

# Perspectives on History

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Looking Like a Historian | #aha16

# Perspectives on History

Newsmagazine of the American Historical Association

Volume 54, No. 2

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## On the Cover



**T**aking its cue from the Twitter hashtag #ILookLikeAProfessor, trending in summer 2015, our February cover celebrates the many

looks of historians of 2016. With the kind endorsement of hashtag originator Sara Pritchard, as well as Rusul Alrubail, Adeline Koh, and Michelle Moravec (who gave it significant boosts), we present our take on the idea. So treat yourself to Vanessa Holden's fashion roundup, and see you next year in Denver.  
*Photographs by Marc Monaghan*

# Perspectives on History

Newsmagazine of the

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# FROM THE EDITOR

## *Townhouse Notes*

What place should the history of homophobia and transphobia command in our teaching and writing? The question can provoke the response “Why must you bring *that* up? That’s all in the past,” just as when discussions of topics like slavery turn on emphasizing relative progress. It might come as a surprise that even within the LGBTQ community, some prefer to focus on the path of progress and the future; harping on oppression alienates

potential allies, they say, and anyway, things are improving, especially among the young.

It does, indeed, feel like a sea change. But there is also an accompanying amnesia. I'll offer two recent teaching anecdotes. For an LGBTQ history course, I cooked up a research assignment to complement a lesson about the migration of LGBTQ people to cities, especially after World War II. Students pored over newspapers from a particular city, looking for news of police crackdowns, local color stories about queer neighborhoods, even classified ads, then wrote diary entries as if

they were contemplating a move from a small town themselves. In their diaries, some decided to stay put, writing that their parents had always accepted them and even knew they were queer before they did. Cities were places where gay men and lesbians could live a more exciting life, but true community could be attained in one's hometown.



In a seminar on contemporary US history, traditional-age students who leaned liberal venerated Bill Clinton and laid their political beliefs (including support for marriage equality) to his influence. They were shocked to read that he signed the Defense of Marriage Act and formulated “Don’t ask, don’t tell” after campaigning on promises to end the ban on lesbians and gay men serving in the military. (The ban on trans people was never on the table in the Clinton years.) Another surprise was just how often, within recent memory, mainstream news outlets framed Jerry Falwell’s

pronouncement that HIV/AIDS was “God’s punishment for homosexuals” as a reasonable point of view. Perhaps the biggest surprise of all was that advances of the 1970s *had been rolled back*, most famously in Dade County, Florida, where activists campaigned to repeal a nondiscrimination ordinance by stoking fears of gay “recruitment” of youth.

I know historians in many fields hear “Why must you bring *that* up?” when they broach subjects with rough parallels to homophobia and transphobia—not simply prejudice, but discrimination actively

sanctioned by law and custom alike. One lesson of recent LGBTQ history is that things *can* improve for a great many. But if my teaching experiences are any indication, lacking knowledge of how bad things were (and still can be) makes it difficult to evaluate the improvements at all. It's not about exalting victimhood at the expense of agency; rather, recent LGBTQ history, by demonstrating that progress is delicate indeed, can instill a sense of humility about social change, as well as our place in it.

—Allison Miller, editor

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*To the editor:*

The September 2015 issue of *Perspectives on History* included a stimulating forum of articles on dual enrollment—i.e., high school students taking college-level history courses, an increasingly common occurrence nationwide. Both the articles and the discussion on the AHA Members' Forum covered a range of questions. I'd like to add another question: Does context matter? College classes taught on high school campuses



may be “*identical*” (emphasis added by Alex Lichtenstein in his *Perspectives* article), but does that mean the student experience is identical? In other words, does it make a difference whether the classroom is filled with 16-year-olds or with 22-year-olds? My intuition is that it does make a difference. And I think it makes even more of a difference in a community college classroom such as mine, where the range of age and life experience spans decades. The argument that a History 101 classroom on a high school campus is “identical” to a History 101 classroom on a college campus assumes that the most important interaction occurs only between the

instructor and each individual student. In other words, instruction can happen just as well in a high school classroom, a phone booth, and the international space station. I don't buy that premise. In my classes, discussions of the New Deal have been enriched by the participation of students who have worked for years at minimum wage jobs. Discussions of the Boston Massacre have been enhanced by the presence of military veterans who were once part of an occupying force in a foreign country. I am not arguing that for this reason we must cancel dual enrollment. I think it's probably a net gain for society that so many high

school students are getting a chance to take a college-level history class. But I am arguing that taking the class on a high school campus is *not* the same as taking the “identical” class on a college campus. Context matters. In this case, the other students who are in the room with you make a big difference.

*Josh Ashenmiller Fullerton College, CA*

FROM THE  
PRESIDENT

***A Strong and  
Diverse  
Historical  
Profession, a  
Strong AHA***



## Patrick Manning

**A**s the discipline of history broadens and deepens its purview, the AHA's importance as a professional network expands. If the Association's membership can grow, it can serve the diverse needs of the profession more effectively. Professional historians differ in gender, ethnicity, nationality, and sexual orientation; in their regional and topical interests; and in the institutions of their employment. The AHA creates a big tent for

discussion and exchange at its annual meeting, and provides support for all historians, including members of its affiliates and independent societies, through its staff and publications. It links historians to one another, to professionals in other fields, and to the public.

The discipline of history is simultaneously expanding and contracting. Even in this time of declining student enrollments, it's possible that AHA membership will grow. Impressive innovations in research and the quality of teaching complement historians' role in public affairs, which seems to be on the rise.

This might presage a rebound, as happened in the 1970s: after a big decline in enrollment, historical studies recovered and became stronger than ever.

Over the long term, there have been other types of changes in the field of history. In particular, as new historical fields and trends emerge, historians alternate between building specialized organizations and relying on the AHA. You can observe this among historians classified by region of study, by topical specialization, and by instructional context (two- and four-year institutions, elementary and secondary schools, public history sites, and so on).

Within area-studies fields, AHA membership fluctuates, although Latin American history provides an interesting exception. The Conference on Latin American History, founded in 1926, brings many historians to the AHA annual meeting. When the interdisciplinary Latin American Studies Association took shape in 1966, historians began attending its conference but kept coming to the annual meeting. It was different, however, for other regional fields: area-studies associations grew for Asia (1941), Russia and eastern Europe (1948), Africa (1957), and the Middle East (1966). In these cases, regional historians developed



initial loyalty to their area-studies associations and came less often to AHA annual meetings. Still, the complementary relationship between the AHA and regional-studies organizations became clear. When my mentor, Philip Curtin, served as AHA president in 1983—the first historian of Africa to do so—he focused his presidential address on world history. Later I joined with colleagues in two separate efforts to attempt to form a Conference on African History within the AHA. Efforts continue: conferences of historians of China and South Asia met at the 2016 annual meeting in Atlanta.

*Scholars focusing on regional, topical, or disciplinary fields might find the AHA to be a privileged place for learning.*

A second realm, that of topical fields, exhibits an analogous organizational dynamic. New groups formed along with expanding fields: the Berkshire Conference on Women Historians first formed out of the AHA in 1930 and took its present form in 1973. The Social Science History Association formed in 1976, and the American Society for Environmental History in 1977. Still, historians in these fields also

brought their conference papers and professional concerns to the annual meeting. Digital history, expanding rapidly within the AHA today, gained strength through the American Association for History and Computing (1996), which became an AHA affiliate in 2000. Studies in the history of health are now burgeoning, with links to several organizations.

A third arena for this dynamic is in the distinctive styles of historical education for middle schools, high schools, two- and four-year undergraduate college classrooms, and graduate programs. While these overlap increasingly, their curricula differ. The National Council

for the Social Studies (formed in 1921) gained the loyalty of secondary-school administrators and, with them, of many teachers. Community colleges have grown rapidly in the past 50 years: the Community College Humanities Association formed in 1979, and the AHA has worked with it. Four-year institutions have witnessed tremendous change in the fields of US and European history—nearly as much as other fields. Out of these changes emerges an interplay in membership and perhaps attendance between the Organization of American Historians' annual meeting and the AHA's.

Overall, the pattern is one of complementarity between the big tent of the AHA and specialized organizations. Specific associations blossom as fields take form and as groups of historians come together. The AHA annual meeting facilitates communication among the many fields and groups. Specific structures vary greatly: many are independent nonprofits (the Organization of American Historians, the Coordinating Council for Women in History). Some 120 organizations are affiliated societies of the AHA, including the American Society for Church History and the Society for Military History. One

affiliate, the World History Association (WHA), formed at the AHA annual meeting in 1982 and for a decade held its main meeting there. But once annual WHA meetings began in 1992, the participation of world historians at AHA meetings declined somewhat. Today, however, the AHA has become a major site for interaction among world historians and the expanding group of transnational historians.

Affecting us all is the gradual but seemingly relentless enlargement of a global and multidisciplinary framework for historical studies. How do local or disciplinary histories fit into the world and vice versa? Scholars focusing on

regional, topical, or disciplinary fields might find the AHA to be a privileged place for learning about interconnections among regions and topics. For instance, the focus on world history in K–12 institutions and community colleges means that teachers there must commonly consider longer periods of time and wider topical scope than is usual for college-level faculty. In contrast, it may be that instructors of undergraduates have more experience with the multidisciplinary dimensions of history today. Through meetings at the AHA, discussions of long-term history and cross-disciplinary history can take place—and at the same time

link to the ongoing discussions of history at national and local levels.

*Overall, the pattern is one of complementarity between the big tent of the AHA and specialized organizations. Specific associations blossom as fields take form and as groups of historians come together. The AHA annual meeting facilitates*



*communication among the many  
fields and groups.*

The natural and healthy tendency is for the existence of numerous organizations of value to historians. We benefit from the many textures and layers of historical studies by belonging to more than one organization. In our networks, the role of the AHA is to provide an open venue for interchange among historians of all types of employment, all fields of study, and all identities and backgrounds. In addition, the AHA, as the broadest of historical organizations, maintains its Research, Teaching, and Professional divisions with elected

officials and a strong staff. Its network of activities extends throughout the historical profession and to other disciplines, governmental agencies, and the public.

I hope that the AHA will come to look steadily more like the historical profession as a whole, even as the shape and structure of historical studies evolve. I hope membership levels will grow among practitioners of US and European history—as well as among the ranks of those who work on Central Asia and the history of science, those who teach at community colleges (where I taught for 13 years), and public historians. The result will be a

reaffirmation of the lively interactions within our profession: thriving organizations addressing the many specializations, backed by a strong and overarching AHA able to speak forcefully and effectively on scholarly and professional concerns.

*Patrick Manning is president of the American Historical Association.*

University of North Carolina Wilmington  
15th Annual Sherman Emerging Scholar Lecture  
**Call for Nominations**



The University of North Carolina Wilmington Department of History invites applications and nominations for the 2016 Virginia and Derrick Sherman Emerging Scholar Lecture. This year's topic is "**Religion and Conflict in Global History.**" Proposals may address, but are not limited to, the relationship between church and state; the place of faith and religion in society; or the historical connections between religion and culture, imperialism, peace and war. Submissions concerning any time periods and any geographic regions are welcome.

The Sherman Lecture provides a forum for an outstanding junior scholar (untenured assistant professor or researcher) to offer his or her perspective on a selected topic in international affairs. The Sherman Scholar will meet with undergraduate and graduate students, share his

or her expertise with faculty members in history and related fields and be available to the local media. The centerpiece of the scholar's visit will be the presentation of a major public address, which the university will subsequently publish.

Applicants will be evaluated on the basis of scholarly accomplishment, relevance of the proposed talk to the year's theme and evidence of ability in speaking before a diverse audience. The scholar will receive an honorarium of \$5,000. The lectureship will take place on the UNCW campus Oct. 17-20, 2016.

Applicants should submit a letter of interest with the title and brief description of the lecture they propose to deliver, current c.v., names and email addresses of three references and a recent scholarly publication. Materials should be sent as hard copy to Prof. Jarrod Tanny, UNCW Department of History, 601 S. College Rd., Wilmington, NC 28403. We also welcome nominations that are accompanied by contact information. *The deadline for submission is March 31, 2016. Finalists must be available for telephone interviews before May 31, 2016.*

UNC Wilmington is an EEO/AA institution.

FROM THE  
EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

***Whose Memory?  
Whose  
Monuments?***

***History,  
Commemoration,  
and the Struggle for***

# ***an Ethical Past***



## **James Grossman**

**J**esse Washington was lynched—burned to death—on May 15, 1916. It happened in Waco, Texas. I first read of this act of domestic terrorism more than three decades ago while doing research on my doctoral dissertation. I came across it again in December while working on my introduction to the plenary session at the recent annual meeting of the AHA,

which took place in downtown Atlanta, a 15-minute walk from the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. The center's collections include an image of Jesse Washington's corpse reproduced on a [postcard](#) that carries a message from its sender to his parents: "This is the Barbecue we had last night. My picture is to the left with a cross over it."

This is an important part of the American past. The moment bears no monument, no memorial other than this gruesome testimonial to a perverse form of popular entertainment (attendance estimates run as high as 15,000). Memorials to lynching are few

and far between, despite its frequency during the half century following Emancipation, despite its clear significance to the history of the United States. But no shortage of monuments exists to Confederate soldiers, the last (as far as I know) erected in Sierra Vista, Arizona, on April 17, 2010. Of particular interest to our meeting was Stone Mountain, a half-hour drive away, and the site of the largest Confederate monument in the world: a bas-relief carved into the mountain depicting Stonewall Jackson, Robert Lee, and Jefferson Davis on horseback. Completed in 1972, more than half a century after work commenced, the



monument marks the site of the founding of the modern Ku Klux Klan (1915) and provided a reference for Martin Luther King Jr. in [1963](#): “Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain in Georgia.”

That which is memorialized and that which is left to popular memory are not accidental. Choices are made about what gets built, displayed, and given plaques. Memorials are public commemorations that legitimate what comes to be called “heritage.” We intended to explore these choices in our plenary, inspired by the controversies surrounding the Confederate flag that followed in the wake of a more recent

act of domestic terrorism: the murder of nine African Americans during a prayer service at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church on June 17, 2015. Our panel focused on the meaning, use, and implications of Confederate memorials, and the debates that have emerged over commemoration through naming.

KATY ELECTRIC S  
TEMPLE, TEX  
H. LIPPE, PRO

CORRESPONDENCE HERE

This is the  
Barbecue we  
had last night  
my picture is to  
the left with a  
cross over it you  
son & JOE.

Wikimedia Comrn

*From the obverse of a photo postcard depicting the lynching of Jesse Washington*

This debate has thrust historians into the center of public culture. Many AHA members are faculty at institutions where students have mounted protests

directed at removing the names of individuals tainted by discredited ideas or identified with discredited policies, most often relating to race and racism. Others have engaged the issues as historians should: as experts on “what actually happened” and how public culture has created new or imagined histories through memorialization based on popular narratives, sometimes narratives carefully crafted by economic and political interests for particular purposes. “What is the historian’s role in this moment?” asked panelist Daina Berry: “To provide the context in which people can understand the very complex issues of the past and the present.”

How do we do that? Do we rename thousands of highways, buildings, and institutions across the nation? Perhaps. Panelist David Blight suggested that as historians we have the expertise—perhaps even the professional responsibility—to think about the possibility of what he called a “line.” One could draw that line at people who took up arms—indeed, committed treason—to defend the rights of some human beings to own, buy, and sell other human beings. Lee. Stonewall Jackson. Davis. But what about Woodrow Wilson or Lord Jeffrey Amherst? Where does our line fall with regard to innumerable others who are

part and parcel of the long and complex history of American racism?

