

Department of History Annual Newsletter 2024–2025



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NEWSLETTER DESIGNED & EDITED BY MEGAN BROWN / COVER PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

CHAIR’S REPORT

Dear Friends,

Fall 2025-26 will be my final year as chair of the Department of History, which I have led for the past nine years. During my tenure as chair, our department has accomplished big things, and our faculty continues to lead the University as one of the most decorated departments with a substantial number of highly distinguished awards, not only on campus but also within the entire University system. I’m proud to have been at the helm of such an accomplished and award-winning faculty.

The last several years, however, have been unusual. The University continues to face economic headwinds and a shifting national climate that challenges the very nature of academic research. It is not a state secret that the discipline of history has been subject to numerous controversies. For those alumni who studied history at UNL in previous decades, the academic climate you benefited from might seem distant from that which prevails today. And while previous generations have faced challenges, those that all universities face across the nation today mean that we must be more focused than ever on protecting the academic mission of the University and the discipline of history itself.



Since its founding, the University of Nebraska has been a towering source of pride for citizens of our state, and it should be. Over the course of the twentieth century, it became one of the nation’s leading public research universities. Our Department’s robust Research 1 focus is alive and well, despite ongoing budget constraints. We have been able to manage this storm better than many departments precisely because we have always had committed faculty, students, and alumni patrons who have ensured the continued success of our faculty and students here at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The patronage of our alumni is, it is fair to say, why we are an extraordinary Department, so this year, I’d like to make a special call, which I have never done before. We are conducting a special fundraising drive to help the faculty sustain its robust research in the face of diminishing state resources. Alumni patronage will help us weather this storm and provide the next chair resources that I could take for granted during better times. Please consider giving to our UNL History Faculty Research Fund: <https://nufoundation.org/fund/01172610/>



Contact me if you would like information about other funds: jlesueur2@nebraska.edu

In the meantime, I hope you all enjoy reading about the Department’s successes in Academic Year 2024-25 in our Annual Report.

Thank you so very much for your time, community, and continued support.

With kind wishes,
James

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

N 2024–2025 IN UNL HISTORY

2024 PAULEY SYMPOSIUM

By Parks Coble

The generous support of the Pauley family in memory of Carroll R. Pauley has enabled the Department of History to host both individual speakers and occasional symposia over several years. In 2024, chair James Le Sueur and members of the program committee Dawne Curry and Bedross Der Matossian invited me to organize a symposium to celebrate my retirement from the University after forty-eight years.

I chose the topic “The Legacy of Republican China,” which coincided with my research and publication interests. I was asked to invite six presenters to the event. Republican China is dated from the 1911 Revolution led by Sun Yat-sen that ended the Qing dynasty, until 1949 when Chairman Mao and the Communist Party won control of China and created the People’s Republic of China. Sun’s successor, Chiang Kai-shek, fled to the island of Taiwan where he established a rump Republic of China, separate from the mainland, which endures to this day.

For many years, scholars studying China tended to see the Republican Era and Maoist China as very different and rarely focused on continuities. But in recent years, scholarly work has increasingly crossed the 1949 divide and examined legacies. In selecting the six invited guests, I chose scholars who had produced exciting and cutting-edge research and had done extensive explorations on China. I also wanted individuals who were good speakers and would engage both our students and history faculty.

I opened the symposium with a keynote address on the morning of October 17th. While the invited scholars presented focused research topics, I chose to reflect on my career at Nebraska. My topic was “Creating a History of Republican China: Personal Reflections.” When I started graduate school studying Republican China in 1968, China was in the throes of the Cultural Revolution, a violent upheaval which impacted academic life especially hard.

Universities and even public schools were closed. Students became Red Guards and were told to make revolution. Americans could not go to China; archives and academic publications were closed. When I completed my degree and began teaching in Lincoln, I had yet to set foot in the People’s Republic of China. Instead, I had done extensive language training and research in Taiwan which the United States recognized as “China.”

After I arrived in Lincoln, Chairman Mao died, and China entered the period of reform and opening. Still my first trip was not as an individual but as part of a U.S.-China People’s Friendship Delegation. We stayed in separate hotels from Chinese, ate separately, shopped separately, and were even given a separate currency. In my keynote speech I recounted how on subsequent trips I was gradually allowed to travel more freely and meet with Chinese scholars. As I did so, I became aware of the tremendous turmoil that the anti-rightist campaigns and Cultural Revolution had inflicted on China’s intellectuals. When I started giving papers at academic conferences in China, I discovered that most Chinese were very cautious in presenting their research lest they encounter political difficulties. As a foreigner I was much more open in presenting, something appreciated by my Chinese colleagues.

I then recounted my research and publications at Nebraska done with English-language university presses. However, Chinese editions of my work appeared. At first these were unauthorized pirate editions, but later after China signed the copywrite convention, authorized editions appeared. This opened the door to many more invitations to speak in China. My keynote session was followed by a lively question and answer period which would continue informally throughout the symposium.

The first of the invited professors was Elisabeth Köll, Professor and Chair of the Department of History at the University of Notre Dame. Her topic was “Infrastructure

Development and the Making of Modern China: From Sun Yat-sen to the Belt and Road Initiative.” China today has the world’s best railway system with an extensive high-speed passenger system. But the origins of this system lay with the founder of Republican China, Sun Yat-sen. Köll traced how his plan remained a guiding post for its eventual completion. Köll was followed by Professor of History and Director of the East Asian Studies Center at the University of Southern California, Brett Sheehan. A specialist in the history of business and banking in Republican China, his paper was “A Century of *Midnight*: Business in Chinese Popular Culture since 1930.” This novel was one of the most famous of the era. Authored by Mao Dun, it was a Marxist look at a capitalist family. Sheehan reveals that various reprints and renderings of the novel in movies and television illuminate changes in attitudes towards business.

The second day of the conference opened with Professor Emily Hill of Queen’s University in Ontario, Canada. A military specialist, she presented a paper “Historians’ Fallacies in Accounts of China’s Civil War, 1946-49.” Newly released material on Chiang Kai-shek, particularly his diaries, have mandated a re-evaluation of his role as commander in chief of the Nationalist Forces as they lost to the communists.

Philip Thai, Director of Global Asian Studies and Associate Professor of History and Asian Studies at Northeastern University in Boston, presented “Bandit Goods and Petty Commerce: Taiwan in the Cold War Shadow Economy.” In the Maoist Era, Taiwan and the United States prohibited trade with the People’s Republic. But this ban fostered an

extensive smuggling between the two sides.

Margherita Zanasi, a native of Florence, Italy, who is Professor of Chinese History at Louisiana State University, presented “Qinjian jianguo 勤俭建国: Frugality and Nation Building across 1949.” Both Chiang Kai-shek and Mao stressed the need for ordinary Chinese to be frugal so that money could be invested to build up China. This idea clashed with the desire of most Chinese to enjoy a higher standard of living.

The final speaker was John Wong, Professor of History and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Hong Kong. His talk was “Hong Kong as China’s Financial Spigot: A Legacy of Republican China.” Hong Kong remained a British Colony until 1987. A center of global banking and commerce, it often was a conduit for money exchange from the China Mainland where the governments of both the Nationalists and later the Communists attempted to limit such movements of capital.

Overall, the sessions provoked lively discussion and during the breaks the participants interacted with each other and with other faculty and students. At each meal, select faculty members from the department joined the participants for discussion. The crowning event of the symposium was the closing reception held in the great hall of the Sheldon Art Gallery. Brilliantly lit, with an open bar and food offerings, it provided a lively setting for final discussion. Many faculty and graduate students attended.

Following the symposium, I received messages from all the participants praising the staff of the Department of History



2024 Carroll R. Pauley Symposium — October 17-18, 2024

The Legacy of Republican China

This event is sponsored by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Department of History in honor of Parks M. Coble on the occasion of his retirement

The Republic of China (1911-1949) was an era of revolution, warfare, and displacement but also the birth of modern Chinese literature, the growth of diverse political ideas, and the development of new economic institutions. Join us as seven scholars explore the rich legacy of the new People’s Republic of China.

View the complete schedule online



for their skill in the arrangements. Many also mentioned specific faculty members whom they had enjoyed meeting. As for me, I thought it was a wonderful tribute to my retirement — much appreciated. Thanks to all who made it possible.

Additional Sources: <https://history.unl.edu/2024-pauley-symposium-legacy-republican-china/>; <https://history.unl.edu/research-and-creative-activity/pauley-lecture-and-symposium/>

2024 RAWLEY GRADUATE CONFERENCE

The 2024 James A. Rawley Graduate Conference in the Humanities was hosted in the Nebraska City Campus Student Union 3-4 October 2024, with the theme “War and Society.” Inspired by ongoing conflicts across the world, it encouraged participants to examine wars, violence, and displacement of peoples, both present and historical, and to consider the ways that war has impacted wider societies and civil life. The conference allowed graduate students, educators, university professors, and other professionals from across the country to present their work and promote enriching dialogue. The conference welcomed a total of over 100 attendees across both days, hosting over 50 presenters for traditional panels and roundtables, hosted a digital tools workshop, a digital humanities lightning round, and a keynote address by Dr. Adam Seipp of Texas A&M University who discussed the long-term effects on German society from its extended Cold War encounter with a large American military presence in their country. In addition to the various humanities departments across the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, participants came from the University of Florida, Florida International University, Purdue University, the University of South Alabama, the University of Iowa, Youngstown State University, the University of Nebraska Omaha, and Nebraska Wesleyan University. Additionally, the conference welcomed over 10 presenters from around the world, providing engaging perspectives and dialogues for this year’s panels.

The 2024 Rawley Conference would not have been made possible without generous support from its sponsors. This year’s sponsors included: The UNL Research Council; UNL College of Arts and Sciences; UNL Department of Political Science; UNL Center for Digital Research in the Humanities; the Center for Great Plains Studies; UNL Institute of Ethnic Studies; UNL Women’s & Gender Studies Program; and the History Graduate Student Association. The committee would also like to thank Dr. James Le Sueur, Dr. Alexander Vazansky, Barbara Bullington, and Megan Brown for their administrative assistance and support during the organization of the conference.

Source: Brianna Rose DeValk, Greg Payne, and the 2024 Rawley Conference Committee

The 16th Annual James A. Rawley Graduate Conference in the Humanities

WAR & SOCIETY

October 3 - 4, 2024

CALL FOR PAPERS

The 17th Annual James A. Rawley Graduate Conference in the Humanities

DIGITAL CROSSROADS: TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH, & INNOVATION IN THE HUMANITIES

NOVEMBER 6-7, 2025

Help the History Graduate Students’ Association celebrate the 20th anniversary of UNL’s Center for Digital Research in the Humanities during the 2025 Rawley Conference this November!

Submit a paper, project, or other work to join our conversation about digital tools, scholarship, and its impact for researchers, educators, and community members! All proposals that interpret our digital theme are welcomed and encouraged from all members of the UNL community across the humanities and related fields.

Additionally, the Rawley Conference has a NEW opportunity for undergraduate students! Apply to join the Undergraduate Research Lightning Round where you can present on ANY research project of your choice for only 3-5 mins!

ALL QUESTIONS MAY BE DIRECTED TO RAWLEYUNL@GMAIL.COM

SCAN HERE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE

N HISTORY GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE BASED UPON ANY PROTECTED STATUS. PLEASE SEE GO.UNL.EDU/NONDISCRIMINATION.

RETIREMENT: BARB BULLINGTON

Barb Bullington retired after nearly 15 years in the Department of History. Starting as Staff Secretary and Graduate Secretary, she worked under William G Thomas III, Chair. In 2013, she was awarded the Staff Outstanding Service to Graduate Students by the UNL Graduate Student Association.

In 2016, she began serving as the Administrative Technician and Office Manager for the Department under James Le Sueur, Chair. She received an Applause award from the Department and was nominated for the 2021 Board of Regents Kudos Award for Academic Affairs. The Department was also awarded the University-wide Departmental Teaching Award, a great honor.

Before working at UNL, Barb worked in banking for 15 years and also worked for the University of Nebraska School of Technical Agriculture and Concordia University.

Barb is looking forward to spending more time with her 10 grandchildren and traveling with her husband, Brian. Barb said: “I’ve truly enjoyed working for the Department of History. The faculty have been incredible and I’ve learned so much from them. The University will always be special in my heart. I’m very grateful that I could complete my professional career working with an outstanding Department!”



Text & Photo Credit: Barb Bullington

NEW HIRE: MICHELE KENTFIELD

Hello. My name is Michele Kentfield. I joined the History Department on February 24, 2025, as the Administrative Technician. I grew up on a farm in south-west Nebraska. I attended college in Sterling, KS and spent the next 31 years living/working in Hutchinson, KS.

My background is in the social service and mental health fields working with children and families. The time I spent in education was working as a Behavior Interventionist with students ranging from kindergarten to high school with behavioral challenges. My current role is quite a departure from what I am used to.

I am enjoying my role in the History Department learning the ins and outs while getting to know everyone.

In my free time I enjoy time with family, friends, my dog Bellah, and all things Husker sports. You can often find me at a game. Go Big Red!



PROJECT ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA EARNS OFFICE OF RESEARCH FUNDING

Dawne Curry, professor in the Department of History and the Ethnic Studies program, has earned funding from the Office of Research's Arts and Humanities Research Enhancement Program. Designed to help faculty achieve short-term goals that increases competitiveness for external grants or the impact of their work, the funding supports her project, "Liberation Struggle Eulogies: Death and Violence in Apartheid South Africa."

Curry's research focuses on 20th and 21st century African history with an emphasis on South African protest and resistance struggles. She has made several research trips — one as a Fulbright scholar — and organized Education Abroad programs in South Africa, a country that she calls her "home away from home."



Source: College of Arts and Sciences, "Curry earns Office of Research funding for project about South Africa," <https://history.unl.edu/news/curry-earns-office-research-funding-project-about-south-africa/>, 10 July 2024

FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND PROJECT EARNS DIGITAL HUMANITIES AWARD

The latest University of Nebraska-Lincoln digital humanities project, "[Petitioning for Freedom: Habeas Corpus in the American West](#)," is now online and invites users to explore how marginalized communities navigated the courts to seek justice.

Katrina Jagodinsky, principal investigator on the project and Susan Rosowski Associate Professor of history, led a [special program](#) to officially launch the project's website at 4 p.m. on 6 September 2024.

The project, web-hosted by the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities, is the first of its kind and

explores thousands of habeas corpus petitions lodged to challenge coercion and confinement in the states of Arizona, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington. It offers a compelling portrait of marginalized peoples' legal mobilization and campaigns for racial and social justice.

Users of the portal can search by name, demographic, court, year, location, and much more. Jagodinsky said the website was designed for exploratory navigation with a broad range of audiences in mind.

The launch is a culmination of more than a decade of

research by Jagodinsky, with the assistance of additional faculty and the team at CDRH. Jagodinsky also mentored student researchers on the project through Nebraska's UCARE and First Year Research Experience programs, and a three-year Research Experience for Undergraduates program funded by the National Science Foundation. In total, 52 undergraduate and graduate students gained research experience while working on the project, often providing transcription, annotation, and historical context to the digitized documents.

As the site is populated with cases, approximately 6,000 records will be available. The documents cover a wide array of cases, from Black petitioners resisting enslavement and Indigenous parents reclaiming their children from boarding schools to Chinese immigrants challenging deportation following the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

Jagodinsky received funding from the [National Science Foundation](#) to complete the research...

In May 2025, [Petitioning for Freedom](#) [earned] the [2024 Digital Humanities Award](#) for Best New Dataset or DH Model...

These awards are designed to raise awareness, put interesting DH resources in the spotlight, and engage DH users (and general public) in the work. The public nominates and votes for this recognition of talent and expertise in the digital humanities (DH) community. An [international nominations committee](#) of volunteers oversees the nominations process and decides on final candidates for each category based on whether they meet four criteria.



The selection was based on [1,522 votes](#), and the recognition is highly valued within the DH community...

