Despite the pandemic, our department AY2021-22 was one of our best. Our faculty won prestigious awards, published cutting-edge books and articles, produced a feature documentary film and an Emmy-nominated short, won more national grants, introduced more classes, and embarked on new projects. Our undergraduate and graduate students have been similarly thriving.

I’m especially pleased to announce the creation of the Lloyd Ambrosius Graduate Student Support Fund, made possibly by a generous gift by history alumni Kristin Ahlberg (Ph.D.) and Phil Myers (Ph.D.). This fund honors a great mentor and makes future graduate research possible.

Two honors will jump out. First, Professor Gorman (Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania) won the coveted OTICA: Outstanding Teaching and Creative Activities award. This is the University of Nebraska systems’ highest award and represents her commitment to the teaching mission of our department. Second, Professor Jeannette Jones (Ph.D., University of Buffalo) has been named Happold Professor. This is a prestigious College of Arts and Sciences Professorship, and it is a great honor that recognizes Professor Jones’s status as a leader in American History.

As a department, we are thriving. Please have a look at the rest of our department’s activities highlighted in this years’ annual report.

I wish to thank all our donors, sponsors, and alumni for your commitment to our continued success. We cannot do this without you.

With kind wishes,

Samuel Clark Waugh Distinguished Professor & Chair of the Department of History
For those who studied American history at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln between the late 1960s to 2010s, it’s likely they may know Lloyd Ambrosius, professor emeritus of history.

Nebraska alumni Kristin Ahlberg and Phil Myers have helped cement the fond memories many people have for Ambrosius’ dedication to teaching and mentoring others in a newly named endowed fund in his honor. They encourage others to help recognize him as well.

Ahlberg and Myers studied at Nebraska at separate times but had the good fortune of meeting each other through mutual Husker graduate school friends in 1999. They were married in Lincoln in 2003, and were then off to Washington, D.C., to put their hard-earned educations to work. In 2018, they welcomed their son, John Ahlberg.

They have established the Lloyd Ambrosius Graduate Student Support Fund with a gift of $50,000 to the University of Nebraska Foundation. To complement Ambrosius’ scholarly interests and expertise, the fund allows the Department of History to provide annual awards to support graduate students who wish to pursue research in areas including American politics, foreign relations, and international policy.

Ahlberg, who served as Ambrosius’ teaching assistant for many semesters, was able to tell Ambrosius about the new fund during a somewhat surprise Zoom meeting.

“You’re widely missed in the department, and this is a way to keep your legacy going and so that other students will enjoy the benefits of having awards from this prestigious fund,” Le Sueur said. “It’s a great thing to do for someone who’s made an impact on their life. It’s a really, truly honorable thing to do for a university professor, too.”

Ambrosius, who was the first recipient of the Samuel Clark Waugh Distinguished Professorship of International Relations, has published many works on American foreign relations. His scholarship in international history has focused on President Woodrow Wilson and German-American relations.

He received a doctorate from the University of Illinois in 1967 before starting at Nebraska U in that same year. Beginning in 1972, he served as a visiting professor in Europe three times, twice as a Fulbright professor in Germany, and once as the Mary Ball Washington Professor of American History at University College in Dublin, Ireland.

Throughout his career, several European and U.S. universities have invited him to deliver lectures on U.S. foreign policy issues as he worked to promote better transatlantic understanding. He is former chair of the E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues, a preeminent speakers series in higher education located at UNL.

Myers has known Ambrosius since the late 1970s when he attended elementary school and Cub Scouts with Ambrosius’ sons.

“My speculations (about the meeting) was that something wonderful was happening to the history department. It didn’t occur to me that it would be this particular gift that would be so wonderful.”

The real reward in being a member of the faculty is to have great students and great colleagues, so I have been blessed over the years,” he said. “Thank you so much. I’m deeply moved.

“My plans are to keep your legacy going and so that other students will enjoy the benefits of having awards from this prestigious fund.”
Jeanette Eileen Jones, Associate Professor of History and Ethnic Studies, has been awarded a Carl A. Happold Professorship. This is an award given to faculty of merit by the Dean's Office. The Happold Professorship fund supports faculty research, travel, and student mentoring activities.

Sources: “Faculty and staff recognition, 2021-22,” https://cas.unl.edu/faculty-and-staff-recognition-2021-22, 31 March 2022; Terri Pieper | CAS MarComm; photo credit: Jeannette Eileen Jones

Vanessa B. Gorman earns top university award

Five University of Nebraska–Lincoln faculty have collected the University of Nebraska system’s most esteemed honors for research, creative activity, teaching, and engagement.

Those earning the President’s Excellence Awards are Robert Brooke, Judy Diamond, Vanessa Gorman, Jordan Stump, and Mark Svoboda.

Announced 6 April 2022, the awards recognize faculty across the NU system whose work has had a strong impact on students, university, and state.

“Faculty are part of the lifeblood of any great university and the University of Nebraska system is fortunate to have some of the world’s best serving across our four campuses,” said Ted Carter, president of the NU system. “The teaching, research, and outreach that these faculty do on a daily basis has a transformational impact on students, our communities, and economic growth and prosperity in Nebraska and beyond.”

Huskers earned five of the six honors awarded in three categories.

Brooke, John E. Weaver professor of English and director of the Nebraska Writing Project, and Gorman, professor of history and classics, both received the Outstanding Teaching and Instructional Creativity Award. The OTICA recognizes individual faculty who have demonstrated meritorious and sustained records of excellence and creativity in teaching...

The awards – selected by an NU-systemwide committee of faculty and community members – were formally presented at a luncheon in the spring of 2022. Biographies of the five Huskers who earned individual 2022 President’s Excellence Awards are below...

Gorman offers courses in ancient Greek and Roman history, Athenian democracy, and ancient Greek language. She is particularly devoted to teaching her students the craft of writing an argument that is clear, persuasive, and well-documented. Gorman has created an open access, digital collection of Greek sentence diagrams, called syntactic trees. It is the world’s largest single-annotator repository in any language. Using the resulting data, she has been collaborating with her husband and fellow classicist, Robert Gorman, associate professor, to invent revolutionary methods of identifying authorship based on measuring the frequency of grammatical structures. Gorman was inspired by her research to pioneer an innovative approach to teaching languages. Her goal is to make Greek and Latin more easily accessible to people in and out of academia.

On 23 April 1909, the Omaha Daily Bee reported on its front page that "all inhabitants of several Armenian villages and towns have been killed ... victims number ten thousand."

The newspaper was referring to the shocking massacres that engulfed Adana in April 1909. These massacres were twin eruptions of violence that claimed the lives of at least 20,000 Armenians and 2,000 Muslims in the former Ottoman Empire, presently Turkey.

At the time, these massacres were covered extensively by the press; however, they soon fell into oblivion. Historians tend to concentrate more on the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923 which killed up to 1.5 million Armenians.

But a new book by University of Nebraska-Lincoln historian and preeminent scholar of ethnic violence in the Ottoman Empire, Bedross Der Matossian, sheds light on the Adana massacres and the political, economic, and societal factors that led up to it. The book, *The Horrors of Adana: Revolution and Violence in the Early 20th Century*, offers one of the first close examinations of the events that led to the massacres. It was published 15 March 2022 by *Stanford University Press*.

Relying on documents and newspapers from 15 archives in a dozen different languages from around the world, Der Matossian examines the events from the perspectives of victims, perpetrators, bystanders, and humanitarians.

"It was a period where massive violence shook the province," Der Matossian, Hymen Rosenberg Associate Professor of Judaic Studies and history, said. "The historiography of the Adana massacres has been represented in a superficial way – as Muslims killing Christians. I argue that that's not the case. I argue that we have to really go into depth in order to understand why these massacres took place. As historians, we have to really understand and explain why phases of violence erupt in a specific period of time and lead to a cataclysm of violence."

"In order to fully understand the Adana violence, we have to really understand the political and socio-economic structure of the province of Adana."

The book follows his examination of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 in *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire*, and begins with the economic hardships wrought for some by the invention of the cotton gin and other new technologies. Previously, cotton grown in the region had been harvested by 70-80,000 migrant workers.

"The requirement for labor started decreasing with the development of new technology," Der Matossian said. "Armenians played an important role in the introduction of this new technology of cotton machines, and there's anger and envy towards perceived Armenian superiority in the economic sphere. Economic changes created a kind of resettlement."

Also playing a role in the massacres was the despotic government in power, which fomented rumors and conspiracy theories. Adana was under extensive surveillance by the government before the 1908 revolution because a small group of Armenians had formed revolutionary groups in order to fight against the depredations and persecutions suffered in the eastern provinces.

"Post-1908 revolution, the conspiracies about the intentions of the Armenians were spread very fast by discontented elements of the province leading to an exacerbation of an already contentious situation," Der Matossian said. "The government and the local notables in power now believed the massacres to the 1905 Pogroms of Odessa (Ukraine) and the Sikh Massacres of 1984 (India).

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Bookended by the Hamidian massacres of the 1890s and the Genocide of 1915, the Adana Massacre of 1909 has not received the scholarly attention it deserves. Even Armenian historians have been negligent in investigating the massacre of 20,000 Adana Armenians. That was the core message of Prof.
One hopes Der Matossian’s impressive research will be an incentive to historians, particularly Armenian and Turkish, to delve deeper into researching the massacre historians forgot.

