for an average of 101 attendees per lecture. Four of our crowds-- comprised of local residents, alumni, students, high school students, and others with (or without) Oakland affiliations—exceeded 100 people.

Attendees heard a wide variety of excellent talks on U.S., European, and non-western topics and had a chance to interact with the speakers during a question and answer session after the lectures. Many patrons stayed afterwards to engage the speakers in further conversation. Since several of the lectures drew classes from local high schools, the series is an important recruiting tool for Oakland as well.

The department is grateful to its generous sponsors who support this series. In particular we recognize the Knudsen Family Foundation (Judy Christie, administrator), the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. We are especially grateful to Dean Kevin Corcoran for his strong support and his presence at four of the six lectures this year.

At the last lecture in March, department chair Todd Estes had at least a half-dozen patrons tell him that they were sad the series was ending for the year and that they couldn't wait for next year's lecture series to begin. One person remarked, "This is such a great thing you do for the people in the community!" The department is rightly proud of such comments as they indicate that our work in History Comes Alive is valued and appreciated by many and does a great deal to engage with the community and connect Oakland to people's lives in meaningful ways.

The History Comes Alive series continues to highlight the depth of talent in the History department and shows us in a great light for the community, creating good will, stimulating interest, and bringing many locals and former students onto campus for these events. Thanks go to all who have made this year's series another great success.

This past year's slate of lectures included:

Karen Miller, "The Public University and the End of the Sputnik Era"

Weldon Matthews, "Explanations of Bush's War on Iraq: Is Counterfactual History Really History?"

Yan Li, "Friends and Enemies: The Chinese Propaganda of Sino-Soviet Brotherhood in the Cold War"

Dan Clark, "The Elusive Postwar Boom: Detroit Autoworkers Through Local Newspapers, 1945-1960"

Derek Hastings, "The Remarkable Rise and Spectacular Fall of a Nazi Icon: The Case of Ernst Rohm"

Ian Greenspan, "Updated Media, Outdated Themes: The Evolution of Anti-Semitic Activism"

## **PHI ALPHA THETA REPORT FOR 2013-2014**

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Phi Alpha Theta's National Historical Honors Society at Oakland University has been very active this past semester in reorganizing and rebuilding our chapter. Early in the winter semester, our group hosted an informal lunch in order to get to know our department's newest historian, James Naus. This was a great event in order for students to learn more about Professor Naus, his area of expertise, as well as his classes offered at OU. Our group also held a President's Day movie night in which students were able to take a break from schoolwork and enjoy time together. As done annually in the past, PAT also hosted the "Careers in History Panel" in order to show Oakland history majors and minors the vast opportunities available to them by earning a degree in history. We were fortunate enough to have on our panel three Oakland alumni as well as two current faculty members. Participants included OU grads Matthew MacLeod (secondary school teacher), Josh Miller (attorney), and Tobi Voigt (Public historian/curator/archivist) as well as OU faculty Dominique Daniel (librarian), and Yan Li (university professor).

The highlight of our semester as a group was attending the Phi Alpha Theta regional conference at Hope College. Our chapter brought the largest number of presenters, ten in total, along with multiple OU students who came to offer their support for their fellow peers. Two of our presenters, Katie Chaka and Robert Toney, also received

exceptional paper awards while at the conference. This was not only an educational opportunity to learn more about the broader historical community, but a wonderful bonding experience for all those members who attended. For us, this time spent together as a group was equally as important as the educational aspects of the conference.

Overall, Phi Alpha Theta has had a whirlwind of a semester, culminating in our end of the year induction dinner in early May. We officially have twenty-one new inductees and could not be more proud of the hard work our members have delivered all semester long. It is a testament to our university that multiple PAT alumni will also be attending the induction dinner in order to stay connected with the organization. We look forward to continuing with the momentum of this semester in order to make next year an even more prosperous and successful year for Phi Alpha Theta.

