

Oakland University

HISTORY DEPARTMENT

NEWSLETTER *Spring 2015*

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

It is becoming increasingly clear, as I conclude my first term as department chair and embark on my second, that I have the privilege of leading a department in the midst of an exciting change. The arrival in 2014-15 of Erin Dwyer and Liz Shesko as our two newest historians—of the U.S. Civil War era and Latin America, respectively—added to the momentum created by the recent hires of Yan Li in Chinese history and James Naus as our Medievalist. Collectively, these four outstanding young scholars and teachers bring the department a vital infusion of youth, enthusiasm, energy, and talent. Not only have they helped to shift the department's center of balance in a new direction, they will also subtly help change old ways and practices in the department and ease new ones to the forefront. As such, these dynamic recent hires will be part of molding a new department culture that builds on the best of the old, but grafts on much-needed new qualities and sensibilities. As culture change goes, the department of History is in the midst of an exciting one and I, as chair, find it most welcome.

This newsletter features interviews with our two newest professors as a way of introducing them and getting

to know them better. It contains a reflective piece by George Milne, our most recently tenured faculty member. It also chronicles the events of 2014-15, another full and successful year for the department. It shares the news of individuals and groups, faculty and students, who have contributed to the vitality of the department in many guises. There is news of awards and fellowships, publications and presentations, honors and achievements - - all of the numerous activities that make up the life of an academic unit. Collectively, they reveal an energetic and active department busily engaged in teaching, research, and service.

I take a great deal of pride in my colleagues and their work, and this newsletter shows that we all have much of which we can be proud. I won't rehearse it all in this introduction—please read for yourself below. Key to all of the success we experience are the special people who work with us in the department. I'd like to say a word of thanks to **Kari Cadwell** who is concluding two years as our graduate assistant. One professor told me that although we have had many excellent grad assistants, "Kari is the best one ever." She has done excellent work for us and for our students and we acknowledge her contributions and thank her for her efforts. I also want to thank **Roger Biernat** who concluded his first year

as our student office worker. Roger's efficiency and dedication set him apart as he tackled photocopying, faxing, filing, and many other duties. We are fortunate to have him returning for a second tour of duty next year. Lastly, we all owe a huge debt of gratitude to **Janet Chandler** and **Johanna McReynolds**, our devoted administrative secretaries, without whom the smooth and efficient operation of the department would be impossible. Each week, they do countless tasks—large and small, seen and unseen—for faculty and for students that help people and make the office hum along. I know I could not do my job as chair without them—and I would never want to try!

Thanks to everyone who has made this year of change a good one for the department.

By: Todd Estes

DINNERS, PANELS, AND REGIONAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHT ACTIVE PHI ALPHA THETA YEAR

The Oakland chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the national history honor society, had another busy and successful year, filled with both individual and collective achievements and honors. In December the students sponsored their annual Holiday dinner for students and faculty at Rochester Mills restaurant, drawing a good crowd of both teachers and members. Earlier in the semester the chapter hosted Oakland's newest historians, Erin Dwyer and Liz Shesko, who talked to the students informally about their research and teaching and experiences in graduate school.

During the winter semester our chapter hosted its annual Careers in History Panel. A large and

interested audience heard panelists discuss what they do, and how a history degree has helped them in their professions. Former PAT students Tobi Voigt, Josh Miller, and Lesley Chapel served on the panel, as did our medievalist, James Naus, and Dominique Daniel from Kresge Library.

One of the highlights of each year is the chapter's participation in the PAT Regional Conference, which was held in March at Ferris State University. Thirteen OU students presented papers, and two others made the trip to provide support. Four of the presenters took home awards for their excellent work. Chris Mosier, Nick DiPucchio, and Karli Cadwell each won awards for "Best Paper" in their categories, and Adam Derington won an "Honorable Mention" award for his work. Congratulations go to the award winners and also to all of our presenters and attendees who performed very impressively, according to faculty sponsors Dan Clark and James Naus. Dan and James both noted how impressive, collegial and professional our students were and how well they represented the department and the university. Also presenting for OU were: Emma Barko, Roger Biernat, Katie Chaka, Michael Dilay, Jane Dixon, Marc DuBuis, Karli Iceman, Steve Piontkowski, and Nancy Windnagle. Attending and supporting were Chris Blaker and alumnus Bill English.

The regional conference is a prime example of student success on display: our students, who have written and revised their papers and rehearsed their presentations, annually display their hard work and accomplishments before their peers from other institutions. When stacked up against these other students, ours often come out on top and earn awards that reflect well on them, their teachers, and the department and College. The chapter is grateful for the strong support of Dean Kevin Corcoran for this venture and to PAT faculty sponsors Dan Clark, James Naus, and Yan Li

who do such a good job of working with them all year and preparing them to be successful. While the awards are nice verification of our students' achievements, the most valuable benefits of the conference are the experience and the opportunities our students gain from participating. We can all be proud of them and their efforts.

Coming on the heels of the regional conference was the annual induction dinner for new members, held in April at Lino's restaurant in Rochester Hills. An enthusiastic group of thirty-seven, including students, parents, faculty members, and Liz Shesko's daughter Becca were on hand to induct our newest members and to celebrate an active and successful past year for the organization. Many thanks to Professor Shesko for an outstanding talk on how she became a historian. The students also remained undefeated in the annual Quiz Bowl, once again defeating the faculty for rights to the Trivial Trophy. These dinners are always meaningful events for the students and for their parents who have a chance to see the manifestation of their children's hard work and achievements. Phi Alpha Theta this year had a group of dedicated students and faithful faculty members affiliated with this organization. It was another excellent year for the chapter and the dinner was a fitting and proper culmination to the year's activities.

