Department of History
Annual Newsletter
2019-2020
Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Historic, scary, and challenging is how I summarize the 2019-2020 Academic Year. In 30 years of teaching, I’ve never seen anything that changed the landscape of higher education like the COVID-19 pandemic. By March 2020, our Department’s office was forced into exile in my home and the home of Barbara Bullington and Megan Brown, our Department staff. Faculty retreated to their home offices, and students moved out of the dorms and back home. It happened so fast. Everyone went into overdrive, working long hours without a vacation or break during the spring and summer. Faculty met the challenge and successfully transitioned to an online spring semester, but most of our research that involved travel ground to a halt. The University froze travel, and the ban to date has not yet been lifted. When Victoria Smith retired in May, we did not have a chance to celebrate her career at Nebraska because all normal social intercourse was officially prohibited.

As we prepared for the 2020-21 Academic Year over the summer, President Carter and Chancellor Green made the decision to start Fall 2020 semester earlier and to end it at Thanksgiving. A new vocabulary for teaching emerged, with hybrid, synchronous, asynchronous, and online modes of delivery. And the University has announced that the spring 2021 semester will begin in February and there will be no spring break. Nothing looks quite the same on campus, not even the university calendar.

And yet despite all this, our students continued research projects, theses, and dissertations; our faculty won major grants, published big books and completed other ground-breaking works, and embarked on new projects. In other words, despite the extraordinary challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic brought us, the Department of History thrived and conducted business in most ground-breaking works, and embarked on new projects.

Let me take a few minutes to brag about the achievements of our faculty. Professor Amy Burnett won a Guggenheim fellowship and was appointed a Solmsen Fellow at the Institute for Humanities Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for her research on early modern publishing networks. Professor Katrina Jagodinsky received a $460,000 National Science Foundation award for her research on “‘We Have the Power to Combat Imperialism’: Francophone West Africa, International and Pan-African Solidarity, and American Cold War Politics, 1946-1987” under Professor Jeannette Eileen Jones. Two M.A. students, William Kelly (Professor William Thomas) and Ann Vlock (Professor Katrina Jagodinsky), graduated and are beginning the Ph.D. program. Mackenzie Hughes earned her Master’s under Professor James Garza.

Overall, despite the chaos and uncertainty of the pandemic on campus and around the world, the Department of History has continued to thrive, has achieved great things, and our students have graduated with a special sense of pride. I couldn’t be prouder, and I am even more thankful for the generosity and support that our alumni have demonstrated this year, in a year unlike others.

Stay safe and kind wishes from Lincoln,

James D. Le Sueur

Chair of the Department of History
Samuel Clark Waugh Distinguished Professor of History

Cover Photo: James D. Le Sueur

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NEH FUNDING FOR HISTORICAL FILM

THE BELL AFFAIR

Building on the success of their short film, Anna, University of Nebraska–Lincoln scholars Kwakiutl Dreher, William Thomas, and Michael Burton are ready to tell a more in-depth story about the fight over slavery. The award-winning Anna told the story of Ann Williams, who jumped from a third-story window to escape the fate of being sold to another slave owner and separated from her family. Combining live-action with rotoscope animation, it was a proof-of-concept project that set the stage for The Bell Affair.

With a $200,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, they will develop The Bell Affair: A Film Reframing American Slavery and Freedom, an hour-long documentary set in 1830s Washington, D.C., at a pivotal moment in the national struggle over slavery.

“The project tells the story of Daniel Bell, who launched a lawsuit to make his family free just as a labor strike, a lynch mob, and a race riot erupted in the nation’s capital in the late summer of 1835,” Thomas, professor of history and John and Catherine Angle Chair in the Humanities, said. “Bell privately negotiated for the freedom of his wife and children, but his plans were upended. In the public trials that followed, the supremacy of the law, the freedom of the press, and the fate of an innocent man hung in the balance.”

Dreher, associate professor of English and ethnic studies, wrote the screenplay for Anna, and co-wrote the screenplay for this film with Thomas. Both productions are based on research from Thomas’s 2016 book "O Say Can You See" online archive of freedom suits.

“For Anna, I concentrated on Anna—just Anna,” Dreher said. “The Bell Affair is a feature-length production that involves a niumerity of characters. When we began our roundtable discussion for The Bell Affair, Will and I understood that a central collaboration would have to occur. It is a smooth partnership especially since history is my minor discipline of research, so Will and I sync in our vision of the script.”

Anna was a shorter film, but Dreher said she was able to accomplish what she wanted to do.

“I knew exactly what we were doing with Anna, so I focused on the script in terms of what would accommodate the time frame.”

Dreher will also be directing the film. She and Thomas will again collaborate with Michael Burton, an animator and assistant professor of practice in textiles, merchandising, and fashion design in the College of Architecture and Human Sciences.

This film is one of 215 humanities projects across the country to receive NEH funding for the 2020 fiscal year. It is supported by the most recent round of NEH funding.

“As the nation prepares to commemorate its 250th anniversary, I am proud to help lay the foundations for public engagement with America’s past by funding projects that safeguard cultural heritage and advance our understanding of the events, ideas, and people that shaped our nation,” NEH chairman Jon Parrish Peede said in a press release.

In addition to producing, promoting, and distributing the film, the funding will be used to develop a website with companion materials and design teaching programs with original source documents. Thomas said his team aims to distribute the film through educational partners, film festivals, and broadcast channels. They also want to organize community-hosted screenings that spark conversations.

“Our goal [with the series] is to extend the historical imagination to recover these stories, showing how ordinary people used the law to define their rights and how their actions intersected with the nation’s highest politics,” Thomas said. “The film and website will tell the complete story of the Bells for the first time, dramatize the historical complexities of their enslavement, and place their resistance to enslavement in its full context.”

They aim to distribute the film through educational partners, film festivals, and broadcast channels. They also want to organize community-hosted screenings that spark conversations.

Visiting professor David Krugler presented a lecture, “Re-
membrance of 100th anniversary of the Will Brown Lynch-
ing in Omaha,” from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. 26 September 2019 in 
Andrews Hall, Bailey Library.  This lecture was organized by 
Patrick Jones, associate professor of history and ethnic stud-
ies, who is a scholar of African Americans in the Midwest.

In his lecture, David Krugler commemorated the 100th 
anniversary of the Will Brown lynching in Omaha, which 
took place on 28 September 1919.  The murder of Brown, 
an African American laborer, by a white mob was part of a 
wave of anti-black violence sweeping the United States after 
World War I.

Krugler’s presentation documented how Brown was framed 
for a crime he didn’t commit, described the failed efforts of 
authorities to bring his murderers to justice, and explained 
how African Americans in Omaha took measures to defend 
themselves against further mob violence.

Krugler is a professor of history at the University of Wis-
consin–Platteville, where he has taught since 1997.  He is 
the past recipient of research grants and fellowships from 
the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Organi-
zation of American Historians, the White House Historical 
Association, and the University of Wisconsin System Insti-
tute on Race and Ethnicity.

Sources: “Visiting professor Krugler to give lecture Sept. 
26,” https://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/today/article/visiting-
professor-krugler-to-give-lecture-sept-26/, 23 September 
2019 & “Livestream Krugler’s Sept. 26 talk on Omaha’s 
racial violence in 1919,” https://history.unl.edu/livestream-
kruglers-sept-26-talk-omaha-racial-violence-1919, 23 
September 2019

C-SPAN3 visited and recorded University of Nebraska-Lin-
coln professor William G. Thomas III’s HIST 341 (Am-
erican Constitutional History) class on some of the lawsuits 
brought by enslaved people who sued for their freedom in 
the antebellum period.  The course, HIST 341, focused on 

C-SPAN Covers History Course

Deirdre Cooper Owens explained how the institution of American slavery was directly linked to the creation of reproduc-
tive medicine in the U.S.  Cooper Owens’s 6:30 p.m. talk on Friday, 27 September 2019 was a Gray/Wawro Lecture in Gen-
der, Health, and Well-being, presented by Rice University’s Center for 
the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality.  Her lecture was original-
ly reserved for Thursday, 26 September 2019, but was rescheduled due 
to a delayed plane flight.

Cooper Owens provided context for how and why physicians de-
nied black women their full humanity, yet valued them as “medical 
superbodies” highly suited for experimentation.  In engaging with 
19th-century ideas about so-called racial difference, she shed light on 
the contemporary legacy of medical racism.

Time Magazine calls Professor Deirdre Cooper Owens one of the 
country’s most “acclaimed experts in U.S. history,” perhaps because 
as a teacher and public speaker, she knows that stories are what draw 
people into wanting to know about the past.  Cooper Owens is a 
proud graduate of two historically black colleges and universities, 
the all women’s Bennett College and Clark Atlanta University.  She 
earned her PhD in history at UCLA and served as a postdoctoral fel-
low at UVA.  Her 2018 book Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the 
Origins of American Gynecology (University of Georgia Press) received 
the Organization of American Historians’ Darlene Clark Hine Award.
NEW BOOK EXAMINES
AMERICAN GI-GERMAN FORCES SOCIAL CRISIS

Alexander Vazansky, assistant professor of history at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, is the author of new non-fiction book An Army in Crisis: Social Conflict and the U.S. Army in Germany, 1968-1975. The book, which was published 1 October 2019 by University of Nebraska Press, examines the social crisis that developed among American armed forces stationed in Germany between 1968 and 1975.

A number of factors contributed to this crisis, including shifting deployment patterns during the Vietnam War, changing social and political realities in postwar Germany and Europe, and racial tensions, drug use and the youth movement back in the United States.