By: Katie Chaka and Kari Cadwell

Phi Alpha Theta President and Vice President

## **2013-2014 PHI ALPHA THETA INDUCTEES**

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Roger Biernat III, Katie Chaka, Adam Derington, Ashley Dillingham, Marc DuBuis, Alexander Greschuk, Neil Jason Harris, Jessica Kaljaj, Jaclyn Kaminski, Holly Lustig, Tiffany McGinnis, Andrew McKinney, Andrew Merwin, Angela Miles, Brenna Ropp, Adam Schiefelbein, Sarah Schneider, Kevin Stephens, Robert Toney, Renée Westcott, Nancy Windnagle

## **SCHOLAR, CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST CHARLES COBB SPEAKS AT OAKLAND**

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The department hosted a guest speaker, Charles E. Cobb, Jr., on Thursday, February 13. Cobb, who is currently a noted journalist and adjunct professor at Brown University, served as field secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in Mississippi from 1962-1967. He visited Oakland in connection with African American Celebration Month. Cobb delivered a well-received lecture entitled "Seeking Civil Rights and Freedom in 1960s Mississippi" at the noon hour to an audience of between 50-60 people and provided some excellent inside perspectives on the civil rights movement. He gave a second talk later that day on "Student Activists and Journalists: Their Roles in Keeping America Free" in the Oakland Room of the Oakland Center. Finally, that evening at 6:30 he provided a short talk for a Communications Department class on "Multicultural Communication." Cobb's visit was sponsored by the Office of the Dean, the African American Celebration Committee, and various other departments in the College. We are especially grateful to Dean Kevin Corcoran for his financial support of the lectures.

Cobb's visit was facilitated by De Witt Dykes who made the plans and handled arrangements for bringing this speaker to campus. De Witt is to be congratulated for sponsoring a very effective and successful guest speaker event. Plans are already underway for a speaker for next February's African-American Celebration Month.

Anyone interested in hearing more from and about Charles Cobb's fascinating life and work can google his name and find links to a series of

short segments on various topics from videos produced by Brown University.

## **CRAIG MARTIN WINS PRESTIGIOUS NEH/FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY FELLOWSHIP FOR 2014-15**

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Craig Martin was named as one of only five recipients of a National Endowment for the Humanities/Folger Shakespeare Library fellowship that will take him to Washington, D.C. for the 2014-15 academic year. His project, funded by a stipend of \$50,000, is for "Global Science Before Global Networks: The Background and Aftermath of Francis Bacon's History of Winds." The letter of offer states that Craig's award "is made from a very competitive pool of candidates" and that the external selection committee "judged [his] project to have exceptional merit and to draw importantly on the Folger collections." This project will be the beginning of Craig's third scholarly monograph and the fellowship should facilitate the completion of a huge chunk of the research for that volume.

Also aiding in the research funding will be a Summer 2014 Oakland University Research Fellowship—Craig's third in his time at OU—which will supplement his Folger Fellowship and enable him to begin work during the summer, ahead of his fellowship period in residence at the Folger. He has already presented some of his early work-in-progress on this topic at the annual conference of the Medical Humanities Workgroup at Western Michigan University this past May in a paper entitled, "The History of Winds Before Francis Bacon: The Case of Medicine."

While the department will miss having Craig around next year, we all join in congratulating him on this significant accomplishment.

## HISTORIANS WIN OAKLAND RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

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Three Oakland historians won summer research fellowships for Summer 2014, valued at \$10,000 each, to support their research endeavors. The three faculty members were **Craig Martin** for "Global Science before Global Networks: The Context of Francis Bacon's History of the Winds;" **James Naus** for "Constructing Kingship: The Capetian Monarchs of Early France and the Early Crusades;" and **Sean Moran** for "Eriugena, Berkeley, and Irish Philosophical Exceptionalism."

These fellowships, awarded by the University Research Committee and open to tenured and tenure-track faculty from across the campus, are highly competitive and it is unusual for a single department to take home three in the same funding cycle. These awards speak very well for Craig, James, and Sean individually and also for the research profile of the department in general.

In addition to those three summer fellowships, **Yan Li** received a \$1,200 Faculty Research Grant from the University Research Committee for her project entitled "In Search of a Socialist Modernity: Soviet Culture in Twentieth-Century China." This grant follows on the heels of the \$10,000 summer research grant she earned last year.

Collectively, the four awards further strengthen the department's strong record in funding support and give the History department a very impressive research profile in 2013-14. Congratulations to all four historians on their grants.