The new members inducted this year are: Bruce Bakken, Sarah Black, Michael Dilay, Nick DiPucchio, Nadine Duchaine, Edwin Hanson, Karli Iceman, Shanna Johnson, Chris Mosier, Steve Piontkowski, and Rose Walsh.

Looking ahead to 2015-16, the chapter has elected the following officers for next year: Adam Derington, Katie Chaka, Nick DiPucchio, and Roger Biernat.

2014-2015 PHI ALPHA THETA INDUCTEES

Bruce Bakken, Sarah Black, Michael Dilay, Nicholas DiPucchio, Steven Piontkowski, Rose Walsh, Nadine Duchaine, Edwin Hanson, Karli Iceman, Shanna Johnson, Christian Mosier, Bennett Gillam and Holly Lustig.

ANOTHER BANNER YEAR FOR HISTORY COMES ALIVE LECTURE SERIES

The 11th year of the department's acclaimed "History Comes Alive" lecture series was a great success. Nearly 600 people attended the six lectures, from September through March, and heard Oakland History faculty members educate and entertain. The appreciative audiences—which averaged 97 people per lecture—included students, community members, alumni, OU classes, faculty members from other departments, administrators, and high school students (prospective Oakland students). The lectures were also faithfully attended by College of Arts and Sciences Dean Kevin Corcoran, whose office is a sponsor of the series, and a special guest at the March lecture was Oakland's new president, George Hynd.

This year's lectures featured the usual mix of topics on U.S., European, and world history and took place in the Oakland Center on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Our crowd included many trusty regulars, some of whom have been with us since the lecture series was inaugurated by the department in 2004. The History department faculty members view these as exciting opportunities to share their research and interests with an engaged, thoughtful audience. The question and answer sessions that follow each lecture are filled with lively exchanges and a sharing of perspectives and give audience

members and speakers an opportunity to extend or clarify their points or to ask additional questions. The department is grateful to its audience for their attendance and participation in this series and for their sustained and growing support over the years.

These lectures are well-received and highly valuable outreach efforts by the department at community engagement, which is one of the key initiatives of President Hynd. They offer the department an opportunity to share our knowledge with the community and to interact in ways outside the classroom that are mutually rewarding and enjoyable. Plans for the 2015-16 season of "History Comes Alive" are already underway and the schedule will be announced soon.

This important series would not be possible without the valued support of our sponsors: the Knudsen Family Foundation (and its administrator, Judith Christie); 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. The series was established in 2004 with a generous grant from our founding sponsors, the late John and the late Annette Carter.

The lectures in the 2014-15 series were as follows:

Todd Estes, "Before the Fatal Duel: The Last Years of Alexander Hamilton's Life and the Future of American Politics"

Bruce Zellers, "The American Century: Things That Might Have Been and Things That Were"

James Naus, "The Crusades and the Making of a Medieval French King"

Karen Miller, "The Geography of Despair: Detroit's Housing in World War II"

Sean Moran, "Britain, Race, and the War Against the Slave Trade"

Ian Greenspan, "Blueprint for Hate: The Enduring Legacy of the Turner Diaries"

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS ANNOUNCED

History majors **Sarah Black** and **Adam Derington** have been recognized for their outstanding achievements by being named recipients of two prestigious scholarships for the upcoming 2015-16 academic year. Sarah Black has been named as one of seven recipients of the Holzbock Scholarship for students in the College of Arts and Sciences. This competitive award honors students with exemplary records across the College. Adam Derington will be the recipient of the George Matthews Scholarship awarded by the department of History for 2015-16. Congratulations to Sarah and Adam on these honors.

Graduate student **Katie Chaka**, who will be the department's graduate assistant, starting in the fall, won a Provost's Graduate Research Award to fund a summer of archival research in Munich as she conducts research on her M.A. thesis.

Additionally, thanks to the work of Professor Erin Dwyer, the Dean's office has funded a new summer internship program for work in the Kresge Library archives in the Frederick Black Papers which contain valuable information about Abraham Lincoln's assassination. Four students were selected through a competitive application process to serve as paid interns for this summer project: Sarah Black, Adam Derington, Amrutha Prakash and Steven Schatzberg. Congratulations to all these students on their fine work and these awards which honor their accomplishments.

THREE HISTORIANS RECEIVE \$10,000 SUMMER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

Three History department faculty members have won \$10,000 Summer Research Fellowships for Summer 2015 to fund their research and scholarship. These fellowships, awarded by the University Research Committee and announced last December, went to Elizabeth Shesko, Erin Dwyer, and Todd Estes. Liz Shesko was funded for her project "Conscript Nation: Negotiating Authority and Belonging in the Bolivian Barracks, 1900-1956." Erin Dwyer's funding is for a second book project entitled "Slavery and Poison in the United States and the Caribbean." Todd Estes earned a grant for his next book project, "The Length of Their Shadows: Federalist Funerals, Commemoration, and Partisanship in the Early American Republic."

