History Department Newsletter

Greetings from Barbara M. Cooper
Chair, Department of History

This past fall was very busy as a result of a multitude of promotion cases, two searches (one in Modern Latin American History and another in Global History), festivities in honor of two of our beloved retiring faculty, and ongoing renovations to the offices in Van Dyck. Across the University, faculty are debating the merits of instituting some kind of language requirement for our undergraduates. As always things are abuzz at Rutgers.

Our graduate students have been highly successful in attracting external funding to support their dissertation research—how do they manage to write effective proposals? Part of the answer is that we do everything we can to ensure that they have the opportunity to sharpen their thinking through pre-dissertation research. Often the ability of our students to win major funding awards for longer term research (for example from the Social Science Research Council, Fulbright, Mellon) hangs on whether their proposals reflect the degree of sophistication that comes with pre-dissertation research in the archives they will be using to document their work. As Marlene Gaynair put it, a pre-dissertation travel award enabled her to “travel to Canada and find [the] inspiration and evidence” she needed to develop her dissertation prospectus.

All this is possible because in 2007 alumnus Neal Ira Rosenthal established the Neal Ira Rosenthal Travel Fellowship Fund to support graduate student research. Since it was established the fund has enabled at least 40 of our students to conduct research in archives at various stages in the dissertation writing process. I am delighted to be able to thank Mr. Rosenthal for providing us with an additional gift towards that fund in 2017. We are very grateful that our graduate students will continue to have the opportunity to travel to do the work in archives that is at the heart of historical research.

Meanwhile a fresh batch of History majors is beginning its intellectual journey in our Honors Thesis Writing program. After applying and being accepted into the program, second semester juniors join an ongoing weekly seminar with me in which they learn about the process of developing a major independent research project, the complexities of the archive, how to contextualize sources, and the difference between a lot of interesting ideas and an actual historical argument. I look forward to learning from our undergraduates as they work with their faculty advisors on a fascinating range of topics: homelessness in turn-of-the-century Newark, Anglo-America perceptions of the Middle East from 1900-25, identity politics in post-bellum Florida, the longer history of eugenics, protest movements in 1960s New Brunswick, apocalyptic discourse among ante-bellum southern politicians, 19th century historical fiction depicting ante-bellum America, relics and icons in the English Reformation, the history of the idea of “harassment,” political legitimation in 1st century China, reading the Syrian refugee crisis in light of the WWII refugee crisis, and the ambivalent reception of the Brutalist movement in architecture. We are so proud of the energy, commitment and imagination our majors put into working on their honors theses.
I am a legal and cultural historian of modern South Asia, the South Asian diaspora, and the broader Muslim world. For the last decade my research has focused on the entangled histories of Islamic law and secular governance in South Asia from the eighteenth century through the present. I have recently begun a new project on death and inheritance among Indian migrant families. My teaching spans the fields of South Asian history, Islamic law and politics, migration studies, and practices of genealogy and family history. My research interests have shaped my teaching portfolio, which ranges from introductory surveys of South Asian history to advanced seminars on family history.

My undergraduate teaching covers a wide range of geographies and chronologies. “The Making of Modern India and Pakistan” provides a survey of South Asian history from 1500 to the present. While orienting students to the history of the region, I also guide them through analyzing different types of primary sources, including images, material objects, oral interviews, music, and films. “Political Islam: Present and Past” provides a thematic introduction to debates about the relationship between Islam and politics. The course addresses the meaning of sharia, the position of religious minorities, veiling, censorship, and alternative forms of political expression, including Sufi rock and hijabi art. I explore these themes through historical examples from the time of the Prophet, early-modern Islamic Empires, European colonial expansion, and nationalist movements in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, as well as contemporary contexts.

The focus throughout is on encouraging students to rethink the meaning of “Political Islam” in the context of diverse Muslim cultures and political histories.

“Asian Migrations,” which I will teach for the first time this spring, explores the long history of Asian mobility, both within Asia and between Asia and other global regions. The course engages with interdisciplinary approaches to studying migrant experiences, including oral history, legal cases, spatial mapping, and food studies. Finally, “Family History,” which is also a course I am teaching for the first time this year, explores the interface between popular interest in “tracing your roots” and academic methods of historical research. Offered as a research-intensive History Seminar, the course guides students through using census records, genealogical websites, archival collections (including visiting Rutgers Special Collections), oral interviews (taught in collaboration with the Rutgers Oral History Archive), and material history.

Because I focus on areas that are not conventionally taught in US high-school curricula, much of my undergraduate teaching is oriented towards exposing students to histories, regions, and methods which are new to them, at least as subjects of academic study. To offset students’ initial anxieties about unfamiliar geographies and different ways of thinking about the past, I try to cultivate a low-stress environment that encourages them to explore. I do a significant amount of lecturing in my introductory-level courses, but I have cultivated an open and informal lecture style, which prioritizes engaging with students over delivering perfect soliloquies. As a petite, soft-spoken woman, I am also interested in disrupting cultural stereotypes about what it means to be authoritative in the classroom. While I put a lot of effort into designing my lectures, I have jettisoned carefully scripting these performances in favor of thinking aloud with my students.

While introducing students to new fields of history, I also from the first day of class encourage them to think of the material as a series of debates, in which they are active participants. I stage in-class debates between my students, including requiring them to argue positions with which they disagree. I carry this focus into my exams, which include essay prompts that require students to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different interpretations of a given historical event such as Partition.
To encourage students to engage actively with unfamiliar fields of history, I also draw extensively on multimedia materials in my courses. While textual analysis remains at the heart of my teaching, I have found that students often feel more comfortable initially engaging new places and time periods through non-textual sources. I therefore emphasize visual and material primary sources in the early weeks of “Modern India and Pakistan.” These include Mughal miniature paintings and eighteenth-century coins, which the East India Company minted with the signature of the Mughal emperor.

In my seminar on “Family History,” I also incorporate non-textual sources, but in this case to encourage students to use different analytical tools to explore the familiar landscapes of their own lives. In one assignment, titled “Turning Your Life into an Archive,” I ask students to analyze an object from their own past as a historical palimpsest, which bears traces of its changing uses over time. The student papers which have emerged out of this assignment have been quite spectacular, including an analysis of an Italian pizzelle-maker and the accompanying family recipe.