We cannot erase these histories simply by taking down the reminders. As Earl Lewis, president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, cogently reminds us, “We cannot exorcise the past without confronting it fully.”<sup>1</sup> This is the work of historians. Our colleagues who work in museums, national parks, and other sites of historical memory will have to wrestle with the question posed by panelist and museum curator John Coski: “You can’t really erase history. You can erase the presentation of it, you can erase the memory of it, you can

erase a particular spin of it, but is it really erasing history?”

Of course not. What happened, happened. So on college campuses we have a unique opportunity: to teach students how to figure out what happened in the past, and to provide them with an opportunity to keep that past in direct conversation with the present—including the commemorative objects they find problematic, if not downright offensive. We can even be a little bit imaginative, offering opportunities to develop skills and habits that employers tell us our students need, that are collaborative and cross-disciplinary. Undergraduate

history students, for instance, could work with design and architecture students to create historical markers—maybe even small monuments—that reside alongside and speak to a named campus building or statue, both historically and aesthetically. The students would be required to do the necessary research, write text, collaborate with colleagues in appropriate disciplines to prepare and submit proposals for construction, and perhaps use digital media to disseminate their work beyond the campus. Students are interested in these issues; let's harness that engagement to fulfill the



educational missions of our colleges and universities.



*Georgia's Stone Mountain monument de*

*George C. Stone, "Memorial to Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee, and Jefferson Davis"*

If we cannot erase the past, we can't erase memories of the past, either—they too are an important part of our history. Everything has a history: slavery itself, the defense of slavery, the myth of the Lost Cause, and the resurrection of that myth for political purposes in response to the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-20th century. As historians, we know that this is the purpose of revisionism. If that term implies invention and untruth for some readers, then it is our job to explain the term and the process better.

And as historians, we will need to confront our own part in the evolution of a national memory that produced

textbooks complimenting slaveholders for civilizing their chattel and justifying the removal and killing of generations of Native Americans. The AHA's hands are by no means clean. We still have a Dunning Prize, neatly matching the now discredited (and "revised") "Dunning school" of Reconstruction historiography. Our journal is complicit in the legitimation of histories that have done harm. These histories have been revised, generally discarded from our syllabi and narratives. But they reigned for a half century or more, and still command substantial respect in popular culture. This reconsideration will require humility and persistence both.

Our teachers got some things wrong.  
Their teachers got some things wrong.  
And yes, we are no doubt getting some things wrong. Without sinking into the morass of whiggery, I hope we're getting better.

*James Grossman is executive director of the AHA. He tweets @JimGrossmanAHA.*

## Note

1. Earl Lewis, "When the Past Is Never Gone," Report of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, 2014 (New York, 2015), 8.

NEWS

# *Scholars on the Edge*

## *The LGBTQ Historians Task Force Report and the AHA*

Allison Miller

Last June, LGBTQ people and their allies greeted the Supreme Court decision in

*Obergefell v. Hodges*—which upheld marriage equality throughout the United States—with jubilation. But the right to marry, at least to some university administrations, now entails the obligation to marry. As Nicholas Syrett, co-chair of the Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History (CLGBTH, an AHA affiliate), says, “My school, which had partner benefits for same-sex couples, has done exactly the thing that everyone feared they would do and eliminated them, and basically said, ‘Well, get married and you can have them.’ I was like, ‘So essentially, you’re forcing us [to get married]?’ The

perception is, of course, ‘You won. Just do this thing.’”

Benefits are only one of the professional concerns of LGBTQ historians, according to the report of the AHA’s LGBTQ Task Force, which the AHA Professional Division (PD) convened in January 2009. The previous year, CLGBTH had requested that PD conduct “further research and analysis of the climate facing lgbtq historians and lgbtq history” in the AHA and in the discipline at large. Leisa Meyer co-chaired the task force along with the rotating PD vice presidents. PD appointed one member (Marc Stein), and CLGBTH two (Jennifer

Breier and Susan Stryker). The task force submitted its report to the AHA Council in June 2015.

Council's charge to the task force was to gather as much information as possible about the issues facing LGBTQ historians at all career stages and to propose concrete steps the AHA might take to address their concerns. Perhaps the most important source of information was an electronic survey distributed to AHA members in fall 2011. Anonymous quotations from the survey, included in the report along with representative statistics, provide grist for reflection on conditions at work, on the job market, in conducting



and disseminating research, and in the classroom.

Nearly 25 percent of respondents described their job market experience as negative or strongly negative, while 21 percent said it was equally positive and negative. “My article on LGBT hist[ory] tends to come up in interviews,” wrote one; “it’s the first thing that appears when you google my name—and can be polarizing, either positive or negative.” “My gender expression more than my orientation has probably had a negative effect on my prospects,” explained another. “I am genderqueer and this is not a good fit in conservative departments. They don’t know what I

look like when they invite me to interview but they go cold as soon as I walk into the room.”

On the positive side, the survey also found that “identifying one’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression in the workplace is increasingly typical,” with 84 percent of respondents indicating that they had done so. Nonetheless, 22 percent of those noted that they had experienced discrimination as a result, and 49 percent of all respondents said there were times when they did not disclose their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression.



Marc Monaghan

*The session “The LGBTQ Historians Task Force Report: Where Do We Go from Here?” at the 2016 annual meeting.*

*From left: Mary Lou Roberts, Nicholas L. Syrett, and La Shonda Adams.*

*and Leisa D. Meyer.*

LGBTQ AHA members sometimes live in states with conservative legislatures, dampening supportive campus atmospheres. “I

honestly believe my department goes above and beyond to support gay and lesbian faculty,” one survey read. “But their hands are tied somewhat by State and Federal Law.” (Today, 18 states include neither sexual orientation nor gender identity in nondiscrimination laws.) Another historian offered, “My non-conventional gender presentation is very rare on my campus and often remarked upon. That is exhausting, but bearable.” Several respondents provided trans perspectives: “HR refused to give healthcare coverage to my domestic partner because she is female and I am now legally male . . . even though we are legally registered as domestic partners in

our city of residence. As a result, my partner currently has no health insurance.” One trans historian also mentioned hostility from cisgender lesbian and gay colleagues.

One of the task force’s recommendations to the AHA was a permanent committee dedicated to LGBTQ issues. At the 2016 annual meeting, Council approved the membership of the first Committee on LGBTQ History and Historians ([historians.org/clgbtqh](http://historians.org/clgbtqh)). The committee will work to implement the recommendations of the task force, many of which center on inclusiveness—for example, in AHA policy and best

practices statements, the annual meeting program, *Perspectives on History* articles, and sample syllabi and lesson plans provided by the Teaching Division. The permanent committee will also finalize the report before making it public.

Much work clearly remains to be done. At the 2016 annual meeting in Atlanta, Mary Louise Roberts moderated a session co-sponsored by CLGBTH and PD, titled “The LGBTQ Historians Task Force Report: Where Do We Go from Here?” La Shonda Mims (a historian of southern queer life) joined Syrett in reading some of the narrative survey responses, while Meyer provided background on the survey and the

report. (Neither Syrett nor Mims was involved with the task force report.) A lively discussion followed, emphasizing that LGBTQ historians' professional concerns aren't limited to one type of institution or area of the country. Attendees underscored the importance of benefits, analyzed extensively in the report, but also noted problems stemming from student course evaluations; perceptions that LGBTQ history is narrowly focused; the lack of LGBTQ-related content in history surveys; discouraging advisers; intersectional issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality; and the precariousness of employment

(including tenure denials and the perceived inclination of departments to create only adjunct lines for sexuality studies). Syrett raised an issue that seemed to resonate in the room: undergraduate history majors don't see LGBTQ history as "real" history; it's gender studies majors who fill the seats in his upper-level elective courses. Because these students bring different skills and knowledge to the class, he often must orient them to analytic frameworks and skills particular to the discipline of history.

Mims's experiences might represent the ironies of an age in which the work of new scholars is outpacing both graduate



program resources and the job market. In an interview, she characterized the reception of her work as largely positive. In her master's program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, one dismissive professor didn't pose an obstacle as significant as the fact that supportive faculty didn't know much about the relevant literature. "When it came time for comps," she said, "it was solely up to me to piece it together. I was fortunate that [noted LGBTQ historian] John D'Emilio worked with me on my comps and later as an outside reader. What I found frustrating was that—because my project is about southern

history and queer history—the southern historians seemingly were so excited about it that I don't think they were as critical as I needed them to be.” When she began speaking with historians of sexuality years ago, she said, she found she “might have had the education of the '70s on some level.”

Echoing some of Mims's points, Roberts observed that the position of LGBTQ history today mirrors that of women's history in the 1970s and 1980s. With an initial wave of hostility overcome, a new generation of graduate students was poised to make breakthroughs, but the discipline lacked the sort of infrastructure that could

nurture them. There was enough goodwill, in other words, but advising possibilities were limited, as were dedicated library budgets, teaching lines, conference opportunities, prizes, and other hallmarks of an established field.

The concerns of LGBTQ historians and scholars of LGBTQ history are more than a litany of complaints on behalf of a small minority. The task force report and the annual meeting session clarify the fact that professional problems translate into an impoverished sense of history. We'll never know how many LGBTQ dissertations don't get past the idea stage, or how many of those that are written never see the light

of day as books, or how many undergraduates aren't able to learn this history. In a public climate that's often hostile to the teaching and learning of humanistic fields, the AHA's advocacy for history will now include efforts to address these concerns through the work of the new permanent committee. The post-*Obergefell* era has only begun.

*Allison Miller is editor of Perspectives on History. She tweets @Cliopticon.*

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AMERICAN HISTORICAL  
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NEWS

# *Responding to Resistance*

*Faculty and  
Administrators of  
Color Analyze  
Today's Student  
Movements at the  
Annual Meeting*

# Eladio Bobadilla

Over the past several months, student protests around the country have rocked higher education, taking up questions of racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination. Faculty and administrators at all kinds of institutions—small and large, public and private—must confront and respond to student demands for change.

At this year's AHA annual meeting in Atlanta, a special panel on student unrest, titled "From #ConcernedStudent1950 to Diversifying the Profession: Responding to Student Demands for Change,"

brought together six professors and administrators of color—Matthew Garcia (Arizona State Univ.), Marcia Chatelain (Georgetown Univ.), Duchess Harris (Macalester Coll.), Jonathan Holloway (Yale Univ.), Douglas Haynes (Univ. of California, Irvine), and Jacquelyn Jones Royster (Georgia Tech)—to discuss the protests' roots, consequences, and implications, as well as their relation to the ongoing conversation about faculty diversity. Although the panelists mostly represented R1 institutions, their insights seemed to resonate with the audience.



Garcia introduced the roundtable as a debate forum, but the panelists largely agreed on most points. They expressed sympathy for students' grievances; reminded the audience that student agitation is nothing new—that it is, in fact, part of a long college tradition, even a rite of passage; suggested that faculty diversification is key to addressing student discontent; and reiterated that campus unrest cannot be considered in isolation from larger, systemic inequalities. In contrast to public commentary, seemingly mired in acrimony, the panel pushed debate forward by acknowledging the legitimate struggles and concerns that student protests have highlighted.

The panelists refused to criticize student movements and instead validated their concerns and efforts to illuminate problems that, as Harris noted, administrators have often recognized only begrudgingly. With “intolerable racism” persisting on campuses across the country, with sexual harassment and assault still a daily threat for students, and with graduate students losing their health care (at the University of Missouri, this happened with 14 hours’ notice), students are justified, the panelists agreed, in demanding change. As Garcia explained, these students are asking themselves, “Why are we submitting

ourselves to this abuse?” while paying ever-increasing tuition or, in the case of graduate students, working more than ever with few benefits and even fewer job prospects.



In addition to mobilizing Yale College's Jonathan Holloway with students during last fall's protests At

traditionally marginalized constituencies, students often using social media for a coordinated outreach and promote their causes. The Twitter hashtag #ConcernedStudent1950 emerged at Missouri, for example, taking its name from the year the first African American student entered the university. Chatelain (herself an alumna of Mizzou) observed that platforms like Twitter and Instagram reach beyond single campuses and have permitted the creation of “a national community of students rethinking what they mean to these institutions.”

Student challenges to perceived injustices are nothing new. From the

1960 Greensboro sit-ins led by black students defying segregation to the California campus walkouts in objection to the state's anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in 1994, college students have historically positioned themselves at the vanguard of social change. Today's protests and responses, however, unfold much more publicly and visibly, thanks to social media. Holloway is well aware of this, having earned wide praise for his leadership at Yale last fall; tensions erupted there after concerns about potentially offensive Halloween costumes sparked broader discussions about racial climate, microaggressions, and free speech.

These conversations evolved in part as a result of social media campaigns, which at times targeted professors and administrators whom students accused of being unresponsive or insensitive.

As Holloway observed, “Our margin for error for saying the wrong thing is almost zero.” He candidly offered insights into how he responded to the “powerful and painful” demands of students, which he said reminded him of his own struggles and activism as a student. Listening was central to his handling of the situation, he said: “If I am not prepared to listen to students I should not be in this job, to be honest.” Promises to “do better” stood in stark

contrast to some other administrators' harsh and defensive responses, panelists noted (without naming specific people). While some administrators, faculty, and outside commentators have called protesters childish, immature, or politically correct, the panelists argued that these views are unfair, disingenuous, and ultimately unproductive. "I don't accept that in any way," said Chatelain, calling such reactions "a perfect mask" for inaction and shifting attention away from students' legitimate demands.

Douglas, too, defended activists, observing that "students are trying to form a political interest" to counter



“established” powers within higher education. Uneven power relations are bound to create frustrations for students, he stressed, which inevitably produce less than “civil” exchanges. Besides, he added, “[in]civility is a problematic charge because some of our faculty settings aren’t particularly civil, either.” Additionally, student political formations can appear alienating to faculty and administrators who sit somewhat removed from campus life. Like Chatelain, Holloway condemned administrators’ negative charges as “a complete smokescreen,” asserting that students’ political style is perfectly “age appropriate.” Royster added that

administrators “have to be the adults in the room,” to respond to student demands with understanding and compassion instead of condescension.

*Students from traditionally marginalized constituencies are forming communities to empower themselves, often using social media.*

As the title of the panel implied, however, the continuing lack of faculty diversity on college campuses remains a glaring problem in the profession, and it's one of the institutional problems

students most frequently cite. As the *Chronicle of Higher Education* demonstrated in a broad survey of higher education institutions across the country (published online October 12, 2015), less than half (44 percent) of full-time faculty members were women, even though female college students now outnumber men, and only 22 percent were minorities. The panelists made clear, in fact, that these issues naturally intertwine. How, panelists wondered, can students of color possibly feel valued if the faculty who teach and mentor them look nothing like them? Royster, perhaps most passionately, insisted that ignorance of

these figures can no longer excuse inaction on faculty diversification: “We know this is a problem. We know it well.” Haynes similarly criticized the “constant critique of institutional bloating,” deeming it a euphemism for faculty diversification.