These results continue the department's very strong record of winning research grants. With three fellowships awarded for the previous summer as well, the department has now won six fellowships in the past two years alone. It is wonderful to see our faculty members being recognized and rewarded for their scholarly research potential. It is especially gratifying to note that Erin Dwyer and Liz Shesko have now joined the department's other junior faculty members Yan Li and James Naus from previous years in earning fellowships in their first year of application. These indicators of success simply confirm what the rest of us have long known--that the department has made great recent hires. These grants will help both of them continue their outstanding work during the summer.

Congratulations to all three recipients and to the department as a whole for this latest round of funding success that reflects well on us all.

IN MEMORIAM: JOHN (JACK) BARNARD

Just before publication, the department of History learned the sad news of the death at age 82 of Emeritus Professor John "Jack" Barnard in late April. Jack retired from the department in 1997 and moved to Cape Cod, but stayed in contact via email and occasional visits to the area. Jack Barnard came to Oakland in 1964 and served two tours of duty as department chair and one term as president of the AAUP faculty union.

Jack was well regarded by his colleagues and former students. Garry Gilbert, currently Director of the Journalism program at Oakland University, was a student of Jack's as both an undergraduate and a graduate student at OU. Gilbert recalled, "He was a mentor and role model for me during my undergrad and grad days. What a brilliant and kind professor. [He was a] great storyteller. His last course here was a seminar for grad students on the Sixties. I was one of six or seven students in that tiny seminar room on the third floor of O'Dowd. We had so much fun and we learned so much in that class," said Gilbert.

A recent article in *The Oakland Post* quoted one of Jack's colleagues, Emeritus Professor Mary Karasch as praising his approachability and openness, saying "He was someone you could always talk to." Jack's replacement in the department as labor historian, Dan Clark, also spoke for the article and said of Jack, "He was just a marvelously warm and generous person. He was always interested in what everyone else was thinking about and learning."

Jack Barnard was an active teacher and scholar and is remembered fondly by former students and colleagues. The department has lost a distinguished former colleague and

friend. We salute his life and mourn his passing.

Family and friends are mourning the loss of Jack Barnard, who passed away at age 82, this past Sunday evening, April 19, in Cape Cod Hospital in Hyannis, Massachusetts.

Jack was born in November, 1932, and raised in Wichita, Kansas along with his two sisters, Mary and Joanne. After graduating from Wichita North High School, Jack enrolled in Oberlin College where he found and fell in love with his wife of 61 years, Joan Pennock Barnard. After Jack and Joan graduated from Oberlin in 1955, they moved to Chicago where Jack enrolled in a Ph.D. program in American history. Jack's first experience behind the lectern was in the History Department at Ohio State University from 1960-1964, during which time he completed his dissertation (From Evangelicalism to Progressivism at Oberlin College, 1866-1917, published by Ohio State University Press).

In the midst of collecting academic degrees and getting careers underway, Jack and Joan also started a family, beginning with Bruce in 1954, Elizabeth in 1957, and Stephen in 1963.

After Ohio State, Jack, Joan and their family moved north to suburban Detroit, where Jack accepted a position as assistant professor in the History Department at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. Jack remained on the Oakland faculty for 33 years until his retirement in 1997. He served two terms as Department Chair (1974-84 and 1987-90) and was president of the faculty union from 1987-89. In the words of former Oakland Press managing editor Garry Gilbert, Jack was, "a model professor-always approachable, generous with his time and perceptive in his criticisms. He possesses a vast knowledge of American History, loves to talk about all aspects of the past and

present, and employs a disarming sense of humor. He never displays flashes of arrogance so prevalent among holders of the Ph.D. whom I have met in other programs and at other universities.

*Popular and engaging in the classroom, and a well-respected department chair and faculty leader, Professor Barnard was also an accomplished scholar who published numerous articles and book reviews, many on the history of education in America as well as U.S. labor history. He authored two books, *Walter Reuther and the Rise of the Auto Workers*, and *American Vanguard: the United Auto Workers During the Reuther Years, 1935-1970*, which earned the State History Award from the Historical Society of Michigan in 2005.*

Soon after their retirements, Jack and Joan moved to Orleans, on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Almost immediately, Jack's administrative skills were recruited to assist First Parish Brewster Unitarian Universalist Church in an historic facility restoration project and search for a new minister. Once again, Jack's steady hand as Board President helped guide the Church through a challenging time and restore its structural and financial footing. Jack enjoyed forming many new friendships in and around Orleans and continuing a lively discussion of current events at a monthly poker club and weekly breakfast club.

Jack will be remembered by his wife, three children, and four grandchildren as a loving husband, father, and grandfather who taught us many life-enriching lessons, perhaps most notably the pursuit of truth and wisdom, in a wonderfully unassuming way.

In lieu of flowers, if you wish to send a contribution, please send to the Brewster Meeting House Preservation Project, Box 713, Brewster, MA 02631.

TODD ESTES REAPPOINTED AS DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Todd Estes has been reappointed by the Dean to a second three-year term as chair of the Department of History. Dean Kevin Corcoran of the College of Arts and Sciences made the announcement in February after consulting with faculty from the department and following a recommendation from the unit. Department procedures called for separate meetings of the faculty last fall at which time Estes was opposed for chair by Sean Moran. After presentations to the department by the two candidates and then discussion by members, the department voted 13-2 for Estes over Moran as their choice for chair and forwarded that recommendation to the Dean. Estes, who had served as Acting Department Chair in Fall 2010, was elected to his first three year term in 2012. His second term will extend from 2015 to 2018. He is grateful to his colleagues for their strong support and looks forward to serving the department as chair over the next three years.