I also engage digital media in my lectures and course assignments. While working with undergraduates, I have been repeatedly struck by how integral digital media, from Snapchat to YouTube, is to how they interact with the world. Yet I find that students possess limited analytical tools to critically engage with these sources. I have therefore tried to find ways to show students how the same skills that historian use to analyze primary sources can also make them more savvy consumers of media. I regularly incorporate videos into my lectures, from Bollywood clips to advertisements for genealogical DNA tests. I have also supplemented outside reading assignments with podcasts, which students can listen to as they commute, a feature which Rutgers students seem to particularly appreciate.

In addition to incorporating different media, I have designed activities that encourage students to think critically about different modes of social communication. For example, in a session of my “Political Islam” course I stage a “multi-media revolution.” The lecture compares the use of print media by anti-colonial nationalist with the use of digital media during the Arab Spring. While I lecture, I have a few pre-selected students spread subversive messages via social media, hand-written notes, and whispered gossip. (Most of the students, however, are unaware about this second activity until they receive the messages themselves.) At the conclusion of the lecture, by which point most of the students are in on the secret, we compare the efficacy of different modes of communication in facilitating political organization.

I have begun to expand my interest in pedagogy through wider outreach efforts. I was interviewed for the podcast series “Teach Better,” which resulted in the episode “Authentic Teaching,” which aired in June 2016. In March 2018 I will participate in a workshop on curricular development for high-school teachers, organized by Columbia University’s South Asia Initiative and the New York City Department of Public Education.

Before Livingston Campus, There Was Camp Kilmer
By Samuel Ludescher, December 19, 2017

Driving along Cedar Lane where it meets Road 1 and the southern border of Rutgers’ Livingston campus, there is a series of one-story buildings that sit next to the pronounced curve in the road. These buildings serve as warehouses and administrative offices for the university. But their original purpose was far more important and is in danger of being forgotten.

Kimberly Tryba, in her third year of Rutgers-New Brunswick Department of Landscape Architecture’s master’s program, has made it her mission to keep that from happening.
Tryba has been on a research journey to unearth the fragmented history of Camp Kilmer, an army encampment designed as a staging area during World War II. The camp saw more than three million people walk through its doors, including GIs returning from World War II. It also continued to aid global humanitarian efforts until its decommissioning in the 1950s.

While her research was crucial in understanding the significance of the site, “it is not just about researching Camp Kilmer,” she explains. “It’s also about how the cultural history of a site can inform a design.”

Tryba will consider the present characteristics of the site in her design in a way that capitalizes upon and enhances its assets.

“When I began this line of study, I challenged myself to see if there was a way that, in our rush toward modernity, we could also honor this layered history without utilizing a tabula rasa approach – literally scraping the existing site features away and starting as a clean slate,” Tryba says.

Much of Camp Kilmer was demolished following Rutgers’ acquisition of a parcel of land equal to one-third of the camp from the U.S. Army. Today, there are only a handful of indicators on Livingston campus that signify Camp Kilmer existed at all. One reminder is a memorial that was erected when the camp was opened to commemorate Joyce Kilmer, the New Brunswick-born soldier and poet for whom the camp was named. Other than the street names, the only other primary marker of Camp Kilmer is a bulletin board in the Rutgers Ecological Preserve on the white path adjacent to two berms, or earthen mounds, which marks where the ammunition buildings once were.

Tryba hopes to honor the history of Camp Kilmer by recognizing and continuing to use its grounds. Remnants of Kilmer’s military design are recognizable in its remaining architecture and infrastructure, like the nondescript buildings propped up next to Cedar Lane that once served as the transportation depot for Camp Kilmer.

“My interest in the site was sparked when I went to take photos of it one day. I was struck by the way that nature seemed to be invading or reclaiming the space,” Tryba says.

She thought it was simply underutilized space and, at the time, had no idea what she had stumbled on. But once undertaking the research, it became evident to her that the site could speak to a collective memory the space represents – not only to the university community but also to those who have a connection to it at another point in its rich history.

“It’s uncanny the number of times that on the mere mention of Camp Kilmer, someone has shared with me that a family member passed through it – or had other experiences directly related to the site,” she recalls.

While her research began at Rutgers, it has led her far and wide to assemble the scattered history of Camp Kilmer. Looking into historical preservation, she came across a few texts that spoke about the notion of "palimpsest" as a means of illustrating such a layered history. The word originated in the literary world, reflecting the practice of reusing manuscript skins to write two or more successive texts, each one erased to
make room for the next – often, with the scraped pigment layers remaining visible. “As such, the concept easily translates to other disciplines,” Tryba says.

This led her to apply the notion of palimpsest as a basis for her research and design intervention, creating a series of land-use maps of the Camp Kilmer-Livingston campus. The maps were based on aerial photos dating back to the 1930s and data collection conducted by Rick Lathrop, a professor in the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources and director of the Rutgers Ecological Preserve, which adjoins the Camp Kilmer site.

The land-use maps demonstrate how the area was transformed by tracing “the natural ecology and development of the land from present day back prior to Camp Kilmer’s inception, when the area was predominantly used for agriculture,” she says.

World War II and its cascading events changed many lives. For many, Camp Kilmer represented the start of a new life. Documenting and preserving Camp Kilmer’s history is the first step toward embracing and incorporating its narrative into present-day uses of the site.

Tryba’s research and the land-use maps she created will certainly help in this process when she publishes her master’s thesis, “PALIMPSEST: A Treatise to Preserve the Cultural Landscape Camp Kilmer on Livingston Campus,” in spring 2018.

(This article was reprinted from Rutgers Today with the permission of the author, Samuel Ludescher, a journalism major.)