The problems, of course, are often institutional and systemic, as the panelists recognized. The lack of faculty diversity isn't due to some nefarious, conscious, and deliberate attempt to keep minorities out of academia. But implicit bias, university corporatization, and adjunctification have marginalized qualified minority scholars, unable to find work despite the need for a more

representative faculty. Hiring minority scholars to contingent positions at the same time as we witness the devaluation of the humanities arguably distorts how we perceive the discipline and its challenges. Perhaps, as some in attendance implied, students do care about history but are constantly urged to become disciplined workers rather than critical thinkers—or come to believe critical thinking isn't important to employers.

Overall, the panelists seemed concerned but cautiously optimistic. Clearly, much work remains if faculty and administrators are to properly address student concerns about fairness,

inclusion, and diversity. But Royster, who recounted frequently being mistaken for a maid, nonetheless argued that “faith in possibilities,” along with ongoing pressure from socially conscious students, scholars of traditionally marginalized communities, and their allies, might gradually produce a more harmonious, diverse, and dignified learning and working environment.

*Eladio Bobadilla is a PhD student in American history at Duke University. You can follow him on Twitter @e\_b\_bobadilla.*

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***Have a  
Question about  
the Past?  
AskHistorians.***

**Sadie Bergen**

**W**hy are there so many medieval paintings of people battling large snails?

This is the top question on one of the largest and most heavily trafficked



online history forums in the world, AskHistorians, which, according to its rules, seeks to “provide serious, academic-level answers” to anyone who asks a historical question. Located on the website aggregator Reddit, it is a platform that allows users to contribute content of all stripes—from videos of animals to personal stories—to be voted “up” or “down” by any of the site’s users.

AskHistorians is a digital history project that is both remarkably simple and incredibly unlikely: an independent clearinghouse without traditional scholarly credentials or the backing of an academic institution that nonetheless

promises trustworthy answers to good historical questions. Like Reddit itself, AskHistorians—with over 400,000 subscribers and 60,000 unique visitors a day—is a dynamic space that relies on the active participation of its users. But, unlike Reddit, which prides itself on being a meritocratic online space where all content is created equal until voted up or down, AskHistorians is heavily moderated by a team of dedicated volunteers who enforce strict standards of scholarly rigor and civility.

Four of these moderators, along with Monash University's Margaret Harris, led a session on AskHistorians at this year's annual meeting, called

“AskHistorians’: Outreach and Its Challenges in an Online Space.” The session used AskHistorians as a case study to think about what it takes to sustain an open learning community and a culture of curiosity on the Internet, where an unwritten rule is “Don’t read the comments.” “The Internet levels the playing field even when it shouldn’t,” Harris said. “Internet spaces make holding authority difficult.” In other words, when everyone is given an equal space to speak, how do we decide who to listen to?

Because users are identified only by a chosen username, AskHistorians has

had to develop internal standards of expertise. A user can become a certified specialist or a “flaired” user (identified by a colored banner listing a particular area of expertise next to the name) not on the basis of academic qualifications, but on the quality of their answers to three questions posed on the forum. The moderators, who have themselves gone through this process of internal accreditation, judge the answers against a set of straightforward criteria. Good answers must be in-depth, grounded in legitimate sources, and fully contextualized. Answers by flaired users on AskHistorians are frequently the length of standard undergraduate essays

and include links to sources of supplementary information.

But it's not only the flaired users who participate in AskHistorians. As panelist Chris Das Neves explained, the moderators have to “set and actively enforce a strict set of rules” in order to keep the forum from “devolving into chaos.” Some of these rules include bans on discussions of politics from the last 20 years, personal anecdotes, jokes, political agendas or moralizing, plagiarism, hostility or rudeness, and bigoted language. In addition, certain types of questions are not tolerated, including “poll” questions that prompt answers to questions like “Who was the

best general in history?” and questions that contain implicit assumptions or biases.



Decretals of Gregory IX with gloss of Bernard of Pa  
10 E IV, f. 107r, Britis

*A knight battles a snail in the margins*  
Determining all when questions or  
genealogical answers violate this set of rules is not

always straightforward, and the moderators rely on one another to settle the disputes that inevitably arise. Further, rules are never finalized, and the moderators routinely set aside space on the site to explain their rationale and allow users to weigh in. Harris explained that by giving users both “access to information and control over the process of finding it,” AskHistorians has found a solution to the fundamental problem of authority in an online community grounded in the encouragement of curiosity.

What is perhaps most remarkable about AskHistorians to a scholar who works within traditional academic

spaces is that the credibility a user might accrue cannot extend beyond the site's invisible walls. Your AskHistorians expertise badge won't translate anywhere else. The would-be scholars on the forum (some of whom *are* in fact scholars, but many just enthusiastic history buffs) offer their expertise outside the academy because they would prefer to flex their intellectual muscle without the attendant obligations and expectations of a traditional academic career. In fact, AskHistorians is an appealing space for many because it avoids the traditional gatekeepers to an academic environment. According to Das Neves, "Simply because we are



perceived as a product of the Internet engaged with academia, rather than the other way around,” AskHistorians is considered a comfortable space for people who might be wary of traditional academic venues.

AskHistorians is, in effect, a training ground for historical thinking facilitated by the moderators and experts. When you ask a question that is poorly framed or violates one of the site’s rules, you are often prompted by a moderator to ask it in a different way. If you apply to become a flaired user by sending the moderators three of your answers, they provide feedback. The discussions that take place below a question teach crucial

lessons: how history is researched, how historiography develops and changes over time, and, most importantly, how answering historical questions well requires more than getting the facts right.

In a moment when digital history is increasingly prominent and when knowledge is disseminated via slick websites and digital programs, it is important to remember that the historical legwork—research, debate among scholars, refinement of arguments, and so on—can be scrubbed out to ensure a clear result, unintentionally perpetuating the sense that the answers and conclusions

historians come to are inevitable. Instead, AskHistorians is the rare digital project that captures the process as well as the result of asking historical questions.

Although people all over the world access AskHistorians, its users, like those of Reddit, are mostly men between the ages of 18 and 35 from the United States. Because the flaired users are drawn from this base, there are few with expertise in such areas as gender and women's history or the histories of non-Western regions. Similarly, because users' interests drive the forum's content, as Harris put it, AskHistorians "probably has the largest collection of

random information about Hitler on the Internet.” Furthermore, Reddit’s format allows popular topics to be upvoted to the detriment of those that users are less interested in engaging with. Harris explained that this system may “punish subaltern members of the audience not just by silencing their answers but by discouraging them from asking the questions that might have those unpopular answers.”

It is an ongoing process, but Danielle Ciccone and her fellow moderators are committed to enacting active “practices of inclusion” that they hope will move the community toward greater diversity without becoming prescriptive. To

achieve this, the moderators not only have to disrupt problematic user activity but also encourage and facilitate discussions in underrepresented areas by recruiting new experts and intervening more on the level of content. They have to perform the dual roles of disciplinarians and facilitators, working to simultaneously combat and encourage the principle of heterodoxy that makes the Internet both a dangerous and a groundbreaking space for historical education. For Ciccone, it is precisely because of the “revolutionary” capacity of AskHistorians that the caretakers of the

site have a responsibility “to open up the process of history to a wide audience.”

So why *are* there so many medieval paintings of people battling large snails? The answer, like most historical answers, is complicated and contested. You can find it on AskHistorians.

*Sadie Bergen is editorial assistant in the AHA's publications department.*



## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: 2016 BOOK PRIZES

The American Catholic Historical Association is pleased to announce its 2016 book prize competitions. Submissions for the **Shea Book Prize** for General Catholic history, the **Marraro Book Prize** for Italian history, and the **Koenig Book Prize** for Catholic biography are now being accepted.

For more details, visit [achahistory.org/awards](http://achahistory.org/awards)

ADVOCACY

***From the  
National  
Coalition for  
History***

***Federal Funding for  
History Holds  
Steady***

Lee White



On December 18, 2015, Congress approved a \$1.15 trillion omnibus appropriations bill that will fund the federal government for the rest of fiscal year 2016. The vote in the House was 316–113; in the Senate, it was 65–33. President Obama signed the bill into law (PL 114-113) the same day.

To the right is a chart showing funding trends over the past three fiscal years to provide historical perspective. Across the board, our programs generally were either level-funded or received small increases this fiscal year compared to last. Funding has become a constant issue in recent years, but the fact that

our interests survived intact should be considered a victory in this budget climate. Here are some highlights:

Of particular note is level funding for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). The original appropriations bill considered in the House Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee would have cut NHPRC's FY '16 budget by 40 percent from the FY '15 level of \$5 million to \$3 million. This crisis allowed NCH to work with the contacts gained from the History Caucus, and the cut was rescinded at the House Appropriations Committee markup. The NHPRC was

the only program in the entire bill to have funding restored. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) received \$7.3 million in its operating expenses budget.

**Budget Trends for History, Archival and Education Programs (FY 14-FY 16)**  
(updated 12/18/15)

<b>Agency</b>	<b>FY 14</b>	<b>FY 15</b>	<b>FY 16</b>	<b>Ch</b>
<b>National Archives (Operating Expenses)</b>	370	365	372.3	
National Historical Publications & Records Commission	4.5	5	5	
<b>International Education &amp; Foreign Language Studies</b>	72	72	72	
Title VI-A&B (Domestic Programs)	65	65	65	
Fulbright-Hays (Overseas Programs)	7	7	7	
<b>National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)</b>	146	146	148	
<b>Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)</b>	226.8	227.8	230	
Library Programs	181	181	182.7	
Museum Programs	30	30	31.2	
<b>Smithsonian Institution</b>	805	819	840	
Salaries & Expenses	647	675	696	
Facilities Capital	158	144	144	
<b>Wilson Center for International Scholars</b>	10.5	10.5	10.5	
<b>National Park Service</b>				
Historic Preservation Programs	56.4	56.4	65.4	
National Recreation and Preservation	60.8	63	63	
Heritage Partnership Programs	18.3	20.3	19.8	
American Battlefield Protection Program	8.9	8.9	10	
<b>Library of Congress</b>	579	591	600	

Amounts are in millions of \$

Change = Difference between FY 14 and FY 16

In addition, level funding for the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays International

Education programs should also be considered a major accomplishment. In August, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved a \$25 million (35 percent) reduction for these programs. We worked closely with our allies at the National Humanities Alliance and the Coalition for International Education to successfully advocate against these potentially devastating cuts. In the omnibus FY '16 budget both Title VI (\$65.1 million) and Fulbright-Hays (\$7.2 million) received level funding.

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) received a nearly \$2 million funding increase, to \$147.9 million. This amounts to the first

increase in the NEH's budget in the past six years.

The Smithsonian Institution received \$21 million more than last year. The Library of Congress will receive a \$9 million increase this fiscal year and has seen a \$21 million increase over the past two fiscal years. The Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) received a modest \$2.2 million increase.

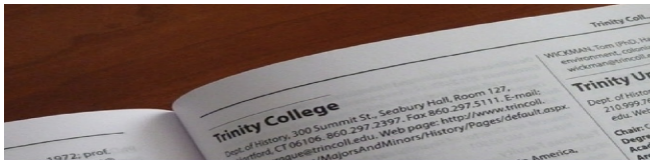
*Funding has been a constant issue in recent years, but the fact that our interests survived intact*

*should be considered a victory in  
this budget climate.*

The Historic Preservation Fund at the National Park Service received a \$9 million increase. However, \$8 million of that funding is dedicated to a new grant program to preserve Civil Rights Movement historic sites.

In February, the FY '17 appropriations process begins anew. NCH and the historical community will have an additional challenge in ensuring that the new K–12 history and civics education programs that were authorized in the Every Student Succeeds Act are fully funded in their first fiscal year.

*Lee White is executive director of the  
National Coalition for History.*



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*Top row, from left: Sarah Williams, Davarian E Renfro. Second row: Jason Wolfe, Claire Arcerow: Amanda Hall, Jonathan Lurie, Yi Sun, Sk Rupp, Ron Johnson, Anne Rees.*

FEATURES

# ***The Natty Professor***

## ***Looking Like a Historian at #aha16***

**Vanessa M. Holden  
Photographs by Marc  
Monaghan**

*Editor's note: A shorter version of this article ran on the AHA's blog during the 2016 annual meeting. It proved so popular that we decided to run the full version in Perspectives.*

The annual meeting of the American Historical Association is now a memory. From across North America and the world, professional historians, teachers, graduate students, archivists, and laypeople gathered in Atlanta, Georgia. Some attended meeting workshops and academic panels. Others were there to sit on organizational committees and to do the business of the discipline. A significant contingent arrived for the annual round of job interviews for tenure-track positions in the field, and a great many thronged events dedicated to career development. But very few blended into the local population of

Atlanta denizens when they left the soaring atriums of the hotels in downtown Atlanta. To some extent this was because annual meeting attendees often forget to remove their name tags when heading outside. But it goes beyond name tags: it is hard to deny that we historians have a look.

Of course the historian's wardrobe has changed dramatically over the years, evolving along with the face(s) of the discipline. While the top results for a Google image search for "history professor" depict tweed, elbow patches, bowties, gray beards, and, almost exclusively, white men, the profession hasn't looked that monolithic in

decades. Last summer, Sara Pritchard, [Adeline Koh](#), [Rusul Alrubail](#), Michelle Moravec, and many others challenged this perception with the Twitter hashtag [#ILookLikeAProfessor](#). Academics who didn't fit the archetypal profile tweeted their experiences, sometimes with pictures of themselves, to show what "professor" might bring to mind today.

"Looking like a professor" has other connotations, too. For many historians who are invisible in that Google image search, getting dressed for work is anything but a utilitarian practice. Often for women, those who are gender nonconforming, people of color, and those with disabilities, getting dressed

comes with layered political and social meaning. The following categories are meant to be playful, but they also highlight the ways that some of us take on established norms without saying a word every time we leave our conference hotel rooms. While we can always expect wardrobe standards and classics at each winter's meeting, Atlanta saw some historians playfully gesturing to days past (thumbing their nose at the old patriarchy) and some issuing new declarations of the fierce and fashionable.

Some of us take on established norms without saying a word



every time we leave our  
conference hotel rooms.

## The Classics

**T**hese historians are established. They have tenure. They have book(s) featured at the Exhibit Hall. They sit on committees. They can be spotted at the hotel bar reminiscing with old graduate school chums, rushing to see a favorite student's presentation, or dashing off to their institution's interview suite. The adjective that best describes this set: comfortable. The masculine dresser will undoubtedly wear slightly oversized trousers with

light wrinkles from multiple days of wear, a solid button-down shirt, a lambswool V-neck sweater or a blazer in a solid color, black or brown trouser socks (though white athletic socks aren't out of the question), and black or brown slip-on shoes like loafers, sneakers in a solid color, or boat shoes. The feminine dresser also has a recognizable aesthetic. They're wearing a draped top that gestures toward mall-friendly mature fashions, leggings or black trousers, and sensible shoes. This look has carried many an academic through an entire career of AHA meetings.