INTERVIEW WITH ELIZABETH (LIZ) SHESKO

We sat down with one of Oakland's newest historians and faculty members to talk about her first year and her work and life.

Q: How have you found your first year here at Oakland and in Michigan?

It's been quite a year! Moving, settling in with a new job, putting my daughter in daycare, and getting to know my colleagues, the university, and the area have kept me very busy. I haven't had as much opportunity as I would like to explore Michigan, so I'm hoping to

make some time for that this summer.

Q: How did you get interested in history and when and how did you decide to pursue a Ph.D. and an academic career?

I was actually a Spanish and English major in college, so I came to my interest in history through literature. After I graduated college, I realized that the questions I was asking about the literature I was reading had much more to do with the historical events and forces that informed and shaped the works than the poetry of the words. While teaching first grade in Guatemala City in my early twenties, I began to realize the profound effect of history on the present, and the ways that historical narratives structure our lives and the way we view the world. So when I decided to apply to graduate schools, I only applied to history programs.

Q: You are our Latin American specialist--tell us about your own work and research. What issues and problems and questions are you working on?

I work on military conscription in Bolivia and its relationship to state and identity formation in the early and mid-twentieth century. I began my studies in graduate school interested in indigenous-state relations. After living in Guatemala for two years, I was interested in questions of identity and state formation in places where indigenous people make up close to a majority of the country. How have states dealt with these populations? Can people be both indigenous and Bolivian or Guatemalan? What does it mean to be both or prioritize one over the other? My work focuses on Bolivia mostly due to timing: I began my graduate work in 2005, the year that Evo Morales was elected president of Bolivia and became the first president in the Americas to explicitly identify as indigenous. I went to Bolivia in 2006 to complete research on the 1945 Indigenous Congress for my master's thesis. That material

highlighted the importance of military service to indigenous actors, which prompted my doctoral research and current book manuscript. In the process of researching and writing that project, my interests expanded beyond an exclusive focus on indigenous soldiers. I realized that military service was the ideal lens for understanding methods of rule, practices of authority, and ideas about citizenship and belonging. I became interested in how the Bolivian state used military service to nationalize its population (both indigenous and non) and how individual soldiers used military service to negotiate with and make claims on the state. My work thus touches on larger questions about citizenship and state formation, especially in multi-ethnic and multi-lingual societies.

Q: What do you hope will be the impact of your ongoing work on the field? What contribution do you see yourself making?

I see myself as part of a new trend in works on the military. For too long, much of the history of the military has been ceded to military historians. These works have tended to focus on strategy, tactics, maneuvers, and decisions made by great men. I'm part of a trend of social and cultural historians who are bringing military issues back into mainstream historical conversations. What does studying the military tell us about the state? What is the impact of war and military service on individuals and on society?

Q: What kinds of new classes do you envision teaching here at Oakland?

I'm already teaching the IS Introduction to Latin America course, the two-part historical survey of the region, and 300-level courses on slavery and race and on Argentina, Chile, and Brazil. In the coming years, I plan to add two other 300-level courses to the catalog: one on Latin American revolutions and the other on indigenous movements in Latin

America. I'm also planning on teaching both HST 300 and the capstone, the latter focusing on Cold-War era dictatorships and the former on the 1780s rebellions in the Andes led by Tupac Amaru, for whom Tupac Shakur was named.

Q: Many students have never studied Latin American history previously. What seems to surprise them the most about the field? How do you help them learn?

I think many students are surprised by how race and ethnicity work in Latin America. Because the US has a basically binary system of race, without a lot of in-between categories, they have trouble understanding how race is a spectrum in Latin America. The idea that factors other than heritage and skin color can play a part in perceptions of people's race really help them understand race as cultural construct. The other part of Latin American history that I think sticks out for students (and often outrages them) is the consistency and depth of US intervention in Latin America. For both of these topics, I try to teach students through primary sources. Political cartoons and policy documents help them understand and work through the concerns and ideologies behind US intervention, and race-based statistics and personal accounts help them understand the differences between racial systems in Latin America and the US.

Q: When you have free time, what hobbies or avocations do you enjoy? What kinds of books do you like to read for fun?

I love to travel. I've been to 28 countries, both for research and for pleasure, and hope to make it to many more. I also love photography, especially when travelling. I used to develop photos myself and even had darkroom equipment, but now with digital, those days are long gone.

I have a one-and-a-half-year-old daughter, so she tends to take up

most of my non-work time right now. We spend a lot of time at the zoo, the playground, reading books, and using crayons!

I'm an avid reader of fiction, especially authors that can immerse me in other cultural or historical experiences, like Toni Morrison, Gabriel García Márquez, and Isabel Allende. I also like to read journalistic non-fiction, especially travelogues and popular histories of commodities or technologies.

INTERVIEW WITH ERIN DWYER

We also sat down with Erin Dwyer, another of our new faculty members, to talk about her life and work and her impressions so far of her time at Oakland.

Q: How have you enjoyed your first year here at Oakland and in Michigan?