RESEARCH and the GRADUATE STUDENT

SHAUN ARMSTEAD

Passport, check. Plug converter—“guaranteed” not to blow a fuse should I fire up my blow dryer (that was a lie)—check. My big, old, and red Samsonite filled with well-just-in-case and I’ve-never-worn/used-this-but-there’s-a-first-time-for-everything items, packed. Computer, camera/phone, locked and ready to go. So began my month-long trip to archives in London and Gothenburg, Sweden this past October. This trip had been more than a year in the making. After months spent finding various ways to cobble together funds and attaining indispensable advice and support from several faculty members and graduate students, I found myself actually embarking on my first trip out of the U.S. Eager and nervous, I hoped that the archives would offer gems that would later help me produce the dissertation I’ve been hoping to write. I also yearned for an enjoyable first time abroad after sitting for my first field exam. And, in the midst of all the excitement, I tried—somewhat futilely—not to think about all the things that could go wrong.

It delights me to share that my trip went wonderfully with only a few bumps. Aside from diving into archival treasures, I took time to do things that made my heart rejoice, like visit museums. At the Victoria and Albert museum I found the Chippendale mirror on which I wrote a paper a few years back. That same day I ventured to Covent Garden where I stood among a horde of others, marveling at a metallic man who was adept at remaining very still. And my unexplainable obsession for subways meant I was destined to fall in love with the London tube. Beforehand I
could never imagine people not rushing to meet a train because they knew another would be arriving in under two minutes. I can’t wait to return to London to explore more of the city. It has an enchanting rhythm and style.

In Sweden I realized I chose to fly to the airport on the opposite side of the country than where I was headed. I found myself in a rainy Gothenburg at 2:00 in the morning after a short plane ride and nine hours on a train. Unlike London, Gothenburg intimidated me. While most speak English, signs and announcements, menus and directions were all in Swedish. I found myself anxious being in a place where society operated in a language other than my own. And I felt badly every time someone had to switch to English to talk with me. Luckily for me, a faculty member at the University of Gothenburg helped me navigate the city. One day, she showed me around Gothenburg. I was struck at how much it reminded me of Washington State. It was, in a word, beautiful. With the exception of narrowly escaping a collision with a bicyclist (my fault; they take the separation of their bike and pedestrian lanes very seriously), I loved my time in Sweden as well and found it difficult to leave.

I could write pages about the recreational delights I experienced. (I exclude describing the food because it deserves its own piece). But archival work was the primary purpose of my journey, and it, too, was enjoyable and fruitful. At the Millicent Fawcett Library at the London School of Economics, I had the fortune of visiting an archive on a Saturday. I had never gone to the archive on the weekend; I think I went just to say I did! In their holdings I found a wealth of information on the International Alliance of Women, a women’s rights federation and one of two organizations I intend to examine in my dissertation. And that was the most interesting thing. To be sure, I’ve been to archives before. I’ve been to the Schlesinger a couple times, the Sophia Smith collection once before and a several others. The Fawcett library was not my first time at the rodeo. But the archive at the LSE felt differently than the others. I sat for my major field exam on October 5th and viewed my first set of Alliance folders on the 10th. Glancing at a document here and there as I took pictures of everything, I noticed that I was imagining how I would frame various sources analytically and historiographically.

Information from the books and articles I had read and thought through, endeavoring to contextualize in a way that demonstrated I understood the genesis and development of my field remained fresh in my mind. Consequently, for the first time, it felt as if I was handling the archive rather than reverse. Before I hadn’t realized that the archive intimidated me. Primary sources at the LSE harkened back to knowledge gleaned from the couple hundred books and articles I had poured over just a short while ago. The bigger picture became clearer.

As clarity sharpened, absences materialized. Emerging into view were executive Alliance members’ agenda for the post-WWII era. What was missing from this collection of papers, however, were direct interactions with women from decolonizing or newly independent nations during that period. They came into view in a seemingly homogenous block plagued with problems that allegedly only capitalism and democracy could solve. I didn’t expect to notice the inadequacies of this source base or to think critically about what Alliance members elected to preserve in records of their past. That I was able to apply the skills learned from professors and my fellow graduate student homies was encouraging. Aside from the thrill of being in places I’ve never been, I began to feel as if I wasn’t only a history student. I started to feel a bit like a historian.

**CHRIS BLAKLEY**

This fall I had the privilege of conducting research at The John Carter Brown Library at Brown University as a short-term fellow. The JCB is an incredibly rich rare book and manuscript library, with collections focused on the history and literature of the Americas before 1825. It was a wonderful two months, and I am
very grateful for the opportunity to be part of the intellectual community there during my time in Providence. The library’s motto, “Speak to the Past, and It Shall Teach Thee”, is engraved on the building, and I found it to be an encouraging sight to see each day on my walk to campus.

While in residence at the library, I had the opportunity to read through several manuscript collections related to my dissertation research, which focuses on material interactions between slave traders, planters, naturalists, enslaved people, and animals in the British Atlantic world throughout the period of the Atlantic slave trade. I relied on the advice and suggestions of several outstanding librarians at the JCB, particularly Kimberly Nusco, Meghan Sullivan-Silva, Scott Ellwood, and Ken Ward, who directed me towards materials for my project. Some of the archival materials I collected during the trip include an account book from a Scottish plantation in Surinam, a journal written by an overseer in Jamaica, and a plantation manual written by a planter from Saint Christopher.

In September, I was very fortunate to present the first chapter of my dissertation on campus at The Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. The JCB encourages fellows to present at other scholarly venues at Brown during their residence, and it was a privilege to present at the CSSJ. The CSSJ is a unique research center dedicated to promoting scholarship on how racial and chattel slavery shaped the Americas, and on the legacy of slavery in the present. I also had the privilege while attending lectures at the CSSJ of learning more about the deep history of slavery and the slave trade in Providence, and throughout Rhode Island, from two high school students, Maya Clifton and Taiwo Demola, who also presented at the center. Their presentation was exceptional, and I look forward to hearing more about their research in the future.

During my fellowship, I had the privilege of being invited by Neil Safier, the director of the JCB, to participate in a conference at the library, Fire & Water: Entangled Histories of Empire and Science. The conference was a wonderful opportunity to meet new scholars and discuss important questions. Neil assembled a stellar group of researchers working in history of science and environmental history of the Americas, and organized collaborative discussion sessions centered around newly-digitized materials at the JCB. The sessions were very fruitful, and I learned quite a bit about the materials from conversations with historians, archivists, and librarians. We also discussed important cutting-edge works of scholarship in the field, including Collecting the World: Hans Sloane and the Origins of the British Museum by our department’s very own James Delbourgo.