Vazansky wrote An Army in Crisis from a unique perspective, having lived for several decades in Germany near an American military base himself. Drawing from his own experiences, he’s excited to shed light on a relatively under-studied portion of U.S. military history.

“Since my years as a graduate student, the history of German-American relations have been a major focus of mine,” he said. “This interest is partially personal. I grew up in Heidelberg, Germany, during the 1970s, 80s, and 90s as the son of an American mother and a German father. At the time, Heidelberg was the headquarters of the U.S. army.”

For more information on his new book, visit the University of Nebraska Press website.


SUFFRAGE ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM

Women’s suffrage supporters demonstrate against President Woodrow Wilson in 1910.

Nebraska Innovation Campus hosted a symposium commemorating the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. 19 October 2019.

The “Celebrating the 19th Amendment: Women’s Rights Here and Abroad” program featured scholars from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and other institutions, as well as women serving as elected officials in the Cornhusker State. Topics included the history of women’s suffrage, the impact of women in elections in the last 100 years, women’s involvement in politics, and the status of women’s rights on a global scale.

The symposium was sponsored by the university’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, the Global Perspectives: Winter Lecture Series, and the League of Women Voters of Lincoln-Lancaster County. Participation was open to the public.

The keynote speaker was Rhoda Howard-Hassmann, professor emeritus at Canada’s Wilfrid Laurier University. Hassmann addressed international human rights with a special focus on women and women’s suffrage. She is the author of several books and articles on the topics. She also served as a consultant for the creation of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s undergraduate program in human rights.

Other speakers include Leslie Working, adjunct instructor of history at Union College and Katrina Jagodinsky, Susan J. Rosowsky Associate Professor of History at UNL.

Working discussed the history of women’s suffrage in the United States. Jagodinsky examined the effects women have had on United States politics, especially in the last 30 years.

The symposium also included a moderated discussion from a panel of women who have served or are serving in elected office in Nebraska. The panelists were: Lou Ann Linehan, current state senator in the 39th District; Patty Pansing Brooks, current state senator in the 28th District; DiAnna Schimek, a public servant who represented Nebraska’s 27th District from 1988 to 2008; and Anna Wishart, a freshman state senator in the 27th District.


Photos from Shutterstock
ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENT

The Executive Vice Chancellor's Office has announced its annual selection of faculty and executive-level professional staff who will attend two Big Ten Academic Alliance leadership programs this year.

Will Thomas, Professor of History, John and Catherine Angle Chair in the Humanities, has been appointed to the Academic Leadership Program.

Fellows will attend a series of three conferences and on-campus events throughout the academic year learning about leadership and a broad range of topics, including community engagement, diversity and inclusion, freedom of expression, challenging conversations, mental health, student success, and the social value of higher education.

Learn more about the programs and view past participants at Academic Leadership Program and Department Executive Officers Program.

Contact Judy Walker at judy.walker@unl.edu for more information about these leadership opportunities.

Source: "11 selected for Big Ten leadership programs," https://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/today/article/11-selected-for-big-ten-leadership-programs/, 30 October 2019

Margaret Jacobs, Chancellor's Professor of History in the Department of History, was one of over 200 new members inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences on 12 October 2019. Her AAAS membership was announced on 17 April 2019.

Jacobs is the first female faculty member at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln to be selected. The class of 2019 includes former First Lady Michelle Obama, gender theorist Judith Butler, The Atlantic journalist James M. Fallows, and Cisco Systems leader Charles H. Robbins.

Read about Jacobs's selection on Nebraska Today.


FACULTY SLAM

From the unlikely intersection of 3D engineering and baking to reconciling the trauma of long-mistreated indigenous peoples, from early childhood development to the connection between eviction and urban poverty, University of Nebraska-Lincoln faculty celebrated the vision and impact of their work.

"How will your research change the world?" asked Nathan Meier, assistant vice chancellor for research, in kicking off the Research and Creative Activity Slam, part of the Nebraska Research Days celebration, Wednesday, 6 November 2019. It was the second annual Slam hosted by the Office of Research and Economic Development.

A research slam? Think poetry slam, but with more PowerPoint. Four faculty members were chosen to explain their research to colleagues in no more than five minutes and three slides – restrictions they largely stuck to.

Several participants shared the moments when their research changed them. For historian Margaret Jacobs, it was participating in a gathering in Ottawa in 2015 that aimed to come to terms with Canada's attempts throughout history to erase indigenous people's culture and traditions. On the one hand, she recalled feeling "weighed down by the magnitude of the cruelty," but on the other, feeling "a deep connectedness and desire to do better."

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"How can my work help people come to terms with the trauma of the past?" Jacobs asked herself. Her current work includes the Genoa Indian School Digital Reconciliation Project, an effort to contribute to reconciliation and healing by making the history of the Genoa Indian Boarding School more accessible to the families of those who attended and by raising public awareness about Native American boarding schools.

"History may seem so yesterday, but reckoning with our history is essential to overcoming our divisions," said Jacobs, Chancellor's Professor of History.

Source: Dan Moser, "Faculty Slam demonstrates research expertise, passions," https://research.unl.edu/blog/faculty-slam-demonstrates-researchers-expertise-passions/, 7 November 2019

DIGITAL LEGAL HISTORY AWARD

The online archive "O Say Can You See: Early Washington, D.C., Law & Family" and the film Anna received the Mary Dudziak Prize for Digital Legal History from the American Society for Legal History. The annual prize, named for scholar and digital history pioneer Mary L. Dudziak, recognizes excellence in digital legal history.

The archive is a collection and analysis of freedom suits filed between 1800 and 1862 in Washington, D.C. It also traces the multigenerational family networks the freedom suits reveal. Located at earlywashingtondc.org, the archive was developed by a digital humanities team in the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities, led by historian Will
During his first visit to Burlington, Vermont, home to work on the project with her. In April of 1969, after a lengthy, coordinated effort by local and federal law enforcement to infiltrate and disrupt the New York chapter of the Black Panther Party, District Attorney Frank Hogan indicted 21 members of the organization.

After several long conversations, Jones pitched Payne the idea of a digital archive, where her photos and films could live online and be accessed with whomever wanted to learn from them. Over the next few years, Jones visited Payne in her Burlington, Vermont, home to work on the project with her. During his first visit to Payne’s home, Jones realized that the archive would be much larger than he anticipated. Payne witnessed events through her camera lens, but she was also a collector. She kept mementos like buttons, manifestos, posters, and pamphlets from every movement she followed and every event she chronicled.

“She said she had a few filing cabinets of stuff, but when I visited the first time, there was so much that was just a part of her lived experience,” Jones said. “On a wall, under a thumbtack, there were two tickets from Woodstock. In a closet, on shelves, she had hundreds of various posters. It was almost overwhelming, but it was such a rare collection.”

“Overall, we were impressed by how this project harnessed the power of new media to excite the imaginations of current and future legal historians.”

In what was, at the time, the longest and most costly trial in New York state history, the Panthers were acquitted of all 156 charges on 12 May 1971.

“[They] modeled more than merely put content online that could be digested in print form,” the ASLH wrote. “[They] modeled more than $5,000 relationships between the participants in these cases. They also included engaging essays by legal historians about these sources and the broader historical context.”

A member of the Newsreel Films collective, Payne chronicled the 1950s in Film” festival in 2009. As a historian of Nebraska–Lincoln, headed by University of Nebraska–Lincoln, hosted by the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities, is completely searchable and annotated.

Jones, associate professor of history and ethnic studies, met Payne when she visited campus for a “Blacks in Film” festival in 2009. As a historian of contemporary America, Jones established a quick friendship with Payne.

“[The project] does more than merely put content online. It was developed using information from the archive. Thomas, the John and Catherine Chair in the Humanities, collaborated with Husker colleagues Kwakiutl Dreher and Michael Bur-
Scholars from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Kearney, Nebraska Wesleyan, and Vanderbilt University presented a series of lectures focusing on the relationship between the U.S. and Latin America.

The 2020 Winter Lecture Series was held from 7 to 9 p.m. on the six successive Sundays from 9 February 2020 to 15 March 2020 at the Unitarian Church of Lincoln. The lecture series is supported by the Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Committee, Humanities Nebraska, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The lectures were free and open to the public.

The lectures emphasized six countries and regions in Central and South America. They described the historical, cultural, political, and economic factors that contributed to the current issues that each face. The Latin American countries or regions were selected either because they face problems that are important at this time or they have become the focus of important U.S. federal policies.

“Our goal is to provide information in a context that allows questions and dialogue with our attendees,” said Dick Dienstbier, member of the lecture series planning committee and Osher Lifelong Learning Institute member.

Speakers and Schedule
Speakers addressed specific topics and included the following. The complete schedule can also be found online.

- **February 9**
  Professor Tim Borstelmann, History, UNL – US Diplomatic History in the Western Hemisphere: From the Monroe Doctrine to our time.

**Source:** "Winter talks delve into U.S., Latin American relations," https://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/today/article/winter-talks-delve-into-us-latin-american-relations/, 5 February 2020

**CATHER ARCHIVES DISCOVERY**

William Kelly, a graduate student in the UNL Department of History, was working with new items for the Charles Cather collection when he came across a fun discovery, a short rhyme in an autograph book written in Willa Cather’s hand. Kelly was working as an intern in the Archives & Special Collections, has an interest in Cather, and assists Mary Ellen Ducey, University Archivist, by doing an in-depth review of items to add to the collection. During Kelly’s closer look, an old pocket autograph book caught his eye. The book belonged to Willa’s brother Douglass Cather, and dated back to 1890. The autograph book is similar to how students of today would sign each other’s yearbooks with farewell messages and poems.