## DEPARTMENT MEMBERS WIN MULTIPLE HONORS AND AWARDS IN 2013-14

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Faculty, staff, alumni, and students in the History department won various forms of recognition this past year at the University. Last June **Janet Chandler** was recognized as Oakland's Employee of the Month. This well-deserved honor for our Administrative secretary came with gifts, a plaque, and a ceremony attended by family, faculty, friends, and colleagues. **Karen Miller** (20 years) and **Derek Hastings** (10 years) were both honored at a January reception marking years of service to Oakland. **Craig Martin** was selected as an honoree at the Faculty Recognition luncheon in April for his achievements in scholarship and service this past year. One of our alumna, **Tobi Voigt** ('98, '04) who is currently Chief Curatorial Officer at the Detroit Historical Society, won the Odyssey Award from the OU Alumni Association which recognizes alumni "whose lives exemplify Oakland University's motto 'to seek virtue and knowledge.'" Tobi and other honorees will be recognized at a dinner in September where the awards will be presented. Finally, several students have earned recognition as well. **Jane Dixon** has won a Holzbock Humanities scholarship for 2014-15; **Emily Barko** has won the Matthews Scholarship for 2014-15; **Jeffrey DeMoss** earned a Graduate Student Research Award to fund his M.A. thesis research in Los Angeles and Germany; and **Carly Puzniak** won a Boren Scholarship which funds travel for students "to study in world regions critical to U.S. interests and

underrepresented in study abroad." Congratulations to all of these honorees for their well-deserved recognition and for the luster such honors bring collectively to the department.

## THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DEPARTMENT DONORS

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The History department is deeply grateful to the individuals and organizations that have donated money to the department this past year. These funds help the department in many ways: they augment existing monies for student scholarships, for faculty travel and research expenses, for the "History Comes Alive" lecture series, guest lecturers, and many other worthy and necessary ventures. We thank our donors for their very generous support and backing and wish to acknowledge them by name: Lee A. Casey; Judith Christie for Knudsen Family Foundation; De Witt S. Dykes; Todd Estes; Thea G. Glicksman; Daniel McCarville; Beverly M. Smith; and Wallace P. Wells. Thank you all for remembering the department.

## CATCHING UP WITH....JENNIFER LAAM (M.A. 2008)

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Jennifer Laam earned her M.A. degree in History from Oakland in 2008 after serving as the department's graduate assistant. Her superb thesis, "Flirting With Power: Ambition and Female Identity, 1770-1830," won the Outstanding Thesis Award for Graduate Students that year. Since earning her degree, Jennifer has transitioned into writing of a slightly different kind: the historical novel.

Her first book, *The Secret Daughter of the Tsar*, was published last year by St. Martin's Press and is already winning acclaim. As the publisher's press release states, "Jennifer Laam seamlessly braids together the stories of three women: Veronica, Lena, and Charlotte and imagines an alternate history for the Romanov family – one in which a secret fifth daughter, smuggled out of Russia before the revolution, continues the royal lineage to dramatic and unexpected consequences."

"Veronica is an aspiring historian living in present-day Los Angeles when she meets a mysterious man who may be heir to the Russian throne. As she sets about investigating the legitimacy of his claim through a winding path of romance and deception, the ghosts of her own past begin to haunt her. Lena, a servant in the imperial Russian court of 1902, is approached by the desperate Empress Alexandra.

After conceiving four daughters, the Empress is determined to sire a son and believes Lena can help her. Once elevated to the Romanov's treacherous inner circle, Lena finds herself under the watchful eye of the meddling Dowager Empress Marie. Charlotte, a former ballerina living in World War II occupied Paris, receives a surprise visit from a German officer. Determined to protect her son from the Nazis, Charlotte escapes the city, but not before learning that the officer's interest in her stems from his longstanding obsession with the fate of the Russian monarchy."

"As Veronica's passion intensifies, and her search for the true heir to the throne takes a dangerous turn, the reader learns just how these three vastly different women are connected."

Readers interested in Jennifer's fine debut novel may purchase it from Amazon at the link provided at the end of this article. But first, enjoy this interview that Jennifer was kind enough to give in which she talks about her novel, her writing process, and the ways that her study of

history informs her work as a writer and novelist.