In late October, I had the opportunity to present an overview of my research at the JCB, and to discuss my dissertation project, during one of the weekly Wednesday afternoon fellow’s talks. I benefited from the generous and insightful comments I received from the other fellows, faculty members, and scholars in the audience.

While I was at the library I also lived with other fellows-in-residence in the library’s house for fellows, Fiering House. The JCB is truly one of the most generous and welcoming intellectual communities I’ve had the privilege to be part of, and I am very thankful to have been a researcher there. I gained a deeper appreciation
of the important work archivists, bibliographers, curators, rare book catalogers, and other librarians do to support scholars. I would absolutely encourage my fellow graduate students studying the early modern world to consider applying as well! While the library is well known for its collection on the Americas, the director and the library staff have encouraged researchers studying Africa, the Indian Ocean, and Asia before 1825 to consider the collections and community at The John Carter Brown Library.

AMY ZANONI

My dissertation examines the history of a public hospital in Chicago as a site welfare state retrenchment as well as resistance in the late twentieth century. By focusing on a single public institution, it asks, how was the attack on the public sector—privatization, cuts, subcontracting—justified, and what did it look like on the ground? How did it impact the mostly marginalized people who depended on state resources and jobs, especially those charged with service and caring labors? Did anyone resist retrenchment? Why? How?

I took a long and somewhat circuitous route to get to this dissertation topic. After several years working for non-profit organizations that addressed the manifold consequences of homelessness and poverty, I decided to pursue graduate study in U.S. history to research the origins of these problems, and how they have been conceptualized and contested over time. My MA thesis examined Baltimore’s second-wave feminist movement in relation to its changing urban environment. I was especially interested in how activists conceptualized both autonomous (free clinics) and state-based (universal healthcare) solutions to the economic and social problems they identified. I arrived at Rutgers intent on expanding my MA thesis into a dissertation about social movements, urban politics, and place. Here, I began to take greater interest in the welfare rights and other anti-poverty and labor movements, and in the rapidly changing welfare state that shaped the experiences of, and was shaped by, these activists. Health and healthcare persisted as a particularly acute focus of all these movements, as well as a vitally important locus of late twentieth-century policy changes. Then it all came together: by studying a public hospital, I would be able to put my many research questions under one roof.

Once I delved into the late twentieth-century history of public hospitals, I found an incredibly rich history of the public institutions that provided a substantial amount of care to economically and socially marginalized persons living in American cities. Like other parts of the U.S. welfare state, historians had noted, public hospitals were chronically under-funded since their nineteenth-century inception. By the late twentieth century, local officials around the U.S. leveraged fiscal crisis to justify eliminating these institutions on which many uninsured, undocumented, and other vulnerable persons relied. But as some historians mentioned and as my early forays into the archives confirmed, this attack on public hospitals did not go uncontested. In the 1970s, movements to “save” public hospitals sprang up in Detroit, Philadelphia, Oakland, and elsewhere. I elected to focus on Chicago, then home of one of the largest public hospitals in the nation, Cook County Hospital (CCH or “County”), as a representative site of this national phenomenon. Further investigation began to reveal that at County between the 1970s and 1990s, patients, healthcare professionals, low-wage workers, and community members joined the struggle to resist policies that compromised the hospital’s ability to provide care for the majority African American and Latinx patient population and work force.

In researching my dissertation, I am navigating the sometimes frustrating absence of a centralized archival collection. Conversations with archivists at libraries throughout Chicago have led me to suspect that County’s records were not retained when the old building was decommissioned in 2002. I have been able to
supplement extant hospital records with papers of state and county government officials and agencies, corporate materials, memoirs, and civic and community organization records in archival collections housed in over a dozen libraries across several states.

Though scattered throughout libraries across the city, the bulk of materials are located in Chicago. I frequently found myself at the Harold Washington Library, looking at county board proceedings and their extensive municipal and county records. During much of the winter and spring, I was in the university archives at Northwestern University in the papers of an activist physician and hospital administrator, which are vital in illuminating how transformations of political economy shaped access to and quality of care. At the Chicago History Museum and the University of Illinois at Chicago, I conducted research on racial justice groups’ involvement in hospital activism. At DePaul University, I shifted my focus to a government watchdog group that assiduously tracked county government management and spending and, thus, is one of the best repositories of hospital budget materials. Back at UIC, I then conducted research in the records of county officials, which offer tremendous insight into the finances as well as the general function and governance of the hospital. I also continued in the papers of other key political figures, civic and activist groups, which allow me to probe how the hospital community developed counter-movements based on the principle of universal access to quality, dignified healthcare.

Answering the questions my dissertation raises about Chicago’s public institutions in the context of retrenchment has also required me to travel beyond the Windy City. I ventured up to Ithaca in February, where I examined collective bargaining materials at Cornell, and somehow managed to not fall down Ithaca’s icy, startlingly steep hills on my way to and from the archives. In Detroit, I conducted research at the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs. There, I investigated the role of County’s SEIU- and AFSCME-affiliated non-medical staff in fighting retrenchment against an epic and inspiring backdrop: a 9 x 20-foot mural, painted in 1937, that depicts members of Detroit and Flint United Auto Workers on strike. The “I Am A Man” poster from the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers’ strike that I passed in the hallway on my way into the archive everyday was equally moving. Other highlights of my research trip included the Detroit Institute of Art—especially Diego Rivera’s Detroit Industry Murals.

I also had the opportunity to explore the less-traveled corners of my home state of Illinois. I spent much of July in Springfield, braving over 100-degree temperatures to walk to the Illinois State Archives every morning, and then to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library each day after lunch. In Springfield, I looked at state agency records as part of my research into how adjustments to Medicaid impacted care at County. I also explored collections of state officials who took stances in support of (or against) legislation to fund County. In Urbana, I explored conversations about whether County should affiliate with University of Illinois, a common practice of public hospitals during this period. While not in the archives, I went to my first drive-in movie and watched the sun set from Springfield’s
tallest building. I also enjoyed the local cuisine in Springfield, tasting my first horseshoe: a hamburger patty on piece of Texas toast, covered in french fries and then drenched in cheese sauce.

