

HAPPENINGS IN HISTORY

We are not the makers of history. We are made by history.
~Martin Luther King, Jr.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the first edition of our online newsletter! We hope that it will serve as a means for alumni, friends, and students to find out what we are doing and keep in touch. Although over the last few years the University of Akron has faced financial challenges, the Department of History has maintained its high quality of teaching, scholarship, and service.

Our faculty continues to be one of the most productive of Ohio's History programs in terms of research, as the "Faculty News" section demonstrates in detail. Last year saw the publication of two books, one by Dr. Stephen Harp and the other by Dr. Gregory Wilson. Our faculty continues to attract positive national and international attention through its involvement in national and international scholarly organizations as editors, reviewers, and coordinators. Over the last couple of years some of our faculty have been asked to present papers at national and international conferences, a sign of their high profiles in the profession. Our entire faculty continues to engage actively in research, and I look for-

ward to seeing more publications with prominent presses and journals in their fields.

Not surprisingly, our faculty has attracted talented students into our graduate program, and we are proud that ten of our graduate students earned their MAs and PhDs in 2016. Angela Riotto and Rob Faith received Robert W. Little Fellowships for the 2016-17 academic year. This year, Pinar Odabasi-Tasci received the Little Fellowship. Pinar is currently carrying out her dissertation research in Turkey with the support of a Fulbright-Hays Dissertation Fellowship, which she received this year. We are very proud of our strong, dynamic students. Read more below.

The History faculty continues its commitment to undergraduate education. We have been deeply involved in reforming the University of Akron's General Education requirements, with six professors serving on committees approving courses for the new schedule from across the university. Our faculty also includes advisers for university-wide student organizations, such as the African Students Association and the Middle East Students Association. This involvement in undergraduate education complements the excellence of our students. Fifteen seniors are graduating this Spring, some with honors.

Over the last couple of years, we have said goodbye to old friends, yet these losses have been reasons to celebrate. Our central European specialist, Kira

Thurman, accepted a tenure-track position at the University of Michigan; our American Civil War expert, Lesley Gordon, became the Charles G. Summersell Chair of Southern History at the University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa; and our medievalist and distinguished professor, Constance Bouchard, retired. We miss them and wish them well.

We are proud of our History programs. For a regional department we have an unusually national (even international) reach. And we want to reach out to you to keep in touch. If you are alumni, please tell us of your accomplishments and share your experiences of how your time at The University of Akron changed your lives. We want to hear from you.

With best wishes for the Summer and Fall semesters,

Martin Wainwright

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CONNIE BOUCHARD

Dr. Bouchard retired at the end of the Fall 2016 semester. As Emeritus faculty, she looks forward to focusing full time on her scholarship. Currently, she is finishing a new transcription and edition of the twelfth-century “Cartulary-chronicle of Bèze,” a history of this Burgundian monastery from the sixth to the twelfth century, written (in Latin) in the 1120s to show that, in spite of repeated setbacks (Saracens, Vikings, heretics, etc.), the monks always came back stronger than ever.



ROSE EICHLER

Professor of Instruction, Rose Eichler recently reviewed *War in the Balkans: Conflict and Diplomacy before World War I*, edited by James Pettifer and Tom Buchanan, which was published in the October 2016 volume of the *Journal of Military History*. Mrs. Eichler continues to lead our undergraduate advising committee, and provides vital support for the World Civilizations and Humanities in the Western Tradition programs, which we organize through the History Department.

MICHAEL GRAHAM

Dr. Graham has been continuing his research into early modern European media studies, focusing particularly on the ways in which various readers made use of Reginald Scot’s *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584). At the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference in Bruges, Belgium in August 2016 he presented the paper “Reading Reginald Scot in Scotland.” This academic year he has also stepped back into his former role as Humanities Director, this time filling in on an interim basis for Steve Harp, who is on leave. In February, Michael and his wife Elizabeth became grandparents for the first time, as Alexander Jon Griffith-Graham was born in Durham, NC.