## The Job Candidates

The best adjective to describe the Job Candidate's style: nervous. It doesn't matter if the Job Candidate has been to the annual meeting before, nervousness is tough not to wear on one's sleeve. The choice of clothing for the Job Candidate greatly exacerbates this fact. Oddly, the style for the Job Candidate hasn't changed in the history of the profession. Few historians wear suits with regularity. In fact, most job candidates will not sit across from a single interviewer who is wearing a suit. Yet, the off-the-rack, rarely worn, stiff interview suit remains the standard for interview wear. Pro tip: wear your suit at least twice before showing up to

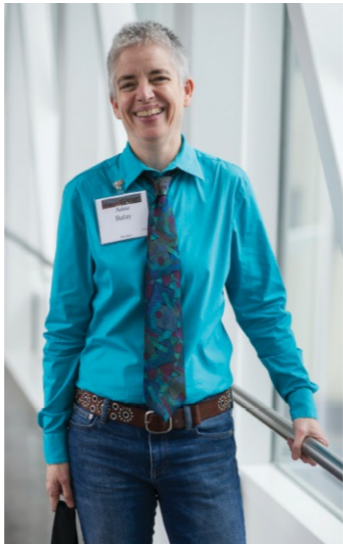
interview. Do the same with your shoes. Most dress shoes can be cruel if not properly broken in, and many a candidate has hobbled to their interview as a result. You're never not going to look nervous, but you can look slightly more comfortable in a suit you'll most likely never need as a professional in the field.

## The Up-and-Comers

**G**rad school is over! That dissertation is locked away! And to top it all off, they've done it: they have a tenure-track job. They have a mailbox among the faculty mailboxes now. Even if their colleagues regularly mistake

them for students or like to comment on how some of the books they've written are older than said Up-and-Comer, these encounters are the price they pay for that tenure-track paycheck. Which means "Hello, grown-up conference-wear!" One rule applies to all masculine, feminine, or androgynous dressers in this crew: they are wearing at least one item that cost no less than half of their rent in graduate school. That watch, that purse or bag, that necklace, those shoes? Repeat after me: TREAT. YO. SELF. The feminine Up-and-Comer typically wears a sheath dress or a pencil skirt in a solid color, a twinset or blazer, opaque tights, and sensible

heels that can go from classroom to conference panel. Their masculine counterpart wears a slightly better fitting version of the Classic's wardrobe: straight-leg trousers in denim or chino, a button-down shirt in a hip fabric like chambray or gingham, and business casual shoes or boots.



*Très chic: Anne Balay.*



*So unique: Brian Kwoba.*





Very sleek: Jack  
Greene Department

## Divas/Department Dons

Every department has one or even two of these put-together colleagues. They're of a certain age.

Their clothes fit like they were tailored (they were). They show up fashionably late to faculty meetings (because they can). They chair panels for younger scholars and then deliver comments that are better than any of the papers anyone just heard (they don't mean to, honest). Their shoes are well cobbled and sometimes have red soles. They smell good. They wear up-market versions of the Up-and-Comers' wardrobes gracefully. They excel at accessorizing. Think zany, trendy, large-framed specs. Think fur hats passed down from midcentury aunties. Think leather gloves in plum or teal or aubergine. Gray hair? Try gray crown of glory.

Patterns and prints? Yes. Mixed and matched by color family? Yes, please. They wear upscale basics and on-trend pieces that the Up-and-Comers aspire to.

## Dandies and Femmes

**D**andies and femmes are among the Classics, the Up-and-Comers, and the Divas and Dons. They don't always comply with gender norms. Rather than conforming to the notion that taking pleasure in one's clothing denotes less serious academic engagement, they have fun with conference fashion. Some play with hyper-gendered clothing and others

gesture toward the androgynous with aplomb. Some elaborate on the masculine styles of the archetypal demographic they're replacing. They're wearing wingtips. They're wearing tweed blazers. They're wearing bowties and pocket squares. Nothing says "I've been in the archive complicating my understanding" like facial hair and large spectacles. The femmes reject the dowdy required uniform of old and look past stalwart professional basics toward the bold. If they're in a sheath dress, it is in a daring pop of color and belted to perfection. If they're in heels (they often are), the adjective "sensible" belongs nowhere near them. Their heels

are fly, they are fierce, and whether or not they are sky high, they are high impact.

Thinking about how historians choose to present themselves is fun hotel bar chatter. But it is also important to consider how our looks, all of our many looks, have changed over the years. As new folks bring their take on professional wear to conference panels, roundtables, and even job interviews, they also bring themselves to classrooms, places where the changing faces of the profession certainly have an impact. Worry not, though! As beards and bowties make a comeback, spreading out from the world of

femmes and dandies, it is safe to say that elbow patches will always be in fashion.

*Vanessa M. Holden is assistant professor of history at Michigan State University.*

FEATURES

# *The Annual Meeting Blues*

## *An Unvarnished Personal History*

Allison Miller

**P**lenty of historians have nothing good to say about “the AHA”—what we at headquarters refer to as the annual meeting. It’s big and impersonal. It’s expensive to get to, and

registration fees can be higher than at regional conferences. And it's usually really cold outside.

To many, the annual meeting is cold inside, too. Graduate students and early career historians on the job market (both within and beyond the professoriate) might find it a chilly experience indeed.

I'm writing just after the annual meeting in Atlanta. All in all, I'd say it was the best I've ever attended, and it was my seventh. But I wasn't unemployed or underemployed. For the first time in five years, my eyes aren't glazed over from staring at the job wiki; I'm not almost broke from expenses



related to looking for a job; and I'm not in existential crisis because I'm *still* not sure why my research matters. For the four years when I was looking for a job, I hated the annual meeting. I was paranoid that everyone was judging me. I resented people from institutions more prestigious than mine. I was too stressed out to greet old friends and too lonely to meet new ones. Everything was riding on one or two interviews—everything.

I've written in *Perspectives* and on the AHA's blog, *AHA Today*, that I was actually having fun at the annual meeting without knowing it and that I wish I'd paid more attention to living within moments of camaraderie and

intellectual stimulation. But it's impossible to be blithe. The AHA knows that the psychological and emotional toll on historians looking for academic jobs is real, and it is a problem. In recent years, many search committees have taken steps to ease burdens on academic job seekers, and the AHA itself has been proactive in combating the idea that an academic job is the only viable career path for history PhDs through its Career Diversity for Historians initiative and the welter of career-oriented opportunities at the annual meeting itself. But for the moment, AHA interviews are often *the* goal of the fall semester. The presence of

new historians with fresh ideas should energize the meeting. But if many ABDs, contingent faculty, and postdocs feel too anxious to participate enthusiastically, it can't be good for the meeting, the AHA, or the discipline of history itself.

So I offer these reflections in the spirit of making a good thing good for more people. I'm not qualified to offer helpful tips on managing stress or depression, though I went through them. And I'm not going to rehearse the professional advice available on dozens of websites, though I encourage everyone—job seekers and advisers alike—to consult

them. Consider this an exercise in solidarity.

Let's set the time machine back to my first annual meeting on the academic market: January 5–8, 2012, in Chicago. I was ABD, with one interview—Grinnell College—and I felt sure I'd nail it. I'd gone to a progressive liberal arts college and therefore believed I knew everything about teaching in that environment. I also imagined plundering various budget lines to bring pet speakers to campus—money that alums told me was everywhere. That would surely impress the search committee.



John Vachon/FSA/OWI Photograph  
*Times Square on a rainy day, 1943*

The interview was fair at best. A member of the committee asked why I hadn't taken many women's history courses—a reasonable question, given that the job was in US women's history. "Rutgers is one of the top-ranked programs in women's and gender history, so the people who teach your reading courses are often women's historians," I said. The committee members nodded. *Good answer!* I was emboldened. "I didn't even pay attention in the one course in women's history I took," I said, laughing. *Bad answer.* Faces fell. Next.

Chicago was also a year of tension with one of my best pals from grad school.

We were in entirely different fields, but I couldn't understand why she got five AHA interviews to my one. My resentment boiled over after the meeting, and we didn't speak for about three years. The academic job market didn't cause our falling out, but it was the backdrop and the soundtrack. We're good now, but not being there for each other for that long was tough for both of us.

Fast forward to the 2013 annual meeting in New Orleans. Immediately gaga for the city, I took long ambles around the French Quarter and Broadmoor, the neighborhood where I was staying. One of the meeting hotels

hosted the Sazerac Bar, known for its namesake cocktail and oak-paneled elegance. I went with a small posse, still in my smart interview attire. This time, I thought, I just might have aced it.

Berkeley: a job in US history, specialization open, and me with a published article, a defended dissertation, and a reality-based teaching portfolio. The interview flowed organically and didn't feel like an inquisition. I got a golden-ticket call a couple of days later from the search chair, but I didn't end up inheriting the chocolate factory.



*I went to the Sazerac Bar in  
New Orleans with a small posse,  
still in my smart interview attire.  
This time, I thought, I just might  
have aced it.*

Not getting that job was traumatic, mainly because of the psychological, physical, and financial exhaustion of that year's academic job season. But one of my mentors, who had a friend on the search committee, had also made a cryptic remark before the campus visit: "They know you're a poet. You have to show them you're a historian." With my

grad-student paranoia, I convinced myself that that came straight from the search committee. I didn't get the job; ergo, I didn't show anyone I was a historian. Maybe my work didn't matter. I won a postdoc at the University of Southern California that year, so I wasn't stranded in unemployment. But the self-doubt remained.

And with that at the back of my head, I couldn't bring myself to get excited for Washington, DC, site of the 2014 annual meeting. But there was more. Seven days before the first of my two interviews, my stepfather died, less than four months after being diagnosed with

pancreatic cancer. Just before he passed, I'd e-mailed the search chairs (Jana Lipman at Tulane and Rebecca McLennan at Berkeley) that I might not make it to the annual meeting, and both kindly offered to let me interview via teleconference. Two days later, I wrote back and said I'd be at the annual meeting after all. With him gone, I had no excuse not to show up. (Or so I thought.)

Sometimes I look back at those last few hours with my stepdad and take comfort from the fact that he died thinking I'd get a job at Tulane or Berkeley. But I couldn't deal with the annual meeting. It was bitterly cold and

icy, making the hotels uncomfortably drafty. Exhausted, I found myself spacing out during conversations. For the first time, I ran into people I knew at every turn, but I didn't want to talk. A friend treated me to McDonald's, hoping I'd eat *something*.

I all but crumbled under grief-induced spaciness and hurt, unable to let interview irregularities roll off my back. One search committee member fell asleep. Another asked tripartite questions, only to have a colleague interrupt as I tried to answer. An academic prominent in my field told me to "riff" on a topic tangential to my work. The interviews went so poorly I

thought I must have unconsciously thrown them, and I was still haunted by the idea that my work didn't matter, that I was a mere poet.

The 2015 annual meeting was in New York, which I thought of as my hometown. But again, everything was riding on one interview, and that made it hard to enjoy the city. I was fortunate to be considered by an ultra-professional search committee, and everything about the interview went smoothly. I was able to greet friends, even the ones who'd been in academic jobs for a few years, which would have inflamed jealousy previously. I was able to open up about deciding that it would

be my last year on the academic job market—grad school friends and many faculty congratulated me, while another mentor stunned me by saying he was “disappointed.”

But I did choose life as a historian beyond the professoriate, and not as a consolation prize—I turned down the tenure-track job offer that emerged from that one interview to work with a team, put my editing skills to use, and evangelize on history’s behalf. And now that I work in the AHA’s publications department, one of my missions is to draw graduate and early career historians into participating in the annual meeting and the life of the Association more

generally. I hope you can see by our coverage of Atlanta that 2016 was a great year to be at “the AHA,” whether you were considering a career within or beyond the professoriate, or both. There are some things that do need to change to make the annual meeting more welcoming. I encourage you to become active in the Association, perhaps through the activities of our Graduate and Early Career Committee. The AHA can’t solve every problem facing the discipline, but “the AHA” can be a place where historians come together because we care deeply about history.

Solidarity.

*Allison Miller is editor of Perspectives on*

History. *She tweets @Cliopticon.*



FEATURES

***The Troubled  
Academic Job  
Market for  
History***

**Robert B. Townsend and  
Julia Brookins**

he academic job market in history remains quite challenging for recent PhDs, and evidence from the AHA's *Directory of History Departments*,

*Historical Organizations, and*  
*Historians (the Directory)*

**T** indicates that these challenges are likely to persist. Among the signs of difficulty for academic-job candidates today and into the near future: (1) the number of positions advertised with the AHA over the past year fell for the third year in a row, (2) the number of tenured and tenure-track faculty lines fell slightly over the past five years, and (3) evidence indicates that a relatively small share of full-time faculty will be approaching retirement within the next decade.<sup>1</sup>

The data reported here represent academic positions that have been

advertised with the AHA; this is a subset within the broad range of jobs that historians pursue and perform. An in-depth study conducted by the AHA in 2013 found that 24 percent of those who had earned a history doctorate 3 to 15 years earlier held positions beyond the professoriate.<sup>2</sup> The AHA's ongoing Career Diversity for Historians project highlights the extensive scope of such opportunities and provides professional development resources for both history doctoral students and graduate programs.<sup>3</sup> Finally, many positions in postsecondary history teaching—at two-year colleges, for example—are advertised primarily through

institutional and local job boards, and are not part of the data set in this analysis.

## An Anemic Job Market

Job openings posted through the AHA provide the most visible evidence of the challenges facing historians seeking academic employment. In the past academic year, job postings fell 8 percent to 587 openings (from 638 in the 2013–14 academic year, fig. 1). This marked the third annual decline and a 45 percent reduction from the prerecession peak of 1,064 advertisements in the 2011–12 academic year.<sup>4</sup>

Fig. 1: Number of New History PhDs and Advertised Job Openings, 1974–75 to 2014–15



Notably, for the first time in 41 years, the number of jobs advertised with the AHA fell below half the number of PhDs conferred in the previous year. Approximately 1,183 new PhDs were conferred in history in the 2013–14 academic year.<sup>5</sup>

An added challenge is the imbalance between the specializations among new job openings in comparison to recent PhDs, particularly for specialists in US history. Among job openings that specified a particular geographic specialization, 21.8 percent sought a specialist in the history of North America, significantly below the share of history PhDs—36.5 percent—specializing in that field in 2014. Or, put more plainly, 128 positions advertised with the AHA sought a geographic specialty in US history a year after 433 people graduated with US history doctorates.<sup>6</sup>

In comparison, the percentage of job advertisements for other geographic fields were comparable to their shares among recent PhDs. For instance, 14.8 percent of advertisers sought a specialist in European history, which was just below the 19.4 percent share of PhD recipients in 2014. Another 9.0 percent of advertisers searched for an Asian history specialist (slightly higher than the 6.6 percent share of new PhDs), and around 5 percent each for specialists in the history of Latin America and the Middle East or North Africa (slightly below the 6.6 and 6.2 percent shares, respectively, among new PhDs). Another 4.4 percent of job ads were for a historian of Africa (as compared to 2.7

percent of new PhDs).

Aside from postings that specified a geographic focus, nearly a third were either open or focused primarily on a topical or professional specialty. The largest of the topical specializations was the history of religion (accounting for 3.6 percent of the advertised positions). Digital history was the predominant professional skill sought by advertisers (serving as the primary criteria for 2.6 percent of the openings, and mentioned as a beneficial skill in an additional 5.5 percent of the listings).

## The Trend over the Past 15 Years



Recent trends in the AHA's *Directory*

**R**underscore some of the larger currents in the profession that are responsible for the depressed rates of new job openings. Questions have persisted about the effects of the Great Recession and whether full-time faculty lines in history are being eliminated or replaced with part-time and adjunct appointments.