Conducting research can be overwhelming, but it has been an incredible experience. Over the course of the year, I have had (almost) unequivocally pleasant and helpful interactions with dozens of archivists. I met many delightful baristas during pre- and post-archives writing and file organizing sessions. I saw a lot of “The Bean” in Chicago, and sampled donuts at university cafes around the country. I’ve also had the opportunity to share my work at conferences in Seattle and, amazingly, Rome, where I workedshipped a chapter-in-progress with scholars from all around the world. We convened our week-long inter-disciplinary welfare state conference in a sixteenth-century villa overlooking the city. In archives and at conferences, I developed professional relationships and friendships with many people working in research areas related to my own.

As I was conducting my research on the struggle over a safety net healthcare institution, debates over changes to healthcare under the Trump Administration and Republican Congress raged. Republican threatened to repeal the Affordable Care Act and to massively cut Medicaid; they succeeded in eliminating the ACA’s individual mandate in December. These decisions could threaten funding sources for public hospitals, with fatal consequences for those who rely on their services. In particular, policy changes at the federal level could sap the private and public insurance payments that public hospitals currently receive. But because they are funded and governed at the local level, public hospitals that manage to survive will continue to provide a vital safety net for those who lose coverage (or who never had it). My dissertation research aims to shed light on the history of these institutions, and the activists who fought to protect them.

“Revealing America’s Long and Sordid Affair with Violence:” The Eighth Annual Interpreting American History Graduate Workshop and Lecture Series, “The Scars of the Past: Violence in American History and Memory”

Jerrad P. Pacatte, Series Chairperson 2017-18

This year’s 2017-18 Interpreting American History (IAH) Graduate Workshop and Lecture Series, “The Scars of the Past: Violence in American History and Memory,” commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the U.S. National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. Commissioned by sitting President Lyndon Baines Johnson in 1968 in response to an uptick in anti-Vietnam War demonstrations, the assassinations of Robert F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., race riots, and other instances of urban unrest arresting the nation, the Commission’s findings shattered Cold War-era ideologies of American exceptionalism and the “myth of American innocence.” The National Commission’s report, published in 1969, inspired studies of American violence written by historians Hugh Davis Graham, Richard Hofstadter, and Richard Maxwell Brown. In effect, the National Commission’s findings confirmed a stark and unsettling truth: violence was as much a blight on the present as it was a scar on our nation’s past.
Our Graduate Workshop and Lecture Series this year celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the beginnings of such historical research on violence in America by showcasing new and exciting work by visiting scholars and activists whose work engages with the subject of American violence writ large. Visiting scholars submit article-length drafts of their work to be reviewed and critiqued by graduate students during small lunchtime workshops in which students ask questions regarding the mobilization of archival evidence, methodology, theory usage, in addition to the often panic-inducing process of academic publishing.

In late September, Dr. Robyn Leigh Muncy (University of Maryland, College Park) discussed her new project exploring the economic violence wrought by the use of the term “working-class” in post-New Deal America. On October 26, 2017, University of Chicago historian and founding member of the Histories of Violence Collective Dr. Kathleen Belew delivered the year’s keynote lecture, “Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America.” Belew explored how white power activists, infatuated with paramilitary and apocalyptic ideologies, banded together to tell a common story about the Vietnam War in order to elevate their anti-government, white nationalist agendas. Dr. Belew’s lecture also placed the August 2017 Charlottesville, Virginia, tragedy in which neo-Nazis and white nationalists violently attacked anti-Klan activists in the context of a longer genealogy of white nationalist violence - a trend she dates back to the return of U.S. soldiers from the jungles of Vietnam. In December, Vanderbilt University Professor of History Paul A. Kramer’s presentation “The Uprooting: Transnational Violence and the Politics of Displacement in Modern U.S. Immigration History” identified how the making and remaking of U.S. borders domestically and abroad through territorial conquest has reaped devastating consequences for these imperial subjects.

Our spring 2018 lineup is equally exciting. On January 30, 2018, Rutgers alumna Dr. Leigh-Anne Francis (Modern U.S. History, 2014) will return to deliver the fourth lecture, “Bad Little Black Girls: African American Women, Survival Crimes, and the Mainstreaming of White Supremacy.” Professor Francis will discuss how incarcerated African American and European immigrant women developed communities bound by labor, gender, race, and class in Progressive era New York’s criminal justice system. On February 22, 2018, Hannah Ayers and Lance Warren screen their 2017 award-winning film, “An Outrage: A Documentary Film About Lynching in the American South.” The final lecture of this year’s IAH series will be given by Yale University’s Dr. Crystal N. Feimster on March 1, 2018. Her talk, “Rape and Mutiny in Civil War Louisiana,” shatters the myth of the Civil War as a conflict with relatively few instances of sexual violence. Dr. Feimster’s forthcoming project testifies to the hardships women of color braved during the war.

Many individuals and departments made this year’s IAH series such a success. I would like to extend my warmest thanks to Dawn Ruskai, Candace Walcott-Shepherd, and Anuja Rivera for forgiving my endless barrage of emails, their assistance with advertising the events on the department webpage and social media accounts, and for scheduling and securing rooms in the building to host our phenomenal guest speakers. A special thanks is also owed to Matt Leonaggeo and Tiffany Berg whose “power of the purse” has afforded us all such a stellar series. The Center for Race and Ethnicity, the Department(s) of History and American Studies, the Graduate Student Association, and the School of Arts and Sciences funded the events both this year and in years prior. Without their help, the IAH series would simply not exist. Lastly, I would like to thank the graduate students in the History Department whose zeal and commitment to learning more about American history has sustained this series since its inception eight years ago. I am eager to see what’s in store for the future of the IAH!
MARK WASSERMAN RETIREMENT CONFERENCE
Camilla Townsend