Some 80 people attended the speech. The historian-author was introduced by Anna Maria Moubayed. Der Matossian’s speech was preceded by Arno Babajanyan’s “Eligea” played on the piano by Hrag Karamandian. The speaker thanked AGBU Toronto Executive Director Salpi Der Ghazarian for organizing the event. Der Matossian’s book can be purchased at the AGBU Toronto offices.


...Dreher’s screenplay is based on research done by Thomas’s team through the digital humanities project, “O Say Can You See: Early Washington D.C., Law and Family,” which has chronicled the many freedom suits filed in Washington, D.C., prior to the Civil War. The Bell family’s story was also featured in Thomas’s book, A Question of Freedom: The Families Who Challenged Slavery from the Nation’s Founding to the Civil War.
We encountered all of the Bell family freedom suits in the course of that research,” said Thomas, who wrote the courtroom scenes and served as executive producer. “We did more research on the family because it is such a remarkable story. There were seven major freedom suits brought by this family over 15 years, and one of them went to the Supreme Court, which isn’t shown in the film.

“This family also filed suits for multiple generations. The last freedom suit the Bells filed was for their child, who was 8 years old.”

The Bells’ story will feel new to many viewers of the film, but petitions for freedom in the courts weren’t unusual, Thomas said, and the filmmakers hope the film will inform audiences of these overlooked stories in American history.

“Freedom suits often went through several generations,” he said. “They were part of long-term efforts by these families to stay together and secure their freedom. The Bells, like many others, faced the same dangers and threats and the same difficulties in the courts. But, what the Bells did that no other families did was launch the largest escape attempt in American history.”

An unusual production

Following the success of Anna, the filmmakers launched work on The Bell Affair in 2019. Just as Dreher and Thomas were finalizing the initial screenplay and Burton was lining up filming at a green screen studio at Nebraska Public Media, the COVID-19 pandemic upended everything…

Despite the pandemic, and the seismic shift it caused, The Bell Affair was finished in time for the team to begin submitting it to 2022 film festivals. They also held a preview screening for friends, family, and supporters of the project 23 Feb. 2022 at the Mary Riepma Ross Center for Media Arts, where the film received a standing ovation. Plans to bring it to Lincoln again [in September 2022] are underway.

The Bell Affair depicts four generations of the Bell family.

The D.C.-area premiere brought together supporters of the film, cast, crew, and descendants of the Bell family and other families who were on the schooner Pearl.

“The Pearl escape happened there and is a highly significant story in American history, and the Bell family organized this escape,” Thomas said. “They had 11 on the ship, and in Washington D.C. today, it is widely taught in schools, and they still have a commemoration for the Pearl in April. This film speaks to that history.”

The new animated film [The Bell Affair] from Husker scholars Michael Burton, Kwakutl Dreher, and William G. Thomas had its world premiere in front of a sold-out audience at Publick Playhouse, in Prince George’s County, Maryland, part of the greater Washington, D.C., area.

In the interview, Dreher, who co-wrote the screenplay with Thomas and directed the film, explained how she explored family dynamics and the determination of the Bells. In one scene of the film, young Caroline Bell stands up for herself during an appraisal of her worth as ‘chattle.’

“This little girl asserts her own authority,” Dreher, associate professor of English, said. “To me, that was a powerful play for her because generally, in visual culture, when the plantation genre was filmed, children are crying, they’re holding on to their mother. They don’t want to be taken away from their mothers, and that did indeed happen; however, I wanted to show a different way in which children respond to being touched by someone other than their own parent.”

Following the interview with Dreher and Thomas, Kast spoke to two descendants of Daniel and Mary Bell, April Green and her daughter, Jasmine Green, who attended the premiere. Both Alice and Jasmine spoke about learning of and drawing inspiration from their ancestors’ story.

“Just like my mom said, it’s really hard to put into words how you can feel about something so grand, but I really feel like it has taught me – and, I’m sure, other members of my family – that life’s challenges are inevitable, but they are meant to be conquered with resiliency and determination,” Jasmine Green said…

The episode of “On The Record” is available online and additional podcast platforms, including Apple, Spotify, and Stitcher.


The Pearl escape is a highly significant story in American history, and the Bell family organized the escape,” said Thomas, professor of history, Angle Chair in the Humanities, and associate dean for research and graduate education in the College of Arts and Sciences. “Eleven family members were on the ship. In Washington, D.C. today, it is widely taught in schools there and commemorated each year. This film really speaks to that history.”

The film was produced entirely remotely due to COVID-19, a process largely overseen by Burton, assistant professor in textiles, merchandising and fashion design, in his role as executive and supervising producer.

In advance of the premiere at the 494-seat theater, Dreher and Thomas did an interview with Sheilah Kast, host of “On The Record,” a radio and podcast show produced by the Baltimore, Maryland, NPR affiliate.

[To Kast, Thomas said, “We need to see this part of American history differently – enslaved people, not as nameless and faceless, but as real people acting in history, who are clearly attempting to claim freedom from day one of the United States.”]

In 2007, Nebraska humorist and writer Roger Welsch did something that was then unprecedented – he gave his land to the Pawnee Nation.

Welsch’s homestead was comprised of 60 acres along the Loup River near Dannebrog. It had belonged to the Pawnee people before the U.S. government forcibly removed and relocated them to Oklahoma in 1875.

The story of Welsch’s reconciliation and the resulting re-emergence of Pawnee culture in Nebraska was told in the short film Return of the Pawnees, which premiered on Nebraska Public Media as part of its “Nebraska Stories” series in 2021. The film recently won a gold Telly Award in the Television-Cultural category and has been nominated for a Heartland Emmy in the Diversity/Equinox/Inclusion category…

Founded in 1979, the Telly Awards honor excellence in video and television across all screens, annually judging over 12,000 entries from all 50 states and 5 continents. The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS), a sister organization to the Television Academy, recognizes excellence in television with the

RETURN OF THE PAWNEES

AWARDS

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“Enjoying the work we’re doing,” Abourezk said. “It’s really great that people are seeing value in and are wonderful, but they are most gratified by the response Abourezk and Jacobs said the awards recognition is them, and then finding ways to move forward and do the injustices of the past, taking responsibility for things that we think are really important – confronting to showcase, “Jacobs said. “He is somebody who was he was the person both Kevin and I immediately wanted “(Roger) was our first interview for the project because and Abourezk produced for their multimedia project “Reconciliation Rising.”

“W’re really proud of the film, because we think it’s a really beautiful film,” said Margaret Jacobs, co-producer of the film and Charles Mach Professor of history at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. “Our film is about joy and human connection. We were really excited to receive the recognition.”

Jacobs, who also serves as director of the Center for Great Plains Studies, co-produced the film with Kevin Abourezk, a Lincoln journalist, activist and member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. It is directed by Charles “Boots” Kennedy, an Oklahoma-based filmmaker and member of the Kiowa Tribe. The story was also shared in the podcast Jacobs and Abourezk produced for their multimedia project “Reconciliation Rising.”

“(Roger) was our first interview for the project because he was the person both Kevin and I immediately wanted to showcase,” Jacobs said. “He is somebody who was practicing reconciliation and was engaged in all the things that we think are really important – confronting the injustices of the past, taking responsibility for them, and then finding ways to move forward and do something positive.”

Abourezk and Jacobs said the awards recognition is wonderful, but they are most gratified by the response they’ve received from viewers of the film.

“It’s really great that people are seeing value in and are enjoying the work we’re doing,” Abourezk said. “Return of the Pawnees was a very evocative and important piece of work, sharing a story of a land return that happened here in Nebraska, and the history of returning Native American ancestral remains, which first happened in Nebraska.”

The Nebraska Legislature passed the Nebraska Unmarked Human Burial Sites and Skeletal Remains Protection Act in 1989, which is touched on in the film. As a member of the Nebraska State Historical Society board at the time, Welsch initially opposed the legislation, but after learning more and speaking with tribal members, he resigned and became an ally to the tribes. A federal law, the Native American Graves Protection and Reparation Act, followed in 1990 and required museums and universities to complete inventories of human skeletal remains and sacred objects and work with descendants on repatriation. The Pawnee Nation has reburied remains on their ancestral Nebraska lands, thanks in part to Welsch’s action.

“It’s a bit of history that few people know about,” Abourezk said. “Nebraska was actually the first state in the nation to pass legislation that required museums and other institutions to return ancestral remains to tribal nations. That’s just incredible, and very few people know about it, or that land has been returned by private individuals and that Roger was the one who started what has become a larger movement.”

“Reconciliation Rising,” was launched in 2018, when Jacobs earned an Andrew Carnegie Fellowship from the Carnegie Corporation. The multimedia project includes a web archive, podcasts and the film, all exploring how Indigenous and non-Indigenous Americans are engaged in confronting painful and traumatic histories and promoting dialogue and pathways toward reconciliation. Jacobs co-directs the project with Abourezk.

Originally, the production team set out to tell these stories in an audio-only format, but Abourezk suggested taking video of the interviews, too.