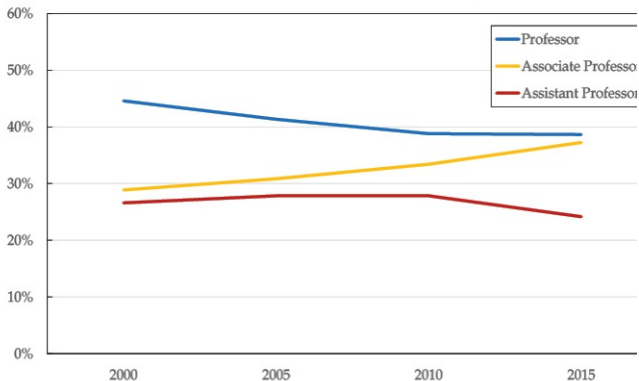
The *Directory* currently contains entries from 640 college and university history departments. Faculty listings for 556 US history departments from the past 15 years provide a partial answer to these questions. From 2000 to 2010, the number of full-time tenured or

tenure-track faculty members increased (from 8,280 to 8,790), but by 2015, the number had contracted slightly (falling to 8,751).

Among the full-time faculty members listed in the departments, there was also a notable shift in balance between the ranks (fig. 2). In 2015, 24 percent of full-time faculty members were at the rank of assistant professor—a drop of 4 percentage points from 2010 and the lowest level in the 15 years surveyed. In comparison, 37 percent of full-time faculty were at the rank of associate professor (up 8 percentage points from 2000), with 39 percent at the rank of

full professor (also the lowest level since 2000).

Fig. 2: Share of Full-Time History Faculty Listed at Rank in the AHA *Directory*, 2000 to 2015



The *Directory* does not offer enough evidence to answer questions about whether there has been a significant increase in the number of faculty in part-time and adjunct appointments,

but it is nevertheless an excellent source for understanding issues related to history departments at four-year institutions and their long-term staffing picture.<sup>7</sup> Among the four-year institutions whose departments provide *Directory* entries in the annual volume, multi-year, full-time faculty members are the most likely to be represented. Departments appear less likely to include lists of faculty members on short-term contracts and in positions that are often filled at the last minute. (For comparison, while 10 percent of the listed faculty in the *Directory* were employed in part-time or adjunct positions, a recent survey of faculty at

four-year institutions found approximately 28 percent of faculty members employed in those positions.)<sup>8</sup> The number of faculty listed in part-time and adjunct positions shrank from 2010 to 2015—falling from 1,596 to 1,397 of the listed faculty (close to the 1,394 listed in the 2000 *Directory*).

Faculty listed in joint appointments are not included in the faculty counts above, since the nature of the appointments and the division of responsibilities between departments could not be determined. But the trend here is notable, with the number rising from 654 in 2000 to 802 in 2010, and reaching 862 in the current *Directory*.

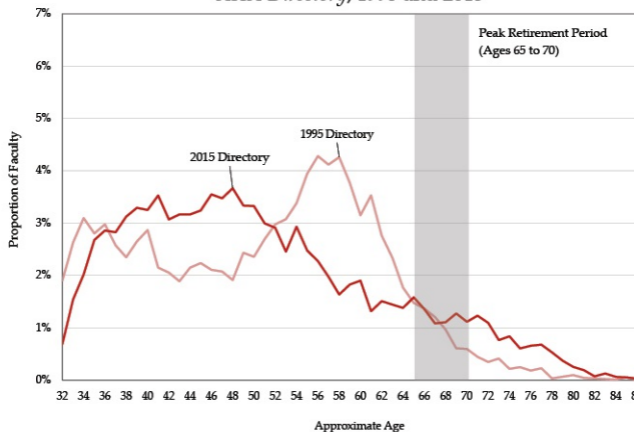
Whether this trend reflects a move to share labor costs among college and university departments that otherwise could not afford to hire, or a growth in interdisciplinarity, remains a subject for further exploration.

## The End of the Boomer Bubble

The recent drop in the share of faculty at the assistant professor level points to a larger shift in demographics, which suggests deeper challenges for new PhDs looking to enter academia in the near future. From the late 1990s to 2008, job advertisements listed with the AHA

reached unprecedented heights as a result of a significant wave of retirements. The wave of faculty members approaching retirement was evident in the age distribution in the 1995 *Directory*; almost 40 percent of faculty members were roughly between the ages of 54 and 65 (fig. 3).<sup>9</sup>

Fig. 3: Approximate Age Distribution of Full Time Faculty in the AHA Directory, 1995 and 2015



But as of 2015, that wave has largely passed, and lingers as a significant increase only in the share of full-time faculty over the age of 70 (which has risen from 7 percent in 1995 to 17 percent in 2015).<sup>10</sup> An unusually small percentage of full-time faculty are now



approaching retirement. As of 2015, 22 percent were ages 54 to 64—the lowest recorded level in that cohort since the 1980 *Directory*, when the end of a wave of hiring in the 1960s and early 1970s meant that just 19 percent of the faculty were approaching retirement (and only 2 percent of the faculty were over the age of 70).

The current age profile of historians in academia represents a significant challenge for doctoral students focused on academic employment and the departments preparing them, as it suggests that the ebb in open tenure-track positions is likely to linger over the next decade. Barring a significant

increase in student enrollments to create pressure for new faculty, the demographics of departments today indicate that there will be relatively few full-time positions opening up to replace retiring faculty.

*Robert B. Townsend is the author of History's Babel: Scholarship, Professionalization, and the Historical Enterprise, 1880–1940 (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2013). When he is not studying history, he oversees the Washington office of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Humanities Indicators. Julia Brookins is special projects coordinator at the AHA.*

## Notes

1. For analyses of the past two years of jobs data, see Allen Mikaelian, “The Academic Job Market’s Jagged Line: Number of Ads Placed Drops for Second Year,” *Perspectives on History*, September 2014, [historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/september-2014/the-academic-job-markets-jagged-line](http://historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/september-2014/the-academic-job-markets-jagged-line); and Allen Mikaelian, “The 2013 Jobs Report: Number of AHA Ads Dip, New Experiment Offers Expanded View,” *Perspectives on History*, January 2014,

history/january-2014/the-2013-jobs-report-number-of-aha-ads-dip-new-experiment-offers-expanded-view.

2. L. Maren Wood and Robert B. Townsend, *The Many Careers of History PhDs: A Study of Job Outcomes, Spring 2013*, available through the AHA website at [historians.org/manycareers](http://historians.org/manycareers).

3. See [historians.org/careerdiversity](http://historians.org/careerdiversity).

4. While there are other outlets for job advertisements in the discipline (H-Net, institutional websites, and local jobs websites for many short-term contract positions), recent research indicates that “societies’ job listings data are useful measures of the demand for new PhD recipients.” Ronald G. Ehrenberg, “The

Usefulness of Societies' Job Listings Data," Academy Data Forum, [www.amacad.org/content/research/dataFi](http://www.amacad.org/content/research/dataFi) i=21673.

5. The annual Survey of Earned Doctorates ([www.sedsurvey.org](http://www.sedsurvey.org)) provides the best measure of new history PhDs potentially entering the job market, since it allows new doctoral degree recipients to self-define the discipline of their degree and captures students who are earning degrees outside core history departments. Tabulations for the years 1973 to 2013 were drawn using the National Science Foundation's WebCASPAR system at [ncesdata.nsf.gov/webcaspar](http://ncesdata.nsf.gov/webcaspar). The

estimate for 2013–14 is based on the growth between 2012–13 and 2013–14 in the number of reported history PhDs in the narrower Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) degree completions survey, downloaded from the IPEDS Data Center at [nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter](https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter).

6. Comparative data taken from the 2014 federal Survey of Earned Doctorates, Table 13, available at [www.nsf.gov/statistics/2016/nsf16300/](https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2016/nsf16300/)

7. The entries are (with a single exception) from four-year institutions, meaning we have no data on staffing patterns at the two-year institutions that serve so many American college students

and employ many non-tenure-track instructors.

8. Susan White, Raymond Chu, and Roman Czujko, *The 2012–13 Survey of Humanities Departments at Four-Year Institutions* (College Park, MD: Statistical Research Center, American Institute of Physics, 2014). Study conducted for the American Academy of Arts Sciences' Humanities Indicators Project. See Table HDS-H2 at [humanitiesindicators.org/content/indicator=626](http://humanitiesindicators.org/content/indicator=626).

9. The approximate age of each faculty member was calculated by taking the year of doctoral degree listed in the *Directory* and adding 32 years—the

median age at degree found among senior faculty in a survey of 2,240 associate and full professors listed in the 2012 *Directory*. The median age of all new history PhDs reported in the Survey of Earned Doctorates has been two to three years higher than this for the past three decades, but the findings in the survey suggest that scholars who are younger when they complete the PhD are more likely to find their way into tenure-track positions. See “What Makes a Successful Academic Career in History? A Field Report from the Higher Ranks,” *Perspectives on History*, December 2012, [historians.org/publications-and-](http://historians.org/publications-and-)



[directories/perspectives-on-history/december-2012/what-makes-a-successful-academic-career-in-history.](#)

The median age for new history PhDs has been consistently between 34.5 and 35.5 years, according to annual issues of the summary report *Doctorate Recipients from US Universities*, available at [www.nsf.gov/statistics/doctorates.](http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/doctorates)

10. The findings here appear to confirm a recent survey that found three-quarters of middle to late-career faculty planned to work past the age of 65. Colleen Flaherty, "[Working Way Past 65,](#)" *Inside Higher Ed*, July 17, 2013, [www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/07/17/working-way-past-65](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/07/17/working-way-past-65), [suggest-baby-boomer-faculty-are-](#)

putting-retirement.

## Grants and Fellowships



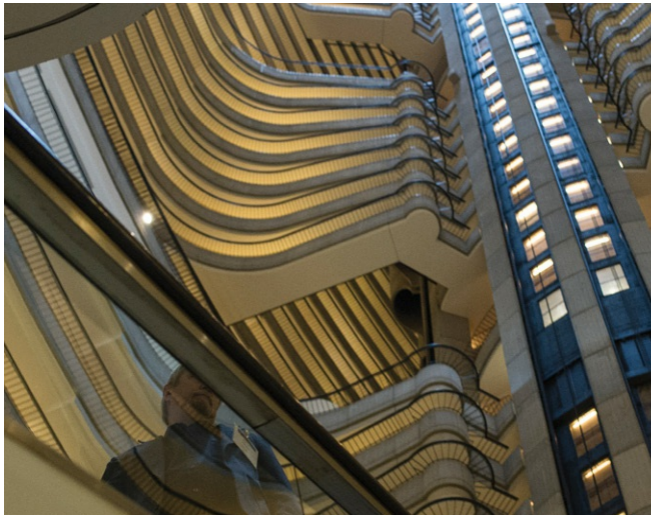
Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress

The AHA is pleased to support the study and exploration of history through our annual grant and fellowship programs. For more information, visit [www.historians.org/grants](http://www.historians.org/grants)

ANNUAL MEETING

***A-HA Moments  
in Atlanta***

Jon Middaugh



*A “whale-bone corset”*

ATL to DCA, delayed,  
affords post rush reflection.

Welcoming, conscientious, practical  
program,  
gracious hosts, helpful guides;  
tasty hors d'oeuvres, cool bartenders,  
energized organizers, running strong.

At an introductory gathering,  
the older veteran asks,  
“what are you looking  
for at the conference?”

Responding, the young attendee  
turns toward her friend  
and slowly mouths, “J-O-B.”

Meanwhile, hotel layouts inspire,  
offering humorous, navigational joy

stepping down into a  
Marriott's whale-bone corset.

Up (down?) to skyway,  
Oh that's right, back  
down to the level  
with the particular ballroom.

Pursuing variety this year,  
military, Irish, world, Latin  
American, Freemasons, LGBT,  
Tuning,  
and triple Pulitzer winner.

Oh Saturday night buzz,  
exhale, smile, even revel . . .  
unless you must present  
or catch early flight.

Confederate hub, Sherman's present,  
South, and new South,

Coca Cola's Rise, MLK's

Prize, Human Rights, Hartfield's

lights fade with Atlanta,  
and Clio's multifaceted musings.

*Jon Middaugh works as a historian at the US Army Center for Military History in Washington, DC. He is writing a history of the Army National Guard in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He holds a PhD in history from Washington State University.*



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GREAT AMERICAN MIDDLE CLASS (1930-2010)**

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Stanley F. Stasch, Ph.D.  
Loyola University Chicago

ANNUAL MEETING

***Submit a  
Proposal for the  
2017 Annual  
Meeting***

**T**he AHA is now accepting proposals for the 2017 annual meeting, which will take place January 5–8, 2017, in Denver, Colorado. The Program Committee seeks submissions on the histories of all

places, periods, and topics and on the uses of history in a wide variety of venues.

Proposals for the 131st annual meeting must be submitted electronically by 11:59 p.m. PST, February 15, 2016. See the proposal page on the AHA website for details: <http://bit.ly/1njyltx>.



Some tips for a successful proposal:

- ◆ The 2017 meeting will move to 90-minute sessions. To accommodate this change, most sessions will be limited to four speakers plus a chair. (Remember, all historians from the United States presenting at the annual meeting must be AHA members.)
- ◆ Be creative! We invite proposals for sessions in a variety of formats and encourage lively interaction among presenters and with the audience.
- ◆ While the annual meeting has a theme, the Program Committee does not consider proposals' relation to the theme when evaluating them.

◆ Think of your proposal like a grant proposal. Not everyone reading it will be a specialist in your field. Your abstract should explain why your proposal is important, what kind of conversation you hope to provoke, and how the presentations fit together to serve that goal.

◆ A good chair moderates the discussion and stimulates conversation during the question-and-answer part of the session. Contrary to popular belief, the Program Committee does not favor proposals with well-known chairs.

◆ Consider proposing a poster. With creative thinking, any topic can be

presented at the poster session. The key is to craft a proposal that explains how you will take advantage of the format.

*Think of your proposal like a grant application. Your abstract should explain why your proposal is important, what kind of conversation you hope to provoke, and how the presentations fit together to serve that goal.*

# Carnegie Mellon University

## Center for Africanamerican Urban Studies and the Economy Postdoctoral Fellowship 2016-2017

Postdoctoral Fellowship/African American Urban: The **Department of History** at Carnegie Mellon University seeks a scholar in the humanities and/or social sciences doing history-related research in African American urban studies.

The appointment is for nine months beginning August 22, 2016. The fellowship carries a stipend of \$50,000, and \$5,000 for research, benefits and other expenses. The fellow will pursue his/her own research project; interact with faculty, graduate and undergraduate students; and collaborate with the director on current center projects.

Application: Send a cover letter, c.v., two letters of reference, writing sample, and a three-to-five page project proposal. The proposal should include a project description, chapter outline, explanation of the significance to relevant fields, and plans and goals for the fellowship term.

Deadline: **March 31, 2016.** (Notification of decision by April 20)  
Women and minorities are urged to apply. EEO/AA.

<p><u>Send all application documents to:</u> Professor Joe William Trotter, Jr. CAUSE, Department of History Baker Hall 244 Carnegie Mellon University 5000 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3890</p>
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# AHA ACTIVITIES

## *Actions by the AHA Council, June 2015 to January 2016*

**T**hrough e-mail conversation from June 8, 2015, to December 23, 2015, and at meetings on January 7 and 10, 2016, the Council of the American Historical Association made the following



decisions or took the following actions:

- ◆ Approved a statement protesting proposals pending in the Wisconsin state legislature that threaten to undermine several long-standing features of the state's higher education system: shared governance, tenure, and academic freedom.
- ◆ Approved the appointment of Professor Claudio Saunt (Univ. of Georgia) to the board of editors of the *American Historical Review*.
- ◆ Approved the expansion of the Digital History Working Group from five to eight members.