Dear Douglass
Learn your lessons, mind your teacher
marry a girl & pay the preacher,
die and fly to the “golden shore”
and don’t be a sill [sic] anymore.
The medical advice of your sister WM Cather Jr.

In the summer of 2019, Kelly interned in Red Cloud, Nebraska at the National Willa Cather Center. It was here where Kelly learned much about Willa’s life.

“I wouldn’t have been able to pinpoint why this was so unique, had it not been for that experience in Red Cloud,” stated Kelly.

**LATIN AMERICA LECTURE**

The most striking piece of Willa’s message was her signature. Willa signed off her poem as, “The medical advice of your sister WM Cather Jr.” Willa would have been around the age of 16 at the time, starting to adopt male styles, and aspiring to become a doctor. This is shown through her medical advice and referring to herself as William (WM) Jr.

“To have the smallest contribution to people’s understanding of Willa Cather…is pretty cool,” said Kelly.

Kelly has enjoyed working with the Cather collection and reading Willa’s books.

“I always hated to read fiction, until I read Willa Cather,” said Kelly, “now she makes me proud to be a Nebraskan.”

**Source:** Caitlin Steiner, "Student Makes Fun Discovery in Cather Collections,” https://unllibraries.blogspot.com/2020/02/student-makes-fun-discovery-in-cather.html, 24 February 2020

**HABEAS CORPUS NSF GRANT**

Translated from Latin, habeas corpus means "show me the body." Originally codified in the 1215 Magna Carta, and later adopted by the United States, habeas is a legal principle that originally enabled prisoners to challenge the legality of their detentions.

But after the Civil War, Congress expanded the rule through the Habeas Corpus Act of 1867, aimed at protecting recently freed slaves. The act’s language extended habeas beyond criminal law and into the interpersonal realm, sparking its transformation into a tool of liberation for marginalized people.

With a three-year, $460,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, University of Nebraska–Lincoln historian Karolina Jagodinsky will explore how habeas corpus was used in the American West by various marginalized groups — immigrants, women, and indigenous and enslaved people, for example — to claim freedom and establish their rights between 1812 and 1924. She is one of the first historians to study these groups’ habeas efforts as a whole, focusing on the overlapping and distinctive ways they used the law. Her project is titled "Petitioning For Freedom: Habeas Corpus in the American West."

"Putting all of these groups together is a very innovative aspect of the project."

In collaboration with Nebraska’s Center for Digital Research in the Humanities, she also will develop a first-of-its-kind open source, open access graph database archiving approximately 6,000 previously unpublished habeas petitions, which will be searchable by detailed demographic information.

Jagodinsky is the first woman in Nebraska’s history department, and just the second Husker historian overall, to receive an NSF grant.

The groups she’s focused on used habeas to challenge a wide array of injustices. Black petitioners resisted enslavement. Indigenous people dodged federal Indian agents — the government’s representatives on reservations — and reclaimed their children from boarding schools and settler families. Chinese immigrants challenged deportation following the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Parents sought custody of children from former spouses or in-laws. And patients and inmates challenged detention in state asylums and institutions.

Though researchers have studied each type of case in isolation, no one has studied the petitioners as a comparative whole. Jagodinsky expects this bird’s-eye view to reveal a
trend of marginalized people informally exchanging legal knowledge both within their own groups and with other groups. These informal networks bolstered their ability to pursue expanded rights through the legal system.

She said people often express surprise that these groups, often uneducated and illiterate, used the legal system as a vehicle for gaining rights. But their practice of sharing legal knowledge, and the circumstances of their lives, enabled them to exploit habeas effectively.

“I think it’s important to remember that these people’s lives were heavily regulated and legislated,” Jagodinsky said.

“When that is the nature of your daily life, even when you are not literate, you carry a common knowledge of the law and the way it affects you.”

She is particularly interested in how black and indigenous people, and indigenous people among themselves, shared knowledge. For example, though scholars often point to the 1879 Standing Bear petition in Omaha as the first instance of a Native American using habeas to challenge federal authority over Native people, that case actually had a predecessor. In 1868, Moses Keokuk in Kansas successfully used habeas to challenge his arrest by an Indian agent.

Jagodinsky said there is evidence of a connection between the two cases. In 1878, Standing Bear and Keokuk were in Indian Territory and Standing Bear’s translator, Susette La Flesche, visited both men there as part of her work to reorganize habeas petitions, which currently are stored in state and federal archives not readily accessible to the public.

Her team will index the petitions so they are searchable by race, relationship, gender, age and petition type. Right now, habeas documents are searchable only by legal party name, which isn’t always known. More expansive search capabilities will open the door for enhanced scholarship, enabling legal historians to unearth documents that were previously inaccessible, said Katherine Walter, co-director of CDRH.

“The project will allow CDRH to visualize relationships in the data by adapting different types of database structures and connecting the resulting data to the legal system,” Walter said. “We believe this has implications for future scholars of legal history.”

The database will also serve as a replicable digital tool for researchers who want to build relational archives for legal records in other areas, like family law, child custody law or other types of civil and criminal law. Jagodinsky said this aspect of the project — the creation of a new digital ontology, or categorization system based on relationships — is of particular interest to NSF because of the need to digitally archive and index records across a wide range of fields.

“I think the structure we’re using could be applied to many other types of cases,” Jagodinsky said. “If we can create the data template, then other archives can use that for their data.”


Amy Burnett, Paula and D.B. Varner University Professor in the Department of History, has been named a Fellow of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation to support work on her research project, The Religious Republic of Letters: Correspondence Networks in Reformation Germany. The twelve-month award, given to researchers who have demonstrated exceptional capacity for productive scholarship or exceptional creative ability in the arts, begins in January 2021.

Burnett, Paula and D.B. Varner University Professor of History, is one of only 175 Fellows, which were announced 9 April 2020. According to a news release from the Guggenheim Foundation, more than 3,000 applied. The fellowships are “intended for individuals who have already demonstrated exceptional capacity for productive scholarship or exceptional creative ability in the arts.”

Burnett teaches early modern European history, and her research examines the role of print, preaching, and education in transmitting and transforming religious ideas. The Religious Republic of Letters examines the correspondence network connecting two dozen humanists, pastors, and teachers in Switzerland and South Germany 1510–1550.

“My research is the missing link between the earlier literary phase of the Republic of Letters and the broader ‘commonwealth of learning’ of the later sixteenth century,” she said.

She will use network analysis and visualization software on a relational database of letters containing over 14,000 letters from nearly 1,500 correspondents.

“I will examine the shape of the network as a whole and consider how humanist epistolography influenced the format of the letters,” Burnett said. “I will then analyze the contents under four headings: knowledge transfer, institutional reform, the expression of affect, and the formation of identity.

“Bridging the artificial divide between humanism and the Reformation, my book will make clear how much religious and educational reform owed to Erasmian humanism.”

Burnett has received numerous previous awards for her research, which examines the role of print, preaching and education in transmitting and transforming religious ideas.

GUGGENHEIM FELLOWSHIP

Faculty and staff who advance the mission of the university in teaching, research, and service are recognized annually at the system, campus, and college level.

Visit our Recognition web page to find out about each award. Professorships are the highest form of recognition.

2020 Awardees
College – Professorships
Bedross Der Matossian, Hymen Rosenberg Associate Professor in Judaic Studies

Source: “Faculty, staff, students earn Spring 2020 awards,” https://cas.unl.edu/faculty-staff-students-earn-spring-2020-awards, 30 March 2020
The list.

... Immigrants and refugees have regularly topped to pollute the national body politic, whether infectious or not of us. The president continues to emphasize what he sees as the foreign character of the disease, and in his wake not of us, so too can remembering the powerful ways in which the courageous dedication of our health care workers inspires us, more than 40 million U.S. residents were born elsewhere, nearly four times as many as in Germany, the country with the next-largest number.

... Roman Catholics, once reviled in this country, eventually came to be seen as plain old Americans. For the most part, so did Jews, as part of a new “Judeo-Christian” tradition. In comparison to their reception in most of Europe, Muslim migrants here appear to be on a similar path of relative incorporation. Asian Americans after 1945 transformed from a “yellow peril” to a “model minority.” Latinos have become a crucial part of American society, the U.S. economy and the U.S. electorate. In contrast to other nations with resurgent right-wing populism, the citizens of the United States can hardly deny their own identity as a nation of immigrants and their descendants.

... Until quite recently, the Republican Party promoted international trade and investment. It embraced U.S. allies abroad. It welcomed new arrivals as entrepreneurs, people of religious faith, and workers critical to the success of large sectors of the U.S. economy. Republicans need not cling to xenophobia of Trumpism once Trump, eventually, is gone.

... Above all, American popular culture reflects global diversity and interconnectedness. Little is truly foreign to the vast industries of music, film, fashion, sports and food. For younger Americans in particular, the nativism (like the ho-mophobia) of some of their elders is acutely embarrassing. They surely need to show up more regularly at election time, but the enormously diverse younger generations of Americans are not warming to xenophobia. At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, my students are not afraid of foreigners, who comprise more than 10% of the student population.

The dramatic expansion of U.S. influence around the globe...
compared to other high-income earning nations, African Americans suffer from hypertension, diabetes, and are overrepresented in many urban centers throughout the Midwest and East Coast. For example, in St. Louis black people make up nearly all COVID-19 deaths. Unsurprisingly, New Orleans is the only southern city with black death tolls that are comparable to New York City. Why do African Americans fare so badly in the United States when it comes to their health and disease? Largely because there has not been a national effort to establish racism as a public health crisis.