Sources: <https://petitioningforfreedom.unl.edu/>; Deann Gayman | University Communication and Marketing, "First-of-its-kind project offers access to freedom petitions," <https://news.unl.edu/article/first-of-its-kind-project-offers-access-to-freedom-petitions>, 5 September 2024; <https://mediahub.unl.edu/media/23088>; College of Arts and Sciences, "Jagodinsky's project earns digital humanities award," <https://history.unl.edu/news/jagodinskys-project-earns-digital-humanities-award/>, 1 May 2025; University Communication, "Achievements | Honors, appointments and publications for May 9," <https://news.unl.edu/article/achievements-honors-appointments-and-publications-for-may-9>, 9 May 2025

Photo Credit: Craig Chandler | University Communication and Marketing

EXPERTISE AND LEADERSHIP ON DISPLAY

Bedross Der Matossian, professor in the Department of History, had his op-ed article, "Armenians, too, have a formidable history in the Holy Land," published in [The Christian Post](#) and [The Times of Israel](#) on 15 September 2024. The [article in Hebrew](#) was number one on the Times of Israel website.

He also recently led the [Society for Armenian Studies 50th Anniversary Conference](#), an international event focused on Armenian history hosted by Harvard University and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), for which he raised over \$40,000. The three-day conference brought together more than fifty scholars from Armenia, Turkey, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, England, Australia, and the United States.

"The momentous international conference celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS)," Der Matossian said. "This is a huge milestone in the history of SAS. The breadth, the scope, and the multidisciplinary approaches of the papers that were delivered at the conference demonstrate how SAS has evolved from a handful of scholars to become the most important academic society in the Western Hemisphere with cutting-edge approaches to Armenian Studies."

James Le Sueur, professor and chair in the department, called Der Matossian "extraordinary."

"Bedross does truly cutting-edge and fearless research, [and is] a fierce human rights defender," he said.

“Superstar is a dramatic understatement in his case.”

Der Matossian, who also serves as vice chair of the department and Hymen Rosenberg Professor in the Judaic Studies program, grew up in Jerusalem and graduated from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His areas of interest include ethnic politics in the Middle East, inter-ethnic violence in the Ottoman Empire, Palestinian history, and the history of the Armenian Genocide. In 2023, his book *Denial of Genocides in the Twenty-First Century* was published by University of Nebraska Press.

Sources: Bedross Der Matossian, “Armenians, too, have a formidable history in the Holy Land,” [https://www.christianpost.com/voices/armenians-too-have-a-](https://www.christianpost.com/voices/armenians-too-have-a-formidable-history-in-the-holy-land.html)

[formidable-history-in-the-holy-land.html](https://www.christianpost.com/voices/armenians-too-have-a-formidable-history-in-the-holy-land.html), 15 September 2024; College of Arts and Sciences, “Der Matossian’s expertise, leadership on display,” <https://history.unl.edu/news/der-matossians-expertise-leadership-display/>, 19 September 2024; Sean Hagewood | University Communication and Marketing, “Nebraska in the national news: September 2024,” <https://news.unl.edu/article/nebraska-in-the-national-news-september-2024>, 1 October 2024; Sean Hagewood | University Communication and Marketing, “Husker inventions, research, expertise made headlines in 2024,” <https://news.unl.edu/article/husker-inventions-research-expertise-made-headlines-in-2024>, 6 January 2025

Photo Credit: Ani Hovannisian



Society for Armenian Studies 50th Anniversary Conference participants in Sackler Lecture Hall, Harvard University.

URBAN HISTORY ASSOCIATION BOOK AWARD



Historian Cindy Ermus’s book, *The Great Plague Scare of 1720: Disaster and Diplomacy in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World*, was awarded the Urban History Association’s Lynn Hollen Lees Book Prize for best book in European urban history published in 2023.

“Ermus expertly ties this story of quarantines, blockades, and inspections to the process of state-making and to the growth of scientific understandings of disease,” the organization’s news release states. “As urban historians debate how best to link particular urban stories to more general patterns, Ermus’s research design

offers an elegant way forward in global urban history, while advancing understanding of practices of disaster management within the early modern Atlantic World.”

The book explores the Plague of Provence, a major disaster that left in its wake as many as 126,000 deaths, as well as new understandings about the nature of contagion and the best ways to manage its threat. Ermus’s study focuses on the social, commercial, and diplomatic impact of the epidemic beyond French borders, examining reactions to this public health crisis from Italy to Great Britain to Spain and the overseas colonies.

Ermus is Charles and Linda Wilson Professor in the History of Medicine in the Department of History and director

of the Humanities in Medicine program. The book was published by Cambridge University Press.

Sources: College of Arts and Sciences, “Ermus earns book award from Urban History Association,” <https://hmed.unl.edu/news/ermus-earns-book-award-urban-history-association/> & <https://history.unl.edu/news/ermus-earns-book-award-urban-history-association/>, 25 September 2024; University Communication and Marketing, “Achievements | Honors, appointments and publications for Sept. 27,” <https://news.unl.edu/article/achievements-honors-appointments-and-publications-for-sept-27>, 27 September 2024

EXPLORING THE LEGACY OF THE U.S. CIVIL WAR

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln hosted two events 9 October 2024, inviting the public to explore the long-lasting impact of the American Civil War and its ongoing relevance to today’s political climate...

The first event, “A House Divided: Politics Today and American History,” took place at noon in the Lied Commons at the Lied Center for Performing Arts. The panel discussion featured a diverse group of University of Nebraska-Lincoln scholars and Nebraska leaders, as well as celebrated author and historian Jeremi Suri, PhD, from the University of Texas-Austin. Moderated by Will Thomas, then-Angle Chair in the Humanities and former professor of history at Nebraska, the discussion examined how the deep divisions that marked the Civil War era resonate in today’s polarized political landscape...

Other panelists were Mike Hilgers, Nebraska attorney general; Jeannette Jones, Happold Professor of history and ethnic studies at Nebraska; Luke McDermott, external vice president of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska; and Sandra Washington, Lincoln City Councilwoman.

Later in the evening, Suri presented a lecture titled “America’s Civil War: Then and Now” at 7 p.m. in the Ethel S. Abbott Auditorium at Sheldon Museum of Art. Suri...offered a thought-provoking examination of the Civil War’s legacy and its continued influence on contemporary U.S. politics. Suri is the author and editor of eleven books on contemporary politics and foreign policy, most recently *Civil War By Other Means: America’s Long and Unfinished Fight or Democracy*. He also hosts the weekly This is Democracy podcast, which illuminates ways in which the past offers hope for the present and the future, if only we

can escape the negativity of our current moment...

The programs were produced in partnership with the College of Arts and Sciences, Lied Center for Performing Arts, and Sheldon Museum of Art. They were presented in connection with the world premiere of *A House Divided*, the new play by Christina Kirk which takes place in the Lincoln White House during the Civil War. The play ran 17-22 September 2024 at the Lied.



Funding for the events was provided by Humanities Nebraska and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment...

Sources: University Communications, “Panel discussion, lecture to explore legacy of U.S. Civil War,” <https://news.unl.edu/article/panel-discussion-lecture-to-explore-legacy-of-us-civil-war>, 4 October 2024; <https://www.liedcenter.org/event/civil-war-lecture-and-panel>

PERSPECTIVES ON VIOLENCE IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

The Norman and Bernice Harris Center for Judaic Studies held two events 9 October 2024 to mark the 7 October 2023 Hamas attack on Israel.

At 1 p.m. in the Unity Room of the Gaughan Multicultural Center, survivor Ofri Avigdor Betser delivered a presentation, “Shadows of the Seventh: A Survivor’s Story.”

Betser was living in Kibbutz Kfar Aza when four attackers repeatedly tried to break into their safe room following a bombing. She and her husband and child were eventually evacuated. Betser shared her experiences of that day and the months that followed, including the birth of her second child in November 2023.

At 7 p.m., in Love Library South, Room 102, the panel discussion, “Israel and Palestine: Perspectives on the Ongoing Violence,” was held. The panel included University of Nebraska-Lincoln scholars Beth Dotan

(research assistant professor in the Harris Center), Ari Kohen (professor of political science and director of the Harris Center), Bedross Der Matossian (professor of history), and James Le Sueur (professor and chair of history). The panel was moderated by Courtney Hillebrecht, professor and chair of political science and director of the Forsythe Family Program on Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs.

The panel was also supported by the Departments of History and Political Science, the Harris Center, and the Forsythe Family Program on Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs.

Source: University Communications, “Harris Center hosting two events marking Oct. 7 attacks,” <https://news.unl.edu/article/harris-center-hosting-two-events-marking-oct-7-attacks>, 9 October 2024

TACTILE TEACHING WITH MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS

A group of University of Nebraska-Lincoln students branched out from their typical textbooks and reached into the past.

Students in HIST 414 Medieval Culture classes taught by Carolyn Twomey, assistant professor in medieval European history, visited [University Archives and Special Collections](#) to view medieval manuscripts. Twomey said the students learn more about the documents and the people who created them through hands-on interaction.

“When they touch something someone made 500 years ago, 1,000 years ago, that brings them into the past,” Twomey said. “That allows a really important physical connection as well as an intellectual connection.”

During the trip, students saw two complete 15th century handwritten texts — a Roman history and a book of hours — along with several early modern printed books. Two other manuscript fragments were purchased with support from a Pedagogic Intervention Grant that Twomey received from [the Center for Transformative Teaching](#).

Students in Twomey’s HIST 211 History of the Middle Ages course were also able to view those manuscript fragments in a class activity.

Twomey holds “manuscript week” every semester and said it’s always her favorite week of every class. Following a classroom exercise where students practice writing with a quill and parchment, they are able, under the supervision



Students in Carolyn Twomey’s HIST 414 Medieval Culture class take photos of a 15th century Roman history manuscript during a visit to Archives and Special Collections. (Courtesy photo)

of Traci Robison, outreach archivist, to handle real medieval texts created in that manner.

“Students remember the experience of holding these materials,” Twomey said. “Because I have them practice, they’re immediately aware of how good these people are at writing and in their art.”

Senior Blake Rapper said viewing the manuscripts gave context to how complicated the work was during that time.

“I learned that even the most ordinary items are ornately done and detailed,” Rapper said. “Writing or recording something was no simple matter. It took time and devotion to get everything just right. What I liked most was the writing. You get the feel for the time and effort given for each of these manuscripts.”



Traci Robison, outreach archivist, shows a 15th-century book of hours to students in Prof. Twomey’s course. A book of hours guided daily prayer. (Courtesy photo)

One of the highlights of the exploration, a book of hours is a prayer book used to guide prayer throughout a typical day. Twomey said this text helps students understand the daily lives of people from monks to elite women of the era. It directs readers when they should recite certain prayers and psalms.

“It allows an average person, someone who does not live in a monastery, to still participate in those devotions,” Twomey said.

One of the items purchased with Twomey’s grant was a 16th century French land charter. Twomey wanted to show her students medieval documents were more than just Bibles and other religious texts, a common misconception. The land charter offers an early view at how people built kingdoms and negotiated land rights.

“We study the birth of the legal system and papal and royal bureaucracies and the technology of writing down these types of agreements,” Twomey said. “They can really see the diversity of things people were concerned about. It wasn’t just about prayer; it was also about making sure no one stole your land.”

All of the items dispel myths about medieval people, Twomey said. She said modern perceptions of the

Middle Ages depict the people as unintelligent and overly pious, but they had a variety of complicated concerns, as we do today. These texts show the artistry they were capable of.

“They were not dumb. They were not unsophisticated,” Twomey said. “They were brilliant artists. We can see their skill and their devotion and their mastery of their own environment through these objects.”

Jaden Shirley, a

senior secondary education and history major, said holding the manuscripts was a reminder of how meaningful the items were to the people who owned them.

“My biggest takeaway was the resilience of medieval people,” Shirley said. “The handwriting and art put into the pages of the book of hours and others like it show the talent but also the time put into these books and how special they were to the owners.”

Viewing the physical objects can show students how the organization of information has developed through the centuries, Twomey said, and connect it to how it is dispersed in modern times through things like a table of contents.

“I encourage closing looking at these objects as both texts trying to communicate something but also as objects,” Twomey said. “Even if you can’t read the Latin, can’t read the handwriting, you can still learn from it. It connects the

technologies of learning and reading all the way up to what they’re doing today.”

In addition to what her students can learn about the past, Twomey also wants to make them aware of Archives and Special Collections as a resource and hopes they realize the breadth of material available to them on campus.

“This is some of the oldest material in the university,” Twomey said. “They should really take advantage of it. I find it’s good to get students into this place as soon as possible.”

Source: Kristina Jackson | University Communication and Marketing, “Medieval manuscripts provide hands-on lessons for history students,” <https://news.unl.edu/article/medieval-manuscripts-provide-hands-on-lessons-for-history-students>, 4 November 2024

FACULTY SLAM RESEARCH PRESENTATION

...The 2024 Faculty Research and Creative Activity Slam — hosted by the Office of Research and Innovation and held 13 November 2024 — is an annual event, held in conjunction with the university’s Nebraska Research Days, in which researchers present their work in five-minute, engaging talks, this year around the theme “Why does the world need your research?”...

James Garza, “Lost Wings of Eden: Beauty, Power and the Search for Wealth in the Modern World”

Humans’ quest for the exotic and beautiful has often led to environmental destruction — species lost, rivers dammed, forests cleared, said Garza, associate professor of history and ethnic studies.

He recalled his research in Mexico City, where Spanish conquerors seized a crown belonging to the Aztec emperor Moctezuma, made of feathers from tropical birds. It was found in an Austrian castle in the 1860s, “a symbol of not only nature’s beauty...but also a representation of power and wealth,” he said.

Other evidence of that damaging quest included the loss of herons, displaced from their winter migration by massive hunting and the loss of canals and lakes. Heron feathers were widely sought for fashionable hats.

“The great plunder of these birds was made possible with what was then modern technology, including global

communications and steamships,” Garza said. From Mexico to New Guinea to Florida, this plunder spread.

Such practices have ended, but their consequences continue to be felt.

“As I have watched my kids play in an ancient prairie, my



hope is that they see nature as something to be respected, not conquered, that they see beauty needing protection, not mass production like those hats,” Garza said...

The slam presentation was part of a larger research project Garza hopes to undertake in the next few years on the development of commodities during the global gilded age.

Sources: Dan Moser, “Aich, Haddad named faculty Slam winners during Nebraska Research Days,” <https://research.unl.edu/blog/aich-haddad-named-faculty-slam-winners-during-nebraska-research-days/>, 14 November 2024; James Garza

DEAN OF MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY’S COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE

Montana State University announced 18 November 2024 that William Thomas, an administrator and long-time faculty member from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, has been selected as the new dean of the [MSU College of Letters and Science](#). He began his new position on 13 January 2025.

“William Thomas brings a wealth of experience as a scholar, educator, and an administrator,” said Robert Mokwa, MSU executive vice president for academic affairs and provost. “His leadership in fostering student success, research, and public service, combined with his deep commitment to preparing the future workforce of tomorrow, will make him a valuable asset to our College of Letters and Science and to MSU as a whole.”

Since 2021, Thomas has been the associate dean for research and graduate education in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he also served, since 2005, as a history professor and Angle Chair in the Humanities. Thomas was chair of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s history department from 2010 to 2016, and he was a Big Ten Academic Leadership Program Fellow from 2019 to 2020. In addition, Thomas was named a McClymont Distinguished Teaching Fellow and a fellow of the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities.

In 2023, Thomas was elected vice president of the American Historical Association (AHA), the largest

association of historians in the world with more than 11,000 members, which was founded in 1884 and is chartered by the U.S. Congress. In that role, he leads the AHA’s division on research and scholarship.

Before his time at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Thomas was a faculty member at the University of Virginia, where he also served as director of the Virginia Center for Digital History.



“I’m thrilled to be joining Montana State University and inspired by the students, faculty, and staff I met at MSU,” Thomas said. “I’m especially excited about MSU’s land-grant mission and its deep commitment to student success and excellence in research.”

Thomas has a doctorate and a master’s degree in history, both from the University of Virginia, and a bachelor’s degree in history from Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. Among other honors, he received a Mellon Foundation Award in 2023, the Lukas Prizes/Mark A. Lynton Prize in History

in 2021, and grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. In 2016, he was named a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellow.

Thomas was selected following a competitive national search, which attracted a pool of highly qualified candidates. He was one of four finalists who visited the MSU campus for interviews in November 2024. The selection process included meetings with faculty, administrators, and students, and included an open public

forum and presentation.