“We added Boots Kennedy to our team to interview Roger Welch, and I’m so glad we did because it became the core of our film, and it was great to have a professional videographer with us,” Jacobs said. “I don’t know that we would have made a film if Kevin hadn’t made that fateful request.”

With the support of Vision Maker Media, the “Reconciliation Rising” team was able to produce Return of the Pawnees and is working on a feature-length documentary chronicling land reconciliation throughout the United States. Filming was slowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, but Jacobs said they hope to finish filming this summer, with a 2023 release.
Dawne Y. Curry & Katrina Jagodinsky – The College of Arts and Sciences recognized Dr. Curry with the CAS Inclusive Excellence and Diversity Award and Dr. Jagodinsky with the College Mentoring Award Source: "Sectract | Faculty and staff recognition, 2021-22," https://cas.unl.edu/faculty-and-staff-recognized/2021-22; 31 March 2022
Katrina Jagodinsky – The Dean's Award for Excellence in Graduate Education honors faculty members whose dedication to graduate students and commitment to excellence in graduate mentoring have made a significant contribution to graduate education in Nebraska Sources: Faculty, students earn Graduate Studies awards," https://news.unl.edu/faculty-students-earn-graduate-studies-awards/; 15 June 2022; University Communication and Marketing, "Achievements | Honors, appointments, publications for July 8" https://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/today/article/achievements-honors-appointments-publications-for-july-8/; 8 July 2022

Deirdre Cooper Owens, Margaret Jacobs, & William G. Thomas III – The kickoff event of the 33rd season of the E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues featured Husker faculty bringing different disciplines to bear on the complex and historical challenges the world faces. Panelists included Deirdre Cooper Owens, Wilson Professor of history and director of the Humanities in Medicine program; Margaret Jacobs, Mach Professor of History and director of the Center for Great Plains Studies; N'anga’a Wahu-Mūchiri, director of the Humanities in Medicine program; Ann and James Rawley Chair in the Humanities; and John and Catherine Angle Chair in the Humanities; Rawley friends Carol and Art Thompson Source: "CollectionTalk – An Online Event," https://sheldonartmuseum.org/events/collectiontalk-August26; 26 August 2021
Jeanette Eileen Jones – Attendees joined the University at Buffalo's Department of History for the presentation "Rethinking America in Africa: U.S. Expansion and the Scramble for Africa" Source: "Dr. Jeanette Jones’ Rethinking America in Africa: U.S. Expansion and the Scramble for Africa," https://arts-sciences.buffalo.edu/history/news-events/upcoming-events.html; 24 September 2021
William G. Thomas III – Participants joined the National Willa Cather Center for a fascinating book and film discussion with Dr. Will Thomas, Michael Burton, and Dr. Kwakullt Dreher as they shared their collaborative process in making the short film Anna and the upcoming documentary The Bell Affair Source: "Virtual Author Series: Dr. Will Thomas, Michael Burton, and Dr. Kwakullt Dreher," https://www.willacather.org/events/virtual-author-series-dr-will-thomas-michael-burton-and-dr-kwakullt-dreher/; 28 October 2021
Margaret D. Jacobs & Susana G. Grajales Gelgla (Ph.D., May 2021) – Team members from the Genoa Indian School Digital Reconciliation Project and community members shared the lasting impact of the school, new research, and deep insights into the personal stories of those who attended Source: "Genoa Indian boarding school is topic of Nov. 11 panel talk," https://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/today/article/genoa-indian-boarding-school-is-topic-of-nov-11-panel-talk; 1 November 2021

On 31 May 2022, Dr. Jeanette Eileen Jones (right) delivered the lecture “Rethinking America in Africa: U.S. Expansion, Race, and the Scramble for Africa” for the Rothermere American Institute at the University of Oxford. The talk was based on her forthcoming book America in Africa: U.S. Empire, Race and the African Question, which is under advanced contract with Yale University Press.
In her lecture, Jones called for a reconsideration of the relationship between U.S. Empire and Africa from the founding of Liberia colony to the end of World War I. She argued that the transformation in American relations with Africa during this nearly 100-year history, inextricably linked (1) the histories and ideologies of U.S. Empire and expansion, (2) American racial thought (specifically antiblackness and white cultural supremacy), and (3) inter-impolitical relations between the United States and European global empires. Jones explained that attending to the interplay between statecraft and “racecraft,” the book demonstrates that U.S. desires to assert itself on the international stage – diplomatically, economically, and culturally – drove American interest in Africa, precisely as the nation began shifting its focus on Africa from “the slavery question” – the abolition of slavery and the suppression of transatlantic slave trade – to “the African Question” – a set of Western political discourses about the place of Africa in the world. In other words, what she calls “America in Africa” was a process, not a moment, through which Americans debated the meanings of empire and race to not only U.S. expansion, but also to a new international order. Africa figured prominently in this shift in global power during the twentieth century. Thus, Jones approaches this history of America in Africa not as episodic, but rather as a continuous renegotiation of power between American state and non-state actors, European empires, African peoples, and African politics (e.g., kingdoms, sultanates, caliphates, and chiefdoms) across much of the long nineteenth century.
The lecture included a brief discussion of how Jones’s book project fits into and builds off historiography of the United States and the World, specifically the works of Carole Anderson, Brenda Gayle Plummer, Eileen Scully, Nicholas Guyatt, Ousmane Power-Grene, Michele Mitchell, Michael Hunt, and Andrew Zimmerman, to name a few scholars. Jones focused on recent publications by Andrew Priest, Brandon Milan, and Steven Tuchfocell. The lecture then shifted to a presentation of two case studies based on her deep multinational archival research in the United States, Germany, France, Belgium, and the United Kingdom. "The Streets were paved with Copal" The US Treaty of Amity and Commerce with Zanzibar and "We cannot think of

**FACULTY PRESENTATIONS**

Ann and James Rawley with: Melissa Yuen, associate curator of exhibitions; Will Thomas, professor of history and John and Catherine Angle Chair in the Humanities; and Rawley friends Carol and Art Thompson Source: "CollectionTalk – An Online Event," https://sheldonartmuseum.org/events/collectiontalk-August26; 26 August 2021
Jeanette Eileen Jones – Attendees joined the University at Buffalo’s Department of History for the presentation “Rethinking America in Africa: U.S. Expansion and the Scramble for Africa” Source: "Dr. Jeanette Jones’ Rethinking America in Africa: U.S. Expansion and the Scramble for Africa," https://arts-sciences.buffalo.edu/history/news-events/upcoming-events.html; 24 September 2021
William G. Thomas III – Participants joined the National Willa Cather Center for a fascinating book and film discussion with Dr. Will Thomas, Michael Burton, and Dr. Kwakullt Dreher as they shared their collaborative process in making the short film Anna and the upcoming documentary The Bell Affair Source: "Virtual Author Series: Dr. Will Thomas, Michael Burton, and Dr. Kwakullt Dreher," https://www.willacather.org/events/virtual-author-series-dr-will-thomas-michael-burton-and-dr-kwakullt-dreher/; 28 October 2021
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the American Indians & of the natives of this country: ‘The ABCFM Mission in South Africa’ featured that research and how those cases fit into the overall argument of the book.

Attendees in-person and via Zoom engaged in a lively Q & A session with Jones, who later received laudatory comments about the presentations.

- “Just a note to say what a delight it was to meet you today and to listen to your paper. Thank you so much for making the trip to Oxford – I greatly enjoyed talking with you and learned a huge amount from your presentation and the discussion. I very much look forward to reading the book and to checking out your other work and the related works you recommended.”
- “I want to again thank you for taking the time to speak with us, the talk was enjoyed by everyone to whom I have spoken and we are all looking forward to reading more of your work in the future.”
- “I absolutely loved your talk yesterday; I can honestly say it was one of the highlights of the term for me… It was directly in conversation with my current research project, and you outlined some very useful sources. I spent last evening exploring the To enter Africa from America website, and it is (as suspected) a treasure trove for prospective researchers like myself.”

The Rothermere American Institute (RAI) did not take long to establish itself as a leading venue for intellectual exchange with the United States. An early expression of this came in a series of discussions under the title Transatlantic Dialogues in Public Policy (2004–2007), each of which brought together a U.S.- and a UK-based expert in a particular field of policy-making. Later, a succession of international conferences shared the common theme of understanding the U.S. in a broad context: notably The Global Lincoln (2009), Governance of the North American Arctic (2013), and Cold Rush Imperialism (2015).

The most recent chapter in the RAI’s story began with the long-awaited establishment of a permanent directorship, attached to the new Edward Orsborn Professorship of U.S. Politics and Political History, which was taken up in 2019 by Professor Adam Smith.


The Genoa Indian School Digital Reconciliation Project garnered significant national and international media attention in 2021…

The digital humanities project began in 2017, stemming from previous research by Jacobs on indigenous child removal in the United States [including the Carlisle Industrial Indian School, an infamous U.S. Indian Boarding School based in Pennsylvania], Canada, and Australia. The reconciliation project is co-directed by Margaret Jacobs, Charles Mach Professor of History and director of the Center for Great Plains Studies at Nebraska; Susana Grajales Geliga, assistant professor of history at the University of Nebraska Omaha [UNL History Ph.D., May 2021], and Elizabeth Lorang, associate dean of University Libraries at Nebraska, and is overseen by a Community Advisors Council comprised of American Indian leaders.