STEVE HARP

Dr. Harp finished *A World History of Rubber*, with the generous help of History colleagues, a generation of graduate students, and a few hundred Humanities students. Thanks to you all! His co-edited a French Historical Studies special issue on archives appeared this spring; those “archive stories” now have a home. He has spent the year 2016-17 on leave, researching his next book project “Mediterranean Migrations: the Making of the French Riviera” and doing yoga.

New Publications

Stephen L. Harp, *A World History of Rubber: Empire, Industry, and the Everyday* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2016)

Craig S. Simpson and Greg S. Wilson, *Above the Shots: An Oral History of the Kent State Shootings* (Kent State University Press, 2016)

WALTER HIXON

Distinguished professor Walter L. Hixson is researching a new book on a relatively new topic (for him): U.S. Relations with Israel and the Middle East conflict. Research has included trips to the National Archives, the Library of Congress, and the Johnson, Kennedy, and (upcoming) Truman and Eisenhower presidential libraries, all of which have thankfully been funded with small travel grants. He also learned a lot spending three weeks in Israel and the occupied West Bank in 2013. The book manuscript is tentatively entitled, ‘What Kind of Relationship Was This?’ The United States and Israel Through the 1967 War. In addition to this major project, Dr. Hixson spends his time teaching classes, walking his dog, enjoying a new (and first) grandchild, golfing, and promptly spending the \$37 royalty checks that continue to roll in as a result of his previous publication efforts.



KEVIN KERN

Last year, Dr. Kern contributed to “The State of Ohio History,” a multi-author feature article in the journal *Ohio History*. He was also invited to speak at a number of events around the state, including a presentation at the McKinley Symposium in Canton, OH; and serving as the keynote speaker for the Ohio Council for the Social Studies 60th Annual Conference in Columbus. Kern continues to serve as a Historical Consultant and Content Review Committee member for the new National Veteran Museum and Memorial being constructed in Columbus. He is currently finishing a book on the Galton Society, an early 20th-century U.S. eugenics organization.

JANET KLEIN

Over the past year, Dr. Janet Klein has published two book chapters and has presented her work on the construction of minorities in the late Ottoman period and related topics at five conferences. One book chapter, published in Turkish, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Azınlığı İnşası: Ermeniler ve Kürtler,” in *Kürt Çalışmaları Konferansı II*, (Istanbul: İsmail Beşikci Vakfı Yayınları, 2016), was also published simultaneously in Kurdish. The other book chapter was in the the historiographically innovative volume, *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*, edited by Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian, and Ali Sipahi, (London, New York: IB Tauris, 2016). Dr. Klein was invited to give a public lecture at UC Davis, titled “Making Minorities in the Ottoman Empire: Armenians and Kurds,” and was also invited to present as part of the keynote panel at the Western Ottomanists Workshop, “Archives, Ottoman History, and Transnationalism,” in the spring of 2016. Dr. Klein was also invited to present “The Construction of Minorities in Kurdish-Ottoman Journals,” at the “Historical and Comparative Perspectives on Kurdish Politics” conference, sponsored by Northwestern University’s Buffett Institute for Global Studies, in the fall of 2016. Additionally, Dr. Klein was asked to participate in the “Minorities in the Late-Ottoman Empire” symposium in early 2017 at Cal State Fresno. She also chaired the panel, “Reform, Violence, and Revolutionary Organizations in the late-nineteenth-century Ottoman East,” at the Middle East Studies Association

Annual Meeting in Boston in November, 2016. Dr. Klein’s book, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (Stanford University Press, 2011), was released in paperback in the summer of 2016. She was proud to hood her PhD student, Sevin Gallo, in May, 2016.