“We are confident in Dr. Thomas’s ability to inspire and support the faculty, staff, and students of the college as we continue to strengthen our academic programs and research efforts,” Mokwa said.

Thomas replaces Yves Idzerda, who served as dean from 2020 to 2024...

From Will Thomas, 18 November 2024:

“I’ve been appointed Dean of the College of Letters and Science and Professor of History at Montana State University in Bozeman, MT. The college is the largest in Montana and configured almost exactly like ours, encompassing all of the sciences, social and behavioral sciences, and humanities departments and research centers. I am so excited to take on this leadership role...

I will start as Dean at MSU on January 13th, so it is a very

quick timeline. I wanted to share this exciting news with you and for the department to hear it from me.

My heart is full of gratitude for my nearly 20 years at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and for the opportunity to serve in this great Department of History. I’ve been able to do so much here and enjoyed it immensely. I think we have one of the greatest History departments in the world and I have been inspired by all of you, my colleagues. I’m proud of what we all of us together have accomplished together in our department...”

Sources: MSU News Service, “Montana State selects William Thomas as new dean of College of Letters and Science,” <https://www.montana.edu/news/24135/montana-state-selects-william-thomas-as-new-dean-of-college-of-letters-and-science>, 18 November 2024; William G. Thomas III



follows a group of people carrying on the tradition of making moonshine, passed down from their forefathers.

Source: College of Arts and Sciences, “Gibson shares expertise on Discovery Channel’s ‘Moonshiners,’” <https://history.unl.edu/news/gibson-shares-expertise-discovery-channels-moonshiners/>, 17 January 2025

VISUALIZING SURVIVANCE, VISUALIZING PERMANENCE

Among its spring shows, Sheldon Museum of Art opened two exhibitions organized by University of Nebraska–Lincoln faculty. The exhibitions “Visualizing Survivance, Visualizing Permanence” and “Infinite Hopper: An Algorithmic Journey Through Light and Space” opened 21 January 2025 and ran through 13 July 2025.

For the exhibition “Visualizing Survivance, Visualizing Permanence,” [Angel M. Hinzo](#) (Ho-Chunk, [Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska](#)), Assistant Professor of [History](#) and [Ethnic Studies](#) at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, selected works by Native American artists and photographs that demonstrate the enduring presence of Native American communities. These works illustrate the spirit of visual sovereignty, a term used to describe contemporary Native American art that prioritizes the perspective of Indigenous artists and reclaims physical and cultural space...

Professor Hinzo was born into a military family in Sioux City, Iowa. Her father and mother met while serving in the Marine Corps, and she credits their service for shaping much of her childhood and making her who she is today. As a faculty member of the [College of Arts and Sciences](#), Hinzo’s research focuses on Ho-Chunk history and contemporary Native American experience.

She developed an interest in history when she was young and entertained the idea of taking museum studies so she could work at the Smithsonian someday. Once in college, Hinzo chose history as a major, later narrowing her focus to U.S. history. She applied and became a McNair scholar and chose Native American boarding schools as her research topic. “I knew some of my relatives had attended boarding schools, but I didn’t know their history,” Hinzo said. “That started my path on researching U.S. policies

and Native American Studies.”

With a doctorate in Native American Studies and expertise in U.S. federal Indian law and policy, Native American feminisms, archival research, Indigenous spiritual traditions, and decolonial theory and praxis, Hinzo is passionate about sharing her wealth of personal and professional wisdom with the students in her classroom. “I think it’s important for people to know about the history and policies that shape their lives, and this field enables me to share those tools with others as an educator,” Hinzo said.

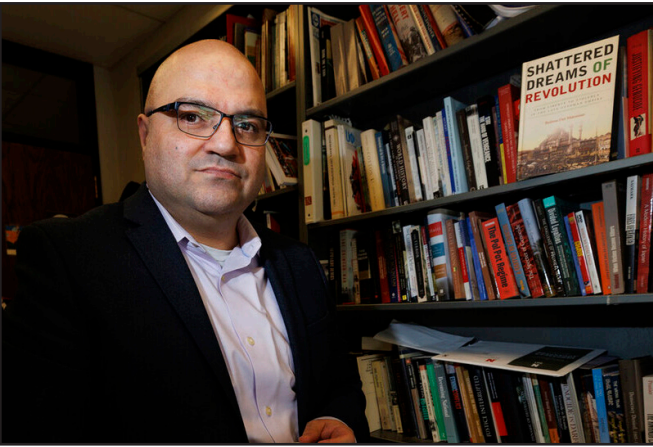
In early 2024, a new educational opportunity arose when Christian Wurst, associate curator of exhibitions at the Sheldon Museum of Art, invited Hinzo to visit and asked if she would like to organize an exhibition from the museum’s Native American collection. What followed was a yearlong collaboration.

Native American Studies is an interdisciplinary field, and as a lifelong supporter of the arts, Hinzo recognized that creating this exhibition could help viewers better understand the survivance and enduring presence of Native American artists and how they engage with politics and express their lived experiences.

Hinzo’s exhibition conceptually complemented and was in artistic dialogue with another presentation from the Bates College Museum of Art, “Exploding Native Inevitable,” that the Sheldon Museum of Art displayed at the same time.

Wurst provided Hinzo with the collection lists of Native American artwork and arranged for her to view and choose pieces in Sheldon’s observation lab. After Wurst shared the background behind a set of photographs from the Mid-American Arts Alliance taken at the Rosebud Indian

UNITED NATIONS GENOCIDE PREVENTION DAY WEBTALK



In observance of the United Nations Genocide Prevention Day, Dr. Bedross Der Matossian examined the historical, social, and economic factors that contributed to the 1909 Armenian genocide in Adana for an Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) WebTalk...

Sources: College of Arts and Sciences, “Der Matossian shares expertise about Armenian genocide for AGBU WebTalks,” <https://history.unl.edu/news/der-matossian-shares-expertise-about-armenian-genocide-agbu-webtalks/>, 13 December 2024; “Bedross Der Matossian — The Case of Adana: How Conspiracy Theories Destroy Communities,” <https://youtu.be/vpiu6rCWZkg>

SHARING EXPERTISE ON “MOONSHINERS”

[Abraham Gibson](#), associate professor in the Department of History, was interviewed as an expert on a recent episode

of the Discovery Channel series *Moonshiners*, called “[Crime and Shine: The Raid That Changed Moonshine](#).” The series

Reservation in South Dakota, Hinzo felt the theme begin to emerge for the exhibition.

“These photographs were taken 75 years apart, and one of the ideas that stood out to me was the strength and fortitude of the people in the photos. Despite settler violence and land dispossession, the Sicangu Lakota Oyate, like many Native American communities, have survived and are not going anywhere. These ideas helped me to arrive at the theme of ‘Visualizing Survivance, Visualizing Permanence,’” Hinzo said.

Looking through the collection, Hinzo discovered a significant collection of artwork from contemporary artists in the last 60 years. She decided to focus on their work. “I wanted to showcase how these artists integrated Indigenous identity, culture, and experience into their art and the different forms that art can take,” Hinzo said. “I like how this exhibit includes printmaking, photos, paintings, silverwork, and ceramics to show the different modes artists use for expression.”

One print that Hinzo was especially excited to see was by Hulleah Tsinnahjinnie, a former professor and mentor. “I knew that I wanted to display her art within this exhibit since she was foundational to my experience as a student,” Hinzo said. “My decision to use the term ‘Visualizing’ in the exhibition’s title is due to Hulleah Tsinnahjinnie’s work and her discussion of visual sovereignty in Native American art.”

Once she selected the pieces and submitted her exhibition proposal, Hinzo enjoyed collaborating with Wurst and the installation team on how to display the art pieces, write the stories on the text labels, and arrange the physical layout of the presentation. Understanding how viewers would enter the gallery and engage with the artwork was essential to communicating the theme’s narrative.

“Dr. Hinzo was an enthusiastic collaborator. She came in with interesting ideas and was receptive to suggestions regarding the presentation. We relied on her knowledge of the subject matter, and she relied on our knowledge of organizing exhibitions... Dr. Hinzo bridges the history

of the settler state with contemporary issues confronting Native communities. Her approach brings together archival research, feminist theory, activism, and visual culture,” Wurst said, noting the significance of Hinzo’s interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching practice...



Prof. Angel Hinzo stands in front of the painting “Grasp Tight the Old Ways” (2011) by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith in the exhibition “Visualizing Survivance, Visualizing Permanence” that she organized.
(Courtesy photo)

The exhibition honors the visual sovereignty of native American artists and tells a powerful story about the continued strength and everlasting presence of Native American communities.

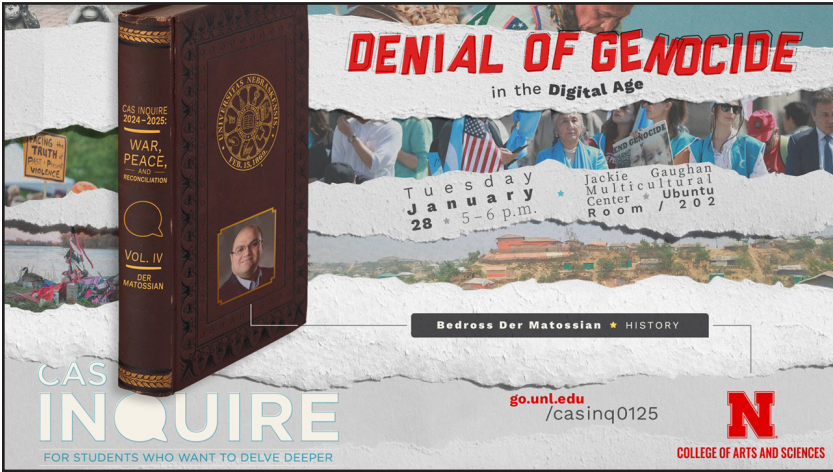
She hopes that people will visit the exhibition and that the artwork will evoke an acknowledgment and remembrance of the history of this place and how we got to where we are today. “I also hope that this exhibition sparks joy and inspires Indigenous viewers to remember their strength during difficult times,” Hinzo said...

Sources: Sheldon Museum of Art, “Hinzo, Novy deliver dynamic Sheldon art exhibitions,” <https://news.unl.edu/article/hinzo-novy-deliver-dynamic-sheldon-art-exhibitions>, 29 January 2025; Mindy Liebelt, “Hinzo honors the everlasting presence of Native American communities,” <https://cas.unl.edu/news/hinzo-honors-everlasting-presence-native-american-communities/>, 18 February 2025

JANUARY CAS INQUIRE LECTURE

Bedross Der Matossian, professor in the Department of History, gave the talk “Denial of Genocide in the

Digital Age” on 28 January 2025 in the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center, Ubuntu Room/202...



This talk was the fourth in the 2024-2025 academic year’s CAS Inquire series, “War, Peace, and Reconciliation.”

Der Matossian explored how denial of genocides in the modern period have been accelerated with the introduction of digital medium in the late 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. He explained how digital platforms are used by denialist governments, organizations, and activists, as well as pseudo-historians to distort and obfuscate the historical veracity of the major genocides of the 20th century...

Questions that the talk addressed include the following: What distinguishes the digital age from the previous period of denial? How are social networks used in order to promote denial of genocides? How can digital platforms become a double edge sword for those who want to promote historical veracity of the major genocides of the modern period and those who want to falsify them? Do



we see a change in the discourse of denial in the digital age? How does these type of denialist ventures hinder post-conflict reconciliation? Finally, how can we as academicians and members of the public can combat this type of denialism that promote bigotry, racism, and hatred and cause severe psychological pain to the victims as well as their descendants...

Sources: College of Arts and Sciences, “Next CAS Inquire talk with Der Matossian is Jan. 28,” <https://cas.unl.edu/news/next-cas-inquire-talk-der-matossian-jan-28/>, 13 January 2025; Mike O’Connor | Arts and Sciences, “Der Matossian featured in Jan. 28 CAS Inquire lecture,” <https://news.unl.edu/article/der-matossian-featured-in-jan-28-cas-inquire-lecture>, 24 January 2025; <https://cas.unl.edu/cas-inquire-2024-2025-war-peace-and-reconciliation/>; <https://mediahub.unl.edu/media/24091>

AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION BOOK AWARD



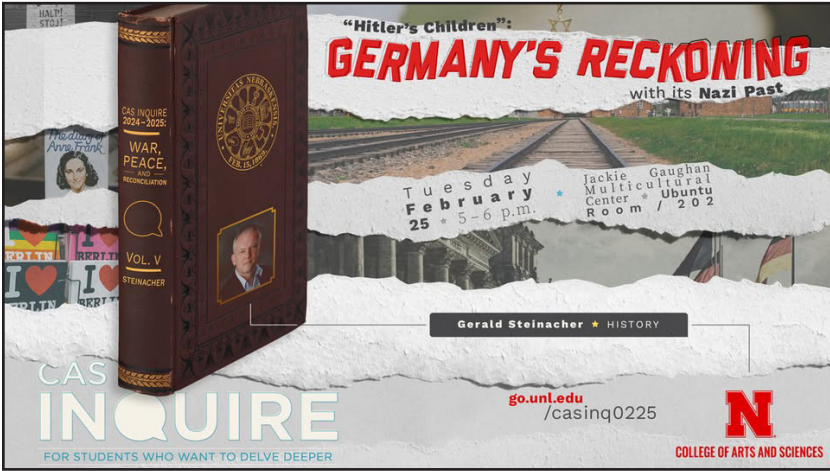
Laura K. Muñoz, associate professor of history and ethnic studies, won the 2025 American Educational Research Association’s (AERA) Division F (History and Historiography) New Scholar’s Book Award for *Desert Dreams: Mexican Arizona and the Politics of Educational Equality*. Muñoz was recognized at the AERA annual meeting in Denver in April 2025.

The biennial award recognizes quality research in the history of education, featuring books that “expand, complicate, shift, or disrupt our understanding of existing and burgeoning topics and areas within the history of education.”

Published by University of Pennsylvania Press, the book chronicles seventy-five years of Mexican American efforts to attain educational equality in Arizona, from its territorial period in the nineteenth century to the post-World War II era.

Sources: College of Arts and Sciences, “Muñoz earns New Scholar’s Book Award,” <https://history.unl.edu/news/munoz-earns-new-scholars-book-award/>, 21 February 2025; University Communication and Marketing, “Achievements | Honors, appointments and publications for March 28,” <https://news.unl.edu/article/achievements-honors-appointments-and-publications-for-march-28>, 28 March 2025

FEBRUARY CAS INQUIRE LECTURE



Gerald Steinacher, James A. Rawley Professor of History, gave the talk “Hitler’s Children: Germany’s Reckoning with its Nazi Past” on 25 February 2025 in the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center, Ubuntu Room 202.

According to Steinacher, Germany is often identified with the Nazis, World War II, and the Holocaust (Shoah), but also with a world-leading economy, a stable and prosperous democracy, and a strong civil society. Germany after 1945 is a success story. But how are Germans able to reconcile their dark past with a brighter present and future?...

Nazi Germany, together with its Axis partners, was responsible for the deadliest military conflict in human history. Sixty million lives were lost, with the majority being civilians. Among the victims were six million Jews systematically murdered in what stands out as the only industrialized genocide in history.

After the German surrender in 1945, the world grappled with the question of how to deal with the individuals responsible for dictatorship, war, and genocide, as well as the millions of Nazi followers, and ultimately German society. The Allies judged some of the Nazi perpetrators

in 13 Nuremberg and many other war crimes trials. In addition, a widespread denazification program was aimed at punishing and reeducating millions of ordinary Germans.

With the increasing Cold War confrontation between Soviets and the US, these efforts quickly came to a halt in the early 1950s. A younger German generation in the 1960s re-ignited a process called “Vergangenheitsbewältigung,” which literally translates to “coping with the past.” Under the motto “never again!,” Germans of all ages accepted their collective responsibility as a society to confront the Nazi past and learn lessons from it.

While condemning the crimes of the WWII generation, there is also a widespread consensus to defend Germany’s non-nationalistic, non-militaristic, liberal democracy. On 27 January 2024, the International Holocaust Memorial Day, over one million Germans rallied against the resurgent far-right and Neo-Nazi movements.