In the late 1990s, then Surgeon General David Satcher created a national initiative meant to eradicate health disparities between African Americans and white people by 2010. His goal was never met. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention still has not made racism a public health crisis although racism meets the four criteria the agency established for a public health crisis. Racism places a massive burden on society, it disproportionately affects a segment of the country’s population, the U.S. government has conducted for decades that race or ethnicity is an important predictor of health outcomes, and there is a proven causative relationship between racism and health outcomes. As the numbers of black victims of COVID-19 increase, those of us who study, write, and teach about medical disparities recognize the importance of establishing racism as an important factor in health outcomes.

Americans have died at disproportionately higher rates than their white counterparts in many urban centers throughout the Midwest and East Coast. For example, in St. Louis black people make up nearly all COVID-19 deaths. Unsurprisingly, New Orleans is the only southern city with black death tolls that are comparable to New York City. Why do African Americans fare so badly in the United States when it comes to their health and disease? Largely because there has not been a national effort to establish racism as a public health crisis.

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A century ago, people understood less about contagious disease. (Although, said Cooper Owens, the practice of spitting on the streets was common and eventually banned over the course of the outbreak in fear of it leading to the flu.)

There were no ICUs. No mechanical ventilators. No antiviral drugs, no antibiotics to treat secondary infections...

Measles and scarlet fever, whooping cough, and polio. Now we have vaccines for those killers.

But not for this one.

The novel coronavirus won’t be rushed out of existence, no matter how soon we open our beauty shops and bars...


There’s evidence that systematic racism affects health in more subtle ways, too. In the 1990s, Arline Geronimus, a professor at the University of Michigan School of Public Health, coined the term “weathering” to describe the way that discrimination wears away at the body, leading to early onset of chronic disease and other poor health outcomes, even as people move up the economic ladder. “There’s this accelerated biological aging that’s caused by chronic exposure to stressors and high-effort coping with stressors [from] living in a structurally racist system,” she explained. She said this may be one of the reasons COVID-19 is hitting communities of color particularly hard. Historically, though, policy interventions to address racial disparities have focused on changing individual behaviors. Geronimus and others argue that what’s needed are structural changes aimed at rooting out discrimination and bias.

Recently, some local governments have started to acknowledge the link between discrimination and poor health. Last year Milwaukee became the one the first cities in the United States to declare racism a public health crisis. Milwaukee is one of the country’s most segregated metro areas: Wisconsin’s mortality rate for black infants is the highest among the states, and Milwaukee has one of the most-incarcerated zip codes in the country. The point of the resolution was to not only make racial equity a core element of all decision-making, and it may have contributed to the fact that Milwaukee was more transparent about data than other locales about disproporportionate deaths early in the pandemic.

Dr. Deirdre Cooper Owens, a historian of medicine at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, has argued that the federal government should issue a similar declaration in response to the ongoing threat from COVID-19.
to COVID-19. She argues that racism meets the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s criteria for declaring a public health threat: It puts a significant burden on society, disproportionately affects part of the population, current measures to address it are inadequate, and a coordinated, broad approach is necessary in response. “Most white Americans do not like to have conversations around racism,” Cooper Owens told me. “We have to be able to root it out at its source and just call a thing a thing.”

In Omaha, Police Chief Todd Schmaderer said smaller groups of outside agitators have overshadowed and undermined the message of those asking for police accountability, pointing to an emotional but peaceful rally Sunday night at the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation Visitors Center in North Omaha that drew about 1,000 people. Mayors and police chiefs in other cities have used similar us-versus-them language, blaming out-of-towners or outsiders for inciting violence and vandalism. But a USA Today analysis of arrest records and social media accounts in several cities found that most protesters are local...

Wednesday afternoon, at a meeting of the anti-violence group Omaha 360, Deputy Police Chief Scott Gray mentioned arrests of people from out of state, including the two Kentucky residents. Gray said he didn’t know if the out-of-state residents came to Omaha for the purpose of stirring up trouble but said the Omaha department and federal authorities are going to look into that.

Patrick Jones is an associate professor of history and ethnic studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln who studies civil rights and social movements. Jones, who attended some of the recent demonstrations, said there’s a long history of officials blaming uprisings on “outsiders,” from labor strikes in the late 19th century to the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

Historically, the tactic has been used to minimize or question the legitimacy of protests, “despite the reality that those movements were rooted in local circumstances and local people and they were the engine ... everywhere in change,” he said of civil rights era-protests.

Still, there’s nothing to stop a car full of college students or clergy in Kansas City from heading up to Omaha to protest this weekend.

“Protest is organic, and we’re dealing with legitimate anger and frustration and rage right now,” Jones said...

People who were detained during a moment of chaos on the fourth day of protests in Omaha.


NORFOLK PROTESTS

Norfolk, Nebraska, is a quiet, conservative, and predominantly white city of 24,000 people where public protests are rare, except for an annual rally against abortion. So when about 300 people gathered on a busy street corner last weekend to voice their outrage at the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, residents took notice.

The rally was peaceful, but the fact it happened at all illustrates how far the movement to protest police brutality and discrimination has spread, fueled by social media and the persistent but less visible racism that minorities say they experience in small towns.

“It was important to do it, especially in the middle of Nebraska,” said rally organizer Eduardo Mora, who lives in a neighboring town. “Are we going to wait for a police brutality incident to happen here? We shouldn’t wait for there to be a life taken…”

The protests even in small towns reflect long-simmering anger over implicit discrimination, such as when police officers watch minorities closely, said Patrick Jones, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln history and ethnic studies professor. Police shootings of other black men only make it worse, he said.

“We’ve reached this tipping point with George Floyd,” Jones said. “Frustration has continued to build with each new incident, and this was the spark. But it’s really rooted in a broader set of injustices…”

People hold their hands in the air as protestors chant “Hands up, don’t shoot” during a 30 May 2020 rally in downtown Iowa City, Iowa, against police brutality sparked by the death of George Floyd, a black man who died after being restrained by Minneapolis police officers on 25 May 2020.


OMAHA PROTESTS

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CALLS FOR UNL CAMPUS POLICE REFORMS

At the urging of student leaders demanding action, University of Minnesota President Joan Gabel announced last week the institution would no longer contract with the Minneapolis Police Department on certain events.

In a statement a few days later, a group of faculty at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln say administrators should take a look at how local law enforcement are used on the state’s largest university campus.

“We are concerned by the heavy-handed reaction by law enforcement and certain political leaders in response to what have been, overall, largely peaceful protests in Lincoln and Omaha,” faculty in UNL’s African and African American Studies program wrote 5 June 2020.

Some of the demonstrators included UNL students who were tear-gassed, shot by rubber bullets, and arrested for exercising their constitutional right to protest, the statement adds, which only served to further erode trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

Because of those actions, the faculty said UNL should conduct “a formal review and reconsideration of any insti-
tutional relationships and partnerships with local and state police forces.”

The statement also calls on UNL to ensure the rights of free expression and peaceful protest by students, faculty, and staff are protected and to provide better access to on-campus legal and medical services, as well as reforms such as the de-militarization of police and better oversight.

According to Patrick Jones, an associate professor within the program, the actions of police against the protesters both in Lincoln and Omaha and across the country highlight unfair, and even discriminatory, practices by some officers, which he said warranted a second look.

“We’re asking the university to think about that, to review what its relationship is and to think about whether they are necessary and essential, or if they are exacerbating what are now obvious inequities in policing,” Jones said. “We think it’s the right and responsible thing to do.”

Citing a letter from Chancellor Ronnie Green calling for action against racism and discrimination, Jones said a review of UNL’s relationship with outside police forces — it also maintains its own law enforcement department complete with sworn officers and community service officers assigned to residence halls — would be a way to immediately signal change.

“Whether or not they will make a change and whether that could happen are political questions, I guess,” Jones said. “If people are serious, it has to be different, we have to re-conceptualize and transform the ways we’re thinking about and doing policing…”

Jeanette Jones [no relation], an associate professor in UNL’s Department of History and the Institute of Ethnic Studies, said the demands made in the letter from African and African American Studies faculty reflect similar calls for reform across the U.S.

She said at a minimum, a reexamination of the agreements between UNL, Lincoln police, and the Sheriff’s Office would spell out the relationship for the campus community.

“When police are called onto campus to help out University Police, it would help everyone understand what the parameters are and what they are expected to do,” she said. “That’s just accountability.”


“Looking at that era and seeing the resurgence of a conservatism at the end of the 60s and beyond was a powerful reminder in a moment where a lot of people are feeling high, but the work of change has yet to really be done, and we’re seeing the push back,” Jones said.

Since the statement by the African and African American studies faculty was released, Jones has been working with UNL’s administration on the faculty’s demands. He said he’s hopeful, but the faculty have been through these types of discussions before.

“Currently the administration seems to be working hard to accomplish that,” Jones said. “They’re hearing new voices, including new voices, and they are willing to at least acknowledge that in the past they have not done what needs to be done to make real and sustained and meaningful change.”

The work of teaching and advocating for change is added to an already heavy personal load for Black faculty.

Dr. Jeannette Eileen Jones is an associate professor of history and Ethnic Studies at UNL. She spoke to NET while coming from places where if you look right now where we are, we are responding – almost all too often – and that’s what we’re here for these students,” Jones said. “But we also want to be a voice to express their concerns to the administration and to be allies with them because they’re also doing their own work.”