MICHAEL LEVIN

Dr. Michael Levin received the 2015-2016 University of Akron Outstanding Teacher Award. In the summer of 2016 he also received a University of Akron Faculty Research Grant, which funded an archival research trip to Genoa, Italy. He is currently researching his next book project, a study of Don Gómez Suárez de Figueroa, the Spanish resident ambassador in Genoa from 1529 to 1569. He recently presented a paper based on his research at the annual meeting of the Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies. Dr. Levin is on sabbatical leave for the Spring 2017 semester, but is looking forward to returning to teaching in the fall.

GINA MARTINO

Following one final trip to the archives last summer with the help of a UA faculty research grant, Dr. Martino has been hard at work finishing her book, *Among the Vanguard: Women at War in the Borderlands of the Early American Northeast*. She was invited to present a portion of that work in the

Clockwise: Dr. Hixon found his totem while doing field research in Palestine (2016); Dr. Klein with recent graduate, Sevin Gallo (2016); Dr. Okoh with Anne Maltempi & Robin Guiler after class (2016); Dr. Santos presenting at the University of Alabama March 2017)



fall at the Ohio Seminar in Early American History and Culture at Ohio State University. In September, Dr. Martino also participated in a forum on the history of democracy hosted by UA's chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America. Her presentation focused on fears of riots and mob rule in the American Revolutionary Era and the development of a representative democracy in the United States. Dr. Martino has particularly enjoyed the opportunity to teach courses on the history of women in the United States, the Constitution, and the American Revolution during such a historically significant year. She thanks her students for their enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity in exploring these topics.

TOJA OKOH

In the Fall of 2016 Dr. Okoh returned to active teaching and scholarship after a year's leave of absence to welcome her twin baby boys to the world. Her article, "Who Controls Warri? How Ethnicity Became Volatile in the Western Niger Delta (1928-1952)" came out in the *Journal of African History* in July 2016. She also co-published an article, "The Ekwe Collective: Black Feminist Praxis" in *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research* in the Fall of 2016. A chapter memorializing the death of the Ogoni Nine – "The Ogoni Nine: Pretext, Context, Legacy" – is expected to be published by the end of 2017 in *21 February: The Impact, Progress and Possibilities for Pan-Africanism*, edited by Kadija Sesay (WOW Publishing). Dr. Okoh is currently working on her book manuscript, tentatively titled, *Contesting from the Margins: Minority Citizenship in Nigeria*. She was also invited to advise the Council on Foreign Relations in their effort to develop and market their educationally relevant content to University audiences. The Council on Foreign Relations also featured her use of their new interactive teaching platform – Model Diplomacy – in her History of Modern Africa Course. You can read the interview [here](#).



MARTHA SANTOS

Last spring, Dr. Santos presented a paper entitled "Slave Wombs, 'Slave Mothers,' and the Reproduction of Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Brazil" at the international conference of the "Mothering Slaves" research network at the University of Reading, England. In the summer of 2016, she was awarded a Faculty Research Fellowship from the University of Akron to continue research and writing on her current book project *Engendering Slavery: Mothering Slaves, Labor, and Reproduction in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*. In March 2017, she was an invited participant in the conference "Dreams of Dominion: The U.S. South and Latin America" at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, where she presented "Precarious Enslavement: Authority, Race, and Law in a Frontier Slaveholding Community, Ceará, Brazil, 1865-1884." Santos' article "Slave Mothers, Partus Sequitur Ventrem, and the Naturalization of Slave Reproduction in Nineteenth-Century Brazil" was published in the Fall 2016 issue of the Brazilian journal *Revista Tempo-História*.



MICHAEL SHENG

Michael Sheng received his second Faculty Research Summer Fellowship in 2016, since he stepped down as department chair in 2012. As part of his research results, he was invited by Hudson Institute to present a paper entitled "China's Popular Nationalism and the Rise of Mao as China's Superhero."

The January 2017 conference on "Asian Shadow: the Hidden History of World War II in the Pacific," also included 5 other internationally known historians from Tokyo University, the Japanese Defense Ministry, the US Naval War College, among others. The conference was live-streamed online, and all the video presentations are available [here](#).