What can other societies learn, if anything, from the German model of coming to terms with a dark past?...

This talk was the fifth in the academic year’s CAS Inquire series, “War, Peace and Reconciliation.”

Sources: Mike O’Connor | Arts and Sciences, “Steinacher to give CAS Inquire talk Feb. 25,” <https://news.unl.edu/article/steinacher-to-give-cas-inquire-talk-feb-25>, 19 February 2025; <https://cas.unl.edu/cas-inquire-2024-2025-war-peace-and-reconciliation/>; <https://mediahub.unl.edu/media/24245>

2025 SOMMERHAUSER WORKSHOP ON HOLOCAUST EDUCATION



The 2025 meeting marked the fifth biennial Sommerhauser Workshop on Holocaust Education at UNL. The workshop was sponsored by the Lou Sommerhauser Fund for Holocaust Education, with additional support from the Forsythe Family Program on Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, the Harris Center for Judaic Studies, and the Department of History.

The 2025 schedule was as follows:
Transitional Justice Revisited: From the Nuremberg Trials to the Present

- Panel 1 — Historical Dimension**
John Q. Barrett, *St. John’s University*
Peter Black, *US Holocaust Memorial Museum*
Michael J Kelly, *Creighton University*
- Panel 2 — Contemporary Dimension**
Roland Kostic, *Uppsala University*
Julia Reilly, *University of Nebraska-Lincoln*
Dawne Curry, *University of Nebraska-Lincoln*
- Panel 3 — Teaching/Education Dimension**
Doyle Stevick, *University of South Carolina*
Mark Gudgel, *College of Saint Mary*
Goran Miljan, *Uppsala University*
- Panel 4 — Roundtable Discussion**

Every other year the Harris Center organizes the Sommerhauser Symposium on Holocaust Education — a one-day conference that brings together Holocaust researchers, local educators, and the campus and broader community. The conference aims to make academic research findings more accessible and to foster dialogue and exchange between Holocaust researchers, educators at all levels, and the wider public. It focuses on contemporary issues related to the historical study of the Holocaust, such as antisemitism, racism, political extremism, and ethno-nationalism. The results are published in the series Contemporary Holocaust Studies with the University of Nebraska Press. The



Prof. Dawne Curry makes her presentation at the 2025 Sommerhauser Symposium. (Courtesy photo)

series is edited by Ari Kohen and Gerald J. Steinacher.

The Sommerhauser Symposium is supported by the Lou Sommerhauser Fund for Holocaust Education, named in memory of Lou Sommerhauser and in honor of his parents, who both perished in a Nazi concentration camp. The fund was established in the belief that only through a knowledgeable, informed public can intolerance be prevented.

Sources: College of Arts and Sciences, “Sommerhauser Symposium on Holocaust Education,” <https://judaic.unl.edu/research/sommerhauser-symposium-holocaust-education/>; <https://events.unl.edu/2025/03/03/186415/>; University Communications, “2025 Sommerhauser Symposium and Wald Lecture in Judaic Studies,” <https://newsroom.unl.edu/announce/sgis/18472/100241>, 2024 February 2025 & <https://newsroom.unl.edu/announce/sgis/18549/100241>, 3 March 2025

HOFSTRA ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT AWARD



Hofstra College of Liberal Arts and Sciences honored 13 accomplished alumni at the second annual HCLAS Alumni Spotlight Awards on 4 March 2025 at the Hofstra University Club...

Through their individual achievements, Eva Badowska, dean of Hofstra College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, emphasized the impact that these successful and diverse alumni have on their alma mater. “Looking at tonight’s honorees, I am deeply impressed by the breadth of your accomplishments. Your careers reflect not just the strength of your individual disciplines, but also the interconnectedness of knowledge and skills — which is truly a part of the liberal arts...”

The HCLAS Spotlight Awards recognizes alumni who have achieved distinction through leadership and excellence in their field. The purpose of these awards is to honor alumni who have demonstrated exemplary service to their profession or to their community...

The 2025 honorees include **Jeannette E. Jones ’93 (history) (pictured third from right)** — Dr. Jeannette Eileen Jones graduated from Hofstra University in 1993 with a bachelor’s

degree in history and minors in political science and philosophy. Her mentor at Hofstra, Professor Carolyn Eisenberg, encouraged her to pursue her doctoral degree in history. Jones earned her MA (’97) and PhD (’03) in history from the University at Buffalo. She joined the faculty at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2004, where she is now the endowed Carl A. Happold Associate Professor of History and Ethnic Studies.

Professor Jones has taught at the University of Buffalo, SUNY Fredonia, Buffalo State College, Heidelberg University, and Regensburg Universität. She is a United States historian, with expertise in American cultural and intellectual history, African American history and studies, and pre-colonial Africa. Her research focus includes Gilded Age and Progressive Era America, US and the World, trans imperial history, and the transnational history of race and racialization. She is the author of *In Search of Brightest Africa: Reimagining the Dark Continent in American Culture, 1884-1936*. Her current book project, *America in Africa: U.S. Empire, Race, and the African Question, 1807-1919*, is under advanced contract with Yale University Press.

Jones is a New Yorker, born in Queens and raised in Flushing, Queens, and Freeport, Long Island.

Sources: Stephanie Flynn, “2025 HCLAS Alumni Spotlight Awards: A Celebration of Liberal Arts Education,” <https://news.hofstra.edu/2025/03/09/2025-hclas-alumni-spotlight-awards-a-celebration-of-liberal-arts-education/>, 9 March 2025; <https://www.hofstra.edu/alumni/alumni-spotlight-awards.html>; Jeannette Eileen Jones

NEW BOOK TO EXPLORE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF GRAN CANAL ON MEXICO’S CAPITAL

At least since the Neolithic Revolution, alteration of the environment has been a centerpiece of human activity.

As people built farms, cities, and ever-more-complex civilizations, they drained swamps, felled forests, plowed prairies, dug canals, excavated mines, and changed their surroundings in myriad ways in a quest for health, comfort, security, prosperity, and prestige.

It’s a topic that fascinates University of Nebraska-Lincoln historian James Garza, whose recent research has become increasingly focused on environmental history.

After a decade of study, including a year living in Mexico City, annual trips to the national archives there, and a research trip to London, Garza is reaching the finishing stages of a book about how the Mexican government under President Porfirio Diaz, partnered with a major British engineering firm to build a 30-mile drainage canal outside Mexico City at the end of the 19th century.

The Gran Canal del Desagüe was an engineering triumph that provided flood control, improved sanitation, and propelled Mexico City to become one of the world’s largest and most beautiful metropolitan areas.



Map of Mexico’s Gran Canal del Desagüe, which, when completed in 1900, connected a chain of six lakes to the north, east, and south of Mexico City in the Valley of Mexico. Today, the space where Lake Texcoco once stood is largely occupied by Mexico City. Lake Xochimilco is the only lake still in existence today.

Gran Canal del Desagüe

But Garza, an associate professor of history and ethnic studies, observes that progress came at a cost that the planners and builders may have failed to recognize. Most of the marshy lakes that once bordered Mexico City were destroyed, along with them the birds, fish, plants, and insects that provided an economic and cultural foundation for the indigenous people whose lives and livelihoods centered around the lakes.

“I’m trying to capture this episode in the transformation of the world from the way it was at the dawn of the 20th century,” Garza said in a recent interview. “At the end of the 19th century and at the early 20th century, there still were glimpses of a way of life that had existed for centuries. The lakes were a source of life for the rural people, a source of food and building materials, hunting and fishing. All of that is gone now, that way of life.”

As yet untitled, Garza’s book is under contract with the University of Nebraska Press and he expects it will be published in 2026. Additionally, his studies of the Gran Canal and its impact on the ancient lakes of the Valley of Mexico are spinning off into a related topic: the international feather trade that sprang up during the 19th century.

During the Gilded Age, it became popular, particularly among the wealthy, to wear hats adorned with the feathers of exotic birds, including herons, egrets, birds of paradise, and even flamingoes.

“One of the things that happened in Mexico City, is that migratory birds that wintered there, including Sandhills cranes, were hunted nearly to extinction for their feathers,” Garza said. “The feathers were worth their weight in gold. These birds represented wealth and beauty — beauty for commercial gain. In Mexico City, they would hunt them by the tens of thousands.”

Garza gave a well-received science slam presentation on his feather research during Nebraska Research Days in November 2024. He is eager to write a follow-up book that will tell the complete story of the feather trade, including its impact on bird species and the indigenous people who hunted the birds.

Garza said he has been fascinated with environmental and social history since he was growing up along the U.S.-Mexico border in Laredo, Texas.

“I was interested in the geology and the Rio Grande and how everyday life was affected by the temperature and the weather and the land there,” he said.



“There’s no good or evil in this story — it’s a historical process. Communities are resilient and they change. This is what happened in the past, this is what we did in the past, and now we have different goals into the future.”

— James Garza
(Associate professor, history and ethnic studies)

Garza has incorporated his research into his classes throughout two decades on UNL’s faculty. In his Latin American and Mexican history courses, for example, he talks about the Mexicans who resisted the Gran Canal as a way to keep the human narrative at the core of his lessons. A popular freshman-level class, “The History of Modern Crime,” takes a case-by-case approach to modern criminality, where he links crimes that occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries to the development of capitalism and state power.

Garza’s love for Mexico City inspired his return to environmental history topic. He finds it a magnificent place to be, full of culture and history. Yet it has a history of floods and earthquakes, while climate change is making it more vulnerable to catastrophic water shortages.

The city sits in the Valley of Mexico, a high-altitude basin surrounded by mountains. Garza said its location in essentially a stone bowl contributes to drainage and water supply issues that date back to the Aztecs before the 15th

century.

“The Aztecs were the original engineers,” he said.

The Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, was established on an island crisscrossed by canals. The Spanish built their colonial capital atop the Aztec city, remnants of which still surface during construction projects. By 1900, the lakes had subsided into six shallow bodies, with Lake Texcoco the biggest — and most polluted by the city’s sewage.

“Then the lakes slowly died out because of development and population growth,” Garza said. “Mexico City just grew and grew. The lakebeds were just too valuable. Lake

Texcoco was turned into subdivisions and a park. A new airport was built on a lakebed in the northern suburbs — and wooly mammoth bones were found during excavation.”

The only natural lake remaining today is Lake Xochimilco, basically a lagoon and wetland where tourists go for boat rides. Most of Lake Texcoco, which once measured more than 2,000 square miles, has been paved over by the city.

“The Spanish and post-independence governments always saw the water as an obstacle,” Garza said. “They wanted to transform into a modern city and the water was an obstacle. But for the indigenous communities there, the lakes were part of their way of life.”

Spurred by serious flooding in the mid-16th and early 17th centuries, as well as the lakes’ increasingly fetid water polluted by the city’s waste, the Spanish government developed flood control and drainage projects but lacked the technology to successfully complete ambitious plans that called for river diversion and the construction of canals and tunnels. It wasn’t until the late 19th century that the government under Porfirio Diaz was able to assemble both the financial resources and engineering expertise, with Mexican engineers partnering with a British firm, S. Pearson and Son, to use five massive steam-powered dredges to excavate the channel. The canal was officially inaugurated by Diaz on 17 March 1900.

Garza said his research offers lessons about resiliency and environmental impact for Nebraskans as well as people in Mexico and around the world.

“I don’t think it was a mistake to build the canal,” he said. “It introduced railroads, better roads, community improvements. But they did end up giving up a way of life.”

“The rich ecology of the Valley of Mexico is completely gone, for reasons that may have not been apparent to people as they developed it,” he said. “There’s no good or evil in this story — it’s a historical process. Communities are resilient and they change. This is what happened in the past, this is what we did in the past and now we have different goals into the future.”

Sources: Leslie Reed | University Communication and Marketing, “Garza uncovers untold stories behind Mexico City’s transformation: Research Leads to New Book Exploring Environmental Impact of Gran Canal

on Mexico’s Capital,” <https://news.unl.edu/article/garza-uncovers-untold-stories-behind-mexico-citys-transformation>, 12 March 2025 & <https://research.unl.edu/blog/garza-uncovers-untold-stories-behind-mexico-citys-transformation/>, 14 March 2025

Photo Credit: Erin Greb Cartography – This image is from James Garza’s book *Technocratic Visions: Engineers, Technology and Society in Mexico, 1876-1946* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2022).

Photo Credit: Aaron Nix | University Communication and Marketing

CAS INQUIRE PANEL DISCUSSION

A panel discussion, featuring the five speakers for this academic year’s CAS Inquire series, “War, Peace, and Reconciliation,” took place on 25 March 2025 in the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center, Ubuntu Room 202.

Faculty members Ross Miller (political science), Anne Duncan (classics and religious studies), Clay Cressler (biological sciences), Bedross Der Matossian (history), and Gerald Steinacher (history) comprised the panel.

Videos of each of the previous talks are available on the event webpage.

Students in the CAS Inquire program connect with college



thought leaders and other inquisitive students to discuss ideas, using a college-wide series of public lectures as a focal point. The series launched in September of 2019, and themes have included the rise of the machines, finding common ground, and pain and pleasure.

During the three-year program, CAS Inquire students take specialized courses, help with facilitating the program, and enjoy additional benefits. They can apply, or be nominated by faculty, for the program as freshmen.

Sources: College of Arts and Sciences, “CAS Inquire panel discussion is Mar. 25,” <https://cas.unl.edu/news/cas-inquire-panel-discussion-mar-25/>, 7 March 2025; Mike O’Connor | Arts and Sciences, “CAS Inquire panel discussion is March 25,” <https://news.unl.edu/article/cas-inquire-panel-discussion-is-march-25>, 19 March 2025

IES SPRING CELEBRATION CONVERSATION

The Institute for Ethnic Studies' 2025 Spring Celebration was held on 27 March 2025 in the Wick Alumni Center...

“Celebrating 100 Years of Malcolm X, Omaha, & Global Black Freedom: A Conversation with Dr. Erik S. McDuffie” featured the Associate Professor of History from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Drawing from his new book *The Second Battle for Africa: Garveyism, the US Heartland, and Global Black Freedom* (Duke University Press, 2024), McDuffie and associate professors Jeannette Eileen Jones and Patrick Jones discussed the significance of Omaha in shaping the life and legacy of the preeminent Black nationalist spokesperson Malcolm X on the eve of the centenary of his birth in Nebraska's largest city.

McDuffie discussed the diasporic journeys of Malcolm X's parents, Louise and Earl Little, and how their grassroots involvement in Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), together with their encounters in Omaha, laid the foundations for Malcolm's Black radical internationalism. Through tracing his early years, the discussion between McDuffie, Jones, and Jones highlighted the underappreciated importance of Omaha and, more broadly, the Midwest in advancing global Black freedom, then and now...

Source: College of Arts and Sciences, “Spring Celebration is March 27, features McDuffie,” <https://ethnicstudies.unl.edu/news/spring-celebration-march-27-features-mcduffie/>, 29 January 2025

medicine, race, and the colonial past.

“I remember the old rule that the best way to learn something is to teach it. So, I started developing a new course here at Cornell, which is the history of medicine,” Seth said.

Seth's research revealed how imperial concerns initially framed statistics and shaped a racialized understanding of populations. His book, *Mortality and Measurement: Race-Medicine, Statistics, and the Making of Empire*, explores the role of medical statistics and how colonial systems shaped these numbers to serve their interests.

“One of my ongoing interests is if we're looking for places

The Ratio of Mortality: Army Medical Statistics and the Values of Disease

2025 Linda and Charles Wilson Lecture in Humanities in Medicine

Wednesday, April 16th, 2025 – 5:00 pm

Lied Center for Performing Arts – Lied Commons
301 N. 12th St. Lincoln, NE 68588

Catered by Venue



Feat. Dr. Suman Seth
Cornell University
Marie Underhill Noll Professor of the History of Science
& Chair of the Department of Science and Technology Studies



HUMANITIES IN MEDICINE

GO.UNL.EDU/2025-WILSON



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where naturalistic ideas of race emerge, medicine is actually one of the main places where that happens,” Seth said.

Cindy Ermus, director of humanities in medicine at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, praised Seth's work for offering a new perspective on the way scientific knowledge is constructed.