For these faculty members, the work of teaching, advocating, and surviving goes on, especially as the nation grapples with race in its past, present, and future.


LINCOLN POLICE VIOLENCE AGAINST PROTESTORS

...Danielle Conrad, executive director of the ACLU of Nebraska, said the organization is monitoring the responses by cities and counties all across the state to the protests.

What they saw in Lincoln and Omaha is disheartening, she said.

“To have a youth-led movement of so many crying out for justice be met with militarization and criminalization and access to health and legal resources for students. The statement is timely, but it's also one in a long line of statements the program has had to make over the years...

Helping students understand the history of race and racism in America is a big part of the work done by faculty in UNL’s African and African American studies program.

Associate professor Dr. Patrick Jones recently finished teaching a three-week class called America in the 60s, which includes covering the civil rights movement. He said students learned about the different avenues for change, as well as the persistence of systems of oppression.

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Dr. Jeannette Eileen Jones is an associate professor of history and Ethnic Studies at UNL. She spoke to NET while going for a walk. She emphasized how important it is for Black people to look after the whole self, especially now.

“That doesn’t mean we shirk what we see as our responsibility to our communities, our families,” Jones said. “We’re coming from places where if you look right now where we are, we are responding – almost all too often – and that’s what we’re here for these students,” Jones said. “But we also want to be a voice to express their concerns to the administration and to be allies with them because they’re also doing their own work.”

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“Looking at that era and see...
“This is nothing new,” said Jeannette Jones, an associate professor of history and ethnic studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. “We’ve seen heavy-handed tactics being used on predominantly black protesters expressing their grief and rage at what was happening in America before.”

In 1965, for example, Americans watched as Alabama state troopers beat and used tear gas on civil rights marchers outside Selma as they walked to Montgomery to rally for voting rights and against racial segregation.

The level of violence seen in Lincoln in late May does not rise to the level of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, Jones said, “but the goals of the protesters, and officers on horseback where water cannons, dogs, and weapons appears the same.

“It is meant to quell protest, it is meant to silence protesters, or make them seem illegitimate, even in the case of clear racial injustice,” she said...


Law enforcement officers stand at the entrance to the County-City Building on 30 May 2020 during a night of clashes between police and protesters.

George Washington had false teeth for most of his life.

They were not made of wood — like the history books told us — but fashioned from ivory and from the teeth of Mount Vernon slaves.

He made the entry in his ledger on May 8, 1784: “to Negros for 9 teeth,” a total of 6 pounds, 2 shillings.

"Think about how rich he was," Deirdre Cooper Owens says. "He had plantations. He had access to sugar. Think about the fact that his dentures were made from a slave who had healthy teeth."

Cooper Owens has spent her academic life thinking about history, and writing about the history of medicine and the way that science is deployed by law enforcement with military-style gear and weapons appears the same.

"We’ve seen that before. We’ve seen that in the movies," she said.

Cooper Owens points me in the direction of a 2016 study of the unjust medical treatment of black people — but fashioned from ivory and from the teeth of Mount Vernon slaves.

"He had plantations. He had access to sugar. Think about the fact that his dentures were made from a slave who had healthy teeth." Deirdre Cooper Owens, director of the Humanities in Medicine Program at UNL, wrote "Medical Bondage: Race, Gender and the Origins of American Gynecology" and is working on a second book on African American physicians.

"Many of the gynecological discoveries have largely been based on medical experiments on enslaved women."

"People say, ‘Why do we have to talk about slavery?’ That was so long ago. We weren't born yet. That has nothing to do with us."

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And yet, it does.

"It had a hand in almost every industry and medical advance."

And it spawned a narrative of racial difference in medical treatment from Colonial times onward, a binary way of looking at black and white Americans.

Myths: Black people have thicker blood. Thicker skin. Black people don't feel pain the way white people do.

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The sticky heat hung like a blanket, the fireworks tents and stands thus contain so many multitude of it is spectacular. They’re walking advertisements for the U.S., to see people give up so much to be here. “… why? Because Borstelmann sees the United States’ broad diversity — of races, languages, perspectives, regions and political views — as an identity that differentiates it from other nations. And the idea that all men are created equally — words embedded in Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence, even if executed for many years in ways untrue to their meaning — is a fast-held belief among Americans, he said. And the world at large sees it. The U.S., Borstelmann said, has roughly 85 million first- or second-generation immigrants. “People gave up their lives elsewhere to come here because this is a place where they can make new and better lives,” Borstelmann said. “And history shows they have, and their kids have after them. Of all color, religions. The diversity of it is spectacular. They’re walking advertisements for the U.S., to see people give up so much to be here.” …

The fireworks tents and stands thus contain so many multitudes who have collected their miniature explosives in a bag, walked to their nearest patch of cement and, with an imperfect lighting device that will almost certainly fail at some point during the night, tried not to blow up a finger in pursuit of a few seconds of flash. And after the weekend closes, America will face the same distress and pain that it takes us back to the 1930s for a point of comparison,” said Tim Borstelmann, modern world history professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. “It’s huge, and what happens, of course, in times of crisis — in this case, a mega-health care crisis combined with an economic crisis and so now a sort of racial crisis over the top of that — it provides the opportunity for change in ways people don’t expect. Mostly, we all kind of live our lives expecting the next day will be like the previous one. When things really change fast, it’s sort of a shock…”

That sense of collective American optimism — that fuels its robust, diverse, world-changing culture, from sports to movies to television to books to art to political ideas — can often seem boundless, even cocky, on the world stage, but it has been blancketed like summer humidity clings to flag-themed T-shirts. Borstelmann said the embedded individualism of the United States — less communal, he said, than any nation — can polarize Americans across a variety of fronts.

“The U.S. has always been at the extreme range of being the most individualistic of all modern cultures,” said Borstelmann, who’s written Just Like Us: The American Struggle to Understand Foreigners and The 1790s: A New Global History from Civil Rights to Economic Inequality in the last decade. Borstelmann believes trust in government has declined over the past 50 years to the point where the nation’s response to the coronavirus is almost atomized by locality… This year is not like the last, or the one before it. But Borstelmann — whose wife, Lynn, is an assistant professor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center — is more encouraged than some by the nation’s growing resiliency.

“Given the extraordinary pain being inflicted economically, politically, emotionally and psychologically by the pandemic, I’m guardedly optimistic,” he said, noting that historians don’t see any better into the future than anyone else.
FOOTBALL IN A PANDEMIC

The snow began the night before Thanksgiving, and it fell softly on a nation weary from war.

Over the past 14 months, from the summer of 1917 to the fall of 1918, more than 100,000 men and women died fighting overseas. Thousands more were buried in the U.S., killed by the Spanish flu.

But when the sun rose on Nebraska the frosty morning of Nov. 28, 1918, the promise of a rare hopeful day lay ahead. Eleven days after the end of the Great War, after a morning of turkey lunches and holiday celebration, thousands wrapped themselves in scarves and topcoats and headed toward the edge of Lincoln to Nebraska Field…

How this game on Thanksgiving day came to be — how it kicked off just after World War I in the middle of a pandemic — is a small miracle. And the story is worth revisiting now, in this summer of 2020, because though the situation in front of college football appears incongruous and foreign, it’s all actually happened once before.

After the outbreak of Spanish flu in the spring and summer of 1918, the conversation surrounding the return of sports split the country then, too. Not on social media but in courtrooms, boardrooms and locker rooms. Health directors cautioned against playing games, conferences debated if they should play or shut it down, universities worried about loss of revenues and scheduling.

A century later, America finds itself in a remarkably similar position. The college football world has spent months wringing its hands over what to do with the upcoming football season. The Ivy League announced last week the conference won’t have any fall sports. The Big Ten and Pac-12 are moving to a conference-only schedule. Most of the sport is still waiting to see if COVID-19 cases continue to rise, as they have for more than a month.

Much has changed in the past century. The world is not in open war. This is not history exactly repeating itself.

Much is similar. And as we chase answers on what to do next, here’s the story of what happened the only other time in history Nebraska found itself in this situation. Here’s what football looks like in the face of a pandemic, and how it led to a hint of warmth on a cold, snowy Thanksgiving day.

When America entered World War I in 1917, life slowly began to change in the United States. But sports continued.

Coached by John Heisman, Georgia Tech was named college football’s national champion. The White Sox beat the Giants 4-2 to win the World Series. Boxing was still on the front pages of newspapers.

As the war rolled into the summer of 1918, though, it was unclear if that could be duplicated. The U.S. military was planning an offensive — called Plan 1919 — that it hoped would finish the war the following spring. The war department wanted as many healthy, young men as possible, and time spent training for football seemed futile.

“There were very few college-age men (in America) anyway,” said Scott Stempson, a lecturer at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln who wrote American Sports History and teaches a course on the topic. Stempson said the military became convinced football was a good way to train soldiers. So military bases put together football teams, and in the summer of 1918 offered to play college teams in the fall.

A second issue was growing. In May 1918, more than 100 soldiers at Camp Funston in Kansas contracted what would later be called the Spanish flu. It spread from army base to army base and into communities, landing in Nebraska by June.

By the end of 1918, at least 14,000 Omahans would contract the flu. At least 974 died. The Spanish flu pandemic is believed to have killed 500,000 Americans, and 50 million people worldwide. In six months, COVID-19 has infected more than 3.3 million Americans, and killed more than 130,000.