MARTIN WAINWRIGHT

In addition to managing the History Department's daily business, Dr. Wainwright also chairs the Faculty Senate's General Education Advisory Committee, which is the committee primarily responsible for approving courses for the new General Education curriculum. Dr. Wainwright continues to actively engage in scholarship. He presented a paper titled, "Defining Religion in a National Framework: The Post-Colonial Context of the Indian History Textbook Controversies," to the International Conference of the Institute of Religious Pluralism and Atheism's (IPRA) meeting at Université du Maine, Le Mans, France, in December 2015. This paper formed the basis of a chapter in a multi-authored book to be published in 2017/18 academic year. Dr. Wainwright is also currently under contract with Routledge Press to publish a book entitled *Virtual History: How Video Games Portray the Past*, and will be working on the manuscript over the summer.



ZACH WILLIAMS

Dr. Williams recently became Series Editor for African American Policy Studies book series with Palgrave Macmillan. He has also published a book chapter, "Reparations as Social Policy: HR 40 and the Debate over the Study of Reparations for Slavery, Jim Crow, and Continuing

Discrimination," in *Race in America: How a Pseudoscientific Concept Shaped Human Interaction*, Volume 2, edited by Patricia Reid-Merritt (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2017).

GREG WILSON

Last year, Dr. Wilson was promoted to Professor. He published, with Craig Simpson, *Above the Shots: An Oral History of the Kent State Shootings* (Kent State University Press). He has presented on this at several conferences. He also earned professional leave to begin a new research project on the history and legacy of Kepone, a pesticide listed among the world's most toxic substances. For the project he earned two fellowships, one from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, the

other from the Virginia Historical Society. He delivered two public lectures on his research in Virginia.

GANG ZHAO

In October 2017, Dr. Gang Zhao was an invited attendant for the conference “Ideas and Methods Interweaving Civilizations: the Inside and Outside of Historic China - International Summit Dialogue and Forum,” held in Beijing Normal University, where he gave a presentation entitled “On the Imperial Qing Conception of Geography in the Context of Early Modern Globalization.”

Undergraduate News

ROBIN GUILER, a graduating senior, will be taking a “gap year” after graduating Summa Cum Laude to work, produce art and music, and learn before pursuing studies in Middle Eastern history in the Fall of 2018, ideally at NYU.

ERIC WASEK is a Distinguished Military Graduate in the Army R.O.T.C., ranking among the top 20% of cadets across the nation. He has also received the General George C. Marshall Leadership Award for being ranked one of the top fifteen Army R.O.T.C. cadets in the nation. He will also be graduating this Spring with Summa Cum Laude, and will be commissioned into the U.S. Army as a Second Lieutenant and as an Aviation Officer. He reports to Fort Rucker, AL in May to begin flight training.

HANNAH ULRICH, who is graduating with a history and French major, was accepted, with scholarships, to all the law schools to which she applied. She has decided to attend law school at the University of Akron with full funding.

We are proud to announce our 2017-18 History Major scholarship recipients! They are: Kosta Budo, Katherine Gray, Kiana Hardy-Butler, Jacob Kainec, Haley Keffer, Zachary Michel, Ross Reeves, Bridget Sciscento, Scott Stoner, Austin Wade. This year, the Summerfield Baldwin II Scholarship went to Anthony Pankuch (Junior); and the David C. Riede Award went to Robin Guiler (Senior). Congratulations to you all!

THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON PHI ALPHA THETA CHAPTER welcomed new members this year: Elizabeth Persinger, Natalie Mitchell, Daniel Woods, William Marsh, Jr., Katherine Gray, Bridget Sciscento, Jessica Wilson, Zach Lane.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR GRADUATING AND HIGH ACHIEVING HISTORY MAJORS!