It has certainly been an action-packed year! After a great Fall semester I acclimated to my first Michigan winter by breaking my ankle trying to go jogging on ice! The Oakland community, students, staff, and faculty, were all incredibly supportive during my recovery. This Spring my partner and I also bought our first house, in Detroit. We have really fallen in love with Detroit and all it has to offer.

Q: Have there been any particular highlights to this first year in the job and the community?

I was thrilled to receive the College of Arts and Sciences Student Success Grant, which has enabled me to hire History majors to work to catalog the Kresge Archives' Frederick Black Papers, a collection of documents about Abraham Lincoln and his assassination. I am hopeful that the department will continue to develop such opportunities for students interested in public history. I was also fortunate to receive a Summer Research Fellowship which will

fund a trip to archives in France to research my next project, about slavery and poison.

Q: Tell us about your work and research--what issues and problems do you work on and what interests you about them?

My focus is on nineteenth century history and African American history, particularly the history of slavery. My book manuscript, *Mastering Emotions: The Emotional Politics of Slavery*, is about the emotional relations between slaveholders and the enslaved, and the ways that emotions were critical to how slavery was maintained, defended, and resisted. My second project delves deeper into the emotional politics of slavery and fear, focusing specifically on slavery and poison in the United States and the Caribbean. I want to explore slaveholders' fears (both real and imagined) of being poisoned by those they enslaved, and I hope to demonstrate that the enslaved used poison as part of a broader constellation of resistance and faith practices.

Q: How did you decide to become a historian and why did you specialize in the field you chose?

I studied political science in college until I realized that what really interested me most was not the political theory but the historical conditions that lead to political events. That led me to get a Masters in History and a Ph.D. in American Studies. I started out working on labor history, but a great professor, Walter Johnson, encouraged me to focus on the history of slavery. Having been born and raised in the South it was a period of American history that I feel is critical to understand. It also helped facilitate my research. Every time I went to a family wedding, or went home for Thanksgiving or Christmas, I would sneak off to an archive (or drag my family to a museum or plantation tour) to fit in more research.

Q: You are very committed to public history--what are the possibilities and potential in that field that excite you?

I am passionate about public history because most people do not learn about the past from sitting in a college classroom, they learn about history from museums, documentaries, re-enactors, National Parks, monuments, and primary and secondary school teachers. I also think that those fields are some of the most interesting career paths for our majors. I want to our students to think about all the ways that history can be disseminated, and I want to connect them to public historians and public history sites throughout Metro Detroit. As much as I love teaching, I see the most exhilarating historic synergy happening outside of the classroom.

Q: What do your students seem to find most surprising or intriguing about what you teach? How do you help them learn?

I find the best way to get students to think like historians is to give them plenty of the materials that historians grapple with: primary sources. Some of my favorite classes involve what students learn from material objects. After a semester if becoming skilled at reading primary sources like letters and diaries, students really respond in creative ways to interpreting objects like photographs, toys, plants, and food. I have found that studying objects often leads students to gain insights into the past that even written documents can't provide.

Q: When you get free time, are there hobbies or avocations you like to pursue? What are your interests outside the job?

I love running, and am working to relearn to jog, though I will never again try to run on ice! I also like hiking and camping, and am excited about all the outdoor opportunities Michigan has to offer. I hope to learn how to cross-country ski next winter. I also love cooking vegan

cuisine, so on Saturdays I am usually perusing Eastern Market for local produce. I've also been enjoying exploring the restaurants and museums of Detroit.

REFLECTIONS BY GEORGE MILNE

The department's newest tenured faculty member is George Milne who below shares some perspectives on his work, his career, and his new status in the department.

During the 2014-15 academic year, I was able to pass two career milestones. The first was the publication of my book, *Natchez Country: Indians, Colonists, and the Landscapes of Race in French Louisiana*. It is a study of the relationships between the Natchez Indians and colonists who shared their homeland. During the early eighteenth century, the Natchez hereditary leaders reinforced their authority by invoking complex religious and social codes and performing elaborate ceremonies on sacred temple mounds and plazas. Faced with increasing pressure from French officials to relinquish these hallowed sites to make way for commercial agriculture, the Natchez reunited their multi-lingual chiefdom by adopting the racial category of "red men." In 1729 they attacked the nearby European homesteads and triggered a bloody war that ended when French forces destroyed Natchez as an autonomous polity. Although some historians have noted that the Natchez had played some part in "how the Indians got to be red," my work explains when, where, and why Indians did so. It also investigates the ways that the Natchez and other indigenous North Americans had used their built environments to create political solidarity before they became red people.

Studying Louisianans' military practices for my book has opened up a new avenue of research. The career of one the colony's governors

suggested a previously unexplored set of connections between the Lower Mississippi Valley and Senegal and Mauritania. Rather than launching another investigation of the African Diaspora or the Middle Passage, I have begun to examine the personnel records of the French Company of the Indies; the powerful financial institution contracted to run Louisiana and slaving forts in Africa as well as France's colonies in India and the Arabian Sea. To do so, the Company maintained a cadre of professional administrators and built a private navy to oversee and protect its vast holdings. It routinely transferred its officers throughout the world. It was not unusual for a Canadian who served in Louisiana one year to find himself in South America, or India, or Africa the next. Tracking these trade and "security" contractors has provided a new insight on an eighteenth century version of globalization—that French imperial policy was far more organized and efficient than many historians realize. This material has formed the basis of an essay to be published in an edited volume on early modern siege warfare. There is also an article in the works that outlines operations at the Company of the Indies's posts in Senegal, Gambia, and Mauritania. If all goes according to plan, these smaller projects will help shape my next book on the French Atlantic World.