*How did your historical training affect your work on the novel? How did the fact that you're a historian shape the writing and the research that went into the book? Were you conscious of having separate hats as "historian" and "novelist" at different points in writing the book?*

There was definitely crossover between historian and novelist. I did tons of research for my novel, and while I was working on academic papers I tried to have fun with language. Having said that, writing as a novelist, I have greater latitude to imagine what historical figures feel and I'm also free to draw more connections between past events and current dilemmas. I really enjoy those aspects of writing as a historical novelist.

*How long had the novel been taking shape in your mind? How long from conception to publication?*

All in all--from first scribbling to submission—I would say at least ten years. I worked on it very haphazardly at first, so it was probably even longer than that. For the most part, I either worked full-time or was in school full-time while I wrote *The Secret Daughter of the Tsar*. Finding good pockets of writing time was always a challenge. I still work full-time, but I've promised myself the next novel will not take more than a year or so. I'm learning to be more efficient with my time and to get feedback from my critique partners sooner.

*What do you hope readers will take away from the novel? Who is your intended audience?*

First and foremost, I want readers to have fun. When I think about books I admire, there are always strong

threads of humor and play. I just finished reading *Gone Girl* and for all of the darkness, there are hilarious moments. I love that!

Of course I want everyone to read *The Secret Daughter of the Tsar*, but the main audience is likely Romanov enthusiasts and history buffs fascinated by the tragic end of the Russian royal family. At the same time, I deal with universal emotional themes in my book: love, trust, redemption, and our connections to the past.

*What surprised you the most about the writing process as you were working? What was the hardest or most challenging thing about writing the book?*

For me, learning to let go is the most challenging aspect of writing. I have to remind myself that the work will never be perfect. While rewriting is vital, endless tinkering becomes counter-productive and stifling.

*Speaking of your future work, do you have ideas for other topics in historical fiction? What are you working on now as your next writing project or projects?*

I'm currently working on a companion novel to *The Secret Daughter of the Tsar*. One of the central characters is Grigory Potemkin, Catherine the Great's former lover and greatest counselor. He was an empire builder, a hedonist, deeply spiritual, and likely bi-polar. He also played a crucial role in the Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, an area of the world we all have our eyes on now.

*How did you break into publishing? Did you have an agent? How did that process work and how did you get started?*

Breaking into publishing would have been impossible without the support and wise counsel of my critique partners. They encouraged me to submit my work. I found my agent, the amazing Erin Harris, now of Folio Literary Management, through Twitter. She was actively seeking new clients and I was actively seeking an agent. Perfect match! Erin is my cheerleader, my advocate, and my advisor. I imagine it's possible to navigate the world of publishing without an agent, but I wouldn't want to try. For anyone thinking of breaking into publishing, I would strongly suggest looking for newer agents who are eager to work with debut writers. The two of you can work together to build your career.

*Could you talk a little bit about your writing and revising process and about the "critique partners" specifically? Who are they? Where did you find them? What role do they play in your work?*

Once I have a general sense of a new project, I need to write a "quick and dirty" first draft. Some writers call this the "shitty" first draft. I like the surprises that happen in that first draft. For example, a character might react to a situation in an unexpected way that influences the shape of the plot. After slogging through at least most of a manuscript, I go back and create a detailed outline to refine structure and determine the type of research I need to do. I then re-read and shake my fist at that rough draft and the revision process begins.

Along about the third draft, I feel comfortable sharing chapters from my manuscript with my critique partners. We met through a writing group here in Sacramento. We read each other's work and give feedback to one another. I think it's important for critique partners to be honest and

really get you. Someone that shares your sensibilities will be on board with your overall vision, but at the same time help you polish your work and call you out on clunky phrases, plot holes, etc. Actually, two of us are now offering professional editing services via our website

<http://www.goodgirlediting.com/>

*If someone has a question about your novel or publishing in general, how can they get in contact with you?*

I love to talk to readers and other writers! Feel free to get in touch with me via Twitter at <https://twitter.com/JenLaam> (@jenlaam) or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Jennifer-Laam/283891801741334>. If you shy away from social media, you can also reach me through my website [www.jenniferlaam.com](http://www.jenniferlaam.com).