“I invited Dr. Seth to speak because his work — including his latest research on the imperial origins of medical statistics and their continuing influence — resonates deeply with ongoing conversations about data, equity, and the politics of public health,” Ermus said.

Ermus said the lecture gave the Lincoln community a unique opportunity to reflect on how these metrics are part of a long and troubling history.

“His contributions to the history of medicine, science, race, and empire have profoundly shaped the field, offering new frameworks for thinking about how knowledge is produced, organized, and mobilized,” Ermus said.

In his lecture, Seth also touched upon the ongoing relevance of race in modern medicine. He discussed how race, which was once considered to be a non-factor in medical science, is making a return in contemporary medical research and practices.

“You get a remarkable number of medical students who think that black people experience less pain than white people, Black women getting less pain medication during

childbirth, all kinds of things,” Seth said.

Seth said he challenged his audience to think critically about how these racialized practices still persist today.

Seth said he hopes to inspire doctors, researchers, and the general public to engage with the hidden legacies of the past and recognize how these histories still influence current medical practices and policies.

“If you're interested in medicine today, or if you're interested in how race is playing out today, then I've got a history story that you should be interested in,” Seth said.

The 2025 Linda and Charles Wilson Lecture was an eye-opening opportunity for attendees to reconsider the foundations of modern medicine, Ermus said.

According to Seth, participants gained a deeper understanding of how colonialism, race, and medicine are interlinked and how this history continues to influence healthcare practices today...

Sources: Chloe Brady and Brady Cornelius, “Cornell's Suman Seth set to speak on ratio of mortality,” https://www.nebraskanewsservice.net/news/health/cornells-suman-set-to-speak-on-ratio-of-mortality/article_936c0a84-db6e-4908-9e98-39d43804df12.html, 7 April 2025; College of Arts and Sciences, “Seth to give 2025 Wilson Lecture on Apr. 16,” <https://history.unl.edu/news/seth-give-2025-wilson-lecture-apr-16/>, 11 April 2025

Dr. Erik S. McDuffie
Associate Professor of History
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Author of *The Second Battle for Africa: Garveyism, the US Heartland, and Global Black Freedom* (Duke, 2024)

Winner of the American Historical Association's Wesley-Logan Prize & the Letitia Woods Brown Award
Recipient of fellowships from the American Council for Learned Societies & the National Endowment for the Humanities

**Thursday, March 27, 2025
5:00 pm**

WICK ALUMNI CENTER
Free & open to the public
1520 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588

THE SECOND BATTLE for AFRICA

Ethnic Studies is grateful for co-sponsorship by OASIS & the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center
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2025 LINDA AND CHARLES WILSON HMED LECTURE

Suman Seth, Marie Underhill Noll Professor of the History of Science and Chair of the Department of Science and Technology Studies at Cornell University, delivered the 2025 Linda and Charles Wilson Lecture in Humanities in Medicine at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in Lincoln, 16 April 2025.

Seth's talk, “The Ratio of Mortality: Army Medical Statistics and the Values of Disease,” dove into the histories behind medical statistics, focusing on the link between mortality rates and British colonialism. Seth explained how imperial views influenced statistics on mortality and how they still affect healthcare today.

Seth is one of the foremost experts on the intersections of

NEH CUTS AFFECT RESEARCH ON INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS

About \$1.5 million in grants to digitize archival records and collect first-person accounts of Native Americans who attended U.S. government-run boarding schools have been cut as part of the Trump administration's efforts to drastically reshape cultural programs and transform the federal government.

The money to 10 groups was among 1,400 grants supporting history and culture projects across the country that the National Endowment for the Humanities recently terminated, according to an advocacy organization. The National Humanities Alliance has been tracking the administration's sweeping cuts through an [action alert page](#).

The lost funding is a major disappointment to many Native American advocates and researchers. Historians call the 150-year period when Native American children were



Thousands of boxes with documents related to Native Americans, including boarding school records, are held in the federal American Indian Records Repository in Lenexa, Kansas.

forced or coerced to attend Indian boarding schools — part of a policy to eradicate their own culture and assimilate them into White society — one of the darkest chapters in American history as well as one that was long ignored and largely hidden...

In Nebraska, Margaret Jacobs and her team were just two months shy of finishing a four-year project to digitize roughly 10,000 page of records they had found on students who attended Genoa Indian Industrial

School in that state. Then their \$450,000 NEH grant got pulled.

"These are important stories that NEH was helping to uncover," said Jacobs, a history professor at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, which is trying to find other money to help her team finish. "It's incredibly disappointing this administration is cutting funding for that."

The U.S. government funded or ran the majority of the 400-plus Indian boarding schools, which operated from 1819 until about 1969. Tens of thousands of Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children were sent to the schools in nearly 40 states. They were stripped of their traditional clothing, their hair was cut, and they were given Anglicized names.



In this undated photo provided by the National Archives, students at the Genoa Indian Industrial School in Nebraska line up outside.

Children who spoke their Native language were beaten.

"Non-Natives need to know this history," Jacobs said. "This has affected almost every Native American family in the U.S., and it has had long-term vibrations."

The schools drew a national spotlight four years ago after the discovery of 215 suspected graves, all unmarked, at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in Canada. Following that revelation, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland — the U.S.'s first Native American Cabinet official, whose own relatives were sent to boarding schools — launched a multiyear, \$21 million investigation to scrutinize the history of the schools once led or supported by her agency.

It was the government's first effort to count the schools

and account for what had gone on there. The investigation reviewed about 103 million pages of federal records...

Sources: Dana Hedgpeth, "NEH cuts \$1.5 million from grants to research Indian boarding schools," <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2025/04/16/national-endowment-humanities-indian-boarding-schools/>, 16 April 2025; Sean Hagewood | University Communication and Marketing, "Nebraska in the national news: April 2025," <https://news.unl.edu/article/nebraska-in-the-national-news-april-2025>, 2 May 2025

Photo Credit: Salwan Georges/The Washington Post

Photo Credit: AP

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CONVENING



Margaret Jacobs (from right)(Charles Mach Professor of History and director of the Center for Great Plains Studies), Marci Black (artist and member of the Otoe-Missouria tribe), and Mark Brohman (Wachiska Audubon Society member) discuss the Walking in the Footsteps of our Ancestors project during the Research and Innovation Convening in the Nebraska Union on 7 May 2025. Community outreach successes were featured during morning presentations at the event.

led by the Office of Research and Innovation.

"Today is an important day for the future of the university," Chancellor Rodney D. Bennett said. "I ask that you look past the many challenges we face in higher education and focus on opportunities — opportunities for greater discovery, opportunities for further impact, and opportunities to refine our research identity."

The daylong summit featured national experts, panel discussions on successful community partnerships, a recording booth allowing faculty to tell their individual research stories, and interactive sessions designed to get faculty thinking beyond traditional research boundaries...

Sources: Troy Fedderson | University Communication and Marketing, "Nebraska U charts course to elevate research distinction," <https://news.unl.edu/article/nebraska-u-charts-course-to-elevate-research-distinction>, 9 May 2025; <https://mediahub.unl.edu/media/24770>; <https://research.unl.edu/>

Photo Credit: Troy Fedderson | University Communication and Marketing

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is sharpening its vision for the future of research, scholarship, and creative activity, discussing research identity, and deepening its commitment to community collaboration.

That effort launched 7 May 2025, when more than 260 faculty, campus administrators, and community leaders gathered at the Nebraska Union for the [Research and Innovation Convening](#), a strategic planning summit

MEMORIAL DAY AND OUR DPAA PARTNERSHIP

By Tony Foreman

As the nation observes Memorial Day, it pauses to remember and honor the service members who made the ultimate sacrifice for the country. For the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), it is also a moment to recognize the responsibility and privilege of supporting the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency's (DPAA) sacred mission to account for Americans still missing from past conflicts and bring answers to the families of the fallen.



then use our historical research to determine whether to recommend disinterment, archaeological digs, or other actions that could provide the fullest possible accounting for our fallen warriors. I think I speak for many when saying that every hour spent on this work is incredibly meaningful.

Over the past three years, UNL has played a key role in conducting oral histories on U.S. conflicts and postwar recovery efforts. Using recording, editing and other digital tools within the department, my previous DPAA fellows and I have worked to preserve the experiences of veterans and the institutional memory of DPAA and its predecessor organizations. These efforts not only advance the university's academic

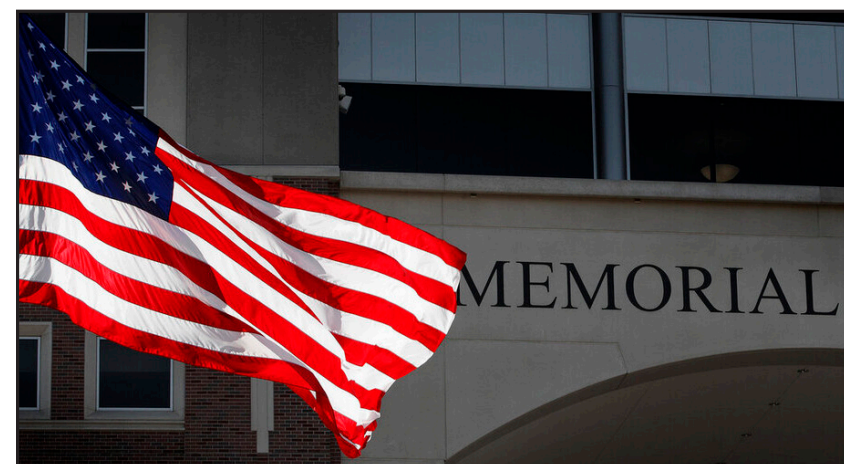
mission but also contribute to the profound national commitment to honoring those who never returned home.

The history department has also developed a unique relationship with the university's ROTC Program. Home of the National Society of Pershing Rifles, the program supports around 75 Army, Air Force, and Navy cadets. All cadets receive their required military history courses from the department's faculty, including Professor Alexander Vazansky, an expert in postwar German-American relations and GIs in Germany. This connection reinforces a shared commitment to honoring military service and deepens awareness of the historical legacy behind DPAA's mission to account for the nation's missing service members.

James Le Sueur, the Samuel Clark Waugh Distinguished Professor of International Relations and Chair of the department, serves as principal investigator for the DPAA program. Reflecting on the UNL-DPAA partnership, he said: "For several years, I've had the privilege of working with the DPAA program and overseeing our postdoctoral research fellow. It's a superb

network of scholars working worldwide on concrete historical questions to find and return those lost and missing in military conflicts. It's a noble and honorable endeavor for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Dr. Tony Forman is especially adept and passionate about finding America's missing soldiers."

As the nation reflects on Memorial Day, UNL proudly reaffirms its commitment to this important work. Through continued collaboration and historical inquiry, the



I have been UNL's Research Partner Fellow since 2024. My father was the crew chief of a B-52 bomber and he was lucky to come home. It is an honor to use the tools of our discipline to help provide answers to families of the fallen. I am currently researching air losses in the Pacific Theater during World War II and determining the last known locations for hundreds of missing service members.

This research informs detailed case summaries, searchable databases, and geospatial products. DPAA professionals

university remains dedicated to ensuring that no hero is forgotten and every family receives the answers they deserve.

Sources: Tony Foreman, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency Research Partner Fellow, "Honoring the fallen: our partnership with DPAA in the search for America's missing heroes," <https://history.unl.edu/news/honoring-fallen-our-partnership-dpaa-search-americas-missing-heroes/>, 22 May 2025; <https://www.dpaa.mil/>

2025–2026 TEACHING ACADEMY FELLOW

Jilian Duan, Kevin Gonzales, and Vanessa Gorman have been selected as the Teaching Academy Fellows for the 2025-2026 academic year.

The initiative 1) engages our faculty in local, national, and international conversations about essential issues in higher education; 2) develops teaching expertise across the disciplines and at all levels of learning; and 3) recognizes and rewards exceptional teachers. Fellows serve three-year terms, and new fellows are selected annually... Gorman is Aaron Douglas Professor for Teaching Excellence in the Departments of History and Classics and Religious Studies. Her primary fields of expertise are Greek history and historiography, Greek pedagogy, philology and dependency syntax, and digital humanities. In the program she will have the title of Paul Olson Fellow.

The program is coordinated by Julia Reilly and June Griffin.



Source: College of Arts and Sciences, "Teaching Academy Fellows selected for 2025-26," <https://cas.unl.edu/news/teaching-academy-fellows-selected-2025-26/>, 5 June 2025

FACULTY, LECTURER, & POST-DOC NOTES

Dr. Donna D. Anderson's first year in the department was an exciting introduction to the world of academia. She taught her first class, HIST 245: Modern America Since 1900, in the spring semester and enjoyed guest lecturing in some of her colleagues' courses. In addition to contributing to the Mellon U.S. Law & Race Initiative, she became an affiliate faculty of the Institute of Ethnic Studies and a fellow with the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities. She looks forward to these partnerships and continuing to build community across campus.

In the fall, she focused on expanding the research for her first monograph, revising the dissertation, and collecting data for the U.S. Law & Race Initiative's Open Educational Resource (OER). In February, Dr. Anderson also received the Overseas Korean Studies and Heritage Foundation (OKSHF) grant to conduct research over the summer at the University of Southern California's Korean Heritage Library.

Throughout the year, she presented her research at four major conferences: the Western Historical Association;

the Organization for American Historians; the Association for Asian American Studies; and the Midwestern History Association. Further, she was invited to sit on the Organization of American Historian's Committee on the Status of African American, Latino/a, Asian American, and Native American (ALANA) Historians and ALANA Histories, which she will begin a four-year term in fall 2025.

Dr. Anderson additionally shared her research with public audiences through several speaking opportunities. In the spring, she spoke with Lincoln Public School social



studies teachers' part of Nebraska Wesleyan's PROMISES Project about teaching Asian American history to middle and high school students. Dr. Anderson also was invited to speak on midwestern Asian American communities for Metropolitan Community College's (Omaha) Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month celebrations. She also recorded a

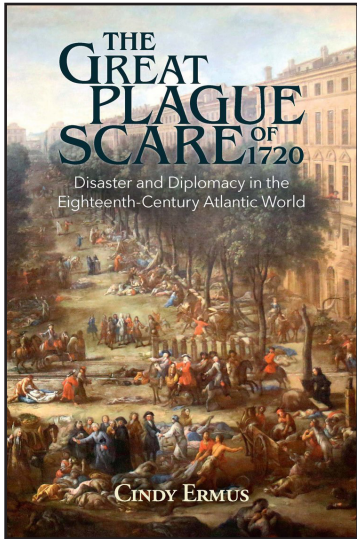
short introduction on immigration to the U.S. during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era for the Iowa Department of Education's forthcoming online high school history course.

In November 2024, Dr. Anderson and her colleague Isidro González interviewed UNL History professor Cindy Ermus for the New Books Network podcast to highlight Prof. Ermus's book, *The Great Plague Scare of 1720: Disaster and Diplomacy in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World*. Dr. Anderson continues to host the New Books Network podcast and has five episodes forthcoming this year.

Prof. Waskar Ari gave a talk at the International Book Fair in La Paz, Bolivia, to commemorate the bicentennial of Bolivia's founding. This talk focused on indigenous peoples from a comparative perspective over the last 200 years in the Americas. It was 2 August 2025, in the International Fair Camp, La Paz, Bolivia. Additionally, he served as a discussant at "The Lettered Indian," a seminar on indigeneity in the era of development, held at the University of Denver, Colorado, and UNAM on 4 November 2024. Ari also published a work titled "Construyendo la ley de indios: Un proceso de descolonización en Bolivia," which appears in the collection **Desde las Margenes: Pensador@s de la Diaspora,** edited by Silvia Rivera and Virginia Ayllon. This publication was released in La Paz by CLACSO/ILDIS in 2024, spanning pages 215-244.

Prof. Dawne Curry was the 2025 recipient of the Department of History Teaching Excellence Reward. Additionally, her essay "South African Women and Exile" was accepted for the *Oxford Encyclopedia of African History*. Prof. Curry was recipient of the Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Teaching Fellowship.