Organizing Committee of the Akron-Kent History Graduate Student Symposium: Kenneth Kosovich (Chair), Matt Nowak, Kat McDonald-Miranda, Suraj Lakshminarasimhan, Michael Selzer, Anne Maltempi, and Mandy Sedlak-Heyener. Anne Maltempi won the “best paper” award in 2016.

New Members of the University of Akron’s Phi Alpha Theta Chapter at the Spring 2017 Initiation Ceremony.



Graduate News

PH.D. CANDIDATE, PINAR ODABASI TASCI, is currently conducting research in Turkey through a Fulbright-Hays fellowship, which she began in December 2016. She also recently presented her work at the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting in Boston with a paper entitled “Beyond the Midye-Enez Line: Reclaiming Edirne During the Balkan Wars of 1912-13.” Pinar was also named winner of the Robert W. Little Graduate Dissertation Fellowship for 2017-18. Her dissertation title is: “Edirne during the Balkan Wars: Urban Life and Inter-communal Relations on the Eve of the Nation-State.”

PH.D. CANDIDATES KATIE BROWN AND ANGELA RIOTTO presented papers at the annual conference of the Society for Military History in Jacksonville, Florida.

PH.D. STUDENT, ANNE MALTEMPI attended the Newberry Multidisciplinary Graduate Student Conference at the Newberry Center for Renaissance Studies in January, where she presented a paper based on original research, entitled “*Sicilianità: Sicilian National Identity in the Writings of Sicilian Humanists Tommaso Schifaldo and Lucio Marineo Siculo.*” Her paper was one of 60 papers selected from the Newberry consortium universities throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe. She plans to conduct further research at the Newberry library in the coming year.

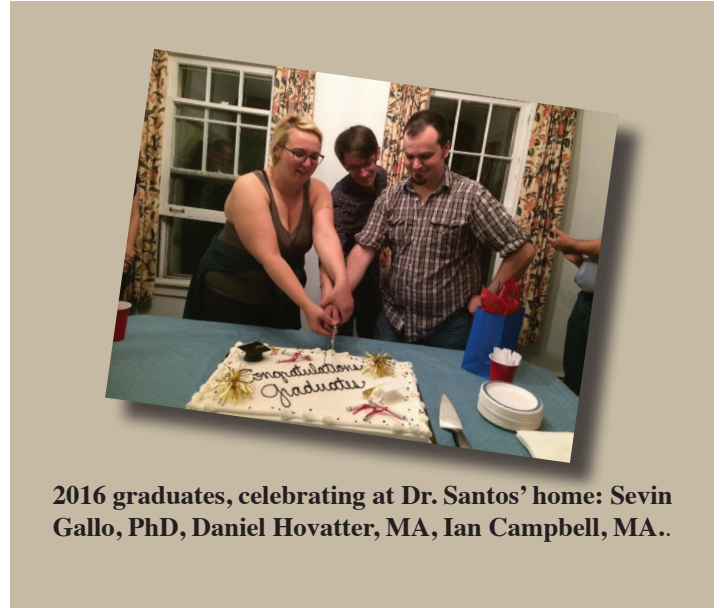
MA STUDENT BEN COMSHAW-ALLEN won the “Best World History Paper” at the Phi Alpha Theta Ohio Regional Conference in March.

Alumni News

Ph.D. graduate, John Henris, just won the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences Outstanding Faculty Award at the University of Arkansas at Monticello for 2017.

Jason Kinsel (MA, 2015), has been accepted to Clark University with full funding, and will begin his PhD study in the Fall, 2017.

MA graduate and public historian Amanda Sedlak-Hevener recently published an article on the mass production of WWI memorials in *Atlas Obscura*, entitled ["Why Do So Many U.S. Towns Have the Same WWI Soldier Statue?"](#)



2016 graduates, celebrating at Dr. Santos' home: Sevin Gallo, PhD, Daniel Hovatter, MA, Ian Campbell, MA..