Researchers say they have discovered the names of 102 students who died while at the Genoa Indian School, the Omaha World-Herald reported 12 Nov. The Associated Press version of the article was picked up by 130-plus media outlets, including ABC News, The Guardian, USA Today, The Washington Post and Yahoo! News. The World-Herald published another article on the boarding school 28 Nov.

The project was highlighted 5 Nov. in The Daily Yonder, 16 Nov. in the Independent and Esquire, 17 Nov. in The New York Times, and 23 Nov. in Mother Jones.

Jacobs also wrote a 24 Nov. guest column for The Washington Post on how to address the American history of ripping Indigenous children from their families and sending them to boarding schools…

Thousands of records have been collected so far and can be viewed on the project’s website.

In the early days of the project, many of those records were gathered by Susana Grajales Geliga when she joined the project as a graduate student in 2018.

As a member of the Sicangu Lakota and Rosebud Sioux Tribes, Grajales Geliga occasionally came across her own ancestral names in the Genoa documents.

“As a historian, my reconciliation with this history is helping people find it,” Grajales Geliga said. “Because to me, those are voices and those are stories that somebody is looking for, and stories that need to be heard…”

“I’ve worked in Native communities for years and years, and it would touch me at a personal level when I came across a last name that I’m familiar with, but it was also hurtful to come across my own family names. As Native peoples, we have that information that each of our families have been affected by a boarding school experience, but it’s not always common knowledge to know that an ancestor went to a boarding school, because so many never wanted to talk about it.”

“It wasn’t until my collegiate experience that I learned really how Native children were shuffled away to schools throughout the country…"

And the Digital Reconciliation Project team is working to uncover more of the history of the Genoa school. The hope is to provide a deeper understanding of the legacy of trauma left by the school.

It’s an understanding Grajales Geliga is eager to give to the descendants of those who lived through it.

“This is a painful history, but there are also stories of resilience,” Grajales Geliga said. “Everyone has a right to know where their family is buried, and every person has a right to know their history…”

A large bulk of research has been spent locating the records, which were dispersed after the school’s closure. The research team found various records in Kansas City, Denver, and Oklahoma. Additional documents likely exist at the National Archives headquarters in Washington, D.C., and in archives in Texas. Trips will be made to locate those records when some COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. Also, through relationships developed with many of the tribes affected, the team has received records directly from families.

“We have found it extremely hard to find records of the Genoa boarding schools,” Jacobs said. “They’re not all in one place. They’re scattered around various
Researchers have also found records of death, many due to diseases that ran rampant in the overcrowded school.

“We’ve been disturbed by the number of children who died,” Jacobs said… “We found this information in newspapers, especially the student newspaper that was published on and off.

“We’ve found that the record of the rate of death of some of these diseases was much higher in the school than it was in the general population…”

“If you read accounts or listen to accounts by survivors of the boarding schools, they talk a lot about the really harsh punishments… and we have come across some causes of death that include drownings, accidents including a child being hit by a freight train, accidental shootings,” Jacobs tells The Independent. “Why would there be a gun at an Indian school?”

“Sports were really big in the schools, and we’ve got a couple of accounts that talk about a child that was boxing and died shortly after a boxing match. There is evidence of that kind of negligence.

“There were a lot of runaways, and if they were caught and brought back, they could expect very harsh punishments… These were really brutal institutions. I do think the number [of dead] is likely to be higher…”

“We do think we’re going to find more, because we’re just going to keep combing through these government reports, medical statistics that they kept to see what we can find for every year,” Jacobs tells The Independent. “So we believe our goal is to at least get an overall count and then to try to find as many of the names of the children as possible.”

“Ironically, often authorities talked about taking children away from their communities because they said their communities were too impoverished or too poor or there was bad healthcare…and then they’re putting them in these overcrowded schools where they’re subjecting them to the likelihood of being infected with these really contagious diseases.”

She adds that researchers have found evidence that officials sent children deemed “incurable” home to die. That could be viewed as a compassionate move – or an attempt to keep down numbers of school deaths, she notes…

“We’re hoping this is a healing project by returning knowledge to tribal nations about their people, but how healing can it be if they are finding more and more of their children who died and authorities treated them in such a callous manner?” she says…”

The truth behind – and hiding of – the realities at Genoa are hardly limited to Nebraska; earlier this year, the remains of more than 200 children were found on the site of what was Canada’s largest indigenous residential school.

Earlier in November 2021, Jacobs held a talk in Lincoln about the Genoa school that attracted an audience of more than 80, both Native and non-Native, where “people took it very seriously,” she tells The Independent.

“It’s very moving for people to actually go to the location of the school and wander through the halls and kind of just imagine what their ancestors and relatives went through,” she says. “I actually kind of compare it to my experience going to Buchenwald.” There’s this sense of being haunted.

“It’s not a Native person, but I think it’s just so important to tell this story and to [use] my skills as a scholar to shine a light on this and support indigenous activists and advocates who are trying to bring this history to light and to find a way to heal from it,” she says.

“The reaction has been great interest right now in Nebraska and kind of a very sombre concern with this – and I think a lot of people are finally kind of getting the gravity of these schools.”

“Enslaved families challenged slavery as a matter of law. Challenging it as unjust. Challenging it as contradictory to natural law,” Thomas said at the press preview event held at Joe’s Movement Emporium in Mount Rainier on 9 September 2021. “In many ways, we have a story of American history that left out these kinds of stories.”

Thomas’s book is part of a two-year project that includes various programs, in person discussions, and other events led by agencies and groups from Prince George’s. Published by Yale University Press in 2020, the book has additionally received the 2021 Mark Lynton History Prize and was named a finalist for the George Washington Prize. “Thomas is the Angle Chair in the Humanities and professor in the Department of History within the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. He is also an associate dean in the college’s Dean’s Office.

Joe’s Movement, a cultural arts center, plans to showcase a play in 2022 based on the book led by award-winning playwright Psalmayene 24, whose birth name is Gregory Morrison. The award-winning playwright, director, and actor is the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Playwright in Residence at Mosaic Theater. The arts organization serves more than 70,000 visitors annually…

The native of New York City’s Brooklyn borough, whose colleagues call “Psalm,” also serves as an adjunct professor at Bowie State University.

“Part of my function is to enable the audience to experience catharsis,” he said. “I can’t think of a better story, a better narrative than the stories that exist in this book. My artistic vision and mission is to highlight little-known stories that illuminate the Black experience. This is right up my alley!”

To learn more about the two-year project or to participate, go to www.joesmovement.org or call 301-699-1819.


At its first in-person meeting in 18 months, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Faculty Senate on 7 Sept. 2021 recognized five faculty members for distinguished service by presenting them with its most prestigious honors…

Carole Levin, Willa Cather Professor of History since 2002, and Allen Steckelberg, associate professor in teaching, learning, and teacher education, were presented with the 2021 Pound-Howard Distinguished Career Award…

“The Pound-Howard Award was established in 1990 to recognize individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the university during their career. The contribution may have made through teaching, research, public service, administration, or a combination of those roles and reflects a long-standing commitment to the university…

“Dr. Levin has a national and international research record that is truly outstanding and has brought great kudos to UNL,” the committee said…

Levin began her career at Nebraska in 1998 as a professor of history and became the Willa Cather Professor of History in 2002. Her research and creative activity has included more than 18 books on renaissance studies, in addition to more than 60 journal articles and book chapters and three plays. Recognition for her research includes being named an Elected Fellow at the British Learned Royal Historical Society in 1999. Her fellowships include long-term fellowships from the National Endowments for the Humanities, the Newberry Library in Chicago, and the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. In 2008, she received the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women prize for best collaborative book, and in the same year the 16th Century Studies Society Roland Bainton prize for the best reference work.

Levin also has been recognized for her excellence as an instructor. She received the College Distinguished Teaching Award in 2002 and the Annis Chaiikin Sorensen Award for Teaching in the Humanities in 2014. Twenty students that she supervised at the graduate or undergraduate level have won awards for their papers or theses. The Parents Association of the University of Nebraska recognized her six times with the “Certificate of Appreciation for Making a Difference in A Student’s Life.” In 2017, the Women’s Center on campus recognized her with the “Woman of Character, Courage and Commitment Award.”

Levin has served as graduate chair for the Department of History from 2004 to 2006, director of the Medieval and Renaissance Studies Program from 2007 to 2017, and as undergraduate chair from 2016 to 2019…

THE ART OF DISSERT DISTRIBUTION

The Art of Dissent, a feature documentary film produced by University of Nebraska- Lincoln historian James Le Sueur, debuted 5 Oct. 2021 on major cable television and internet video on-demand platforms, including iTunes and Amazon.

The film is being distributed by Gravitas Ventures, a Red Arrow Studios Company, as a result of a licensing agreement with NUtech Ventures, the university’s technology commercialization affiliate…

“I’m thrilled that Gravitas Ventures, the largest distributor in the United States, has taken our film,” said Le Sueur.

Samuel Clark Waugh Distinguished Professor and chair of the Department of History. “This is a very difficult achievement, because very few finished feature films go to market, and I’m grateful for NUtech Ventures’s hard work on this distribution agreement.”