This line of research is sure to enrich my teaching. Aside from lending depth to my courses on Native American and Colonial American history, it will definitely enliven one of my favorite classes: "Piracy in the Atlantic World." For instance, I recently learned that one of the Company of the Indies's captains seized over thirty pirate vessels during a single cruise of the African coast. Findings like that one will also help to put the finishing touches on a new 200-level course on the warfare in early America. Like the "Piracy" class, I hope it will become one of those classes that attract people who otherwise would not register for a history course.

The other milestone was becoming an associate professor in its Department of History. This promotion was aided by the support of my colleagues, particularly Karen Miller, Don Matthews, Sean Moran, and Sara Chapman-Williams. They were ready to lend advice and support throughout the process.

With these two waypoints behind me, I have more time to serve the Oakland University community in other ways. The Dean of the College has been instrumental in the acquisition of Geographic Information Systems applications (GIS) for the entire campus. This technology, and the skills, to use it are in demand in the private and the public sectors. Academics from nearly every field, from political science, public administration, biology, health sciences, to history and English, are also using GIS tools. I hope to become an active player in the College's efforts to bring GIS resources to our students. I have also been active in the CAS Graduate Committee; the STEP program at the School of Education, and in a new initiative on academic misconduct that focuses on teaching students how to avoid accusations of cheating and plagiarism.

Most of this work keeps me pretty busy, but I try to make some time for other activities. Photography is one of my longtime hobbies and I am an avid fan of the movies.

FACULTY UPDATES

De Witt Dykes was extremely active this year in attending historical meetings and conferences. He attended gatherings of the Textbook and Academic Authors Association in Baltimore; the Association for the Study of African-American Life and History in Memphis; the American Historical Association in New York City; the Historical Society of Michigan in Sterling Heights, Michigan; and the "Equity Within the Classroom" Conference hosted

by Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Additionally, he gave a lecture on "Slavery and Genealogy: Finding Your Roots," at the Southfield Public Library. De Witt coordinated for the History department a lecture as part of Oakland University's African American Celebration Month by John W. Hardy, "Sit-Ins & Freedom Rides of the 1960's: My Experience." He is also serving as Historical Consultant for a number of projects including the Detroit Historical Museum's plans for a commemorative exhibit on the 1967 Civil Disturbance in Detroit; a Wayne State University project on housing discrimination in Detroit from the Ossian Sweet case of the 1920's to the present; and the Michigan Historical Museum's update of exhibits on African Americans in the 1800s. He also gave several lectures on campus.

Todd Estes completed his first three year term as department chair and was re-appointed to his second this year. He was also re-appointed to his third consecutive three year term (2015-18) as an OAH Distinguished Lecturer for the Organization of American Historians. But the highlight of the year for him was the publication of *Founding Visions: The Ideas, Intersections, and Individuals That Created America*, a book he edited of the writings of his Ph.D. mentor, Lance Banning. Todd selected the contents, wrote the introduction and the chapter headnotes, prepared the appendix and the index, and recruited Gordon Wood to write the Preface. The book was published this year by the University Press of Kentucky. In May, Todd traveled to Lexington to give the Lance Banning Memorial Lecture at an event celebrating the book's publication and also participated in a radio interview with WUKY-FM and a book signing at a local store. Additionally, he had a book review published in the *Journal of American History*, and continued work on several other writing projects, some of them short (an article and two book chapters) and one of them long (a book

manuscript on the debate over ratification of the Constitution). Todd was very busy again on the conference circuit this year traveling to Indianapolis (twice), Charlottesville, Virginia, and Hermosa Beach, California for various meetings. He was an invited discussant at a conference on the American Founders and the French Revolution, a discussion leader for a meeting on the rival economic philosophies of Alexander Hamilton and Albert Gallatin (the first two great U.S. Treasury Secretaries), discussion leader for another program on Thomas Jefferson's Constitutional thought, and he organized and directed an interdisciplinary conference on Charles Beard and the economic interpretation of the Constitution over the past century. Closer to home, Todd earned an OU Summer Research Fellowship (his fifth) from the University Research Committee to begin work on a new book project entitled "The Length of Their Shadows: Federalist Funerals, Commemoration, and Partisanship in the Early Republic." He led off this year's "History Comes Alive" program in September with a lecture on Alexander Hamilton's actions and evolving political thought in the last four years of his life (1800-1804) as Hamilton grappled with the presidential leadership of his great political rival Thomas Jefferson.

During the past academic year, **Derek Hastings** secured a contract with Bloomsbury Press of London to publish his book *Nationalism in Modern Europe: Identity and Belonging since the French Revolution*. He also continues to work on his book manuscript on the Nazi SA leader Ernst Röhm, and has completed a piece on Nazi Christmas celebrations for the journal *Central European History*. In addition to publishing book reviews in the *American Historical Review* and *German Studies Review*, Prof. Hastings served as an external peer reviewer for three book manuscripts, one article manuscript, and one fellowship proposal. He also spoke on the 25th anniversary

of the fall of the Berlin Wall at Oakland University, in addition to delivering public lectures in venues ranging from Seaholm High School to the Society of Active Retirees to the Holocaust Memorial Center.