◆ Approved the following members of the 2017 Annual Meeting Program Committee: Carl Ashley (US Dept. of State), John L. Brooke (Ohio State Univ.), Kate Brown (Univ. of Maryland, Baltimore County), Erika Bsumek (Univ. of Texas at Austin), Zephyr Frank (Stanford Univ.), Katherine French (Univ. of Michigan), Robert Hardmond (Brooklyn Tech High Sch.), Dina Khoury (George Washington Univ.), Joy Schulz (Metropolitan Comm. Coll.), Jonathan Skaff (Shippensburg Univ.), Valentina Tikoff (DePaul Univ.), and Kerry Ward (Rice Univ.).

◆ Approved signing on to a letter from NDD United to members of Congress urging them not to cut funding for nondefense discretionary programs.

◆ Approved revisions to the Annual Meeting Guidelines to accommodate a shift to 90-minute sessions beginning with the 2017 annual meeting, including giving priority to sessions that foster discussion, requiring organizers of each session to devote at least 30 minutes to discussion, and limiting panels to a maximum of four participants in addition to a chair.

- ◆ Approved the recommendation of the *American Historical Review* search committee.
- ◆ Approved joining with other scholarly societies in signing a revised version of the American Political Science Association's statement of concern regarding the Texas Campus Carry law, which introduces serious safety threats on college campuses with a resulting harmful effect on professors and students. (See the statement at [www.politicalsciencenow.com/apsa-statement-on-campus-carry/](http://www.politicalsciencenow.com/apsa-statement-on-campus-carry/).)

- ◆ Approved the AHA endorsement of the World History Institute, to be held July 18–22, 2016, at California State University, Long Beach, sponsored by the Alliance for Learning in World History.
- ◆ Approved establishing the Palmegiano Prize in the History of Journalism.
- ◆ Approved the June 2015 Council meeting minutes.
- ◆ Approved the June–December 2015 interim Council meeting minutes and ratified Council actions and decisions made during online voting.

- ◆ Approved nominations from the Committee on Committees, including the 2016 appointments to various AHA prize and other committees.
- ◆ Approved the appointment of William Philpott (Univ. of Denver) and Miriam L. Kingsberg (Univ. of Colorado, Boulder) to co-chair the Local Arrangements Committee for the 2017 annual meeting in Denver.
- ◆ Approved the appointments of Antoinette Burton (Univ. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) and Rick Halpern (Univ. of Toronto, Scarborough) as the 2018 Program Committee chair and co-chair,

respectively.

- ◆ Extended the term of AHA parliamentarian Michael Les Benedict (Ohio State Univ.) through January 2017.
- ◆ Approved the AHA sponsorship of a roundtable concerning Title IX at the Western Historical Association's October 2016 meeting in St. Paul, MN.
- ◆ Approved the AHA sponsorship of the South Texas Regional Conference on Dual Enrollment at the University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley, Edinburg, TX, in February 2016.

◆ Approved amending the AHA Policy on Prizes to clarify that only one individual or group should receive an award. The change deletes the phrase “except under exceptional circumstances” from “Prizes and awards should be conferred on only one individual or group, and there will be no honorable mentions, except in the case of the Asher Teaching Award.”

◆ Eliminated the “seconding” or “endorsement” requirement from the O’Connor Prize nomination procedures.



- ◆ Approved a change to the letters policy of *Perspectives on History* shortening the maximum length of a letter to the editor to 500 words.
- ◆ Approved the selection of the 2016 Honorary Foreign Member (to be announced at a later date).
- ◆ For the January 9, 2016, Business Meeting of the American Historical Association: authorized AHA president Vicki Ruiz to set time limits, extend debate at her discretion, ask for all amendments at one time at the beginning of the meeting, and grant the proposer and selected opposing organization of the Resolution on Protecting the Right to

Education in the Occupied  
Palestinian Territories five minutes  
each to speak before debate begins.

◆ Issued the following statement:  
“The AHA recognizes that many of our colleagues around the world encounter obstacles to engaging in the teaching and research activities that lie at the heart of what it means to be a historian. Therefore, the Association will undertake an initiative to facilitate the donation of books and other research and teaching materials by our members to college and university libraries that lack the resources to build collections adequate for research and teaching in history.”

- ◆ Added “Journalism” as a thematic category in the AHA member taxonomy.
- ◆ Authorized outgoing Council member Josh Reid (Univ. of Washington) to explore establishment of a book prize for American indigenous history.
- ◆ Authorized outgoing Teaching Division vice president Elaine Carey (St. John’s Univ.) to represent the AHA in the realm of dual enrollment for a period of three years.
- ◆ Approved continued collaboration with the Social Science Research Council’s Measuring College Learning initiative.

- ◆ Accepted the report of the AHA Ad Hoc Committee on Contingent Faculty.
- ◆ Accepted the organizational priorities outlined in the AHA executive director's Road Map: digital technology opportunities, reconceptualizing employment opportunities and structures for historians, broadening our engagement as historians with public culture, professional development for historians, fundraising for the Association, advocacy, international activities, and the affiliates program.
- ◆ Received the AHA Fiscal Year 2014 Audit.

◆ Authorized a letter from the AHA presidents to the French minister of culture to encourage the ministry to keep the holdings of the Lyon Textile Museum accessible to the public.



# AHA CAREER CONTACT

Are you a graduate student or early-career scholar who is interested in learning about the career paths open to historians?

Sign up to participate in AHA Care  
a new service that matches graduate students and receive  
beyond the professoriate for one-time info

For more information and to sign up, visit [www.history.org](http://www.history.org)  
Questions and feedback about the program should be directed to  
programs manager,

# AHA ACTIVITIES



***Proposed  
Resolution on  
Palestinian  
Right to  
Education  
Defeated at  
AHA Annual  
Meeting***

t the 2016 business meeting of the

American Historical Association in Atlanta, members voted against a proposed resolution, “Protecting the Right to Education in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,” by a measure of 111–51.

AHA president Vicki L. Ruiz chaired the meeting, with Michael Les Benedict serving as parliamentarian. The business meeting began with reports from the various divisions of the Association before moving to the proposed resolution. Proponents and opponents lined up at microphones in the center of the hotel ballroom aisle. Debate was civil and efficient, albeit vigorous, with five-minute opening statements

delivered by one representative each from Historians Against the War (HAW), which submitted the measure in accordance with AHA bylaws in October 2015, and from the main group opposing the resolution, the Alliance for Academic Freedom (AAF).

Unlike resolutions recently considered by other scholarly societies, the proposed resolution did not call for a boycott. Instead, it would have committed the AHA “to monitoring Israeli actions restricting the right to education in the Occupied Palestinian Territories” due to Israel’s alleged violations of academic freedom there.

Contrary to wide reports last year that the AHA defeated a boycott resolution, this was the first year a resolution dealing with Israel-Palestine was introduced on the floor of the AHA business meeting. In 2015, some AHA members who wished to introduce a resolution without submitting it before the November 1 deadline moved to suspend the AHA bylaws to enable consideration of their proposal to condemn Israeli policy and actions; that motion was defeated.

For 2016, HAW submitted the resolution in accordance with AHA bylaws, meeting three requirements: that the resolution be signed by at least

100 members (the final total was 126), be submitted to the executive director by November 1 of the previous year, and be no more than 300 words. The proposed resolution appeared in the December 2015 issue of *Perspectives on History*. Members thus had a chance to consider the measure in due time, heading off criticisms such as the ones raised at last year's business meeting. The AHA also provided a special forum for members to debate the issue online. Notably, the print edition of the September issue of *Perspectives* featured one ad each from HAW and AAF.

*Unlike resolutions recently considered by other scholarly societies, the proposed resolution did not call for a boycott.*

Individual speakers were passionate but also eloquent about the resolution, presenting reasoned arguments and counterarguments. The point most emphasized by those in favor of the resolution was that since the AHA was committed to protecting academic freedom, it should take a clear stand regarding Israeli restrictions on student and faculty activities in the Occupied Territories. Opponents responded that

academic freedom violations are legion throughout the world and that the AHA is already affiliated with Scholars at Risk, a group that monitors violations of academic freedom globally. Some opponents argued that a “yes” vote would be divisive, to which proponents responded that the Association has taken stands on other controversial matters and survived. Members disagreed over whether the occupation was the signal moral issue of our time, as well as whether the AHA has the capacity to do what the resolution would commit it to.

Anyone anticipating acrimony among business meeting attendees was likely

disappointed. Members disagreed strenuously from the microphones, but there were no comments from the audience. The tensest point of the meeting was perhaps when there was disagreement over whether speakers should face the chair or be allowed to face the assembly at large. (From the dais, the chair ruled that speakers could face the assembly; executive director James Grossman joked, "No one up here feels the need to be looked at," to widespread laughter.) Speakers generally kept to the two-minute time limit. No amendments were offered.

At 6:11 p.m., the resolution went to a vote by general consensus. Members of



Council collected ballots, which were counted by AHA staff members. At 6:22, when the vote count was finished, Grossman addressed the members, saying, “Before the vote is announced, I’d like to echo the words of a young scholar who said from the floor that he was proud to be a member of the AHA. That’s how I feel after the end of this debate. If the press is here, let the record show that the final motion was made by someone on one side of the issue and seconded by someone on the other side. We’re all here because we believe that historians do work that’s worth doing.”

Ruiz then announced the results: 51 in favor, 111 opposed. As her final act as

AHA president, she passed the gavel to Patrick Manning, the Association's new president. The meeting adjourned at 6:24.

# AHA ACTIVITIES

## *Silent Heroes*

### *Teaching the Past through Remembrance*

Kevin Wagner

**I**n the summer of 2011, Sam Spare, a student at Carlisle High School, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, had his senior picture taken for the yearbook—an important rite of passage for all high school students. As he sat in his starched

dress shirt, tie, and blazer, he could not help but think of the bright, hopeful smile of William T. McCabe, who 70 years earlier sat for his Carlisle High School senior picture. Since being a senior is all about looking forward, Sam wondered whether anyone would ever look back at his senior photo with the same amount of respect and gratitude that he had for William. At that moment, as Sam relayed this story to me, I realized that Sam had learned an invaluable lesson about the process of doing history—giving a voice to the past—and I needed to continue this with future students. Thus the initial thought of a Silent Heroes website project was

born.

History is not something that is simply brought out of the archives, dusted off, and displayed as the way life really was. The understanding of history is a painstaking undertaking, held together with the help of arguments, hypotheses, and inferences. Teachers and students of history who push dutifully onward, unaware of all the backstage work, miss the essence of the discipline. They fail to recognize the opportunity to do the one thing we must do: question and assess history critically. Most of all, they miss the chance to learn how enjoyable it can be to go out and do a bit of digging and

in the process honor the memory of someone or of some event.

The Normandy: Sacrifice for Freedom Albert H. Small Student and Teacher Institute, created by National History Day (NHD), granted Sam and me the chance to do some of that digging. I strive to be a courier of the past for my students in my capacity as an educator of American history. However, nothing could have prepared me for the journey I took or the classroom project that would emerge from it. For the past five years, NHD has engaged 15 student/teacher teams in a rigorous study of D-Day and World War II. Students and teachers attend lectures

presented by leading World War II historians, participate in a scholarly study of the war memorials in the Washington, DC, area, and walk in the footsteps of history on the beaches of Normandy itself.

The journey began where any good historian would start—gathering and collecting a base of working knowledge from which to proceed in further study. Through a series of autobiographical and historical readings and films, Sam and I thoroughly immersed ourselves in the study of events leading up to and including the D-Day invasion of June 6, 1944. What heightened our journey was the ability to comment and reflect

upon the daily chapter readings, as well as gain insights and perspectives from the other 14 student/teacher teams. Social media also made it possible for us to collaborate and discuss readings online.





*Sam Spore and Kevin Wagner outside Memorial Pegasus Museum in Normandy with restored glider like the one William T. McCabe would have flown in World War II*

Throughout this process, Sam began to locate, research, and write about a fallen American who had taken part in the Normandy campaign. The process was made even more intriguing as he was able to identify a soldier, William T. McCabe, who had graduated from our own high school. One of the joys of this program was hearing the excitement in Sam's voice every week as he found new documents—a photograph or other viable evidence—pertaining to McCabe. He was realizing that the process of doing historical research is time-consuming and messy, and that many times it leads a historian to find some new piece of evidence or to encounter a

dead end and begin again. As the weeks turned into months and June approached, Sam scoured microfilm and yearbooks, and even located living relatives. The process of researching history was coming alive for him with every turn.

By the time we arrived at the University of Maryland, College Park, our knowledge and understanding of World War II, and the soldiers who fought in it, had only begun. We were treated to opportunities that most educators and students could only hope to encounter. From laying a wreath during a formal ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns to a behind-the-

scenes look at the National Archives, our eyes continued to be opened about the true historical process—engaging in and interacting with locations and documents that give a voice to the past. But perhaps the most engaging moment of all was arriving in France and traveling through the countryside of Normandy.

I cannot begin to describe the emotional roller coaster I experienced as I set foot on the Utah and Omaha beaches in Normandy. It is this type of emotional connection that we, as educators, hope to make between events and people of the past with our current students. This is how history and

historical study come alive. How could these brave young men have gone through with this? How could they have sacrificed everything? The questions kept flooding my mind as I stood there and scanned the beach. Yet my emotional journey came to fruition when, upon turning to leave the beach, I found a small etching in the sand made by one of our students. It was simply the word “Thanks” with a heart drawn around it—so very simple, yet so profound.

That small gesture was only magnified as we climbed the cliffs and entered the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial. For over four hours, students

and teachers alike stood motionless and silent as each student scholar memorialized their fallen soldier. One by one, each student knelt, placing an American and a French flag at the base of the pale, white marble cross. Then a short tribute to the soldier was read aloud, culled from the student's tireless research.



*Sam Spare at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer, Normandy, France*

What we heard were excerpts from letters home, comments by family members and friends, poems written by one of the students the night before, and songs of remembrance and longing. We heard the stories of brave young men who made the greatest sacrifice, their lives, in order that the world would remain free from tyranny. I experienced the highest honor any American educator can feel, as my young student paid respect to a bygone fellow American.

I remember leaving the cemetery that day thinking, "How can this moment and this legacy be brought back home?" The answer came one week after our return from France as I celebrated the

Fourth of July. The holiday took on a whole new meaning for me, a meaning that continues to this day and translates into a great responsibility. We—teachers, students, parents, and all citizens—have a responsibility to remember those who gave their lives so that we might still be able to celebrate our freedom.

Each of us needs to connect with history in the way that Sam and I did—a connection that moves the soul, stirs the heart, and tugs at the very thought of what it means to be an American citizen. Each of us must make it a point to mobilize the memory of our country's youth. This continues to be



the driving force behind the Silent Heroes website project within my classroom. I want my students to personalize and humanize the story of America. I must get them to realize that there are ordinary individuals behind the extraordinary stories of our past.

To date, my students have been able to memorialize 37 men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice during World War II. As a result of their hard work and dedication, many of the students' websites have been recognized, by the state and nationally, for their contributions to American memory and history. For example, three websites were selected by the National World

War II Museum in New Orleans to be featured in a “My Memorial Day” tribute. One student’s work and dedication made a family realize that their uncle’s personal effects should be donated to a museum so that all can know his story. As Sam put it so eloquently from the beginning, 70 years from now the legacy of this newest generation of historians will remain, as they have created a lasting virtual memory of our nation’s silent heroes.