NUtech owns the rights to the film’s intellectual property, serves as an executive producer – in addition to ERMOL Production in Prague – and has helped navigate legal agreements related to archival footage and music from foreign countries.

“This is an incredible milestone for an independent university filmmaker,” said Arpi Siyahian, senior technology manager at NUtech Ventures, who led the film’s licensing process. “By partnering with Gravitas Ventures, we’re looking forward to bringing this film to audiences across the United States. That’s our goal – bringing campus innovation to market, where it is accessible to more people.”

The Art of Dissent explores the role of artistic activism during Czechoslovakia’s communist takeover and nonviolent transition from communist power. It includes...
rare archival footage, interviews with prominent dissidents, and music that was written, directed, and produced by faculty and undergraduate students at Nebraska. “Our film uses art and archives to communicate the urgency and beauty of the dissident movement,” Le Sueur said. “Ultimately, it celebrates the courage of dissent, which created a tolerant civil society.”

Le Sueur received NUtech Ventures’ 2020 Creative Work of the Year, an award that recognizes an individual who has developed a creative innovation, such as a film, that is typically protected under copyright. The film has been shown at a dozen international film festivals worldwide and received multiple awards, including the Social Spotlight Award at the Rhode Island International Film Festival and the Best Documentary Feature Film at New York’s Blackbird Film Festival. For more information on the film, click here.

The Blackbird Film Festival’s 10-star review called it an “archival masterpiece,” with “momentous skill and attention to detail” from director Le Sueur. “The festival circuit was surreal,” Le Sueur said. “We had a good showing for any year, but given the pandemic, it was extraordinary.”

Le Sueur is now working on a second feature documentary film, Four Seasons of COVID, which he started filming in March 2020. It chronicles how the pandemic has unfolded in Nebraska and includes interviews with doctors at Nebraska Medicine. Sources: “The Art of Dissent Distribution,” https://mediahub.unl.edu/media/1787089clid-3waAR0w1SDIr30wecQ5NW7-gO2-_tp7tvbHavouRLkCJJdSm-AX91MEf2J8, 15 September 2021; Alyssa Amen | NUtech Ventures, “Le Sueur documentary to launch on major cable, internet platforms,” https://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/today/article/le-sueur-documentary-to-launch-on-major-cable-internet-platforms/, 16 September 2021.

ANOTATING (ANCIENT) TEXTS AND LEARNING (ANCIENT) LANGUAGES

The relatively recent digitization of large textual corpora – roughly speaking, collections of written or oral texts gathered for some purpose – has opened a new era for the study of the use of language and therefore of society and its changes and challenges. While linguistics has experienced the development of a new branch – corpus linguistics – other disciplines such as history, literature, or social sciences can greatly benefit from such resources. Therefore, corpora have become an integral part of research in many fields. However, their usefulness is also beginning to be recognized in education… Annotating a corpus is a way of enriching it with information and also of learning, no matter whether the annotator is an experienced scholar or a first-year student.

However… in the teaching of ancient languages such as Ancient Greek and Latin, the use of annotation as a learning method is very rare. But there are some exceptions and someone has even developed an entire course based on annotation.

Vanessa Gorman, professor of Ancient History at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, is a scholar who has not only pioneered the use of annotated corpora for carrying out groundbreaking research (see, e.g., her co-authored paper on questions of authorship: Approaching Questions of Text Reuse in Ancient Greek Using Computational Syntactic Stylistries), but she has also used annotation to teach ancient languages in an innovative way. Her online, open-access course Reading Ancient Greek in the Digital Age introduces learners to the basics of language. It prepares students to be able to read (relatively easy) Ancient Greek prose. The breakthrough aspect is the use of annotation tools and the digital environment for teaching the language. In fact, both teaching and practice rely on Perseids, a free online user-friendly platform that enables people to carry out morpho-syntactic annotation of (mainly Ancient Greek and Latin) texts. This is not a trivial task as each single word needs to be precisely recognized, described, and put in relation with other words in the sentence and within the wider context of the passage. In this way, learners are confronted from the very beginning not only with the challenge of recognizing and describing the changing forms of words in a sentence (Ancient Greek has a quite complex morphology), but also of how words are related to one another and result in a meaningful sentence (syntax and semantics). In this way students learn the deeper elements of grammar, a knowledge transferable to other language studies – as underlined by Gorman herself. She also tries to familiarize learners early on with the terms of the metalanguage of language, which is very useful when learners need to use reference tools such as dictionaries and specialized grammars. In line with current digital practices, her course also offers a collaborative way of learning, as the sentences are annotated together by thinking aloud. The fact that learners are introduced to annotation from the very beginning is important…as the relatively complex rules of annotation are learnt together with the language. Interestingly, Gorman has achieved some promising results using this method of teaching.

Gorman’s experience shows that annotation is a powerful resource for collaboration not only at research level, but also in educational environments. Research and didactics teaching do not necessarily have to be close, but they can share some tools and there are many in-between situations in which, e.g., students collaborate in research projects and at the same time acquire knowledge and skills that will last a lifetime…


WICKED INQUIRY STIRS UP WITCHY HISTORY

Long before a teenage Sabrina summoned spells and Hermione Granger perfected Polyjuice potions, witches were seen in a more sinister way – and they weren’t green, covered in warts, riding brooms with cats, or wearing pointy hats.

To get the real story – one a bit more wicked than you would expect – Nebraska Today’s Annie Albin sat down with Carol Levin, Willa Cather Professor of History, who created and teaches a witch-specific course, “Saints, Witches, and Madwomen,” at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln…

Levin’s passion for witches bubbled forth during her earliest college days. “When I was this undergraduate interested in witchcraft, even finding out about it was really difficult to get picked up [through] a European history textbook,” Levin said. “There would be nothing in the index about witches or witchcraft.”

While the lack of historical coverage of witches was notable, Levin noticed it added to the overall lack of subject matter for one important topic – women. Her classes and textbooks contained little to no information about the visionary women that made their mark on the world in its formative centuries. Ignored and inspired, she
Poor, unattached women became the target for witchcraft accusations. Whether they actually performed magic is unclear.

“Some women...and some men too...might try to do magic because they have no power, and that's kind of a last resort for the powerless,” Levin said. “I think some who were accused of being witches actually did try to perform magic. I think many did not.”

The first three accused women were "others" within the community. One was enslaved; one was a beggar known for her aggressive nature; and one, bedridden and aging, had forgone church in the recent years. Incensed by their newfound fame and attention, the girls identified more and more "witches" from across the community — gradually climbing up the social scale as they did...

Hundreds were accused and twenty were killed for their supposed crimes in Salem. Globally, the numbers were even worse. Due to the lack of records from these eras, Levin said there is no accurate count of the amount of people who were killed. Some say it was as low as 10,000, though she estimates the number to sit at 50,000.

“For anyone to die — it’s too many,” Levin said.

Modern media’s portrayal of magic has changed how the world views witches. While once outcasts of society, a witch’s power now makes her a hero in many stories.

The history of witches may seem just like a spooky tale to some, but to Levin it holds a much deeper meaning. While she’s happy to see where the girls have climbed up the social scale as they did...
that Washington, D.C.'s other border was with Maryland, a slave state whose loyalty to the Union was shaky at best...

A 35-Mile Shield Around Washington, D.C.

The formidable task of fortifying Washington, D.C. fell to Major General John Barnard, a respected Army engineer. Winkle says Barnard quickly recognized that the greatest challenge was Washington, D.C.'s sprawling layout, the result of architect Pierre L'Enfant's ambitious grid design. The only effective way to defend all sides of the capital from attack, Barnard decided, was to establish a circle of fortifications surrounding the city...

In between the forts were 20 miles of earth-dug trenches known as rifle pits. Barnard also built 93 artillery batteries on prominent hilltops equipped with more than 800 cannons to cut down an invading force. Each fort was only 30 miles of freshly cleared military roads to speedily move thousands of Union troops to the site of an attack...

At the Battle of Fort Stevens, the Fortifications Proved "Exceedingly Strong"

During the drawn-out conflict, the Confederate Army made several sorties in the direction of Washington, D.C. – Winkle says that both the Battles of Antietam and Gettysburg were primarily designed to threaten the Union capital – but the city only suffered one direct attack...

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The Nebraska Legislature recently passed Legislative Bill 888, introduced by Sen. Jen Day of Omaha, which was signed by Gov. Pete Ricketts. The bill requires the State Board of Education to adopt standards for education on the Holocaust and other acts of genocide. In line with this new legislation, "Nebraska Stories of Humanity" will be a great resource for Nebraska teachers, students, and the public interested in learning about the Holocaust.

the proliferation of terrorism leading up to the 9/11 attacks. However, both projects have remained in the pre-production phase for years due to another project he started, which would eventually become his first theatrical release.

“As I was moving towards finishing those two, I decided to just do this crazy idea of trying to make a movie about Václav Havel [former president of the Czech Republic] and the dissidents in Czechoslovakia who were driven underground by the communist regime and then eventually came to power in 1989 after the Velvet Revolution.”

Le Sueur said the informative language of documentaries in particular is apt for the current times. “This is the age of documentaries,” Le Sueur said. “There are people who just want more from cinema, and there’s more people who want more from their TV.”