On Friday, September 22, 2017, Mark Wasserman’s former students, colleagues, friends and family met together to celebrate his retirement after forty years at Rutgers University (1978-2018). The one-day conference, “Modern Mexico: A Retrospective,” was in effect a gathering of three generations of academics, for Mark’s own dissertation advisor, John Coatsworth (emeritus from Columbia) was also in attendance. In his time at Rutgers, Mark has directed the dissertations of fifteen advisees (including two in the pipeline), and most remarkably, every single one was in attendance, as well as people on whose dissertation committees he once served (myself among them). The morning panel included Greg Swedberg (Manhattanville College), David Reid (Brooklyn Poly-Prep) and Rob Alegre (University of New England). Rob in his characteristic way reduced the audience to tears of laughter before sending us on our way to lunch. (His older brother, he told us, had attended Rutgers as an undergraduate. Upon news of his little brother’s acceptance to the graduate program, he said, “You’re going to meet this guy named Wasserman. I’m telling you, you’re going to think he’s a real jerk. But then you’ll find out— he’s the dead opposite!”) The afternoon panel was comprised of Glen Kuecker (DePauw University), Sarah Buck Kachaluba (UCSD) and Anne Rubenstein (York University). Anne stood as Mark’s first student (his very first one, Horace Marucci, having passed away), while morning speaker David Reid, who had just defended in May, represented the younger

Mark Wasserman (center) with the students whose dissertations he directed.
generation. The speakers’ subjects ranged widely, from Iturbide’s Mexico to modern environmental history, reflecting the group’s varied interests and research.

In the late afternoon Mark’s old friend, Gilbert Joseph (Yale University), gave the keynote, describing the range and depth of Mark’s contribution to Mexican history in his many books and articles over the decades. The devotion and care that Mark’s students remembered so well had come from a person who was at the same time a highly prolific scholar. That evening, the group dined at the new Rutgers Club. (The Club’s old building has been slated for demolition and the association now resides on the top floor of the Livingston Dining Commons.) Sam Baily, who retired from Rutgers in 2002, acted as Master of Ceremonies and spoke of all that the Latin America program has been able to accomplish since it was created only a few decades ago. Mark’s remaining students rose one at a time to bring to life, with tears and laughter, their interactions with their advisor over the years. At the end, Mark responded, telling us that the gratitude was mutual. It was a memorable evening.

**A SYMPOSIUM TO CELEBRATE ZIVA GALILI’S RETIREMENT**

Jochen Hellbeck and Yael Zerubavel

On Friday, October 13, 2017, the History Department held a well-attended symposium, “Revolution and War in the 20th Century,” in honor of our dear colleague, Ziva Galili, who has been a major presence at Rutgers since 1981. A historian of Russian revolutionary movements and of 20th century Jewish history, Ziva demonstrated impeccable timing in choosing the date of her retirement, as it coincided with the 100th anniversary of the Russian October Revolution. A centennial event as well as an appreciation of Ziva’s scholarly career, the symposium featured three eminent speakers, two of whom started off by presenting contrasting accounts of the meaning and enduring significance of the Russian revolution. Ronald Suny (University of Michigan) described the euphoria of popular power and democracy that characterized 1917, and asked provocatively how we ended up 100 years later in a global crisis of democracy and socialism. Laura Engelstein (Yale University) vigorously challenged Ron’s characterization of radical Bolsheviks as “democratic socialists” and pointed instead to their moderate Menshevik
counterparts – the protagonists of several of Ziva’s books – as the true carriers of democracy and principal historical actors in need of commemoration in the context of the revolutionary centennial. The third presentation by Omer Bartov (Brown University) focused on mass violence in Ukraine during World War II. The talk also addressed methodological issues when approaching complex historical occurrences that official memories suppress and demonstrated the importance of local archives for an understanding of the Holocaust. The lively discussion among the panelists and the audience demonstrated the stakes, as well as the passions, that continue to shape historical writing about the Russian revolution.

Festivities continued at a luncheon following the symposium. Many of the guests in attendance spoke about Ziva’s enormous contributions to Rutgers over thirty-seven years. She served as chair of the History Department twice, as Acting Executive Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, and as Vice-dean of the Graduate School. Her extraordinary service earned her the Daniel Gorenstein Memorial Award in 2008 in recognition of both outstanding scholarly achievement and exceptional service to the University. Speakers at the luncheon paid tribute to Ziva’s enormous successes as a dean and chair, which they attributed to her practical wisdom and, specifically, her ability to translate the merits of a particular project in ways that could be appreciated at all levels of university administration. Many spoke about Ziva’s powerful example as a female role model, and several remarked upon her great sense of style. The luncheon concluded with a round of video recorded salutations by colleagues and friends of Ziva from around the world.

2017-2018 POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATES

Kendra Boyd is a scholar of black entrepreneurship, racial capitalism, migration, and urban history. She holds a Ph.D. in African American History and United States History from Rutgers University-New Brunswick and a B.S. in Business Administration from Wayne State University. Boyd is currently working on a book manuscript, based on her dissertation, “The Great Migration and Black Entrepreneurship in Detroit." This project investigates the role of business in the black freedom struggle in twentieth-century urban America. Between 1910 and 1970, more than six million African Americans left the U.S. South, and this massive demographic shift redefined urban life throughout the country and reconfigured the position of black Americans in the U.S. economy. Boyd traces the rise and fall of the black business community in Great Migration Detroit, while analyzing black entrepreneurs’ economic thought and the structural challenges they faced in pursuing their entrepreneurial aspirations. This research scrutinizes the possibilities for African Americans’ attainment of economic empowerment and self-determination through business. The project also provides a deeper understanding of the trajectory of black economic development in urban spaces throughout the twentieth century.

As the Postdoctoral Associate for the Scarlet and Black Project, Boyd supervises research on African Americans related to Rutgers and New Jersey history in the 19th and 20th century. http://scarletandblack.rutgers.edu
Shannon C. Eaves is an Assistant Professor of History at the University of North Florida. She currently serves as the 2017-2018 Race and Gender Postdoctoral Fellow at Rutgers University. Her current book project *Illicit Intercourse: How the Sexual Exploitation of Enslaved Women Shaped the Antebellum South* uses the sexual exploitation of enslaved women as a lens for exploring the intersecting influences of race, gender, and power on the day-to-day interactions and negotiations between slaveholders and the enslaved during the antebellum period. Eaves received her Ph.D. in US History from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2015.