*Kevin Wagner is the social studies program chair (6–12) at the Carlisle Area School District in Carlisle, PA, and teaches advanced placement US history. He received the AHA’s 2015 Beveridge Family*

*Teaching Prize. The Silent Heroes website project, housed on the Carlisle Area School District website, can be accessed at <http://www.carliseschools.org/academics.cfm?subpage=1512905>.*

*Look for Sam Spare's comments about his participation in the institute at [blog.historians.org](http://blog.historians.org).*

AHA ACTIVITIES

**A**  
***Conversational  
Shift?***

***Career Diversity  
Flourishes at the  
2016 Annual  
Meeting***

Emily Swafford

As the low buzz in the hotel ballroom shortly after lunchtime grew to an animated conversation throughout the afternoon, it became clear that the third annual AHA Career Fair captured the energy of the Association's Career Diversity for Historians initiative. In addition to the Career Fair, annual meeting highlights included the Graduate and Early Career Committee (GECC) Open Forum, focused this year on Career Diversity, and the Job Workshop for Historians, organized annually by the AHA's Professional Division. A year and a half into the Career Diversity initiative, the 2016 annual meeting provided much

anecdotal evidence that the conversation about careers for history PhDs is shifting.

The Career Fair's 140 enthusiastic participants swamped the tables, which hosted advisers representing a range of employers: nonprofits, startups, the federal government, private corporations, and more. Job seekers packed the aisles; advisers reported being talked off their feet as they provided career path advice and informational interviews about their work. A new highlight this year, Ask an Assistant Professor, featured a rotating cadre of academics staffing a booth to demystify their work life, on and off the

tenure track. A small army of volunteer assistant professors—aiming to “make the process suck a little bit less,” as one said—contributed in no small part to the new feature’s success. Additionally, as a response to requests from Career Fair attendees in previous years, the AHA provided more structure by scheduling small breakout sessions, led by Jennifer Polk of [FromPhDtoLife.com](http://FromPhDtoLife.com). One session, “Networking: What It Is and How to Do It,” fostered lively discussion, as participants shared common networking fears and discovered unexpected ways to make connections.



At the GECC Open Forum, *graduate* *Stephanie Young* from *RAND* *Cooper* *conducts an informational interview* with *Career Fair attendee* *Anna Krome-Lukens*, especially the initiative's four pilot sites, and thought about how to enact similar programming in their own departments. Anna Krome-Lukens, lecturer in history and director of experiential education in public policy at



the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, described the conversation as dynamic, ranging from calls for necessary (and challenging) structural change to practical tips for navigating graduate and postgraduate career changes. She also observed shifts in attitude that can make looking for a job within and beyond the professoriate a little less stressful. Krome-Lukens emphasized some post-PhD advice from Karen Wilson, graduate career officer at UCLA: “We don’t have any control over jobs or job markets. But we do have control over our *preparation* for whatever job market we choose, so take

charge of your own professional development.”

The Job Workshop for Historians likewise showed a shift in perspective. Job seekers today seem less likely to focus exclusively on academic employment. Cultural institutions, startups, and nonprofits “seemed to garner the most interest and sustained enthusiasm from job seekers,” observed first-time participant Jennifer McPherson, a PhD candidate at the University of New Mexico and project assistant for the Career Diversity pilot program there. Philippa Levine, vice president of the AHA Professional Division, described the widening of job

seekers' interests as a "sea change." The continued success of the workshop, she said, will lead the Professional Division to continue to "offer job seekers, at various stages of their work, insight into a considerable range of career opportunities, from nonprofit organization work, museum curating, and academic administration to the many different kinds of faculty positions."

## ***Career Diversity for Historians Online***

- ◆ Career Contacts
- ◆ What I Do

- ◆ Career Paths
- ◆ Resources from past and future regional conferences
- ◆ Information about applying for Career Diversity departmental grants

Find out more at [historians.org/careerdiversity](http://historians.org/careerdiversity). Is there a conversation about Career Diversity you'd like to have? Propose it for the 2017 annual meeting in Denver!

Conversations about careers continued in individual sessions. Two panels, “What I Do: How Can I Be a Historian in This Job?” and “Where I Work: Historians and Their Institutions,”

brought together history PhDs from a variety of industries to talk about their work inside and outside the academy. *Perspectives on History* editor Allison Miller, a “What I Do” panelist, reported that the conversation was frank and positive, as attendees reflected the widespread curiosity about careers beyond the professoriate at this annual meeting. “Where I Work” panelists highlighted ways that doctoral training in history can be an asset in careers outside of academia. Spencer Crew, former president of the National Museum of American History and of the National Underground Railroad Museum, revealed that his historical

training helped him bring a nuanced approach to relationships with the press and the boards of organizations he headed. With years of expertise in educational consulting, Meaghan Duff noted that understanding early American institutions helped her comprehend how institutional change happens, and to resist ideas that CEO-level, top-down shifts are all that matter. Finally, Lynn Weiner discussed her years as a university historian and academic administrator, observing that historical thinking is crucial to success in administration: historians know that the present shares a relationship with the

past, that old problems have a way of resurfacing.

A noticeable shift in tone accompanied the steadily growing interest in career-preparation programming at the annual meeting. GECC Open Forum panelists Karen Wilson and Lindsey Martin put their fingers on the transition. As Wilson wrote in an e-mail, “I noticed career diversity conversations are shifting some from destinations (i.e., jobs history PhDs hold or could hold) to process (i.e., how does one prepare for a particular job or a variety of paths?).” Martin, Mellon career development officer at the University of Chicago, noticed a similar trend: “Discussions

between many students moved seamlessly between dissertation research and projects like podcasting, blogging, and tweeting.” She interpreted “the fluidity of these conversations” as a sign that “traditional boundaries about what constitutes ‘academic’ and ‘nonacademic’ scholarship are irrelevant in the minds of many graduate students, who instead find themselves increasingly curious and creative about how they convey their research and communicate stories about the past.” Similarly, Caroline Marris, graduate co-coordinator for History in Action at Columbia, said that not only was there more “fluidity” at the annual meeting,



there was also a sense of the relationship between learning new skills and doctoral training. “Engaging in different types of work—from digital projects to nonacademic internships—proved to them that they were *more* capable historians,” she explained, “and certainly more capable professionals (and professors are professionals too!) than they might have been if they had remained strictly within academia.”



*Packing the aisles at the 2016 annual meeting*

As historians, we must recognize that these stories may well represent only one side of the story—those against or ambivalent about a variegated career

search for history PhDs likely did not attend these events. Still, there is evidence of change afoot, signs that furtive discussions and *sub rosa* channels for advice are emerging from the shadows. And that is to the good. Our discipline teaches us that cultural change is slow and sometimes fitful, but we are also well poised to navigate and influence it. The future of the discipline depends on it.

*Emily Swafford is manager of academic affairs at the AHA. She tweets @elswafford.*

AHA ACTIVITIES

*In the February  
Issue of the  
American  
Historical Review*

Alex Lichtenstein

The February issue of the *American Historical Review* includes the 2016 Presidential Address, three full-length articles, a review essay on economic history, and a

pair of *AHR* Exchanges evaluating digital websites. The issue also contains five featured reviews and our regular book review section.

In her Presidential Address, “Class Acts: Latina Feminist Traditions, 1900–1930,” outgoing AHA president **Vicki Ruiz** considers the exemplary lives of a pair of transnational female labor radicals, Luisa Capetillo and Luisa Moreno (née Rosa Rodríguez López). Tracing the complex geographic and political itineraries of these early Latina feminists, Ruiz considers how class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and radical culture shaped their lives as women and as rebels, in both Latin America and the

United States. “With all of these tensions,” Ruiz concludes, “the writings of . . . ‘las dos Luisas’ reveal vital threads of a Latina transnational feminist consciousness.”

## Articles

Three articles follow Ruiz’s address. **Adam Clulow’s** “The Art of Claiming: Possession and Resistance in Early Modern Asia” considers European claims to possession in early modern Asia and in particular a string of territorial acquisitions made by the Dutch East India Company in the first half of the 17th century. Noting that possession claims encapsulated the key

act of European expansion, Clulow focuses both on the complex legal mechanisms the company used to justify its hold over territories in Taiwan and the Banda Islands and also on East Asian mercantile actors' counterclaims. The process of looking for counterclaims, he suggests, is productive, revealing connections between otherwise neglected events or actions that cohere to form patterns of legal opposition. Clulow reveals that legal resistance was the pervasive byproduct of expansion and that different groups were able to mobilize arguments that struck at the heart of the company's claims to territory.

The next article shifts attention to the Dutch imperial world in the Western Hemisphere. In “Dodging Rebellion: Politics and Gender in the Berbice Slave Uprising of 1763,” **Marjoleine Kars** examines the long-lasting but little-known 1763 slave uprising in Dutch Berbice, a small colony next to Suriname on the Caribbean coast of South America. Interested in the lived experiences of the enslaved, Kars moves beyond the military conflict between rebel leaders and slave owners, on which historians most often focus. Using rich records generated in Berbice over more than a year of insurgency, she argues that the uprising did not encompass all



slaves in the colony but was the work of a determined minority who coerced others to join. Many enslaved Berbicians were neither purposeful rebels nor committed collaborators or loyalists. Eager to stay alive and preserve their independence once slavery was overthrown, the uncommitted (many of them women) struggled to dodge both the colonists and the rebels. A focus on internal politics reveals that armed emancipatory rebellion was profoundly gendered and hierarchical, and thus exacerbated existing divisions within the enslaved community.

Moving to 20th-century Europe, in “Infinite Power to Change the World:

Hydroelectricity and Engineered Climate Change in the Atlantropa Project,” **Philipp Nicolas Lehmann** examines the utopian Atlantropa Project of the German architect Herman Sörgel. This fantastical hydroelectric scheme serves as a window onto the interconnected histories of environmental anxiety and technological optimism in Europe during the first half of the 20th century. The main feature of Sörgel’s vision was a gigantic dam across the Strait of Gibraltar, which would (he imagined) create a connected and climate-engineered Afro-European supercontinent, as well as provide a potentially inexhaustible source of

hydropower. Sörgel believed that the availability of cheap and boundless energy would inaugurate a peaceful era and form the basis for a coming unified and revitalized European society. Lehmann argues that these plans were more than the expression of an eccentric mind. Sörgel's anxieties about environmental decline and resource exhaustion, and his belief in the primacy of technology, reflected contemporary debates and struck a chord with the German public. Atlantropa thus stands as a striking example of both the entanglement of environmental and political ideas in interwar Germany, as well as the understudied history of

unrealized utopian projects of high modernism.

**Kenneth Lipartito's** review essay, "Reassembling the Economic: New Departures in Historical Materialism," examines recent writings in economic and business history. This scholarship, he shows, casts new light on major transformations in world history—industrialization, capitalism, and the global economy. This new literature avoids the structural determinism of old with much greater sensitivity to politics, culture, and social institutions. To a lesser degree, it bridges the gap between social scientific history, often written by those trained in economics, and the

more narrative styles of those trained in history departments. Taken as a whole, this scholarship offers a substantial rethinking of how we should engage material life, including the natural world. Woven through the various works is a new ontology that grants agency to things as well as people while avoiding the traditional tension between the power of external structures and the autonomy of human consciousness. This new materialism allows historians to bring markets, finance, capital, technology, corporations, and other economic features of the past back into historical narrative.

## AHR Exchanges

In the belief that the burgeoning world of digital scholarship deserves fuller critical engagement, February's *AHR* Exchange, "Reviewing Digital History," inaugurates this feature with a pair of reviews and responses. The best digital history sites not only find new ways of presenting old data, they also deploy the medium to open up new interpretive possibilities that more traditional analytical techniques have failed to disclose.

Both digital sites reviewed here manage this by plotting data gleaned from familiar sources of social history—diaries, correspondence, legal records, newspapers—onto digital maps. The

reviewers evaluate the degree to which these digital history projects succeed in opening new vistas with this method.

**Joshua Sternfeld** reviews the website *Digital Harlem: Everyday Life, 1915–1930*, and exposes what he sees as the historiographic limits of this innovative approach to historical representation. *Digital Harlem* invites users to navigate the iconic African American cityscape from the perspective of the community's workers, businesses, social meeting places, and events. Drawing upon historic sources such as maps, African American newspapers, district attorney files, and arrest records, the site's creators construct an interactive

mapping platform rich with potential for comparative sociocultural analysis. Sternfeld questions *Digital Harlem's* data integrity, claiming that a lack of sufficient source information, unbalanced sample source selection, and inconsistent data entry contribute to the decontextualization of *Digital Harlem's* data. As a result, Sternfeld argues, the site misses an opportunity to harness digital tools to interrogate the complex social dynamic among a predominately white legal authority and Harlem's nonwhite residents.

In his invited response, **Stephen Robertson**, one of the site's co-creators, suggests that Sternfeld's assessment is



skewed because he does not recognize the category of digital scholarship into which the site falls or evaluate the project in terms of what it is trying to accomplish. *Digital Harlem*, according to Robertson, was designed as a research tool to combine and map a heterogeneous set of sources to reveal spatial patterns and relationships, which could then be explored and interpreted in traditional peer-reviewed publications. Robertson points out that Sternfeld evaluates the site as if it is instead a digital collection that has chosen a tightly defined subject, homogenous data, and focuses on the existing historiography. As a result,

Robertson claims, Sternfeld overstates problems with the data, mischaracterizes the site as concerned with crime, and fails to recognize how *Digital Harlem* visualizes facets of the daily lives of ordinary residents and relationships grounded in place that are missing from the existing picture of the neighborhood.

In an accompanying review of recent digital scholarship, **Natalie A. Zacek** evaluates the significance of the website *Slave Revolt in Jamaica, 1760–1761: A Cartographic Narrative*, created by historian Vincent Brown to both answer and provoke questions about a series of slave uprisings and their eventual

repression by Jamaica's colonial government. She briefly outlines the technological and scholarly developments that made such an elaborate website possible and desirable, and assesses the site's importance as a source for both undergraduate teaching and academic research. While not entirely convinced by Brown's ambition to use digital technology to reveal "something that is difficult to glean from simply reading the textual sources," Zacek finds much value in the site's ability to use digital mapping technology to raise new questions about the unfolding of the revolt.

**Vincent Brown**, in his response, reminds readers that the maps in *Slave Revolt in Jamaica* address elementary historical questions—what happened, when, and where—to reveal something about why the greatest slave insurrection in the 18th-century British empire played out as it did, and with what implications. Brown points out that his site raises important questions about the production, circulation, and reception of historical narrative beyond the print medium. What can we learn from digital presentations of history that we don't already know or couldn't just as easily learn from print? He concludes that even as digital scholarship reaches

and informs its audience in new ways, historians must still impart old-fashioned narrative methods for reading and interpreting sources.

*Alex Lichtenstein is associate professor of history at Indiana University Bloomington and interim editor of the American Historical Review.*

Robert Culp, a merchant for the VOC (VOC, for the Dutch name *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*), most likely Jacob Mathew, stands with his wife in front of Batavia, the capital of the Dutch East India Company. The wife holds a parasol, a traditional umbrella used for shade over their heads. While the VOC is a state-backed commercial enterprise concerned with trade, it also acquired a series of important territories, including the city of Jayakarta (renamed Batavia), the Moluccan Islands. In "The Art of C

Early Modern Asia," arguments used by com territories and the generated. Clulow show and tribute used by the political practices across manipulated by local absolute confidence su were relatively rare, and be uncovered across e claimed territory. *VOC Senior Merch* 1640–1660. SK-A-2350, Rijksmuseum.