Sports reacted to the virus in 1918 by pulling the plug. All major golf and tennis championships were canceled. The virus was quelled briefly, but it reappeared in September at Camp Devens in Massachusetts. More than 10,000 soldiers contracted the Spanish flu, with almost 100 dying per day in the camp.

In September, the war department requested “no fall gridiron schedule” in 1918…

The 1918 Nebraska football squad poses for a team photo. The captain-elect of the team, Roscoe B. “Dusty” Rhodes, was killed in October while fighting with the 89th Division in France. News of his death made the papers of the morning of the Notre Dame game.

As campuses turned to autumn, as the flu killed young and old, as the Allies pushed further into German-occupied France, Nebraska hit the phones.

The country, they said, needs football.

A second breakout at Camp Funston quickly canceled the two-game series.

Iowa agreed to travel to Lincoln for the season opener, but days before kickoff, the army training corps ordered students in Iowa City to undergo a 21-day quarantine as Spanish flu cases rose…

Iowa beat Nebraska 12-0.

Two days later, Evangeline Pelton became the third student on campus to die from the Spanish flu.

Lincoln responded by closing campus. The state closed churches, schools, movie theaters and businesses. Parades were banned, as were large meetings and public gatherings…

In the first 10 days of October, 106 people died from the lung-clogging influenza in Omaha. Unlike COVID-19, the Spanish flu appeared to prominently impact those in their 20s and 30s. Young women contracted the flu while serving as volunteer nurses at the University of Nebraska. In Greeley Center, Nebraska, an outbreak of 200 cases killed four boys. At least 10 UNL students died in ensuing days after the Iowa game.

Despite that, football teams wanted to keep playing.

Though locally people knew of deaths from the virus, wartime censorship in Europe and hyper-awareness of war in the U.S. led Americans to think the problem was not as widespread as it was.

“More than likely, what you find is that people, including newspaper publishers, were far more concerned with anything and everything concerned with the war and dismissed anything else as competing with the war effort, including the Spanish flu or any other widespread sickness,” said Thomas Berg, a former lecturer of military history at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. “Newspaper editors either kept the numbers of sick people out of their papers or buried the information on page 27 under the fold in small print next to an advertisement for dental creme.”

Spain — neutral in World War I — was one of the few places to report accurate numbers, which is what led to the virus being named the Spanish flu, and why even as the virus killed between 3% and 5% of the world’s population, there was an appetite for sport…


Source: Chris Heady, “Amid a war and pandemic, Nebraska gave Notre Dame all it could handle in 1918,” https://omaha.com/sports/college/huskies/teams/football/amidst-a-war-and-pandemic-nebraska-gave-notre-dame-all-it-could-handle-in-1918/article_ed_38b90616e6d8c71-57db-8d71-8f3e077d8d7e.html, 19 July 2020
ENSLAVED WOMEN AND MEDICAL ERASURE

This story is part of The Confederate Reckoning, a collaborative project of USA TODAY Network newsrooms across the South to critically examine the legacy of the Confederacy and its influence on systemic racism today.

Anarcha was at least 17 when the doctor started experimenting on her. The year before, she suffered terrible complications during a 72-hour labor that opened a hole between her bladder and vagina and left her incontinent.

The man who held Anarcha in bondage outside Montgomery sent her to Dr. J. Marion Sims sometime in 1845. She was one of at least seven enslaved women sent to Sims by white slaveholders. They had the same condition as Anarcha, known as a vesicovaginal fistula.

Sims wanted to find a way to address it. From 1845 to 1849, the enslaved women became experiments.

By Sims’ own account, Anarcha underwent 30 operations as Sims tried different approaches to repairing the fistula. Another woman named Lucy took two to three months to recover from one of Sims’ operations. Anesthesia was not in widespread use at this time, said Deirdre Cooper Owens, a professor of medical history at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and author of Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology. Sims later wrote that “Lucy’s agony was extreme” during one procedure.

These women could not say no. Neither Sims nor the white men who held them against their will showed any interest in their opinions. Cooper Owens said if the women protested, they “could get beaten, or they could get ignored.”

“Their consent was a bad decision because they were under the assumption that there was something about them that was susceptible to this kind of treatment,” Cooper Owens said.

Despite that, a statue of Sims unveiled in 1939 remains on the grounds of the Alabama Capitol, in Montgomery, Ala. A statue of Dr. J. Marion Sims is seen on the grounds of the Alabama Capitol, in Montgomery, Ala.

“During this time, he allowed this, or he allowed this white man if not himself to have access to her body,” she said. “That goes against all ethics. That goes against the Hippocratic Oath.”

Racism warped medicine as it did every American institution, and contributed to long-term public health issues that continue to affect Black Americans. In 1856, a physician named W.C. Danielli claimed that the breast milk of enslaved mothers was poisonous to their children and urged slaveowners to feed Black infants “sweet oil and molas-ses” instead. Most physicians of the time, including Sims, believed Black men and women didn’t experience pain the way whites did.

Today Black Americans suffer higher rates of chronic diseases and higher rates of infant mortality while having less access to quality health care. Cooper Owens said the “structural dynamics of medical racism,” which maintain those conditions, should concern Americans more.

When we create historical boogeymen, we lose sight of other folks who were doing the same things as Sims before him, during his time period and afterward,” she said.


BIG TEN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

The Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor has announced its annual selection of faculty who will participate in the Big Ten Academic Leadership Program this year. Four of these faculty are in the College of Arts & Sciences.

- Eve Brank, Professor in the Department of Psychology and Director of the Center on Children, Families, and the Law
- Deirdre Cooper Owens, Associate Professor in the Department of History, Charles and Linda Wilson Professor in the History of Medicine, and Director of the Humanities in Medicine Program
- Eileen Hebets, Charles Bessey Professor in the School of Biological Sciences
- Nick Pace, Professor and Chair of the Department of Educational Administration

- Susan Sheridan, George Holmes University Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology, founding director of the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools, and associate dean for research and creative activity, College of Education and Human Sciences
- Leen-Kiat Soh, Professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering

Fellows will attend a series of virtual conferences and on-campus events throughout the academic year learning about leadership and a broad range of topics, including community engagement, diversity and inclusion, freedom of expression, challenging conversations, mental health, student success, and the social value of higher education.

Learn more about the program and view past participants. Contact Judy Walker at judywalker@unl.edu for more information about this leadership opportunity.


Eileen Hebets
• Professor in the Department of History, Charles and Linda Wilson Professor in the History of Medicine, and Director of the Humanities in Medicine Program

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Resistance can take many forms as these three documentaries from the virtual Newburyport Documentary Film Festival (18-24 Sept. 2020) demonstrate. Whether it’s building a community out of a landfill, treating drug addiction with acupuncture, or struggling for years against a despotic regime, these stories inspire hope for those times when lives and careers, determined people can topple a tyrannical regime.

It looked like Czechoslovakia had achieved that in January 1968, when Alexander Dubček, first secretary of the Czech Communist Party, introduced “socialism with a human face.” He ended censorship and other restrictions in what became known as the “Prague Spring,” a brief renaissance of arts, culture, and free expression.

The result is an essential account of an overlooked chapter in the history of American slavery.


THE ART OF DISSENT
REVIEWS, FILM FESTIVALS, AND AWARDS

While thunderous percussion plays a classical Bond theme, Welsh star Shirley Bassey rises to the heavens on an enormous crane-suspended girder, so that dangling in the air she can sing about evil Goldfinger, whose familiar rise of right-wing, populist leaders. Havel and his fellow artists had the passion to help win the country’s freedom, Le Sueur suggests, but they did not have the political skills to preserve it.

Though it may take more than 20 years of peaceful activism, as well as imprisonment, torture, and the destruction of efforts by enslaved families in Prince George’s County, Md., to win their freedom through the courts. Many of these men and women were held in the Jesuit-owned White Marsh tobacco plantation, and profits derived from their labor—or from their sale to slaveholders in the deep South—helped to finance Georgetown University. In 1791, two men enslaved at White Marsh sued the Jesuits for their freedom, basing their argument on claims that they were descended from free women of color. Their lawsuits “opened the floodgates,” Thomas writes, leading to “more than a thousand legal actions against hundreds of slaveholding families” in the county. He convincingly characterizes these “freedom suits” as “a public counterpart of the Underground Railroad” that forced a reckoning with the patchwork of laws supporting slavery. Moving profiles of Edward Queen, one of the original litigants, and Thomas Butler, whose family won their freedom suit against Supreme Court justice Marshall’s decision in the case of Dred Scott v. Sandford, and Thomas’s discovery that his own ancestors held Queen’s relatives in bondage adds emotional and historical nuance.

The result is an essential account of an overlooked chapter in the history of American slavery.

plans of destroying the world can only be stopped by heroic James Bond. To a local person, the locations of this 1968 clip are surprisingly familiar: it was actually filmed on the construction site of the Federal Assembly, which was just emerging at the top end of Václavské náměstí.

The clip was being filmed for the international music series Europea. The English Moody Blues, who played their breakthrough psychedelic piece “Night in White Satin” on Charles Bridge, performed in the program along with Shirley Bassey. The documentary film *The Art of Dissent* directed by History Department Chair at the University of Nebraska James Dean Le Sueur, begins with excerpts from this now forgotten show. Le Sueur is currently doing a tour of international festivals with the film, so that he may also show it with co-producer Czech TV next year.