Though he places great significance on his self-sufficiency as a filmmaker, Le Sueur doesn’t try to do it completely on his own, and in delegating parts of the work to others, he said he’s found a different kind of fulfillment.

“I think one of the cool things now, because I’m in this kind of good position, I can help other emerging filmmakers,” Le Sueur said.

Shema Yahya is one such benefactor. A junior integrated science major from Rwanda, Yahya got in touch with Le Sueur through a mutual acquaintance, and he’s now been tasked with helping Le Sueur to animate the maps and various other graphics for Seasons of COVID.

Yahya said the job has been challenging, but he’s grateful for how it’s pushed him to grow. “It’s a really creative-based type of job. It forces you to really think outside the box, and just, you know, very hands-on learning,” Yahya said. “That’s kind of how he’s helping me develop my skills. And also my communication skills because I have to really explain to him, like, coming up with an idea that maybe makes sense to my brain, but make sure he understands what I’m saying.”

Yahya said what stands out to him the most about the professor’s most recent project is the potential for broadening peoples’ perspectives on the pandemic. “[Filmmaking] allows me to speak in different languages, not just with words, but with visual images. I think I can connect to people different with my camera work,” Le Sueur said. “I do my own cinematography and sound and lighting, so I’m really unique in the world in that sense, probably the only professional historian who can actually do this stuff!”

Le Sueur said he’s grateful for the expanded freedom filmmaking awards, legitimizing his work more than just a side hobby.

“I think it’s fair to say we’ve made it,” Le Sueur said. “And that’s kind of raised the bar at Nebraska substantially because a lot of filmmaking was done here before, but never quite like this.”

Le Sueur’s most recent project hits much closer to home. Seasons of COVID will cover the whirlwind of events surrounding the pandemic that defined the past few years, with a greater emphasis on how it affected Nebraska.

“[The Art of Dissent] was really heaviest about intellectuals and writers,” Le Sueur said. “This one is not like that. This one is about us; it’s about our stories, about the state of Nebraska. It’s also about police reform and racism, medical difficulties. It’s about anti-science movements. It’s about the alt-right infecting our political discourse.”

Beyond the messages he attempts to convey through his work, Le Sueur said he’s grateful for the expanded freedom he’s found in how he can convey ideas through the visual medium of filmmaking compared to writing books or essays on a subject. Furthermore, he said he especially appreciates being able to control the filmmaking process at every stage of its production.

“During COVID, everybody was very much in their homes, and they were seeing things through the window, so to speak,” Yahya said. “He had this cool idea of trying to show basically all the things you can’t see because you can only see from one window.”

Looking beyond to the future, Le Sueur said he hopes to make a big splash on the market with his production company without leaving Nebraska. “What I’d like to do in the end is [keep the production company] in Nebraska, so we can actually make a major filmmaking move here,” Le Sueur said. “I know I can do it, I just need to figure out exactly how to assemble the pieces. But I’m not going away, and I’ve been able to be successful by just being determined not to fail.”


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**CENTER FOR TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHING**

More than a dozen university faculty members have earned grants offered through the Center for Transformative Teaching.

This round of grant funding had four types of grants for faculty to receive funding, including a student-faculty collaboration grant. Applicants for the grants had to demonstrate that the funding received would be used to create a transformative learning experience that engages students in co-creating knowledge, increasing interdisciplinary inquiry, and demonstrating achievement.

“Many of us can pinpoint the moment in our university experience in which we were transformed by an experience, a class, a course, or an instructor’s response to our work,” Nick Monk, director for the CTT, said. “The CTT wants to
help our instructors find the ways and means create more of these experiences for more of our students.”

Two groups were awarded the strategic departmental grant, which can be used over a three-year period. One group included members of the history department: Vanessa Gorman; Ann Tschetter; Angela Bolen; and Anthony Foreman. They will use the $60,000 funding to reimagine pedagogy for student success in entry-level history classes.

“We knew we wanted to do something both to expand our appeal to first-year students, especially first generation and minority students, and to help them succeed in college at a better rate,” Gorman, professor of history and classics, said. “The study of history is intrinsically exciting, but we knew we wanted to do something both to expand our pedagogy, “ said Melissa Gomis, associate professor of practice and co-organizer. “Join us – we are confident that you can help us achieve our goal of improving representation of women’s history on Wikipedia.”

The idea for hosting an edit-a-thon started last year with the CDRH Community Engagement Committee, of which Jagodinsky is an active member. Jagodinsky knowleds an opportunity to connect this outreach event with her History 110 course, developing a research-based Wikipedia assignment focused on women who contributed to American history prior to 1877. This initiative supports ongoing efforts by the Wikimedia Foundation to address the gender gap in representation on Wikipedia, and in terms of content reflecting notable women and increasing editorial participation among female contributors.

“This is a great opportunity to participate first-hand in the generation and circulation of historical knowledge,” Jagodinsky said. “Because millions of people worldwide get their historical information from Wikipedia before delving into more in-depth academic studies, UNL participants can have a tremendous impact on making historical content more accessible. This is a powerful way to celebrate women’s history month.”


With research support from the Libraries, students in Jagodinsky’s class created Wikipedia entries for notable women figures from United States history whose biographies are missing from the site. Entries created by students were available for additional contributions at the public event, though edit-a-thon participants had a variety of topics to choose from and ways to contribute to the event.

With extensive contributions from Traci Robison, assistant professor of practice and outreach archivist in the University Libraries, organizers curated topics that relate to local women’s history. Topics include: Lucy Correll, suffragist and journalist; Rosalind Morris, first woman on the university’s agronomy and horticulture faculty; Sarah Muir, alumna, suffragist, legislator; and Carol Moseke Frost, alumna, 1968 Olympian and Husker women’s track coach. Edit-a-thon participants could also pick from a backlog of tasks to improve existing entries as well as topics selected by the organizers from Wikipedia-generated work lists.

The event was sponsored by the University Libraries, Center for Digital Research in the Humanities, and the Department of History.


EDIT-A-THON INCREASES WOMEN’S HISTORY ON WIKIPEDIA

The University Libraries collaborated with Katrina Jagodinsky, Susan J. Rosowski associate professor of history, and her History 110 students to host a Women’s History Wikipedia Edit-a-thon. The event focused on improving the representation of cis and trans women within Wikipedia entries.

The event, which was free and open to the public, was 1 to 4 p.m. 28 March 2022 in Love Library, Room 221, or via Zoom.

The project aims to reduce gender bias on Wikipedia. Currently, biographies of women make up 18% of the content on the English language Wikipedia site...

Faculty helped attendees sign up for a Wikipedia account and supplied them with the resources to get started. Students from History 110 attending the event served as peer ambassadors. Jagodinsky kicked off the event with opening remarks shortly after 1 p.m.

“We’ve designed the event to be accessible to anyone who wants to participate whether they have ten minutes or an hour to spare,” said Melissa Gomis, associate professor of practice and co-organizer. “Join us – we are confident that you can help us achieve our goal of improving representation of women’s history on Wikipedia.”

In the College of Arts and Sciences, serves as a mentor. His research design, and analysis of primary source materials from digital and physical repositories.

Jagodinsky guides students in the analysis of freedom suits and habeas petitions for a case study of freedom-making between 1770 and 1924 to demonstrate the widespread legal mobilization of marginalized petitioners who challenged exploitation.

William G. Thomas III, Angle Chair in the Humanities and Professor in the department, and associate dean for research in the College of Arts and Sciences, serves as a mentor. His research collects, digitizes, and analyzes freedom suits filed between 1800 and 1862 and traces the multigenerational family networks they reveal.

DIGITAL LEGAL RESEARCH LAB
A diverse group of undergraduate students, contributing unique perspectives to digital legal research, will:

- learn to advance critical inquiry into past and present trends in crime, violence, and policing; legal decision-making; legal mobilization and conceptions of justice; and litigation and the legal profession
- participate in the innovative restructuring of archival legal data from indexing focused on case party names and dates to a system prioritizing demographic and relational data
- offer novel insights relevant to family law, federal Indian law, immigration law, labor law, morals policing, and slavery
- develop analytical questions, disseminate research findings, establish distinct research identities, and craft competitive applications for funding opportunities and graduate programs.

The project is supported by the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities, the Department of History, and the Office of Research and Economic Development.

Source: “Experiential learning spotlight: Digital Legal Research Lab,” https://history.unl.edu/experiential-learning-spotlight-digital-legal-research-lab, 10 April 2022

The Genoa Indian School Digital Reconciliation Project earned an ACLS Digital Justice Development Grant in the amount of $98,327 for an 18-month project titled, “Honoring Indigenous Community Knowledge: Expanding the Genoa Indian School Digital Reconciliation Project Beyond the Government Archive.” To date, the Genoa Project has published around 3,000 government records, with work underway to publish several thousand additional documents. Building from this work, the ACLS funding begins a next major phase of work, supporting descendant communities in telling more complete stories of Genoa through the development of a digital oral history and community knowledge program.


Margaret Jacobs, Ng'ang'a Muchiri, and Adrian Wisnicki have earned Digital Justice Grants from the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS). The funding is designed to promote and provide resources for digital humanities projects that aim to diversify the digital domain, advance justice and equity in digital scholarly practice, and contribute to public understanding of racial and social justice issues.