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# IN MEMORIAM

Richard Greening Hewlett  
1923–2015

Public Historian; Historian of Science,  
Technology, and Government; AHA  
Member since 1947

Richard (“Dick”) Hewlett devoted his career to shining light into the darkness. As the first historian of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), author of numerous works on the nuclear energy program, co-founder of the public history firm History Associates, Inc. (HAI), volunteer archivist and

historiographer at the National Cathedral, and mentor to dozens of young historians, Dick dedicated himself to illuminating previously hidden subjects, documents, and ideas. Although he was not a college professor, he was an educator, providing public access to records and information and helping many young historians find their own voices. A meticulous researcher and an elegant writer, Dick approached his work with a generous and kind spirit, collaborating with others at a time when the profession favored individual labor. He led by example, showing those of us who were fortunate to work with him what it



looks like to be a force for good in this world.

Like many of his generation, World War II and the Cold War shaped Dick's career path. His Dartmouth education, which he began in fall 1941, was interrupted when he enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942. Within a year, he was engaged in technical training in science and electronics at Bowdoin and Harvard, followed by service as an Army Air Force rawin (radio winds aloft)-radiosonde operator and weather technician in western China from 1945 to 1946. Upon his return to the United States, he resumed undergraduate coursework at the

University of Chicago and then moved on to the graduate program in history, earning his master's in 1948 and PhD in 1952. He never officially earned the BA, because, he later confessed with his trademark impish humor and grin, the university wanted \$50 to award the degree and he did not want to spend the money.

Despite his classic academic training under Civil War historian Avery O. Craven, Dick chose a career outside the academy. While finishing his dissertation, he took a civilian post in Air Force Intelligence before joining the AEC staff in 1951 to compile progress reports for commissioners, the Joint

Committee on Atomic Energy, and the National Security Council, allowing him a rare holistic view of AEC's highly compartmentalized and classified activities. By 1957, AEC chair Lewis Strauss had tapped Dick to write the history of the AEC, which he did in three compelling and award-winning volumes: *The New World, 1939–1946*, written with Oscar E. Anderson Jr. and a runner-up for the 1963 Pulitzer Prize; *Atomic Shield, 1947–1952*, co-authored with Francis Duncan and a winner of the David D. Lloyd Prize from the Harry S. Truman Library Institute; and *Atoms for Peace and War, 1953–1961*, written with Jack M. Holl and awarded

the Richard W. Leopold Prize from the Organization of American Historians and the Henry Adams Prize from the Society for History in the Federal Government (SHFG). In the midst of these projects and at the insistence of Admiral Hyman Rickover, he and Duncan wrote *Nuclear Navy, 1946–1962*, the definitive history of the initial years of that program. Dick's work established him as one of the pioneers in the history of science and technology, a subfield that he avidly supported throughout his career.



Dick also blazed trails in public history, [helping Hewlett establish the SHEG](#), the

*and co-author Oscar Anderson (standing) pre of the Atomic Energy Commission history i between them.*

chairing the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History (1977–80); facilitating the creation of federal history offices in numerous agencies; and consulting with academics on the establishment of public history degree programs. From his position as chief historian for the AEC (1957–75) and its successor agencies, the Energy Research and Development Administration (1975–77) and the Department of Energy (1977–80), Dick helped others use its records and commissioned various historical studies. One of those, a

history of the accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, led to a business collaboration with authors Philip Cantelon and Robert Williams, along with a visiting scholar at the Department of Energy, Rodney Carlisle of Rutgers University. Together, they founded HAI in January 1981, not long after Dick had retired from federal service. At HAI, Dick and his co-founders shaped a private-sector version of public history, demonstrating how professionally trained historians and archivists could not only write sophisticated studies but also assist private and public entities in

establishing archives, conducting litigation research, and declassifying documents, among myriad other activities.

Integrity defined Dick's career and life. He nearly left AEC during the height of the Red Scare when one of his mentors was purged from the agency. As with his work at AEC, at HAI Dick navigated with diplomacy and tact the rocky shoals of writing history on contract. Dick never ignored or shied away from controversial topics, impressing clients with his professionalism and objectivity. So much of Dick's scholarly production helped legitimize the field of public history.



From his position at HAI, Dick took many of us under his wing, offering us crucial support, such as reference letters, time off, space in his basement to work, sage writing advice, and a hot meal with him and his wife, Marilyn, as we pursued doctorates. He did more, however. He never failed to find the humor or see a bright spot in any situation, and this characteristic reminded us that there was more to life than a perfectly crafted sentence and well-documented argument. Indeed, his positive outlook on life gave us the confidence to learn from our mistakes—in life and in history—and to move on. When he passed away at the age of 92

on September 1, 2015, his extended family and many friends felt a keen sense of loss. Even so, we all continue to feel Dick's spirit and carry with us his faith in the power of history to light the way to a better future.

*Margaret Rung Roosevelt University Brian  
Martin History Associates, Inc.*

## David Higgs 1939–2014

**Historian of France, Canada, Brazil,  
Portugal, and Sexuality**

**D**avid Higgs passed away peacefully on October 20, 2014. A longtime member of the Department of History of the University of Toronto, where he once

served as graduate coordinator, David was also a fellow of University College and a founding member of the Sexual Diversity Studies program. He taught at the University of Toronto for exactly 40 years and would often joke about this extraordinarily long tenure: “I received my first University of Toronto paycheck two weeks before my 25th birthday,” before commenting on changes in academia and on how such a thing would constitute a rarity today.

David’s interests were remarkably wide-ranging. He wrote scholarly articles in English, French, and Portuguese. He penned important studies in social history, political history,

religious history, queer studies, and cultural history, covering an equally breathtaking geographic scope: France, Portugal, Brazil, and Canada.

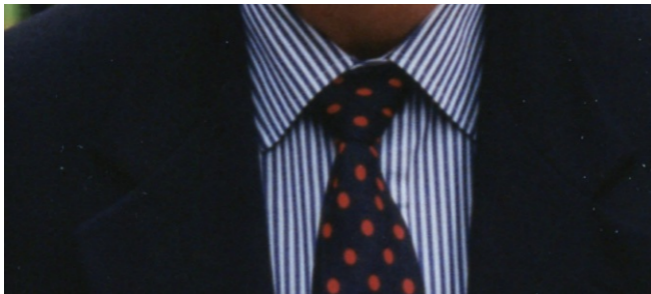
David was born in Rugby, England, in 1939, and moved with his family to British Columbia at the age of 16. He earned his BA jointly in French and history at the University of British Columbia in 1959, an MA in history from Northwestern University in 1960 (as a Woodrow Wilson scholar), and a PhD under the direction of famed French historian Alfred Cobban at the University of London in 1964. He later transformed his thesis into an excellent first book, *Ultraroyalism in Toulouse:*

*From Its Origins to the Revolution of 1830*  
(Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1973).

This was 1960s–70s history at its best: one discerns the imprint of the *Annales* school, careful, painstaking local research, and the unmistakable influence of Cobban on the legacy of the Revolution. The book examines the founding moment of French ultraconservatism by investigating the networks and social universe of counterrevolutionaries. These were not just conservatives in the classic sense of the term: they actively sought to turn back the clock—as David contends, much as Vichy or the paramilitary OAS would later aspire. He shows how an

idealized return to the past proved impossible even after the royalists returned to power in 1815, their paternalist, ultra-traditionalist values having proven difficult to re-instill in a France marked by the legacy of 1789.





## David Higgs

David would take up some of these themes again in his remarkable study *Nobles in 19th-Century France: The Practice of Inegalitarianism* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), delving into the kinship bonds of the nobility and examining everything from milieu to property to the transmission of socio-cultural capital. The book was translated into French, as always to consistently outstanding reviews (*Nobles, titrés,*

*aristocrates après la Révolution, 1800–1870*).

Between these two connected books, David had turned to other interests, indeed other fields, whose stakes and contours he mastered in record time. In 1976, he produced a book on the Portuguese communities in Canada—translated into French three years later—and, with Bill Callahan, co-edited an important comparative volume, *Church and Society in Catholic Europe of the 18th Century* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979).

David subsequently edited two wide-ranging volumes: *Portuguese Migration in Global Perspective* (Multicultural



History Society of Ontario, 1990) and *Queer Sites: Gay Urban Histories since 1600* (Routledge, 1999). In the latter, he contributed chapters on Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro, turning his attention not only to sexual diversity studies, a field on which he taught a path-breaking seminar for the University of Toronto's history department starting in 1998, but also to urban spaces: gay sites of leisure, socialization, and sociability.

The governments of France and Portugal both decorated David for his scholarship (including Chevalier dans l'ordre des palmes académiques). He retired from the University of Toronto in 2004 but remained an active

member of several academic communities, in Portuguese studies and French history most notably. His research notes and findings on the Portuguese community in Canada are housed in a special collection at the York University archives. There is also a David Higgs collection at Saint Michael's College Library at the University of Toronto.

Until recently, David was working on several projects. One was tentatively titled "A Tropical Inquisition: Brazil in the Late 18th Century." Another dealt with the Enlightenment, the Inquisition, and the Lisbon Tribunal, and a third was provisionally titled

“Three Portuguese Portraits from the Late 18th Century.” He also evoked a sequel to his book on the French nobility, which in his more whimsical moments he would refer to as “Nobs II.”

David’s colleagues, graduate students, and friends will remember him for his kindness, good humor, wit, collegiality, and guidance. He will be dearly missed. He is survived by his partner, Kaoru Kamimura, as well as by a brother, Michael Higgs, and sister-in-law, Rosemary Lear.

*Eric Jennings University of Toronto*

**Ethan Schmidt 1975–2015**

## Historian of Early America

**E**than Andrew Schmidt passed away on September 14, 2015, in Cleveland, Mississippi. Ethan was a devoted husband and father, a brilliant and self-driven historian, a dedicated teacher, and a friend to many in the profession. He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Skolaut Schmidt, and their children, Conor, Dylan, and Brianna.

After graduating from Peabody High School in Kansas, Ethan obtained bachelor's and master's degrees in history from Emporia State University. Ethan loved Emporia State and served his alma mater with distinction, holding

the office of student body president while leading Phi Delta Theta fraternity. Ethan completed his doctorate from the University of Kansas and worked as an assistant professor at Texas Tech University and Delta State University.

As a scholar, Ethan leaves behind several articles and two books that enrich the field of early American history: *Native Americans in the American Revolution* (Praeger, 2014) and *The Divided Dominion: Social Conflict and Indian Hatred in Early Virginia* (Univ. of Colorado Press, 2015). As an educator, Ethan touched the lives of thousands and inspired the creation of memorial scholarships at

several institutions where he was a student and teacher. Comments from students who have contributed to these funds demonstrate Ethan's generosity. "I owe this \$10 to you, Dr. Schmidt," one student wrote. "You gave me two books when you were my thesis adviser and I miss you greatly."

Ethan's generosity began at Emporia State, where he shared his notes with classmates and took the time to prepare the author of this essay for his first teaching job. "Ethan Schmidt represented all the best things in our profession," recalled graduate adviser John Sacher. "He was a dedicated - scholar-teacher, who always had time to

help and cheer on others, whether they were students or colleagues. In a profession where we are less helpful than we should be to our peers, Ethan stood out in his willingness to help and cheer on others.”

At the University of Kansas, Ethan Schmidt was not simply the leader of the graduate student cohort; he was its center of gravity. Fellow students recall with fondness how Ethan fell naturally into this role as the owner of the only coffeepot in the basement of Wescoe Hall. Yet it was Ethan who chose to be the first to arrive each morning, to keep the pot full, and to share his space with others. “Looking back, Ethan was the

center of it all,” recalled John Schneiderwind. “We all naturally gravitated to his personality, his humor, and his love of learning. . . . That was Ethan’s magic and beauty.”





ETHAN A. SCHMIDT

# NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

How the War  
Divided, Devastated,  
and Transformed  
the Early American  
Indian World



Colleagues recalled that Ethan's magic included the capacity to complete his own work while reviewing countless first drafts, lecture notes, and dissertation proposals from colleagues. "If you had a question about teaching," recalled Nicole Anslover, "Ethan would happily put his own work aside and discuss your problem." Ethan often knew the work of his colleagues on a level greater than their own. "I remember nearing the end of graduate school and I could not come up with a suitable title for my dissertation," Anslover recalled. "It was Ethan, feet up on his desk, tossing a ball of paper in the air, who easily came up with the

words I was unable to find.”

Ethan's love of history and service to his friends and university was surpassed only by his love of family. Colleagues recall that Ethan arose before dawn and completed his work alone so that he could spend more time with his wife and children. Whether traveling to an academic conference or returning to Lawrence to deliver a lecture, Ethan shared every journey with his family. He gave his time generously, coaching Little League and embracing his adopted homes in Texas and Mississippi while serving as an ambassador for Jayhawk basketball and all things Kansas.

Ethan's love of family and friends and his dedication to the field of history were reflected throughout his eulogy, fittingly delivered by his dissertation adviser Paul Kelton with the help of Ethan's colleagues from around the country. In his conclusion, Kelton shared a quote that reflected his former student's love of history. "I value the fact that inquiry for the sake of inquiry is honored in the profession," Ethan stated in a recent AHA Member Spotlight Q&A. "We never accept the conventional wisdom or current paradigm as an acceptable answer. To be a historian . . . is to grapple with the very core of what it is that makes us human. Our triumphs, our tragedies,

our flaws, and our strengths are all laid bare by the scholarly study of history, and without this kind of inquiry there is little hope for mankind.”

The full measure of our loss cannot be measured without reflecting upon our obligation to do something more than simply come together to mourn a friend and colleague. Ethan died while doing a job he loved, but he was taken from us by a growing epidemic of gun violence that has infected our schools and universities. As the executive director of the AHA often reminds us, “Everything has a history.” Ethan understood this history better than most, as a scholar whose work centered on our nation’s

failure to stop an epidemic of violence in the 17th century. Ethan would be the first to remind his fellow historians of our obligation to reject the “current paradigm as an acceptable answer.” Let us remember Ethan as a scholar, friend, and father by resolving ourselves to preserve our colleges and communities as safe places to learn and live.

Donations may be made to support the education of Ethan and Elizabeth’s three children at <https://www.gofundme.com/j546db5s>.

*David Trowbridge Marshall University*

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**NEW YORK**

## New York

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building LGBTQ studies across disciplines and schools at Columbia. The selectee will be appointed at the rank of tenured associate or tenured full professor. Review of applications will begin on February 1, 2016 and will continue until the position is filled. Inquiries about the position should be directed to the chair of the Search Committee, Professor Mae Ngai at [mn53@columbia.edu](mailto:mn53@columbia.edu). All applications must be made through Columbia University's Recruitment of Academic Personnel System (RAPS). To apply, please visit our online site: <https://academicjobs.columbia.edu/applicants/Central/quickFind=61880>. Columbia University is an AA/EOE — Race/Gender/Disability/Veteran.

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[www.historians.org/hiring](http://www.historians.org/hiring); and Policy on Advertisements, [www.historians.org/adpolicy](http://www.historians.org/adpolicy).

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