In the documentary, the Prague Spring is immediately followed by a Prague winter. As soon as Europea was finished (the film database lists the fateful numerals 21.8.1968 as its “date of release”), Soviet tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia. And half a year later, Jan Palach immolated himself as its “date of release”), Soviet tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia.” For the new documentary, this is the springboard for hit “What My Now Love” in front of the National Museum, a token of criticism of Lukashenko’s regime? In Minsk streets to sing together in peace as different social and cultural groups also meeting the events in Belarus: aren’t members of different social and cultural groups also meeting in Minsk streets to sing together in peace as a token of criticism of Lukashenko’s regime? And, like our dissidents, they await for someone to beat them up if not even directly arrest them for doing so.

Incidentally, Shirley Bassey sang one more song in Europea, which Le Sueur’s documentary surprisingly left out. It was called “Big Spender” and it the singer allowed herself to be escorted across Národní třída and in the direction of Schirnding’s palace by a jocular policeman. Here, twenty one years later, his much less jovial colleagues brutally dispersed a student demonstration, after which even those who had until then been too afraid to go out in the streets, let alone sing in them, finally lost their patience with the regime.

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**The Art of Dissent**, a feature documentary film by historian James Le Sueur, explores the role of artistic activism during Czechoslovakia’s communist takeover and nonviolent transition from communist power. It was screened as a free drive-in film at 7:30 p.m. 30 September 2020 at Nebraska Innovation Campus, 2021 Transformation Drive, in the northwest corner of the A lot.

Le Sueur is the Samuel Clark Waugh Distinguished Professor of International Relations and the chair of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln history department. His film recently premiered online at the Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival and the Newburyport Documentary Festival.

Le Sueur completed his doctorate in intellectual and cultural history at the University of Chicago in 1996. He joined the Nebraska faculty in 2001 and teaches courses on world intellectual and cultural history, France, Algeria, terrorism, radical Islam, 20th-century decolonization, and 20th-century international relations...

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**Sources:**

**Reviews:** Peter Keough, "In Focus: In Newburyport, films that take the path of most resistance," [https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/09/09/arts/ focus-newburyport_films_that_take-path_most-resistance](http://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/09/09/arts/focus-newburyport_films_that_take-path_most-resistance). 9 September 2020.


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**FACULTY NOTES**

Columbia University Press published Dr. Tim Borstelmann’s newest book in Spring 2020, *Just Like Us: The American Struggle to Understand Foreigners* explores how Americans, across the full sweep of their history, have wrestled with how much people they encounter from elsewhere – immigrants, refugees, visitors, and those in other countries – are similar to themselves. He won the UNL College of Arts and Sciences Honors Humanities Faculty of the Year Award, and delivered one of the Nebraska Lectures as well as invited talks at Southern Methodist University, the University of California-Irvine, and the UNL Law School. His recent interview for a podcast on U.S. relations with South Africa can be found on the BackStory website. Borstelmann continues his efforts to spread the gospel of history beyond the Department, teaching extensively in the University Honors Program and for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.
Dr. Amy Nelson Bur- nnett spent last summer doing research at the Herzog August-Bibli- thek in Wolfenbüttel, Germany. This past fall she gave papers at a symposium on “Ul- rich Zwingli and the Swiss Reformation’ at Calvin University and at the annual meet- ing of the Sixteenth Century Society and Conference in St. Lou- is and published three articles on the inner-Protestant debate concerning the Lord’s Supper, the topic of her 2019 book, Debating the Sacra- ments: Print and Authority in the Early Reformation. She is now beginning work on a major new project that examines the evolution of the correspondence network that linked humanists and Protestant reformers throughout Switzerland and South Germany. Her study will be based on a database that contains over 20,000 letters written in the first half of the sixteenth century. Burnett received a Maude Ham- mond Fling Fellowship from UNL’s Research Council for the summer of 2020, which will allow her to compare the Swiss/South German network with that centered on Martin Luther and Philipp Melanchthon in Wittenberg. She will begin analyzing these networks this coming academic year as a Solmsen Fellow at the Institute for Humanities Re- search at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and she has received a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship to continue work on the project through the end of 2021.

Dr. Parks Coble’s primary research focus for 2019-2020 was completion of his book manuscript, The Collapse of Chiang Kai-shek’s China: Hyperinflation and Its Consequences, 1944-1949. Much of the year was spent writing the final two chapters yielding a complete draft of the manuscript. Plans for a brief research trip to the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University were derailed by COVID-19 which had left the archives closed as of this writing. Although Coble continues to be an Associate-in-Research at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard University, Harvard libraries have been closed by the virus and all ac- tivities of the Fairbank Center are virtual only. Perhaps the biggest disappointment has been the suspension of Coble’s ongoing research relationship with the History Faculty and Graduate Students at Fudan University in Shanghai, China. The virus as brought academic trips to China and much of the research activity in the history field there to a halt for the foreseeable future. Despite this Coble expected to send the manuscript off to a potential publisher by the end of the summer 2020.

One long-standing conference volume is finally being published as a book, Living and Working in War-time China by the University of Hawaii Press. Edited by Wen-hsin Yeh of University of Virginia and at Berkeley and Brett Sheehan of the University of Southern California, it will contain Coble’s chapter “Preserving the Value of jubi during Nationalist China’s War with Japan.”

Coble attended the Midwest Asian Studies Conference held in October 2019 at Michigan State University where he presented a paper “70 years on: reflections on the 70th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Revolution.” In January Coble attended the American Historical Associa- tion’s annual meeting in New York City where he also joined the Conference on Asian History, an affiliate of the AHA. Coble was scheduled to be a discussant for a panel at the Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference to be held in Boston in March 2020 but the conference was canceled by COVID-19.

In the fall semester of 2019 Coble had one of his most rewarding teaching experiences of his four decades at Ne- braska. He taught a freshman honors seminar at the Robert Knoll Honors Center. Capped at 20 students, the class was primarily discussion with incoming honors students. The environment in the Knolls Hall is unusual in that virtually all of the students lived in the building. Atten- dance was almost universal and honors students all seemed to have done the reading. The class dealt with 20th century China. The spring semester brought perhaps the greatest challenge of Coble’s teaching career. Never having done any online teaching in his career he (along with the rest of the faculty) found themselves in mid-semester having to completely convert their classes to online. After a few intense work- shops in online teaching, he completed the semester.

Dr. Bedross Der Matossian had a very productive year. He published a new article titled “The Development of Arme- no-Turkish (Hayatur T’kervin) in the 19th Century Otto- man Empire: Marking and Crossing Ethnoreligious Bound- aries”. Interventions in the Islamicate World (2019) 1-34. His new edited volume The First Republic of Armenia (1918-1920) on its Centenary: Politics, Gender, and Diplo- macy (California: The Press California State University, Fresno, 2020) has just been published. He is currently finishing his manuscript From Revolution to Violence. The Massacres of Adana to be published by Stanford University Press in 2021.

Dr. Vanessa B. Gor- man’s work this year has been dominated by her long-term Greek treebanking project: she makes syntactic trees of ancient Greek Prose sentences, and then uses those trees to examine questions of authorship among the ancient Greek historians (example to the right). This year she hit the half-mil- lion token milestone and published a data paper announcing this repository of open access material (https://openhumanitiesdata.metajnl. com/articles/10.5334/tehd.132), and Gorman gave several presentations – both domestic and international – focused on the construction and use of Greek trees. She has also begun developing a fully open-access, on-line (or flipped) class beginning Greek language that follows the princi- pal that we should use all modern tools and avoid useless memorization of dumb stuff (https://voryman1.github.io/ Greek-Language-Class/). This class is about half developed, funded in part by a grant from the UNL Center for Trans- formative Teaching. It should be functional by the end of summer 2020, with a tentative plan to teach it as Accelerat- ed Beginning Greek in Spring 2021.

Within the department, Gorman began her third stint as Undergraduate Chair, and has been working particularly on the department’s upcoming Academic Program Review and on the challenge of converting our department’s teaching to align more with the available digital tools and to increase distance education offerings.

Margaret D. Jacobs is in the second year of her Andrew Carnegie Fellowship for her project, “Does the United States Need a Truth and Reconciliation Commission?” She trav- eled to New Zealand, Canada, and Australia in 2019-2020 to learn more about how those nations have been reconditioning with and redressing past histories of human rights viola- tions against Indigenous peoples.

Jacobs co-founded with journalist Kevin Abourzek (Rose- bud Sioux) a multimedia project, Reconciliation Rising (https://www.reconciliationrising.org), to showcase the lives and work of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who are engaged in honestly confronting painful and traumatic histories, promoting meaningful and respectful dialogue between Natives and non-Natives, and creating pathways to reconciliation.

Since 2018, Jacobs has been co-directing with Liz Lorang of UNL Libraries the Genoa Indian School Digital Reconcili- ation Project, which aims to make government records of the boarding school more accessible to descendants and to promote greater awareness and discussion of Indian board- ing schools in American history. The project is funded by two major grants from the Council on Library and Informa- tion Resources (CLIR) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

Jacobs also was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in October 2019. She was invited to give a speech at the induction ceremony on behalf of the new members in the Arts and Humanities (https://www.amacad.org/news/2019-induction-ceremony).

Carole Levin published the article, “Scholarship on Queen Elizabeth and Tudor Queens Over Half a Century: A Per- sonal View” in the 50th anniversary issue of the Sixteenth Century Journal in 2019. A special issue of the journal Explorations in Renaissance Culture she edited came out in
American Studies conference in Las Cruces, New Mexico and the Rawley Conference on UNL’s campus cancelled this year, Homberger Cordia looks forward to presenting at both the Pacific Coast Branch and the regular American Historical Society’s upcoming conferences in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington, respectively. She will present her new research project that focuses on women and travel writing in twentieth-century Mexico at the (postponed) Gender and Gender Equity Conference in Lincoln in the fall.