Poe Johnson holds a BFA in Writing for Film and Television from the University of the Arts, an MFA in Creative Writing from Rosemont College, and a PhD in Aesthetic Studies from the University of Texas at Dallas. His research synthesizes critical race theories, Afro-Pessimism, film studies, and new media theory to bring to the fore the connections between blackness, participatory fan cultures, and popular culture artifacts. His dissertation, “But the Crowd was not Satisfied: Blackface Minstrelsy and Lynching as Remediated Fandoms of the Black Body,” argues that the black body can be considered a remediated object which has inspired two attendant fandoms: blackface minstrelsy and lynching. Rather than see blackface minstrelsy and lynching as two separate modes of violence directed at the black body, this dissertation sees the two as fundamentally linked attempts to control and discipline black people. Through the analysis of historic and contemporaneous visual representations of the black body and their surrounding cultures, Johnson illustrates that the logics of blackface minstrelsy and lynching did not end in the twentieth century, but continue into the present day through film, television, and digital media.

At Rutgers, Johnson will work to turn his dissertation into a book manuscript of the same name; he will also delve further into the notion of the black body as fandom, this time focusing on the ways the black athletic body has been understood by the dominant culture as an object of fascination and fear. For a century, black athletes have been amongst the most visible black Americans. While this visibility had its benefits to those athletes who made it to the top of their respective sports, it also left them vulnerable to a dominant culture
interested in controlling and containing the public performance of black citizens. From Jack Johnson to Serena Williams and Colin Kaepernick, when black athletes have in some way challenged the dominate culture’s preconceived ideas toward their appropriate behavior fans have targeted them for imagistic and textual assault. “Fandom Violence and the Black Athletic Body,” will investigate the historic and contemporary forms of racialized censure that sports fans have inflicted upon black athletes.

Savannah Shange is an urban anthropologist who works at the intersections of race, place, sexuality, and the state. She is assistant professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz and holds a joint PhD in Africana Studies and Education, Culture and Society at the University of Pennsylvania. Previously, Shange received a BFA in Theater from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts and a Master’s in Teaching from Tufts University. She has been awarded the Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, the Jack Kent Cooke Dissertation Fellowship, and a Point Scholarship, as well as Penn’s Dissertation Completion Fellowship. Her research interests include Black femme gender, queer of color critique, ethnographic ethics, and the afterlife of slavery.

At RCHA, her primary focus will be completing a book manuscript based on her dissertation, Progressive Dystopia, a study of multiracial political coalitions in the context of late liberalism. Through multisited organizational ethnography of activist non-profits in gentrifying southeast San Francisco, the project attends to sexuality and gender as vectors of anti-Blackness and reveals how everyday enactments of state violence often fall on the bodies of Black girls, women, and queer people, thus adding nuance to dominant tropes of the spectacular and gruesome fates of Black masculine bodies. Using a spatial framework, Progressive Dystopia brings settler colonial frameworks to bear on accounts of Black subject formation. When indigeneity is used as a lens to examine racialization in the neoliberal city, the endemic contradiction between Blackness and belonging is brought into relief. In San Francisco, the practice of carceral progressivism refracts across each of these sites, operationalizing anti-Blackness as a multiscalar project that spans both state and social worlds.

The Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis’ Project for 2017-2019 is on “Black Bodies,” directed by Professors Marisa Fuentes and Bayo Holsey. With vital urgency and new technologies of story-telling, we daily witness black bodies in peril. From histories of slavery and discrimination to more present modes of state violence, black bodies have been figured as disposable and resistive, silenced and demanding. This RCHA Seminar, “Black Bodies,” seeks to pull together several interdisciplinary frames of inquiry about ‘black bodies’ in various times, spaces, and geographies. Attentive to the intersections/assemblages of race, gender and sexuality this seminar asks and invites questions concerning the many ways in which black bodies are subject to epistemic, historical, archival, state/non-state, biopolitical, and praxes of violence and erasure in global configurations. We will also consider how we remember, grieve, represent, signify, and reclaim black bodies and lives in a variety of contexts.
Recent Graduate Student Accomplishments

The Neal Ira Rosenthal History Travel Fellowship was awarded to the following students in 2016-17:


Graduate Student Milestones

Proposal defenses and working title:

Beatrice Adams, “Standing in the Warmth of Their Own Sun: African Americans Who Stayed in the American South During the Second Great Migration”

Hugo Marquez Soljancic, “Female bodies in debates about God’s omnipotence and natural law during the Long Twelfth Century”


Brenann Sutter, “Consuming the Centerfold: Sexuality and the Fantasy of the American Good Life”

Megan Weirda, “To Count and Be Counted: Quantifying Race During the Antebellum Era”

Major Field Examinations:

Tracey Johnson and Pamela Walker (African American), Catherine Babikian (Modern European), Shaun Armstead and Caitlin Wiesner (Women’s & Gender)

Minor Field Examinations:

Yarden Avital and Catherine Naeve (Global & Comparative), Aries Li (Modern East Asia), Meagan Wierda (STEH), Joseph Williams (Women’s & Gender)

Ph.D. Degrees Conferred

Danielle Bradley, “In Via, In Camera, In Capella: Professionalization and the Construction of an Administrative Ideal in England, c. 1150-1450”, under the direction of James Masschaele

Rebecca Lubot, “The Passage of the Twenty-Fifth Amendment: Nuclear Anxiety and Presidential Continuity”, under the direction of David Greenberg

Lytton McDonnell, “Ecstatic Anthems: Music and the Persistence of Enchantment in Modern America”, under the direction of T.J. Jackson Lears

Patrick McGrath, “Catholics Incorporated: Class, Power, and the Politics of Assimilation in Nineteenth Century America”, under the direction of T.J. Jackson Lears

Kristin Canzano Pinyan, “Changing Understandings of Gentility: Status, Gender, and Social Opportunity in England, c. 1400-1530”, under the direction of James Masschaele


Recent Master’s Degree in the Global and Comparative History Program

Tomos Hall and Kevin O’Shaughnessy

New Positions

Patrick McGrath, VAP (2y) appointment at the University of Hong Kong
Rachel Devlin: During my leave of Fall 2016 I secured a contract to publish my book project with Basic Books. The book, titled *A Girl Stands at the Door: The Generation of Young Women who Desegregated America’s Schools* now has a firm publication date of May 15, 2018. During the leave I completed the last three chapters of this seven-chapter book, reworked much of the writing, obtained photographs for the book and secured permission to use the photos. It is, I am pleased to report, now in galley form.