Prof. Cindy Ermus's book, *The Great Plague Scare of 1720: Disaster and Diplomacy in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), was awarded the Urban History Association's Lynn Hollen Lees Book Prize for best book in European urban history. She is currently working on a co-authored book (with Claire Edington) titled, *Epidemics: A Global History* (under contract with University of California Press), and on a co-authored edited volume (with Bryan Banks) titled, *Age of Revolutions: A Global History, 1650 to the Present* (under contract with University of Virginia Press, 2026).



In the autumn, Prof. Ermus was invited to present her research at the Imperial Disease Symposium at Georgetown University. Her talk was titled "The Great Plague Scare of 1720 in the Franco-Spanish Atlantic World." She also participated in roundtables and hosted workshops at the 2025 meetings of the American Historical Association and the Consortium on the Revolutionary Era.

Prof. Ermus is director of the Humanities in Medicine program at UNL, and she continues to serve as executive editor of the open access journal *Age of Revolutions* and as co-editor of the France Overseas series of the University of Nebraska Press.

Dr. Tony Foreman is the U.S. Department of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) Research Partner Fellow within the UNL History Department. Over the past year, he has researched and authored dozens of case histories on lost service members involved in World War II Pacific Theater operations. This research utilizes several tools of digital humanities available through the Department, including the development of searchable databases and geospatial projects to better understand historic battle and recovery landscapes in the context of modern geography. In the three years since Prof. Le Sueur established and has directed the DPAA Fellow position, it has played a key role in creating oral histories on U.S. conflicts and postwar recovery efforts. Using recording, editing, and other digital

tools within the Department, Dr. Foreman has continued the work of conducting interviews and preserving the experiences of veterans and the institutional memory of DPAA and its predecessor organizations. He also teaches one of the American Military History classes (HIST 303), in which he uses gameplay and other active learning methodologies to grow enrollment from 26 students in Fall 2023 to 54 students in Spring 2025.

As an independent scholar, Dr. Foreman has pursued several activities this past year. He became a Fellow of the Faculty Seminar at the World War II Museum in New Orleans, where over thirty international military historians discussed the latest historiography and were introduced to newer sources and resources and pedagogical methodologies. In October 2024, he presented a paper at the UNL Rawley Graduate Conference, entitled "Spector of the Wehrmacht: Forging the Bundeswehr through Politics and Popular Media in 1950s and 1960s West Germany." He also delivered a series of lectures for the Osher Lifetime Learning Institute (OLLI), entitled "A History of Fascism in the United States."

Prof. James Garza's forthcoming manuscript explores the environmental, social, and cultural transformation of the Valley of Mexico in the late nineteenth century. His work centers on a major infrastructure project undertaken in the 1890s — The Porfirian Desagüe, a collaboration between the Mexican government and the British engineering firm Pearson and Son — designed to improve hygiene and prevent flooding in Mexico City. While the project's overall goal aimed to modernize the region, it had profound and lasting consequences: it physically reshaped part of valley's landscape and disrupted the daily lives and traditions of the basin's inhabitants, some of whom resisted violently while others negotiated and adapted to the advances of capitalism and technology, as well as ecological change.

Garza recently presented a version of the first chapter at the April 2025 meeting of the Southeast Council of Latin American Studies meeting in Mexico City. Garza's presentation was made possible in part by his participation in the Forsythe Family on Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Program in Spring 2025, during which Garza became a fellow.



Canku Heska sets up a tipi in green space near Brace Laboratory for a land blessing for a future Indigenous garden, organized with Prof. Angel Hinzo, on 4 May 2025 in Lincoln. (Photo Credit: Justin Diep)

Prof. Vanessa Gorman has continued to work in collaboration with Robert Gorman on a stylometric study of authorship attribution. After a number of years of developing the method and the database of authors, they are now applying their methodology to problems that have bothered scholars for centuries. The first example, *A Morpho-Syntactic Authorship Attribution Study of the Speeches of Demosthenes and Apollodorus*, has appeared in the preeminent *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 144 (2024): 65-92. The Gormans are now studying dubious passages in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and preparing an article in which they confirm a different author for a long-doubted passage, but also cast doubt on the authenticity of a second passage early in the work. This study is part of a larger examination of the normal range of stylometric variation within one author's prose. Prof. Vanessa Gorman has also gamified her Roman Revolution class so that, after ten weeks of a more-normal classroom experience, the students were assigned historical characters whom the researched thoroughly. Then they were put into the position of Romans in the moments and days after the assassination of Caesar of the Ides of March. For the remaining five weeks, they debated and discussed, attempted to woo supporters among the other elites, the legions, and the people, and eventually sorted out the matter in a kind of Risk-style fighting on the final day. Thus, they practiced oratory, argumentative writing, negotiation, and a deep-dive into the Roman sources remaining to us. Prof. Gorman has never seen a class of students so engaged, so enthusiastic, and so obsessed with learning and understanding the workings of the late Republic and the reasons for its fall into a dictatorship.

Prof. Angel M. Hinzo had an exciting second year as a faculty member at UNL. Prof. Hinzo wrapped up a few writing projects, including the first draft of her book project currently titled *Remembering Ho-Chunk History, Survivance, and Resistance*. She participated in a manuscript workshop with University of Nebraska Press acquisition editor Matt Bokovoy and with Deborah Taffa from the Institute of American Indian Arts. This workshop was attended by History and Ethnic Studies graduate students and faculty, offering an opportunity to hear discussion on

her manuscript draft. Hinzo expressed that this was a wonderful opportunity and looks forward to the next

stages of her book project, which includes incorporating commentary from the reviewers.

During the year, Hinzo also curated the exhibit “Visualizing Survivance, Visualizing Permanence” at the Sheldon Museum of Art. This exhibition was displayed throughout the Spring and complemented the traveling exhibition, “Exploding Native Inevitable.” Prof. Hinzo is continuing to share her knowledge of Native American history through art by partnering with the Center for Great Plains Studies (CGPS) this coming year. She will be writing a reflective essay on an art piece in celebration of CGPS’s 50th anniversary.

To end the year, Prof. Hinzo organized a land blessing for the proposed space that will soon be home to UNL’s Indigenous Garden. This is a long project in the making that you can read more about in this [Daily Nebraskan article](#). Community members, students, and faculty participated in the land blessing to connect with the space and prepare the area for the work ahead. The Indigenous Garden is an exciting project that will offer space for community to gather and learn.

Prof. Margaret Jacobs is continuing to serve as the Director of the Center for Great Plains Studies at UNL. The Center’s current signature project is the [Walking in the Footsteps of our Ancestors Project](#), a Mellon Foundation-funded effort to develop new commemorations in southeast Nebraska that reconnect the Otoe-Missouria Tribe to their homeland and educate non-Natives in the region about the Tribe’s history and culture. Project co-directors Christina Faw Faw Goodson (Otoe-Missouria) and Jacobs recently completed an [audit of southeast Nebraska monuments](#) to see whether and how the Otoe-Missouria are commemorated in the region. Goodson and Jacobs also conducted [surveys](#) of tribal members and southeast Nebraska residents to measure knowledge of the tribe’s history in the region as well as interest in healing and reconciliation. Project volunteers are growing a [garden](#) in 2025 and 2026 of traditional food crops and ceremonial plants at Prairie Pines in Lincoln. The Footsteps Team will be celebrating the [fourth annual Otoe-Missouria Day](#) on the weekend of 19-21 September 2025 at Mahoney State Park and hosting an [all Otoe-Missouria art exhibition](#) at the Great Plains Art Museum in fall 2025. You can learn more about the project through the “[Talking in the Footsteps of our Ancestors](#)” podcast. This project builds on Jacobs’s latest research focus on truth and reconciliation, including her 2021 book, *After One Hundred Winters: In Search of Reconciliation on America’s Stolen Lands*. Jacobs continues to work on an hourlong documentary, *The Land Returns*, regarding grassroots Land Back efforts to return land to Native peoples.

Prof. Gerald Steinacher has just completed his major

new monograph, *The Pope Against Nuremberg: Nazi War Criminals, the Vatican, and Postwar Justice*, forthcoming from New York University Press in 2026. In spring 2025, he also signed two additional book contracts: one for the edited volume *Fascist Legacies: Far Right Ideologies Then and Now*, and another for a German-language edited volume titled *Humanität zwischen Kaiser und Hitler: Anspruch und Wirklichkeit des Deutschen Roten Kreuzes 1918-1945*. These projects bring his total to eighteen books published over the course of his career.

Together with Prof. Ari Kohen, Prof. Steinacher organized the fifth biennial Sommerhauser Symposium on Holocaust Education, titled *Transitional Justice Revisited: From the Nuremberg Trials to the Present*, held at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in March 2025. The event was sponsored by the Lou Sommerhauser Fund, the Forsythe Family Program, the Harris Center for Judaic Studies, and the Department of History.

Prof. Steinacher presented at several major conferences in 2024-2025, including the American Society of Church History Annual Conference in Chicago, the *Lessons and Legacies* Holocaust Studies conference at Claremont



McKenna, and a conference on Italy and postwar justice at the University of the Republic of San Marino. In June 2025, he was invited to deliver the keynote address at the International NORFAS Conference on Postwar Fascism at Uppsala University in Sweden. The conference was titled *Flight, Adaptation, and Resilience: Fascists, Collaborators, and War Criminals in the Post-War Nordic Periphery*. In the

summer of 2024, he also served as a visiting professor at the Central European University in Vienna, where he taught a seminar on the history of European Fascism.

Prof. Steinacher remains deeply committed to advancing Holocaust studies and supporting the academic community through various service commitments. He continues to be a member of the Academic Council of the Holocaust Educational Foundation, which organizes the field’s leading conference. Prof. Steinacher was also elected to the board of the Austrian Studies Association, dedicated to the study of Austrian, Austro-Hungarian, and Habsburg history and culture. He was recently invited to serve on the executive board of the American Friends of the DOEW — the Documentation Center of Austrian Resistance, a preeminent Austrian institution studying National Socialism — and as an Associate Editor of *Contemporary Church History Quarterly*.

Prof. Carolyn Twomey this past summer examined several archaeological sites in the UK for her current book project, *Living Water, Living Stone: A Material History of Baptism in Early Medieval England*. These riverine sites and churches included eleventh- and twelfth-century churches marking crossings on the River Trent and the early medieval *porticus* side chapels at Britford (Wilts) and Breamore (Hamps), the latter pictured in the photo. Earlier this year Prof. Twomey became the new editor of the journal *Church Archaeology* and is looking forward to her first issue out with Liverpool University Press this fall. She also presented her research on the intersections of medieval and modern history at the joint meeting in Kansas City of several Midwestern medieval associations and at the centennial meeting of the Medieval Academy of America. Her papers explored how the ninth-century Christian baptism of the viking King Guthrum became a model for political baptisms in modern Britain and examined how medieval art was studied and collected in different ways by the founders of the Medieval Academy in Boston 100 years ago.



U.S. LAW AND RACE INITIATIVE

By Kaci Nash

The Mellon-funded U.S. Law and Race Initiative is in its third year. With the addition of Donna D. Anderson to our team as Mellon Research Assistant Professor in U.S. Law and Race, William G. Thomas III, Katrina Jagodinsky, and Jeannette Eileen Jones continued to make progress in advancing curriculum related to law and race through courses at the 100, 200, and 300 levels, including our introductory course, HIST 115: And Justice For All: Race, Gender, & the Law in U.S. History, taught during the Fall.



The Digital Legal Research Lab continues to host robust and engaging summer programming in conjunction with the U.S. Law & Race Initiative. For the sixth summer in a row, we hosted a 10-week lab experience with student researchers who worked on Dr. Katrina Jagodinsky’s Petitioning for Freedom project; Dr. Jeannette Eileen Jones was this year’s faculty lead for the 3-week Mellon Graduate Fellows program. These projects provide training and funding for students interested in merging critical analysis and digital legal research skills in a collaborative lab setting. In addition to working on their own projects through the summer, Digital Legal Research Lab scholars also contribute to the UNL Libraries Juneteenth program by sharing legal histories of black freedom making. (Credit: Katrina Jagodinsky)

Alongside the curriculum, we launched a webinar series, hosted by our HIST 341: American Constitutional History and HIST 115 classes. Guest speakers included Ned Blackhawk (Yale University) on U.S. Constitutionalism and Native American Sovereignty, Eric Berger, Danielle Jefferis, and Catherine Wilson (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) on Affirmative Action’s Origins and Legacies, Kate Masur (Northwestern University) on Equal Protection, Reconstruction, and the Meaning of the 14th Amendment, Martha Jones (Johns Hopkins University) on Black

Women and the Right to Vote, Alicia Gutierrez-Romine (California State University, San Bernardino) on Criminal Abortion in the 20th Century U.S., Robert McGreevey (College of New Jersey) on The Insular Cases and Contested Citizenship, Linda Ho Peché (Vietnamese in the Diaspora Digital Archive) on A Case Study of the Vietnamese Impact on Defining the “Refugee,” and Taja-Nia Henderson (Rutgers University-Newark) on The Carceral State and Legal Histories of American Unfreedom. Each webinar was recorded, with the videos posted to our website and included in our open educational resource, *Equality Before the Law*.

We have also hosted two cohorts of Mellon Graduate Fellows in U.S. Law and Race. The 2024 Fellows, led by Professor Jagodinsky, were Kasha Appleton (Indiana University), Emma Herman (Harvard University), Taneil Ruffin (Princeton University), and Hannah Simmons

(Northwestern University). Kasha and Taneil later presented with Professor Jones on a panel at the AAIHS 2025 Conference. The 2025 Fellows, hosted by Professor Jones, were Keziah Anderson (Harvard University), Jerry Chen (Harvard University), Annabelle Lyne (University of Kansas), and Katie Wu (University of Virginia).

In addition to the fellowship, the U.S. Law and Race Initiative also supports a pair of Graduate Research Assistants who serve as TAs for HIST 115, provide assistance and support for the Mellon Fellowship, and collaborate with project manager Kaci Nash on the development of the OER. Emily Binder works as our current GRA. Previous assistants include Anne Gregory and Elodie Galeazzi.

The OER is planned for a Fall 2025 launch.

cultural centers and bookstores, which functioned as tools for activism, education, and cultural preservation. The study also critically addresses the limitations these efforts faced, including financial constraints and systemic barriers. Alongside her academic work, Elodie has been serving as an academic advisor for the University of Nebraska High School. This past fall, she also celebrated a major personal milestone with the birth of her first child. Elodie defended her dissertation in July 2025.

Julian Gillilan had an eventful and productive 2024-2025 school year! In summer 2024, he participated in the “Prague to Berlin” education abroad program with support from the department’s Belousek Fellowship. After the 3-week program, Julian conducted dissertation research in Vienna at the Austrian National Library and the Austrian State Archives. During the fall and spring semesters, Julian worked as a Graduate Teaching Assistant alongside taking coursework. He also actively participated in the HGSA, serving as the Secretary and Representative to the Graduate Student Association, as well as a Graduate Student Mentor for the University’s McNair Scholar program. In March 2025, Julian traveled to the annual Austrian Studies Association conference at Gettysburg College, where he presented his work on turn of the century Viennese Mayor Karl Lueger and received a graduate student travel award. Throughout the school year, Julian also sang in the local Abendmusik chorus, which

performed Mozart’s *Requiem* in the late spring. In summer 2025, Julian was selected to attend the Holocaust Education Foundation at Northwestern University’s Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization. Julian also received the Victor and Nina F Chab Czech Heritage Fund Award from the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures to study intensive Czech at the Summer School for Slavonic Studies in Olomouc, Czech Republic.

Dr. William Kelly successfully defended his dissertation on 19 May 2025, which examined Black freedom seeking in Maryland during the War of 1812 and the efforts of white enslavers to seek compensation for them after the war. He recently took that research abroad to present at a conference in Nantes, France. Throughout 2024-2025, William continued his work with the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom while also picking up another position as Book Reviews Editor of the *Maryland Historical Magazine*, published by the Maryland Center for History and Culture. He is currently on the job market seeking to launch his career in public history.