Yan Li presented a paper on Chinese mass reception of Soviet literature at the VII International Research Conference "Russian - China: History and Culture" in Kazan, Russia, and another paper on popular response to the Chinese Communist propaganda of Sino-Soviet friendship at the Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference in Chicago. These papers are two critical chapters from her current manuscript that examines the personal dimensions of a massive transnational cultural flow from the Soviet Union into socialist China. This summer she will conduct further archival research in Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong for the final completion of the manuscript. Outside her scholarship, Yan Li has been dedicated to the promotion of China studies at Oakland. During her stay in China this summer, she will visit China Foreign Affairs University, OU's partner university in Beijing, to discuss details of the China Study Abroad program in 2016.

Craig Martin enjoyed a productive and busy year, conducting research on Francis Bacon's natural history at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC. Last summer, he gave presentations on new and past projects in Tokyo, Paris, and York, UK. Over the academic year, he presented new material about early modern understandings of winds at Johns Hopkins University, the University of Maryland, and University of Pennsylvania. Before returning to Michigan for the fall semester, he will spend a month in residence at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California.

Don Matthews' article "The Kennedy Administration, the International Federation of Petroleum Workers, and Iraqi Labor under the Ba'athist Regime" was

published in January in the *Journal of Cold War Studies*. The list serve H-Diplo has commissioned a review of the article. He is currently at work on an article on the Kennedy administration and the Kurdish insurgency in Iraq and will be doing research in the National Archives this summer. Both articles are a part of his ongoing book project on US-Iraqi relations during the 1960s. Don's invited review of the book *Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party* by Joseph Sassoon is forthcoming in *Arab Studies Journal*. He also served as an anonymous peer reviewer for an article under consideration by a London-based journal this year. Recent books citing Don's publications include Roham Alvandi's *Nixon, Kissinger and the Shah: The United States and Iran in the Cold War* (Oxford University Press, 2014), Andrew Arsan's *Interlopers of Empire: The Lebanese Diaspora in French Colonial West Africa* (Oxford University Press, 2014), and Susan Pedersen's *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2015). Don was also the department's honoree for his scholarship at the annual Faculty Recognition Luncheon in April.

George Milne has written about his activities elsewhere in this newsletter but one additional project he recently undertook has been to assist a Native American group, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, in the translation of a manuscript dictionary of the Odawa language that was compiled by a Jesuit missionary in the mid-1700s.

Sean Moran organized and hosted the 2015 Midwest Annual Regional Meeting of the American Conference for Irish Studies at Meadowbrook Hall in November. The conference brought in over fifty scholars from North America and Europe for a three day meeting. Sean gave the conference's plenary address, entitled "Seamus Heaney, Poetry, and the Historians," which was later published in the Winter

2015 edition of *The Oakland Journal*. He gave two talks at the Birmingham Senior Center, and a lecture in March as part of the "History Comes Alive" series at Oakland. Sean chaired the College's Committee on Appointments and Promotion, and was re-elected to that committee to serve for another three year term. He produced several book reviews, submitted two articles for publication, and created and taught a new course, "History of Modern Christianity." Lastly, he was appointed as the new Director of the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) program by Dean Corcoran, and will start in that position in June.

2014-15 was an exciting year for **James Naus**. In addition to welcoming his daughter, Charlotte, on (February 2nd) he also finished a book on the French kings and the Crusades (February 1st). The book is due out from Manchester University Press during the upcoming academic year. During the summer of 2015 Professor Naus will be juggling the duties of fatherhood with deadlines for two pending articles, one for an undergraduate reader on the crusading movement and the other for the Cambridge History of the Crusades. Both will appear in 2015-16. Professor Naus will also begin the preliminary work for his next book project. Professor Naus has reviewed books for several journals and has delivered lectures in Europe and the US.

Jeff Powell recently received an award for Exceptional Mentoring and Student Engagement at Lawrence Tech. His award states, "According to input provided by our student, you have served as an exemplary role model as a professional in your discipline and have had incredible impact on their learning experience at Lawrence Tech." Jeff's award was presented by Dr. Hsiao-Ping Moore, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Congratulations to Jeff on this nice honor!

Elizabeth Shesko joined the history faculty in August. In addition to finding her way around the department and adjusting to teaching at OU, she put the final touches on two publications. The first has just come out in the latest issue of *Hispanic American Historical Review*. It looks at the methods by which the Bolivian state recruited and disciplined its forces during the Chaco War with Paraguay in the 1930s. The second piece successfully passed through peer review and is under contract to be published by Bloomsbury Academic in an edited volume on the Chaco War. Her chapter looks at the experiences of the Bolivian prisoners of war in Paraguay, arguing that social divides trumped national ones in structuring their imprisonment. In April, Professor Shesko gave a well-received talk on her research at Michigan State after being invited by the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. She also presented papers this year at two workshop-style conferences at Indiana University and Grand Valley State. In terms of teaching, Professor Shesko taught the Introduction to Latin America survey in the International Studies Department along with 300-level Latin American history classes on indigenous movements, slavery and race, and the Southern Cone.