Amazon Link:

[http://www.amazon.com/Secret-Daughter-Tsar-Jennifer-Laam/dp/125002868X/ref=la\\_B00EAANSSW\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1400009698&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Secret-Daughter-Tsar-Jennifer-Laam/dp/125002868X/ref=la_B00EAANSSW_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1400009698&sr=1-1)

## FACULTY UPDATES

**Dan Clark** reports that it has been an interesting year marked by connecting with different audiences. After a productive sabbatical in Winter 2013, he was able to present versions of his research on Detroit autoworkers in the 1950s at a departmental "First Draft" session, at a seminar of Chicago-area labor historians at the Newberry Library, at the North American Labor History Conference, and as part of our History Comes Alive series. Whether experts in academia or experts in their own experiences, those who commented and asked

questions helped him think through his developing argument.

Dan also spent time working with high school students at the International IB Academy in Utica and at Mumford High School in Detroit. Former students Kim Hall and Sabrina Bright offered these invitations, which again provided opportunities to connect with different audiences and to marvel at the important work our alumni do. In OU's classrooms, Dan taught HST 115 for the first time in a few years and he also taught the Graduate Colloquium, which of course offered very different constituencies and challenges. Both were lots of fun.

Phi Alpha Theta provided its own set of challenges this year, but with the help of Yan Li the chapter did amazing things. It became clear early in the winter term that there was interest and energy among our students in maintaining an active chapter, and it's always gratifying to see them accomplish wonderful things, from organizing the annual Careers in History Panel to presenting research at the Regional Conference. Perhaps most importantly, students connected with each other. It all adds up to a rewarding year.

**Keith Dye** will present a paper titled "From American Negotiations to African American Ascendancy: The Eve of the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War, 1964-1967," at the annual conference of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR) that meets June 19-21 in Lexington, Kentucky. Dr. Dye's paper considers the partial pull-back of the United States diplomatic team from negotiations to prevent civil war in Nigeria. The move unintentionally expanded an opportunity of the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa (ANLCA) to also assist with negotiations. The ANLCA was advancing a foreign policy independent of the American state



department, much to the dissatisfaction of President Johnson. The president interpreted ANLCA efforts as clashing with American foreign policy for Africa.

**De Witt Dykes** has been very active this year giving talks and attending conferences. He lectured on “Slavery and Genealogy” at the Southfield Public Library, on “The African American Experience in Michigan” at the Troy Historical Village, and on “The Origin and Operation of the Underground Railroad in Michigan” at a conference on local history sponsored by the Historical Society of Michigan. Finally, with colleague George Milne, he gave a presentation to the Fred Hart Williams Genealogical Society at the Detroit Public Library. De Witt was also involved as a scholar-speaker for an NEH funded program on the 1950s and 1960s context of the film *The Loving Story* about interracial marriage. In addition to arranging for the visit of Charles Cobb to campus in February, De Witt also attended conferences on family history, African American life and history, and African American experiences in revolutionary Virginia. These sessions took him to Detroit, Jacksonville, Florida, and Williamsburg, Virginia.

**Todd Estes** completed his second year as department chair and also engaged in an array of scholarly activities. He is editing the collected essays of his late Ph.D. mentor Lance Banning, entitled *Founding Visions: The Ideas, Individuals, and Intersections That Created America* and forthcoming this fall from the University Press of Kentucky. His article, “The Endless Allure and Ultimate Folly of Determining the Original Meaning of the Constitution: History, Law, Politics, and the American Founding,” appeared in *XVIII: New Perspectives on the Eighteenth Century*. He is finalizing a chapter on Alexander Hamilton for a collection of essays on the American founders and their

visions of the future to be published by the University of Virginia Press. Todd gave an invited lecture for a Philosophy of Law seminar at the University of Texas, was an invited discussant for a conference on the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, and served as discussion leader for conferences on James Madison and the Constitution and another on challenges to the authority of the central government in early American history in addition to delivering a lecture for Oakland University’s Winter College program held in Florida last February. These trips took him to Austin, Texas, Orange, Virginia, Santa Fe, New Mexico, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Bonita Springs, Florida. He also refereed an article manuscript for the *Journal of the Early Republic*, wrote a book review for the *Journal of American History*, and participated in an American Council on Education (ACE) Leadership Academy for Department Chairs last October in Chicago.