During her second year of her Ph.D. program, **Catherine Baker Nicholson**, JD, studied women track and field Olympians who competed during the 1950s and faced an intersectional oppression of race, gender, class, sexuality, and nation. She traveled for research, to share history with others, and to market her book, *Running in Borrowed Shoes: Thane Baker and the 1952 Summer Games*. A week at the United States Olympic and Paralympic Archives in Colorado Springs preceded a week at the Olympic Studies Centre in Lausanne, Switzerland, where Nicholson researched the 1952 and 1956 Olympians, venues, and politics. Her interviewees included Olympians from the Bay Area and New Jersey and an Olympic coach in Kansas. The Nebraska and Sarpy County Historical Societies, elementary schools in Hastings and Bellevue, the University of Nebraska Rawley Conference, a men’s club at the Methodist church in Papillion, and a Hastings bookstore hosted Nicholson as she spoke about Olympian Thane Baker, 1950s Olympians on active duty in the military, and how to write a book. Her paper, “Defying Gravity: The Flights of Olympians Mabel ‘Dolly’ Landry Staton and Marjorie ‘Margie’ Larney,” tied for first place for the Dov Ospovat Memorial Award for a distinguished graduate research paper from the UNL History Department. Nicholson published an article in the Delta Tau Delta Fraternity’s magazine, *Rainbow*, Winter 2025, entitled “From Kitchen Boy to Olympic Gold Medalist.” She archives Thane Baker’s Olympic materials, and her contacts with amateur and professional historians continue to enrich her life.

Andrew Varsanyi’s third year was a busy one, he completed comps and his prospectus. His article, “Beyond Binaries: The Complexity of Populist Politics in Historical and Contemporary Contexts,” appeared in *The Middle*

GRADUATE STUDENT NOTES



Historical Society’s May Lunchbox Lecture is available on YouTube and LNK-TV. A similar lecture will be given for the Deborah Avery Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in the coming year. Brianna also travelled to Kansas City, MO, for the Western History Association Conference where she presented on her developing database, *Citizenship Taken*, which was awarded the Immigration and Ethnic History Society’s Digital Seed Grant this past year. A progress report and outline of the digital project is now available on the IEHS blog’s site, *Not From Here*. In May 2025, Brianna travelled to Des Moines, IA, for the Midwestern History Association conference, joining a roundtable on Midwestern Gender Histories and received the MHA Graduate Travel Award. This past spring Brianna was invited to lecture on the 1909 and 1910 Anti-Greek Riots in Omaha for the National Hellenic Museum (video now available on their site) and was awarded travel and research funding this past spring for her project on married women’s citizenship from the Sheldon Award, Meyer Award, and Belousek Fund.

Graduate students in the HIST 961 seminar discuss their final historiographic essays on global history with Prof. Bedross Der Matossian. (Courtesy Photo)

Brianna Rose DeValk, who just completed her third year as a Ph.D. student, presented at numerous conferences this past year. In September, Brianna travelled to Sioux Falls, SD, for the Northern Great Plains History Conference, where she presented on her now available article, “Beyond Vows: Race, Marriage, and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Omaha.” The paper won the William E. Lass Award for best paper on a topic within the region the late Dr. Lass studied (i.e. Great Plains), along with the Best Graduate Student Paper Award for the best paper submitted by a graduate student at the conference. The article is now available through the *Nebraska History Magazine*, and a recorded lecture from the Nebraska State

Dr. Elodie Galeazzi recently completed the research and writing of her dissertation. Her work explores the roles of Black media and cultural institutions in Omaha during the post-civil rights era, examining how African Americans and their allies used both traditional and alternative media to amplify Black voices, foster community, and advocate for social change. It highlights a diverse range of platforms, from newspapers, radio, and television to



Julian Gillilan hiking in Krkonoše National Park (Czech Republic), summer 2024. (Courtesy Photo)

West Review, marking his first peer-reviewed publication. He was also awarded the 2025 Iowa History Dissertation Fellowship from the State Historical Society of Iowa in support of his dissertation, “Authorized Agent: Alonzo Wardall and the Settler-Colonial Promise in the Gilded Age, 1865–1918,” which traces the shifting political culture of the American West from the mid-nineteenth century through World War I and situates the reformist impulses of the region in the broken promises of the settler-colonial economy.

Andrew has also taken on an expanded role in professional service, serving as co-chair of the Teaching and Public History Committee and as a member of both the Digital Scholarship and 2026 Program Committees of the Western History Association. Locally, he co-chairs the Affordable Housing Issue Committee for Justice in Action Lincoln, where he works to gain support for a pilot program

focused on pre-filing eviction mediation to reduce housing disruptions for the city’s most vulnerable residents.

In May 2025, **Andrea Wagh** completed her 4th year in the Ph.D. program, successfully passing comprehensive exams and defending her dissertation prospectus. In addition to becoming ABD, she was named a winner of the 2025 Graduate Student Research Days poster exhibition and awarded a travel grant from the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) to support her dissertation research at the Zoryan Institute in Toronto, Canada. The trip was also made possible by the Edward Homze Fund and John F. Stover Fellowship granted by the UNL History Department. Recently, Andrea was accepted to present part of her dissertation research, a comparative study of the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust, at the European Studies Conference this upcoming fall.

Faculty and staff may nominate a student for this award. Nominators submit a nomination letter and the nominee’s statement of teaching philosophy (max. 1000 words)...

A note from Anne’s adviser, Prof. Katrina Jagodinsky: “Anne was one of 3 UNL grad students to earn the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award of \$1k from Grad Studies this year. Everyone on the Mellon team is really proud of her work!”

Sources: University Communications, “Graduate Luncheon recognized 2024-2025 Fellowship Award Winners,” <https://newsroom.unl.edu/announce/gradstudies/18789/101407>; <https://graduate.unl.edu/funding/award-nominations/>; Edith Reza Martinez | Graduate Studies, “Graduate luncheon recognizes fellowship, award winners,” <https://news.unl.edu/article/graduate-luncheon-recognizes-fellowship-award-winners>, 30 April 2025; Katrina Jagodinsky

Photo Credit: Katrina Jagodinsky



GRADUATE RESEARCH AWARD

On 15-16 April 2025, the Office of Graduate Studies, the Office of Undergraduate Research and Fellowships, and the Office of Research and Innovation held the 2025 Student Research Days Poster Sessions and Creative Exhibitions.

More than 120 graduate students in addition to a week-long celebration of student research and creative activity. Graduate students who were awarded competitive prizes for their scholarship and presentation skills and received \$400 toward travel grants to present their research regionally or nationally as well as support other research costs.

Over 40 faculty and postdoc volunteer judges met with students during sessions and evaluated their presentations. Thanks to all the judges for their time and expertise!

Graduate awardees for Arts and Humanities include:

Andrea Wagh (Houston, Texas; studying History) — “Preserving Hidden Histories: Jewish Children in Occupied France, 1939 - 1945,” adviser: Bedross Der Matossian

Sources: Lisa Rohde; University Communications, “Congratulations to 2025 Research Days Award Winners!,” <https://newsroom.unl.edu/announce/gradstudies/18869/101562>



GRADUATED STUDENTS

For the 2024-2025 Academic Year, the Department of History is very pleased to congratulate five students on the successful completion of three Masters and two Doctoral degrees. In chronological order, our newest graduated graduate students are:

Jonathan Laska (pictured below, right) successfully defended his M.A. portfolio on 14 March 2025. His committee consisted of Profs. Timothy Mahoney (adviser; pictured below, left), Katrina Jagodinsky, and Alexander Vazansky. Prof. Jagodinsky is Jon’s Ph.D. adviser here at UNL while he researches Community Development in Early Colorado.



Jacob Moore, under the advisement of Prof. James Garza, defended his portfolio on 14 April 2025 and graduated with his Master’s of Arts in May. His other committee members were Profs. James Le Sueur and Joy Castro (English &

Institute for Ethnic Studies).

Dr. Timothy Turnquist (pictured below, middle) successfully defended his dissertation, titled “Between Race and Religion: U.S. Catholics and the Transnational Plight of ‘Non-Aryan’ Refugees, 1933-1942,” on 28 February 2025. His committee was Drs. Gerald J. Steinacher (adviser; pictured below, left), Tim Borstelmann, Alexander Vazansky (pictured below, right), Ari Kohen (Political Science & Harris Center for Judaic Studies), and Mary Brown (Marymount Manhattan College [Brooklyn, NY]). Tim graduated in August 2025. Tim is excited to start as a Professor of Practice in UNL’s School of Global Integrative Studies and in the Forsythe Family Program on Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, and as the director of the Social Entrepreneurship Certificate.



OUTSTANDING GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT AWARD

Congratulations to all the graduate students and faculty members whose remarkable achievements in research, teaching, mentorship, and creative endeavors were recognized at the annual Graduate Fellowship and Awards Luncheon. Please join us in congratulating them.

The 2024-2025 recipients receiving honors include:

Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award: Recognizes graduate teaching assistants who have demonstrated special effectiveness in teaching undergraduates at Nebraska:

- Kathleen Dillon, English
- Brandon Fogel, Management
- Anne Gregory, History...



Dr. William Kelly (adviser: Prof. Katrina Jagodinsky) graduated in August after successfully defending his dissertation — “‘Sufferers’ and Freedom Seekers: Claiming Indemnity and Seizing Freedom During the War of 1812 in Maryland and Beyond” — on 19 May 2025. The rest of William’s committee consisted of Drs. William G. Thomas III (currently Dean of

Dr. Elodie Galeazzi successfully defended her dissertation on 24 July 2025 and graduated in August. Her dissertation was titled “Dreaming, Building, and Enduring Black Voices: Black Media in Omaha in the Post-Civil Rights Era” and completed under the supervision of Prof. Patrick D. Jones. Drs. Jeannette Eileen Jones, Laura K. Muñoz, William G. Thomas III (currently Dean of Montana State University’s College of Letters and Science), Jeannette Eileen Jones, and Carrie C. Heitman (School of Global Integrative Studies & Center for Digital Research in the Humanities).



Montana State University’s College of Letters and Science), Jeannette Eileen Jones, and Carrie C. Heitman (School of Global Integrative Studies & Center for Digital Research in the Humanities).

2025 DEPARTMENT AWARDS CEREMONY



Department Chair Prof. James Le Sueur speaks to open the History Department Awards Ceremony on 7 May 2025 in the UNL City Campus Student Union.



Prof. Dawne Curry is recognized by Graduate Chair Prof. Alexander Vazansky, along with the rest of the Graduate Committee, for her exceptional service to our graduate students and program.

Other Awardees Not Pictured Here:

Undergraduate:

Bowen Dick-Burkey & Jadon Parker — Allen P. Gerlach Scholarship, for undergraduate History majors studying Non-U.S. History

Graduate:

Mason Lee — Dov Ospovat Memorial Award for a Distinguished Graduate Research Paper (Special Commendation) for “‘The Thermopylae of my Campaign:’ Confederate Classical Analogy in the American Civil War”

Photo Credit: Michele Kentfield



Carole Levin History Student Award, from left to right: Savannah Toth (also the Winner of the Best Undergraduate History Paper Award); Prof. Sean Trundle; Dr. Angela Bolen; Kalen Melton



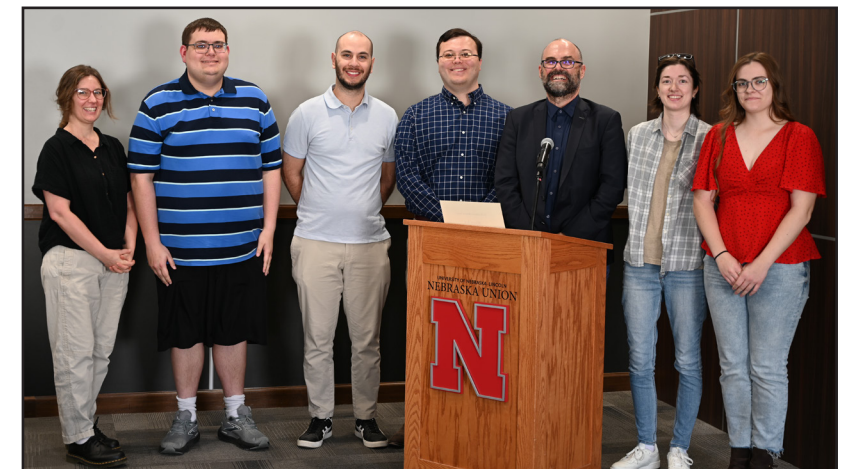
Larry R. Gerlach Scholarship, for undergraduate History majors studying U.S. History: Varinia Luke [not pictured: Sidney Wickham]



Glenn W. Gray Outstanding History Student Award: Nathan Hill (middle, left photo) & Lauren Van Treeck (left, right photo)



Dov Ospovat Memorial Award for a Distinguished Graduate Research Paper: Jonathan Laska (“From the Front Range to Main Street: Community Identity, Connections, and Development in Southern Colorado”) & Catherine Baker Nicholson (“Defying Gravity: The Flights of Olympians Mabel Landry Staton and Marjorie Larney”)



Travel Award Funding Recipients, from left to right: Anne Gregory (also recognized for Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award, see p. 36); Jonathan Laska; William Kelly; Gregory Payne; Prof. & Graduate Chair Alexander Vazansky; Andrea Wagh (also awarded the John F. Stover Graduate Fellowship); Brianna DeValk (also the inaugural awardee of the Frank A. Belousek Research Award)

UNDERGRADUATE SPOTLIGHT:

LUKE McDERMOTT

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Luke McDermott, a first-generation student from Omaha, has been awarded a 2024-26 Voyager Scholarship, the Obama-Chesky Scholarship for Public Service. McDermott is a political science, economics, and history major and University Honors Program member who is also working toward a Certificate in Public Policy Analysis.

The Voyager Scholarship was created by former President Barack Obama, former first lady Michelle Obama, and Brian Chesky, co-founder and CEO of Airbnb, to support U.S. college juniors and seniors pursuing public service leadership careers. The scholarship provides: Up to \$50,000 in financial aid (up to \$25,000 per year in "last dollar" financial aid for the recipient's junior and senior years); a \$10,000 stipend and free Airbnb housing to undertake a self-designed Summer Voyage, occurring between the recipient's junior and senior years; and access to mentoring networks, including an annual summit, speaker series, and global alumni community.

The 2024-26 Voyager Scholarship cohort includes 100 students from 44 states and territories, representing 88 colleges and universities nationwide.

With coaching from mentors and inspiration from fellow Voyagers at the annual summit, McDermott designed his own Summer Voyage for 2025. He intends to focus on meeting workers and labor organizers in different regions of the United States. Through immersion in local communities and cultures of labor, he will learn how their perspectives on labor issues and policy matters may vary.

"I am grateful to the Obama Foundation and Brian Chesky for this life-changing opportunity and for their commitment to making public service careers more accessible," McDermott said.

McDermott will bring experience with analyzing varied

perspectives on legal and constitutional matters to his Summer Voyage. As a 2023-24 Undergraduate Creative Activities and Research Experiences student researcher at Nebraska, he encoded historical habeas corpus cases of marginalized peoples as part of the Digital Legal Research Lab, mentored by Katrina Jagodinsky, Susan J. Rosowski Associate Professor of history...

Source: Undergraduate Research and Fellowships, "McDermott wins coveted Voyager Scholarship for Public Service," <https://news.unl.edu/article/mcdermott-wins-coveted-voyager-scholarship-for-public-service>, 27 August 2024

Photo Credit: Craig Chandler | University Communication and Marketing

Luke McDermott had his eye on the prize.

As a freshman at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the first-generation student met with Courtney Santos, director of undergraduate research and fellowships, and declared he wanted to earn a Truman Scholarship.

McDermott, now a junior majoring in political science, economics, and history, achieved that goal when the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation announced 18 April 2025 that McDermott is among the 54 scholars nationwide selected for the honor. He was notified of his selection during a surprise meeting 14 April 2025 with Chancellor Rodney D. Bennett, the chancellor's executive leadership team, and McDermott's colleagues who served with him on the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska's (ASUN) executive team.

"I am excited," McDermott said. "I've always wanted to do public service, and the people I've looked up to in public service, I noticed many of them had this mark of distinction — being a Truman Scholar — and so that was something I knew I wanted to pursue. It was the one

scholarship I've been most passionate about ever wanting.

"It is encouraging to know that people who have accomplished great things in their lives are looking at me and saying I can accomplish similar things. It feels like I am on the right path."



Chancellor Rodney D. Bennett greets Luke McDermott and announces that McDermott has earned a Truman Scholarship 14 April 2025.