Homberger Cordia’s research plans to visit the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City to begin tentative dissertation research has been delayed, but in order to help facilitate that travel when it is possible to do so safely, she was awarded the Maslowski Travel Award from the Department of History as well as the Albert J. Beveridge Grant for Research in the Western Hemisphere from the AHA. Once it is feasible, she plans on spending some time immersed in the archives. She is also looking forward to serving as the President of the History Graduate Students Association next year.

This past year, Elodie Galeazzi completed her second year of Ph.D. coursework. She advanced her research on black media in Northern Virginia in the post-civil rights era and started developing digital components to her project. Galeazzi was also the co-chair of the annual James A. Rawley Conference in the Humanities. The 2020 Rawley team developed an innovative conference theme – TIME: Trailblazers, Innovations, Movements, Epochs, the conference sought particularly to revisit, rethink, and remember the 100-year anniversary of the women’s suffrage movement. Alas, the conference was forced into cancelation due to the novel coronavirus. Even so, Kelly was part of a Rawley organizing duo that raised a considerable sum of financial support, received numerous qualified applications from around the world, planned for a renowned keynote speaker, and fostered an already steady foundation upon which future Rawley Conferences can thrive.

Come fall 2020, Kelly will enter UNL’s PhD program under the same department and continue studying under Dr. William Thomas. His current research on the freedom suits of enslaved persons in antebellum United States will take on a digital approach to diversify its conveyance to the public.

Kenneth Knotts completed his fifth year toward his Ph.D. in Modern European History, with a Focus Field of Central and Eastern Europe and a Secondary Field of Twentieth Century U.S./International History. Knotts, a retired Air Force officer, is a former Intelligence Analyst and Soviet/Russian Area Specialist, who served as a military
In August 2019, Knotts successfully completed his Prospec- tus Defense. In the Fall of 2019, Knotts taught History 324, History of the Cold War, at UNL, as well as History of the United States to 1865, at UNO. Knotts is scheduled to teach both of these courses in both cases, to allow students to successfully conduct research for the two courses from home.

Knotts continues to conduct research on Twentieth Century World and U.S. History. He focuses especially on topics associated with U.S. and Allied military units on World War One's Eastern Front and Russia's Civil War, 1917-1922.

During the summer of 2019, Sean Scanlon traveled to three states to conduct research for his dissertation on U.S.-Israeli relations at the Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan presidential libraries. Upon returning to Lincoln, he taught HIST 110: American History to 1877 during the Fall semester of 2019 and began work on writing his dissertation.

During the spring of 2020, he continued working on his dissertation and taught two courses, HIST 110 and HIST 112: History of the United States. During the Summer of 2020, Scanlon worked as a teaching assistant for an online course in the Department of Classics and Religious Studies and completed several chapters of his dissertation. During the 2020-2021 academic year, he will teach three courses: in the Fall he will teach a course on the history of U.S. involvement in World War II for the University of Nebraska Omaha, and in the Spring he will teach HIST 112 and HIST 111: American History Since 1877 at UNL. He intends to complete and defend his dissertation in 2021.

Ann Vlock completed her M.A. degree this spring and has been admitted into the Ph.D. program. She has been expanding her research on women who participated in the Populist reform movement of the 1880s and 1890s. She originally focused on Luna Kellie of Nebraska, but is in the process of adding other women editors of Nebraska and Kansas to her research. Dr. Jeff Wells, Chair and Associate Professor of History at the University of Nebraska-Kearney, asked Ann to participate on a panel on Populism at the Missouri Valley History Conference. Vlock's proposal was accepted for this conference (slated for March, 2020) and is entitled "Who Would be Free, Themselves must Strike the Match: A Long Overdue Salute, " at the Missouri Valley History Conference.

Researchers at the University of Nebraska's Center for Great Plains Studies talked about new research on black homesteaders in the Great Plains during the February Paul A. Olson Great Plains Lecture at 3:30 p.m. 19 February 2020. African Americans successfully homesteaded in all of the Great Plains states. Although few in comparison with the multitudes of white settlers, black people, against steep odds, created homes, farms, and a society which were all their own. About 70% of them settled in clusters or "coloni- ties," the most significant of which were: Nicodemus, Kansas; DeWitt, Nebraska; Dearfield, Colorado; Sully County, South Dakota; Empire, Wyoming; and Blackdom, New Mexico. Others were independent homesteaders, filing on

History of the United States to 1865 at UNO. Like so many others, Knotts began teaching both of these classes in the Spring as “in-person courses,” when the COVID-19 Pan- demic struck, and then made the transition to fully online courses in both cases, to allow students to successfully complete the courses.

In March 2020, Knotts was scheduled to present a paper titled "Women’s Airforce Service Pilots of World War Two: A Long Overdue Salute," at the Missouri Valley His- tory Conference in Omaha. Unfortunately, that conference was canceled due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Nonethe- less, the Society for Military History recognized Knotts’ paper as "Honorable Mention for Best Graduate Paper" at that conference. Later in March, Knotts was awarded the Homer Travel Research Award, with which he plans to conduct research at the Sioux City, Iowa, Railway Museum after COVID travel restrictions allow. In June 2020, Knotts taught History of the United States Since 1865 as a fully online course at UNO.

In the Fall of 2020, Knotts will teach History 324, History of the Cold War, at UNL, as well as History of the United States to 1865, at UNO. Knotts is scheduled to teach both these courses as Split Synchronous versions, combining in-person student learning with simultaneous online learning.

Among the honors that Vlock has received is "Honorable Mention for Best Graduate Paper" at the Missouri Valley History Conference. Vlock’s proposal was accepted for this conference (slated for May, 2020). During COVID-19, these conferences did not take place, but hopefully will next year.

Emily Wendell (right) gained access to documents in Mex- ico City crucial to her portfo-lio research.

"I will always remember this form of altruism and plan to replicate it back home," she said.

Source: "How students have been impacted by the Maslovski graduate fund," https:// history.unl.edu/how-students- have-been-impacted-maslowski-ki-graduate-fund, 22 April 2020
“It is a joy to be able to announce new projects that will produce vibrant humanities programs and resources for the reopening of our cultural centers and educational institutions,” he said.

**Great Plains Studies**

Scholars from the Center for Great Plains Studies received $75,000 in support for a traveling exhibition, titled “Staking Their Claim: Black Homesteaders and the Promise of Land in the Great Plains.”

The free public talk was part of an interdisciplinary lecture series from the Center for Great Plains Studies on various Great Plains topics. Learn more at [https://www.unl.edu/](https://www.unl.edu/)

The award was part of $22.2 million in new grants for 224 humanities projects across the United States. The awards were part of $22.2 million in new grants for 224 humanities projects across the United States.

The free public talk was part of an interdisciplinary lecture series from the Center for Great Plains Studies on various Great Plains topics. Learn more at [https://www.unl.edu/](https://www.unl.edu/)

Project co-directors Richard Edwards, the center’s director, and Mikal Eckstrom, a postdoctoral researcher at the center, will develop the exhibition, which will feature photographs of black homesteaders on the Great Plains. The exhibition will be shown in museums throughout the region. “This project extends the center’s eight-year study of black homesteading,” Edwards said. “Before the Great Migration, there was a smaller migration of African-Americans to the Great Plains to claim land. We want to illustrate their lives through photographs.”

Homesteading was a central feature of the Euro-American, African-American and immigrant settlement of the Great Plains. On May 20, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act, which offered settlers 160 acres of free public land. Settlers had to pay a small processing fee, live on the claim for five years and fulfill some other requirements to obtain the land title.

Several thousand African-Americans successfully homesteaded in the region and claimed roughly 650,000 acres of prairie land.

“The exhibition seeks to engage the public with this important and complicated history to help Americans better understand our shared past,” Eckstrom said.

For more information on homesteading and the center’s work, visit [https://www.unl.edu/plains/homesteading-research](https://www.unl.edu/plains/homesteading-research)

**Cas Alumni Master:**

**Charles Wilson**

Alumnus Charles Wilson was selected to represent the College of Arts and Sciences for the Nebraska Alumni Association’s 2020 class of Alumni Masters. Alumni who have shown great promise, success, and leadership in their fields return to campus during the annual Alumni Masters Week – postponed this year – to share their experiences and knowledge with students and be recognized by the university.

After earning his undergraduate degree in 1960 – majoring in chemistry, English, and history – he completed medical school at Northwestern University and specialty training in cardiology at the Mayo Clinic. He also served as a medical officer in an army field hospital during the Vietnam War.

Wilson was a leader in health care in Nebraska during a 40-year career, which included co-founding the Nebraska Heart Institute and the Lincoln Cardiac Transplant Program. He also served as chair of the Lincoln Community Health Endowment.

Passionate about higher education, he was elected to three terms on the University of Nebraska Board of Regents and served as chair of the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. He helped found the Humanities in Medicine program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (housed in the Department of History) and University of Nebraska Medical Center with an endowment for student scholarships and speakers focused on the intersection of medicine and the humanities. He has served on the Dean’s Alumni Advisory Council in the college for four years.

Alumni Masters Week is sponsored by the Nebraska Alumni Association, the Student Alumni Association, and the Chancellor’s Office.

Source: “Wilson selected as 2020 CAS Alumni Master,” [https://cas.unl.edu/wilson-selected-2020-cas-alumni-master](https://cas.unl.edu/wilson-selected-2020-cas-alumni-master), 31 March 2020
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