**Derek Hastings** spent last summer in Munich, completing archival research for his book on the Nazi SA leader Ernst Röhm and beginning work on another book manuscript, entitled *Nationalism in Modern Europe: Identity and Belonging Since the French Revolution*, which is currently under review with Bloomsbury Press. While in Germany he also delivered a public lecture at the University of Frankfurt and, during the academic year, he presented papers at the annual conference of the German Studies Association in Denver and at the annual meeting of the German History Society (UK) in London. He also gave several talks to local groups and organizations, including Grosse Pointe Memorial Church and Bloomfield Hills High School, in addition to presenting one of the lectures in the department’s History Comes Alive series.

**Yan Li** presented a paper on socialist fashion in Mao’s China at the Association for Asian Studies

Annual Conference, gave a lecture on Sino-Soviet relations in the History Comes Alive series, and published an article on China’s Soviet-influenced architecture. This summer she will conduct further archival research in China for the manuscript she has been working on, aided by the University Faculty Research Grant. She enjoyed serving as a faculty adviser to the OU chapter of Phi Alpha Theta and was a speaker on the Careers in History panel that the PAT organized.

In the spring, **Craig Martin’s** *Subverting Aristotle: Religion, History, & Philosophy in Early Modern Science* was published by Johns Hopkins University Press. He is now starting a new project on Francis Bacon’s *Historia ventorum*. This year, Oakland University’s URC, Huntington Library, and Folger Shakespeare Library awarded him fellowships to work on that project. For most of the summer, Craig will be conducting research in Rome but will also travel to York (United Kingdom) for a conference and to Paris and Tokyo for invited lectures. In the fall he will begin his residency in Washington DC at the Folger.

This year **Karen Miller** has continued to focus her research on the city of Detroit during World War II. This began with a research trip to Washington to examine federal documents concerning regulations for the construction of federally funded housing during the war. All sorts of information was unearthed concerning war-time construction projects, including the fascinating details of contracting fraud.

This work on Detroit’s wartime economy was supplemented by a side project—a history of the first 100 years of Local Union 58 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. With the help of OU history grad, Cari Durant, and a group of retired electrical workers, Karen Miller wrote the story of the union’s impact on the development of Detroit. The book that resulted from this project was presented to



the attendees of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner for IBEW #58. After stepping down as president of Oakland's chapter of the AAUP, Karen Miller continues to be active in the union. In particular, she has been researching university policies toward women faculty and the maintenance of shared governance in the modern university.

**George Milne's** book, *Natchez Country: Indians, Colonists, and the Landscapes of Race in French Louisiana*, is in press with the University of Georgia Press. The copyediting has been completed and he awaits the page proofs which are due soon. The book is slated for publication in the spring or summer of 2015. George's essay "Clerics, Cartographers, and Kings: Mapping Power in the French Atlantic World, 1608-1752" is now under contract and will be published in John Corrigan (ed.), *Religion and Space of the Atlantic World*, from the University of South Carolina Press forthcoming in 2015. He is also finalizing an article draft entitled "High Prices and Bad Talks: Choctaw Strategies for Playing Politics in French Louisiana" for submission to the *William and Mary Quarterly*.

During the summer George will be concentrating on two projects. The first is a workshop entitled "The World of the Siege," hosted by Duke University that focuses on aspects of early modern warfare in North America, Europe, and Asia. He will also be working on a paper for the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory that will take place in October 2014. His paper is part of a panel that will focus on Native American slavery during the late 1600s. The panel's papers will form the basis for a topical issue of the ASE journal *Ethnohistory*.

**Sean Farrell Moran** hosted a panel at the regional American Conference for Irish Studies (ACIS) in October. He will be chairing two sessions at the ACIS National Meeting at Trinity College, Dublin in June, one

of which is to focus on his work on Dublin's Easter Rising of 1916. While overseas, he will also do research for a forthcoming article on the Irish philosophers Johannes Eriugena and George Berkeley. He won an OU Faculty Research Fellowship to do this work and plans to finish the article this summer. He continues to serve on the College's Committee on Appointment and Promotion (CAP) as well as the University's Senate Budget Committee. Much of this past year he has spent working on a new course "The History of Modern Christianity" to be offered this fall.