Bruce Zellers has had a remarkably busy, yet exciting and fulfilling, year on the lecture circuit all over southeast Michigan. Counting his well-received lecture for the department's "History Comes Alive" series in October, he has given nine (that's right, 9) lectures this past year. He has given two lectures apiece at the Berkley Public Library and the Birmingham Area Senior Citizens Council, and single lectures at the Dexter Public Library, the Livonia Public Library, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and the Society of Active Retirees. His topics have ranged widely over 20th century and contemporary

topics. In addition, Bruce also published two book reviews in the *Michigan War Studies Review*.

LIST OF GRADUATES

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

History Bachelor of Arts degrees

Summer 2014: Christopher L. Cardamone, Alaina Jaclyn Faber, Andrew Michael Merwin, Christina Elisa Peach, Michael Eugene Santarossa, Bryan E Sharrow, Joseph August Whitmer.

Fall 2014: Randy Faaik Abboud, Joseph Kegan Coyne, Dante A Elmore, Alaina Jaclyn Farber, Heather Lee Hirdes, Brandon Wayne Howard, Ryan Frederick Keck, Zachary Joseph Korienek, Aubrey R Latimer, Stephanie Lynne McLaughlin, Christian Scott Mosier.

Winter 2015: Emma Helen Barko, Christopher L Cardamone, Dominic Vincent Carlini, Kelsey E Christofis, Brycen Dane Czachorowski, Michael Joseph Dilay, Lauren Elizabeth Elliott, Alaina Jaclyn Faber, Alexander Robert Greschuk, Aaron Phillip Kapanowski, Christopher Michael Kline, John Dean Kluck, Andrew Michael Merwin, Michael Edward Nagy, Vikram G Nellamakada, Daniel Aaron Nick, Chris S Noechel, Christiana Elisa Peach, Steven Warren Piontkowski, Courtney L Ponka, Jason Michael Poupard, Brenna Marsie Ropp, Michael Eugene Santarossa, Adam Paul Schiefelbein, Bryan E Sharrow, Brittany Lynn Shimshock, Andrew Bradshaw Vickers, Joseph August Whitmer, Nancy Windnagle.

Winter 2015 STEP Majors: Scott William Austin, Zachary Cornell, Jolie Renee Curtis, Kyle Scott Engel, Colin Benjamin Dean Evanson, Kastriot Franz Grishaj, Peter Martin Klozik, Chad Garrett Kortz, Mathew J Saunders, Christopher Richard Schroudt.

FULL-TIME FACULTY 2014-15

Bekele, Getnet (PhD Michigan State 2004; assoc. prof.) Africa
bekele@oakland.edu

Chapman Williams, Sara E. (PhD, Georgetown 1997; assoc. prof.) Early Modern Europe, France
chapman@oakland.edu

Clark, Daniel J. (PhD, Duke 1989; assoc. prof.) US Labor
djclark@oakland.edu

Dwyer, Erin (PhD, Harvard University 2012; asst. prof.) 19th-Century U.S., African-American History, Civil War and Reconstruction
dwyer@oakland.edu

Dykes, De Witt S. (MA, Michigan 1961; assoc. prof.) African American, US Urban, Family and Gender
dykes@oakland.edu

Estes, Todd A. (PhD, Kentucky 1995; assoc. prof.) Early National US, Revolutionary US, Political Culture
estes@oakland.edu

Hastings, Derek K. (PhD, Chicago 2003; assoc. prof.) Modern Germany
hastings@oakland.edu

Li, Yan (PhD, Northeastern University, 2012; asst. prof.) Modern China, Sino-Soviet, Relations East Asia
yanli@oakland.edu

Martin, Craig (PhD, Harvard, 2002; assoc. prof.) Renaissance Europe, History of Science & Technology
martin@oakland.edu

Matthews, Weldon C. (PhD, Chicago 1998; assoc. prof.) Modern Middle East
matthews@oakland.edu

Miller, Karen A. J. (PhD, Columbia 1992; assoc. prof.) US 1877-present, Diplomatic, Political
kjmiller@oakland.edu

Milne, George E. (PhD, Oklahoma 2006; assoc. prof.) Early American and Native American History
milne@oakland.edu

Moran, Seán Farrell (PhD, American 1989; assoc. prof.) Modern Britain, Ireland, 19th- and 20th-century European Intellectual
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Naus, James (PhD, St. Louis University 2011; asst. prof.) Medieval Europe History
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Shesko, Elizabeth (PhD, Duke University 2012; asst. prof.) Latin American History, Race and Ethnicity
shesko@oakland.edu

PART-TIME FACULTY 2014-15

Dye, Keith (PhD, Toledo 2007; lect.) US History, African American History
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Greenspan, Ian (PhD, University of California (Berkeley) 2006; lect.) Early Modern and Modern Europe.
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Holland, Robert M. (MA, Wayne State 1972; lect.) US
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Londo, William (PhD, Michigan 2004; lect.) East Asia, Japan, Religion & Society
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Miles, Mary Jo (MA, Detroit 1991 & Oakland 1992; lect.) US
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Powell, Jeffrey (PhD candidate, Wayne 2006; lect.) US
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Prentiss, Dale (PhD Stanford 1990; lect.) US
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Shelly, Cara L. (MA, Michigan 1990; lect.) US
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Zellers, Bruce L. (MA, Clark 1978; lect.) US
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DEPARTMENT STAFF

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McReynolds, Johanna (Secretary)
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If you have information about yourself to contribute to the next newsletter please send it to estes@oakland.edu. We especially love to have the latest news from our alumni.