Chie Ikeya: 2017 was a year like no other. Christian and I welcomed our daughter Mio Megumi Lammerts-Ikeya (弥生恵ラマーツ池谷). She keeps me thoroughly amused, enthralled and exhausted. Quite the globe trotter, Mio has travelled to Japan and Burma (Myanmar) twice in the first nine months of her life. Our next trip to Asia—by which time she will be walking—promises to test my endurance in new ways!

I returned from maternity leave in the fall of 2017. I have relished teaching the year-long graduate seminar in women’s and gender history. My participation in IRW’s “Perils of Populism” seminar—for which I had a course release in the fall—has helped me dive back into my manuscript in progress, *Illegible Intimacies: Inter-Asian Marriages, Families, and Friendships Under Two Empires*.

On a different front, I received an extension for a GAIA Grant that I was awarded to launch a working group, *Global Asia Studies*, that will contribute to the vital scholarly project of re-envisioning the academic study of Asia. The growing emphasis on the global and the transnational across the disciplines today has, apparently, undermined the validity of area studies. The “crisis” in area studies has also led scholars of Asia to critically rethink the field of Asian studies, prompting a rapprochement between Asian and Asian American Studies. *Global Asia Studies* explores the shifting meanings, purposes, and methods of the academic study of Asia. It draws on and gives greater visibility to the critical mass of Asia scholars at Rutgers. We hope that the working group will serve as a productive forum for Rutgers scholars to reimagine Asia as a dynamic and interconnected formation spanning Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Russia, and Asian diasporas; explore thematic and conceptual links among the disciplines and regional studies formations that address Asia; and exchange ideas about the future of Asia studies at Rutgers and beyond.

Jamie L. Pietruska: I am grateful to the Department of History and the School of Arts and Sciences for granting a combined research leave/sabbatical to release me from teaching duties during the Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 semesters. In Fall 2016, I completed the final revisions for my book, *Looking Forward: Prediction and Uncertainty in Modern America*, which was published in December 2017 with University of Chicago Press. *Looking Forward* examines a culture of prediction in which Americans came to believe in the promise and accept the limitations of new methods of forecasting. It reveals that a late nineteenth-century search for predictability yielded just the opposite: greater acceptance of the uncertainties of early twentieth-century American economic and cultural life.

During my leave, I also undertook historiographical and archival research for a new book project on the history of paperwork and investigation in modern America. This project, *Paper Trails: Paperwork, Bureaucracy, and Investigation in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century America*, will examine the importance of paperwork and bureaucracy to investigations that influenced American capitalism, government, and culture. It explores how the routinized, material, and seemingly mundane bureaucratic practices of paperwork played a crucial role in organizing information and producing knowledge in a far-reaching culture of investigation in a modernizing America. Drawing together detective agencies, commodity exchanges, postal inspectors, Spiritualist investigators, and federal investigations of immigration, public health, and crime, this project reveals how paperwork and bureaucracy shaped Americans’ experiences of economic life and their relationship to the state. In May 2017, I conducted archival research for one book chapter in the Seybert Commission for Investigating Modern Spiritualism Records, 1884-1922, at the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts at the University of Pennsylvania. In June 2017, I conducted archival research for

During the first summer and fall of my leave, I completed a digital history project on “A Spatial History of Nineteenth-Century American Meteorological Infrastructure” with the assistance of Rutgers History PhD student Marika Plater. This project was generously funded by a Digital Humanities Seed Grant from the Rutgers Digital Humanities Initiative in 2016-17. This project combined climatological data on nineteenth-century weather observation stations with QGIS mapping tools to visualize the origins and development of the meteorological knowledge infrastructures that became the first national weather service in the United States. The data visualization illuminates broader questions about the nineteenth-century American state and how historians understand the expansion and constitution of state administrative capacity. I presented the findings from this project at the Rutgers Digital Humanities Showcase in March 2017 and have been invited to contribute this material to a panel on “Reinterpreting the American State: Digital History’s Intervention” at the Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting in Sacramento in April 2018.

**Sarolta A. Takács:** During my sabbatical leave, Spring Semester 2017, I continued to work on my research project. I began drafting Borders, Caravans, and Empire a study that focuses on Roman Syria, Mesopotamia, India, and China, through the lens of the caravan route that channeled goods from India and China to the West. My project covers the early principate (last decades of 1st century BCE), when a new, highly competitive, and consumption-driven aristocracy emerged, until the reign of Justinian I (~mid-6th century), as different trade routes emerged and the Eastern empire, with its capital at Constantinople, began to oversee the import and taxation of goods from the “Middle” and “Far” East. This particular period of time offers a substantial body of primary sources, including texts, inscriptions, and artifacts.

Beyond scholarly research, my leave also included course design and interactively working side by side with undergraduate students. Through the Aresty Research Program, I oversaw the creation of a virtual portal based on material from the monograph project, with particular focus on the ancient city of Petra. My three research assistants (majoring in Computer Science and Engineering) and I built the matrix for an interactive learning module using Unity, a gaming computer language. I also devoted time to the development of summer study abroad and service learning courses. As a result of a collaboration with Rutgers Global, we were able to pilot successfully a new Summer Service Learning course focused on migration and refugee issues on the Greek island of Leros. A highlight of my 2017 summer was also the honors Study Abroad course, “Conflict and Convivencia: Spain’s Three Cultures”. What a pleasure it was to introduce fifteen students to the complex history of Spain and experience this amazing country with them!
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