Jacobs, a faculty member in the Department of History and director of the Center for Great Plains Studies (CGPS), is a co-lead along with Elizabeth Lorang, associate dean of University Libraries…

The nationally competitive award recognizes promising graduate student researchers in their final year of writing a doctoral dissertation examining violence – especially projects aiming to increase understanding of the causes, manifestations, and control of violence and aggression.

Hoehne studies extralegal collective violence between the American Revolution and the end of the Civil War. In 2021, he launched the Riot Acts project to accompany his dissertation, which uses maps, network analysis, and machine learning to explore over 2,200 instances of violence.

Genesis M. Agosto has completed the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s joint J.D./M.A. in History program through the College of Law and the Department of History. In the last year, she defended her master’s portfolio, published her first article in the Nebraska Law Review; “Involuntary Sterilization of Native American Women in the United States: A Legal Approach,” and served as the History Graduate Student Association’s Research and Faculty Committee Representative for 2021-2022 school year, among other appointments within the College of Law.

Genesis was awarded the Maslowski Conference Award and the 2022 Dov Ospovat Memorial Award for her graduate essay “Sterilization on La Isla del Encanto: The Colonial Experience of Puerto Rican Women in the 1960s and 1970s.”

In August 2022, Genesis will begin working at the University of Nebraska College of Law Schmid Law Library as their new Assistant Professor of Law Library and Reference Librarian.

Elodie Galeazzi completed her fourth year in the Ph.D. program this past 2021-22 school year. Last summer, she prepared and passed her comprehensive exams in the fall of the academic year and successfully defended her dissertation prospectus early this spring. Her dissertation research is well underway. After completing a research trip to Mexico City in March and another to Berlin in June, she has plenty of material to wade through and analyze in the coming months. In spring 2022, Lina taught a U.S. history survey course and the Mythic West, and she is looking forward to teaching Rethinking the American West in the fall as she balances ongoing research, writing, and works on a chapter that will be published in an edited volume in 2023.

William Kelly completed the second year of his Ph.D. during the 2021-22 academic year. Part of the academic year involved a visit to the Maryland State Archives in Annapolis to further develop his dissertation topic. In addition to completing his program coursework, William also made progress on his Museum Studies certificate: a newly revived interdisciplinary program at UNL designed to prepare students for work at all levels of the museum field.

Outside of the classroom, William worked as the department’s first career diversity research assistant in conjunction with History Nebraska. An article on the history of the resettlement of displaced persons in Nebraska after World War II will appear on History Nebraska’s channels in the fall.

William also contributed to the White House Historical Association’s Slavery in the President’s Neighborhood initiative with an article on the life of Charlotte Dupee detailing her legal campaign for freedom in early Washington, D.C. (“Slavery and Strategy in Decatur House,” WHHA, 2022).

Throughout the 2021-22 academic year, William participated on the National Council on Public History’s “Records, Repair, and Reckoning” working group. William’s ongoing contribution involves probing the future of museums as discursive sites of social justice and reparative work.

Kenneth Knotts completed his seventh year toward his Ph.D. In July 2021, Ken conducted a research visit to the Sioux City Railway Museum, in Sioux City, Iowa; the trip was made with funding awarded under the Homze Research Travel Award in May 2020, but was delayed due to the COVID pandemic.

In June 2022, Fox 42 News Omaha, Nebraska, interviewed Ken on questions related to the Holodomor, or the Terror Famine of 1932-33. This was a campaign of genocide carried out by Josef Stalin’s Soviet Russian Government on Ukrainians, especially rural farmers and peasant workers. The video is still in production and likely will be aired in Fall 2022.

Ken nominated a paper to be presented in October 2022, at the European Studies Conference at UNO, and the paper was accepted. The tentative title for the paper is “Charles MacMillan: Nebraska Native, Soldier-Engineer, Builder of Global Railways.” California-born and Omaha-raised, Charles Edward MacMillan was a professional railway engineer and U.S. Army soldier, a builder of railroads on three continents, and a war hero of the First World War.
The academic year 2021-22 marked a partial return from the Covid pandemic. After a year of teaching totally online and not going to campus, it was a relief to return at least partially to regular, in-person teaching. Prof. Parks Coble took a hybrid approach offering his survey courses online while teaching the smaller upper-division classes in person. The online surveys were taught totally through Canvas which allowed students interested in East Asian history the opportunity to study with Coble regardless of changes in the Covid health directives in place. Although it appeared that the pandemic might be easing at times, the Omicron variant created another surge on campus.

Still Coble offered his upper-division classes in person with smaller class sizes and social distancing. When health directives required it he mandated mask wearing in class. It was quite rewarding to meet with students in person during the past year. One skill Coble never mastered was having a vigorous class discussion using an online format. His research agenda has still been impacted by the pandemic. Travel to China for research has become quite difficult. The 2022-23 academic year has been an especially busy one for Prof. Deirdre Cooper Owens and rewarding one for the Gilded Age and Progressive Era inaugural writing group. Still Coles study will shed new light on the factors which led to his defeat. Victory and Chiang was exiled to Taiwan. Cobles study will be "attending" the monthly Chinese Economic History Workshop based in Hong Kong which is usually early in the morning there and early evening in North America. But the online discussion never seem to be as fruitful as the old in-person format. Coble is delighted that he will travel to Lawrence, Kansas, in September to be a discussant on a panel at the Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs. This will be his first face-to-face conference in over two years.

Fortunately before the pandemic he had completed enough research in China and at the Hoover Archives to begin writing his manuscript on hyperinflation and the collapse of the Chiang Kai-shek government in China. Coble submitted a draft manuscript to Cambridge University Press in the spring of 2022. After sending it out to readers, the press accepted the manuscript for publication and it is now in press. The Collapse of Nationalist China: How Chiang Kai-shek Lost Chinas Civil War should appear in early 2023. The book was one of the last months of World War II when China still suffered under Japanese invasion through the Civil War between the Chinese Nationalists and Mao's Chinese Communists. In the autumn of 1949 Mao swept to victory and Chiang was exiled to Taiwan. Cobles study will shed new light on the factors which led to his defeat.

The 2021-22 academic year has been an especially busy and rewarding one for Prof. Deirdre Cooper Owens. She continues to serve as a public speaker and leading historical expert on racial inequities in health care with regard to reproductive health and medicine. In April 2022, the University of Virginia's School of Nursing-Eleanor Crowder Boring Center for Nursing Historical Inquiry awarded her their highest honor, the Agnes Dillan Randolph Award. The award recognizes excellence in historical scholarship on nursing and healers. Further, she was selected by the Society of Early Americanists as their Scholar of the Month in October 2021, and was nominated unanimously by UNL as the senior scholar for the nationally competitive and prestigious Carnegie Mellon Fellowship. Lastly, Cooper Owens had two book chapters published in Medicine and Healing in the Age of Slavery (LMU Press, 2021) and Ideas in Unexpected Places: Reimagining Black Intellectual History (Northwestern University Press, 2022). Lastly in June 2022, Professor Cooper Owens was on tour in Germany at three universities in Germany (the Universities of Freiburg, Cologne, and Erfurt) speaking on her newest work on Harriet Tubman, disability, citizenship, and nation-making.

Prof. Dawne Y. Curry: The 2022-23 academic year has been an especially busy and rewarding one for Prof. Deirdre Cooper Owens. She continues to serve as a public speaker and leading historical expert on racial inequities in health care with regard to reproductive health and medicine. In April 2022, the University of Virginia’s School of Nursing-Eleanor Crowder Boring Center for Nursing Historical Inquiry awarded her their highest honor, the Agnes Dillan Randolph Award. The award recognizes excellence in historical scholarship on nursing and healers. Further, she was selected by the Society of Early Americanists as their Scholar of the Month in October 2021, and was nominated unanimously by UNL as the senior scholar for the nationally competitive and prestigious Carnegie Mellon Fellowship. Lastly, Cooper Owens had two book chapters published in Medicine and Healing in the Age of Slavery (LMU Press, 2021) and Ideas in Unexpected Places: Reimagining Black Intellectual History (Northwestern University Press, 2022). Lastly in June 2022, Professor Cooper Owens was on tour in Germany at three universities in Germany (the Universities of Freiburg, Cologne, and Erfurt) speaking on her newest work on Harriet Tubman, disability, citizenship, and nation-making.

Prof. Tim Borstelmann continues to teach courses in the University Honors Program as well as the History Department. His most recent book, Just Like Us: The American Struggle to Understand Foreigners (Columbia University Press, 2020), won the 2021 Johns Family Book Award from the American Historical Association’s Pacific Coast Branch. He is currently finishing the manuscript for his next book, a collection of brief essays about his four decades as a teacher and a historian. One possible title: “The Historians Diet: Essential Takeaways from 40 Years of Teaching and Writing about the Past.”
**Prof. James A. Garza** has a chapter “Engineering the Porfrian Landscape: Technology and Social Change in the Basin of Mexico, 1890-1910” appearing in a volume he co-edited with Justin Castro (Arkansas State), Technocratic Visions: Engineers, Technology, and Society in Mexico, 1875-1986, which will be published by the University of Pittsburgh Press this fall.