**James Naus** will spend most of the summer of 2014 finishing his book on medieval French kings and the crusades. Thanks to a Faculty Research Fellowship, he will also spend time in Paris tying up the archival loose ends for that project. While in Europe, he will deliver a lecture at the University of Leeds at the *International Medieval Congress*. In addition to his book, Professor Naus will also spend time writing a chapter for inclusion in the *Cambridge History of the Crusades*. In the past year, Professor Naus has had two articles appear in press, one in *French Historical Studies* and another in a collection of essays on the narrative sources of the First Crusade. He also delivered a number of lectures in the US and Europe.

**Bruce Zellers** has published a review of John Prados, *Normandy Crucible: The Decisive Battle That Shaped World War II in Europe* in a recent issue of *Michigan War Studies Review*. This spring and summer he will present several library talks and public lectures in the area.

## EMERITUS FACULTY UPDATES

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**Richard Tucker**, Professor Emeritus, teaches a course entitled, "War and Environment," each winter at the University of Michigan. He is coordinator of an international research network on the environmental impacts of warfare through history, and continues to publish in that area. He is co-editor of forthcoming books on the environmental history of World Wars I and II, and is giving seminars on the subject in Helsinki and Vienna this May.

## LIST OF GRADUATES

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**Congratulations to the following history students who earned degrees the past year:**

### History Bachelor of Arts degrees Summer 2013: Katherine E.

Alderson, James Daniel Ball, Kari Ann Cadwell, Jamie Steven Masaid, Matthew S. Merrill, James P. Milne, Daniel A Nitzh, David J. Sulick, John M. Timm, Dianna Gail Young.

Fall 2013: Kyle P. Bethel, Jason Robert Craft, William English, Matthew Steven Ferruzzi, Jodi Elizabeth George, Kristen Marie Harris, Amanda Yoon Horodskyj, Ryan Michael Johnson, Matthew Willard Kittle, Sean Kristopher Lehman, Tiffany Marie McGinnis, Rebecca Marie Rasmussen, Daniel James Rochon, Shannon Joan Schneider, Daniel Nichole Sommer, Donald Seth Tottingham Jr., Kimberly Marie Westman, Lindsay Tate White.

Fall 2013 STEP Majors: Michael James Runyan

Winter 2014: Dominic Lee Alessi, Andrew C Beebe, Brett Michael Bilicki, Aaron Z. Breslow, Christopher L. Cardamone, Katie Kristine Chaka, Rebecca Dawn Churray, Ashley Ann Dillingham, Derek Taylor Douglas, Jeffrey Paul-Leopold Fernandez, Tyler Scott

Ferus, David Michael Garbarino, Heather Lynn Haley, Alyssa Nicole Halula, Anthony Michael Hernandez, Jessica Marie Hertle, Daniel Joseph Hill, Jaclyn A. Kaminski, Bridget Anne Matthews, Andrew David McKinney, Jason Michael Poupard, Rosemary Retford, Bradley A Ristau, Patrick James Scoggin, Brittany Lynn Shimshock, Ryan Mitchell Stemm, Louis Jeffrey Teeter, Robert Thomas Toney, Renee Elizabeth Westcott, Ryan J. Wiese.

Winter 2014 STEP Majors: Jason Paul Bazner, Chadwick Carson, Katherine Lee Griebe, Aimee Marie Reardon, Jennifer Rochelle Richards, Virginia Lyn Shidler, William David Sophiea, Alice J. Woodward.

## FULL-TIME FACULTY 2013-14

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**Bekele, Getnet** (PhD Michigan State 2004; assoc. prof.) Africa  
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**Chapman Williams, Sara E.** (PhD, Georgetown 1997; assoc. prof.) Early Modern Europe, France  
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**Clark, Daniel J.** (PhD, Duke 1989; assoc. prof.) US Labor  
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**Dykes, De Witt S.** (MA, Michigan 1961; assoc. prof.) African American, US Urban, Family and Gender  
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**Hastings, Derek K.** (PhD, Chicago 2003; assoc. prof.) Modern Germany  
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**Martin, Craig** (PhD, Harvard, 2002; assoc. prof.) Renaissance Europe, History of Science & Technology  
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## PART-TIME FACULTY 2013-14

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## DEPARTMENT STAFF

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If you have information about yourself to contribute to the next newsletter please send it to [estes@oakland.edu](mailto:estes@oakland.edu). We especially love to have the latest news from our alumni.