This year's Truman Scholars were selected from 743 nominees representing 288 colleges and universities. Truman Scholars demonstrate outstanding leadership potential, a commitment to a career in government or the nonprofit sector, and academic excellence. The scholarship, which is a living memorial to the 33rd president, is among the United States' most prestigious for students who want to pursue a career in government or other public service. Truman Scholars receive up to \$30,000 for graduate or professional school, participate in leadership development activities, and have special opportunities for internships and employment with the federal government.

"Luke McDermott's achievement as a Truman Scholar is a powerful reflection of his character, drive and commitment to public service," Bennett said. "We are incredibly proud of him — not only for this prestigious honor, but for how he represents the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with purpose and integrity. His success signals to the world that our university is a launching pad for excellence."

McDermott plans to use the scholarship to pursue a joint Juris Doctor/Master of Public Policy, focusing on labor and employment law and constitutional law. Growing up in Omaha, McDermott said his dad was active in labor unions, and he has seen how labor law could be vastly improved.

"I think there's still too much power given to the federal government in deciding how labor should be adjudicated, and that wildly swings between different presidential administrations," McDermott said. "Restructuring how we go about doing labor work is something I'm interested in, and I think that will require some really strong background in constitutional law."

McDermott said he began thinking about a career in public service as a student at Millard North High School.

"I had great history teachers, and I think that is something that they instilled in me, that I wanted to be a public servant," he said. "History informs how I do advocacy, and there are a lot of people I really admire. Through history, I can see how the actions of a single person can change the trajectory of other people's lives. And that's something I always aspire to do."

McDermott was also inspired by his parents, Joel McDermott and Cathy McDermott.

"Not having attended college themselves, my parents were doubly committed to making sure that I made the most of my educational experience," he said. "They were very encouraging and made sure I had

the resources I needed to pursue all of the opportunities that were available to me."

Those opportunities have included fellowships and recognition such as the Phi Beta Kappa Key into Public Service Scholarship, Alan Davis Scholarship, Reagan Civic



Jessica Herrmann, director of government relations, hugs Luke McDermott after the announcement that McDermott was chosen as a Truman Scholar. Herrmann has mentored McDermott and wrote a letter of recommendation for the award.

Leaders Fellowship, and Roosevelt Network Emerging Policy Fellowship. He was also one of [100 Voyager Scholarship](#) winners.

“These accolades speak to Luke’s exceptional ability to inspire action and effect meaningful change,” Santos said. “I am delighted that he will represent our campus and our region in the Truman Scholar community, now and for years to come.”

Aside from serving as external vice president in ASUN for the past year, McDermott’s campus leadership is extensive. His ASUN involvement began with the Freshman Campus Leadership Associates and the Student Court, and then as director of the Government Liaison Committee. McDermott also served as chair of the Husker Vote Coalition, a nonpartisan civic engagement organization that hosts voter registration drives. [In July 2024, his leadership with the coalition was recognized with a \$5,000 Alan Davis Scholarship from the National Association for Campus Activities.] He attended the Association of Big Ten Students Conference in 2024 and 2025 to meet student leaders from across the Big Ten universities and share perspectives on governance models and advocacy efforts.

Off-campus, he gained experience with policy analysis and constituent perspectives at various levels of government and non-profit entities through service as a Legal Aid of Nebraska volunteer, legal history researcher, state legislative page, Henry Clay College Student Congress Delegate for Nebraska, and Victory Institute Congressional intern with U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.). [In May 2024,

McDermott received a Key into Public Service Scholarship from the Phi Beta Kappa Society, and in August 2024, he was named a Reagan Civic Leaders Fellow by the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute and was one of 30 students invited to the PPIA Public Service Weekend at Georgetown’s McCourt School of Public Policy.] McDermott is currently an intern with the Nebraska Association of Public Employees (AFSME Local 61) labor union.

McDermott hopes his success in pursuing these opportunities, and especially earning a Truman Scholarship, inspires current and future Huskers to dream big.

“I hope it’s also encouraging to everyone at the University of Nebraska that careers in government, careers in policy and advocacy are not out of reach — that there are all types of opportunities for students at the University of Nebraska,” he said.

Sources: Deann Gayman | University Communication and Marketing, “McDermott follows through on Truman Scholarship dream,” <https://news.unl.edu/article/mcdermott-follows-through-on-truman-scholarship-dream>, 18 April 2025; <https://mediahub.unl.edu/media/24603>

Photo Credit: Aaron Nix | University Communication and Marketing

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HISTORY

EMERITI NEWS

& ALUMNI INFO

ELIZABETHAN PLAY

GOES TO SCOTLAND

When Carole Levin was 10 years old, she pulled a book off the shelf at a public library in the Chicago area that changed her life.

It was a historical biography on Queen Elizabeth I, who ruled alone over England from 1558 to 1603, a time marked by war, religious strife, and betrayal. There was something about the monarch’s story — her bravery, her courage, how she handled difficult situations during her reign — that captured Levin’s imagination.

“I was just really impressed by her and, yeah, fell in love with her as a kid,” Levin said.

That moment led her down a path of scholarship — and eventually to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she served as the Willa Cather professor of history and director of the Medieval and Renaissance Studies Program before retiring recently.

Today, Levin can say Good Queen Bess has been, well, very good to her.

Her extensive curriculum vitae proves as much. Among it are numerous books she’s written and edited about Elizabeth, an exhibit on her reign she helped put on at the Newberry Library in Chicago and a Fulbright scholarship at the University of York in 2015.

Levin has even written a one-woman, one-act play *Elizabeth I: In Her Own Words*, which was recently staged at the Edinburgh Fringe, a massive arts festival in Scotland that brings in thousands of artists and performers who perform hundreds of shows on stages around the city.

“To get there was kind of like a highlight of my life, honestly,” Levin said in a recent phone interview after she returned from Edinburgh, where her play was staged from 5-17 August 2024. “It’s beyond thrilling for me.”

The play follows Elizabeth — played by Tammy Meneghini, a theater professor at the University of Colorado Boulder and a professional actor — in her later years, using her own letters, Shakespeare, and the words of Robert Dudley, a suitor to the Virgin Queen, to paint the picture of a stateswoman revered for her leadership during a time of turmoil in England.

During the course of the show, which runs just short of an hour, Elizabeth removes pieces of her regalia until at the very end she is in undergarments, her wig removed, so that the audience sees “completely through the woman.”

Levin and Meneghini had met while both teaching at UNL

and reconnected years later when the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., announced it would send out First Folios — original collections of Shakespeare’s plays — to institutions across the country to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Bard’s death in 2016. One of the folios was traveling to Boulder, and Meneghini asked Levin about writing a one-act play about Elizabeth to commemorate the moment.

The original play they worked on in 2016 was much different than the one that traveled to Edinburgh, including the fact that it was originally a two-person show. The pair eventually tweaked the script and whittled it down to a one-woman play.

Then, last year, Meneghini heard from a woman named Penny Cole, who runs Flying Solo, a production company based in Colorado that has taken a number of different shows to the Fringe over the years, which led to *Elizabeth I: In Her Own Words* getting its moment in the Scottish sun.

The play, directed by Lynn Nichols and produced by Cole, was staged at the theater venue The Space at Surgeon’s Hall and was warmly received by critics, with a photo of Meneghini in all her Elizabethan glory — frizzy red hair, pale powdered face, white ruff — even appearing on the front page of The Times in Scotland on 13 August 2024.

One reviewer described it as “a quality hour of research, detail, and reverence made manifest: and one for history lovers of all ages.”

Another critic called the play “wonderfully rich and evocative.”

Levin wanted the play to be truer to Elizabeth’s story than many of the contemporary depictions of Gloriana that Hollywood and others have spawned over the years. For example, in some depictions, Elizabeth and Mary Stuart, her cousin who conspired to have Elizabeth killed and was eventually executed, confront each other. In truth, the two never met.

“I really loved doing this because I wanted to do Elizabeth, and I wanted it to be dramatic, but I also wanted it be accurate,” she said.

Her excursion to the Fringe was Levin’s first — “I went to my show four times,” she admitted with a laugh, explaining that she had four different friends come join her to see the



Dr. Carole Levin, Willa Cather Emerita Professor of History (Courtesy photo)

play. She also caught some other performances and caught in the sights of the Scottish capital, including the Royal Mile.

“It was just amazing,” she said.

Levin retired from her UNL posts in January 2023, but is still heavily involved at the university.

In the spring of 2023, she put on a show at the Sheldon Museum of Art entitled “Beyond Eve and Mary: Premodern Representations of Gender, Power, and Religion.” She also worked on a First Folio exhibit at Love Library and has also taught OLLI courses.

A love of teaching, learning and writing — sparked by that chance encounter with a book all those years ago — is a lifelong affair, it appears. And Levin is proud to have done it in Nebraska.

“I’m so proud to be from Lincoln, Nebraska. I’m so proud to be from the University of Nebraska...and so to represent Nebraska just made me so happy and proud,” she said. “I can’t tell you how thrilled I feel about that.”

Source: Zach Hammack, “Leading Off: Retired UNL professor’s Elizabethan play goes to

Scotland,” https://journalstar.com/life-entertainment/local/art-theater/leading-off-retired-unl-professors-elizabethan-play-goes-to-scotland/article_0008c428-5e5c-11ef-96d8-8b7e9c4509ea.html, 23 August 2024

Photo Credit: Colin Hattersley Photography



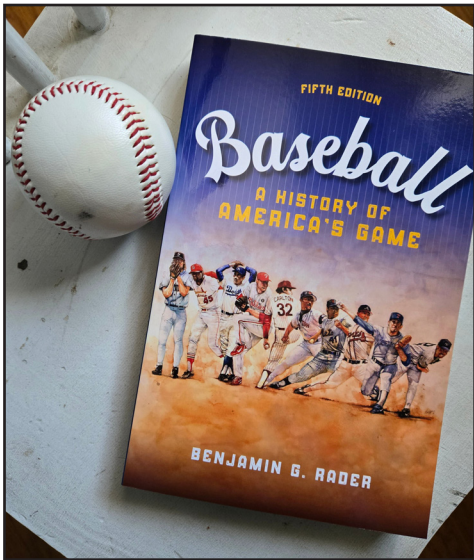
Tammy Meneghini, who plays Elizabeth I in Carole Levin’s play *Elizabeth I: In Her Own Words*, stands in a meadow beside Craigmillar Castle in Edinburgh, which has connections to Elizabeth’s cousin, Mary Queen of Scots. *Elizabeth I: In Her Own Words* was at the Edinburgh Fringe festival from 5-17 August 2024.

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Ben Rader is the James L. Sellers Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and the coauthor of *American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Televised Sports*, Seventh Edition.

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Source: <https://www.press.uillinois.edu/books/?id=p088803>

HONORARY DOCTORATE FROM UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH

On 16 May 2025, the University of Zurich conferred the honorary degree of Dr. Theol. on Professor Dr. Amy Nelson Burnett from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In the *laudatio* read at the ceremony, the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies noted that her foundational studies on the Swiss Reformation are a milestone in research, representing the international impact of the Zurich Reformation in the 16th century and demonstrating the transatlantic academic community in this field.

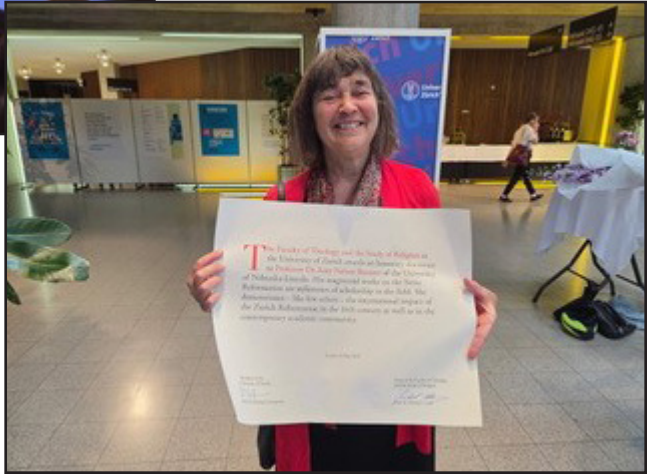


Prof. Burnett received her doctorate in history in 1989 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 1989, she was appointed assistant professor at the History Department of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she taught and researched as an associate professor and then as a full professor from 2006 until her retirement in 2024. She began her work on unpublished sources in continental Europe as a doctoral student, which shaped her work as a researcher: in 1985-86 she received a Fulbright-Hays scholarship for research at the Westfälische Wilhelms University [Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität]

in Münster. Since then, she has repeatedly undertaken extensive research trips through European libraries and archives, including in the summer of 2001 as a research fellow of the Herzog August Library in Wolfenbüttel and 2001-02, and in 2004 as a Research Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

Prof. Burnett’s research on the Reformation has received numerous awards: in 1991, she received the Frank S. and Elizabeth D. Brewer Prize from the American Church History for her study *The Yoke of Christ: Martin Bucer and Christian Discipline*. Her groundbreaking monograph from 2006, *Teaching the Reformation: Ministers and their Message in Basel*, was awarded the Gerald Strauss Prize by the Sixteenth Century Society.

In addition to integrating her own research into her teaching, Prof. Burnett has been honored and received several awards for her teaching.



Amy Nelson Burnett is one of the world’s leading experts in the history of the Swiss Reformation. Since completing her doctorate, she has repeatedly published studies that have become milestones of historical research into the process of religious and social transformation in the 16th century. In doing so, she combines careful source work

with a gift for successful linguistic presentation. She knows the theological subtleties as well as the social and political constellations of the Reformation period and repeatedly combines these perspectives into enlightening

contributions. Together with Emidio Campi, she published *Companion to the Swiss Reformation*, which was published in German translation only a year later and can rightly be considered as the most up-to-date and complete presentation of the Reformation throughout the Swiss Confederation. Burnett has long been associated with the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, the Zwingli Society [Zwingliverein], and the Institute for Swiss Reformation History as a member of the Zwingliana Academic Advisory Board.

Sources: Universität Zürich, “Ehrenpromotionen 2025” | University of Zurich, “Honorary promotions 2025,”

<https://www.uzh.ch/de/explore/portrait/awards/hc/2025.html>; Universität Zürich, “Ehrenpromotion 2025 der Theologischen und Religionswissenschaftlichen Fakultät” | University of Zurich, “Honorary Promotion 2025 of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies,” <https://www.uzh.ch/de/explore/portrait/awards/hc/2025/trf.html> — translation assistance from Amy Nelson Burnett; University Communication and Marketing, “Achievements | Honors, appointments and publications for July 18,” <https://news.unl.edu/article/achievements-honors-appointments-and-publications-for-july-18>, 18 July 2025

Photo Credit: Amy Nelson Burnett

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*A European Family's Odyssey Through
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A Conversation featuring Daniela Spenser

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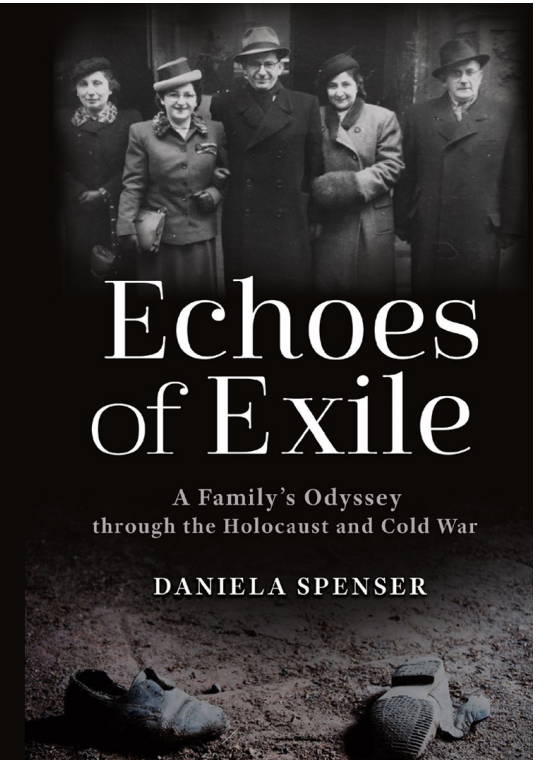
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4:00 – 5:30 PM

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Feat. Phil Clark, SOAS University of London



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