**Prof. Vanessa B. Gorman**'s big news this year was that she received the University of Nebraska Outstanding Teaching and Instructional Activity Award (OTICA) from President Carter. Only two such awards are given out across the entire four campuses of the NU system. This OTICA was bestowed particularly in recognition of her efforts in developing new approaches to learning. She has pioneered the use of on-line tools to learn classical languages more quickly and with less memorization of obscure forms, as embodied by her course, GREK 151, Reading Ancient Greek in the Digital Age (available on-line at https://vgorman1.github.io/Greek-Dependency-Trees/tree/master/xml%20Divisions/) in order to distinguish genuine orations written by Demosthenes from the so-called Pseudo-Demosthenes orations. They use their statistical analysis of grammatical features to determine that, for the most part, the general opinion on authorship within the Demesthenic corpus is correct, but that several orations can be shown to be wrongly attributed. Prof. Gorman hopes to submit this article in the fall.

She continues to make presentations nationally and internationally on digital stylometry of Greek prose texts and ancient Greek language pedagogy. She is on the board of the Alphabet project and was appointed co-Director of the Perseids Project. She has re-upped as department undergraduate chair and continues as chair of the University Commencement and Recognition Committee.

Finally, beginning fall 2021, Gorman has received a joint appointment in the Department of Classics and Religious Studies, with the long-awaited opportunity to teach one Greek language course each year.

**Prof. Margaret D. Jacobs** had a new book come out in 2021: After One Hundred Winters: In Search of Reconciliation on America’s Stolen Lands with Princeton University Press. It was a finalist for the 2022 Reading the West award in nonfiction. She continues to work closely with Kevin Abourezk, a Rosebud Lakota journalist and managing editor at Indianz.com on the Reconciliation Rising multimedia project. Abourezk and Jacobs have produced a series of podcasts and an 11-minute film, Return of the Pawnees, which aired on Nebraska Public Media in April 2021. The film earned a Gold Telly Award in the Television-General-Cultural Category and has also been nominated for a Heartland Emmy award in the in the Diversity/Equity/Inclusion category. Jacobs also co-directs the Arizona Indian Studies Digital Humanities Project with UNL Libraries professor Liz Lorang and Susana Geliga, a former UNL History PhD student who now teaches at UNO. The project recently won a Digital Justice Grant from the American Council on Learned Societies. The project has been involved over the last year in searching for the Genoa Indian school cemetery and identifying the children who died at the school. An Australian film crew made a 30-minute documentary, A Small Town Digs for the Truth, about the search for the cemetery that aired in May on Australia’s ABC News: https://my.youtube.com/watch?v=A13zDuaYU0c. Jacobs also continues her work as Director of the Center for Great Plains Studies.

**Prof. Gerald J. Steinacher** is making good progress writing his major monograph about the Vatican and the Nuremberg War Crime Trials of 1945-1949. After over 6 years of research in over 60 archives worldwide, he is almost done with the archival research stage of the work. His 2021 highlight was that his fieldwork in the Vatican archives, which were just opened for the pontificate of the controversial wartime Pope Pius XII (1939-1958). For this book project he was awarded a number of fellowships and invitations to named lectures. Most recently in the spring of 2021, he received a Senior Research Fellowship from the renowned Vienna Simon Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (Austria); and in the fall of 2021 he was invited as a Visiting Scholar to the Center for Church History at the University of Ca’ Foscari in Venice (Italy).

In 2021-22, Cory James Young completed his first of two years as a postdoctoral associate in the History Department. As project manager for Katrina Jagodinsky’s NSF grant, “Petitioning for Freedom: Habeas Corpus in the American West, 1812-1924,” (PFF) Young spent two weeks conducting archival research at the Oregon State Archives in beautiful, rainy Salem (and nearly as much time at NebraskaHistory in Lincoln). He also helped manage Jagodinsky and William Thomas’s brand-new NSF REU Site, the Digital Legal Research Lab, which brought eight undergraduate researchers to campus to study the history of freedom making. As of Summer 2022, the PFF dataset was nearing 500 cases and continuing to grow.

In June 2022, Young published his own dataset, “A Just and True Return: Pennsylvania’s Surviving County Slave Registries, 1780-1826,” (JATR) with the Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation. JATR collects and encodes more than 6300 slave registrations from nineteen Pennsylvania counties. The project reveals the human costs of Pennsylvania’s gradual abolition program, enables scholars to campus to study the history of freedom making. As of Summer 2022, the PFF dataset was nearing 500 cases and continuing to grow.

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John Wunder, emeritus professor in the Department of History, received the 2021 Sower Award in the Humanities from Humanities Nebraska.

The annual award honors an individual who has made a significant contribution to the public understanding of the humanities in Nebraska. Wunder has published or edited 22 books and numerous essays and journal articles. His book “Retained by the People: A History of American Indians and the Bill of Rights” (1995) won the Phi Alpha Theta national history honorary society’s award for the best history book that year.

"John Wunder’s ability to capture the imagination of people of all ages, through his teaching, his community participation, and the extension of his work through his writing, speaks directly to the meaning of the Sower Award and the symbol of excellence it represents," nominator Ron Hull said.

Wunder previously served as director of the Center for Great Plains Studies, president of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, and president of the Western History Association.


The Nebraska Alumni Association is proud to introduce its 2022 class of Alumni Masters and alumni award winners.

The Alumni Masters and award winners were recognized on campus 30 March to 1 April 2022, ending with the Nebraska Medallion Dinner on 1 April.

Since 1964, more than 400 alumni have participated in Alumni Masters. Its primary goal is to link the university’s outstanding alumni with students who can benefit from their experiences and knowledge, as well as honor alumni for their success and leadership. All students are encouraged to take part in lectures, presentations, and events with the Alumni Masters, who will speak about ways to apply formal education to working situations and career goals...

Don Winslow (75) College of Arts and Sciences


Winslow came to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln from his boyhood home in Rhode Island, and after earning a degree in African Studies, he traveled the world with stops in Asia, Africa, Europe, and many places in the U.S. Wherever he has traveled, Winslow has found inspiration for compelling stories, creating works that have become short stories, novels, magazine features, and screenplays. The recipient of many international writing awards, including the Los Angeles Times Book Prize. Winslow currently lives in California...


The ways in which identities intersected could bring instability to the neat hierarchy of categories set out by our sources (Arab Muslim; Arabised and/or client Muslim; Muslim of muwallad origin, i.e. what is often termed

As Jessica A. Coope highlights in the introduction to this, her second book, it is only relatively recently that scholarship on Umayyad al-Andalus (711–1031) – long centred on institutional and political history – has begun to explore social and cultural history...

Coope’s contribution to the field is an exploration of Andalusí identity in the ninth and tenth centuries, and in particular of how group identities shaped the lives of individuals. Following in the footsteps of the usual cultural history touchstones, such as Clifford Geertz, she examines the value systems of the textual sources to reconstruct how people in this time and place understood themselves, their society, and their world. Identity in al-Andalus, she argues – whether religious, ethnic, or gendered – was “varied, fluid and contentious” (p. 2), for all that the texts often imagine it as fixed and distinct... Both Andalusí Jews and Arabised Christians (often termed “Mozarabs”) have been quite extensively studied in the past, but, as Coope explains in Chapter Three, we still know a great deal more about the theory of their lives than the practice. Law regarding dhimmis, while enticingly extensive, was “a statement of Muslim society’s ideals rather than a reflection of its realities” (p. 74), and for this early period other types of sources are frustratingly limited; in comparison with later medieval centuries, for example, we have very few surviving fatāwa (expert commentaries deriving from actual legal cases)... Coope distinguishes very usefully between the different types of evidence, and what we can actually learn.

The ways in which identities intersected could bring instability to the neat hierarchy of categories set out by our sources (Arab Muslim; Arabised and/or client Muslim; Muslim of muwallad origin, i.e. what is often termed...
“Hispano-Roman;” Muslim of Berber origin; non-Muslim). Different sources of group identity coexisted, in tension with each other. In her first two chapters, Coope explores such tensions with regards to Islam and Arab ethnicity...

Non-Arab mothers and wives did not dilute a family’s Arabness, even if – ideally – daughters should not be married out. Indeed, as Coope discusses in her fourth and fifth chapters, women often found themselves at the intersections of identity categories, and aspects of their status and experiences could be ambiguous as result...

Coope rounds off her study with a pair of chapters on life beyond Cordoba. In Chapter Six, she discusses the Umayyads’ struggles to control territory, looking at rebellions by leading Arab families in key cities such as Toledo, and those led by Berbers or muwallads, which the historical tradition tends to label ‘heterodox’ or even heretical simply for being expressions of opposition to the caliph. Chapter Seven, meanwhile, is devoted to the exceptionally fluid identities and loyalties of marcher families such as the Banū Qāši, who often married and made alliances across religious lines and what we think of today as territorial borders; such groups are interesting in their own right, but this chapter is also notable for containing a wonderfully clear conceptual and terminological overview of Andalusī Muslim ideas about frontiers and belonging, reflecting the valuable work of generations of Spanish scholars that still does not feature as strongly as it might in English-language scholarship.

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