



# History at Eastern Michigan University



Dept of History & Philosophy

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## *History at Eastern Meets the Arsenal of Democracy*

Enjoy these historic photographs throughout this edition of the Newsletter provided by the Yankee Air Museum.



Shown above are two women working at the bomber plant during WWII

A major reason that Detroit became known as the “Arsenal of Democracy” during World War Two was the Willow Run Bomber Plant, which, at its peak of production in 1944, could produce one B- 24 Liberator Bomber per hour. So potent, in fact, was the production capabilities of this plant that 8,685 of these mighty bombers were produced here for the war effort in just four short years. Henry Ford build the Willow Run Bomber Plant in 1941, and he and his advisors applied the lessons they had learned from mass producing automobiles to the production of planes at the bomber plant. One of the most innovative parts of the plant was an assembly line that included a turntable about two-thirds of the way through the production process, that allowed the aircraft to be turned a full 90 degrees before completing the manufacturing process and leaving the factory.

Efforts to preserve the incredibly rich legacy of the bomber plant and to highlight the history of aviation led to the founding of the Yankee Air Museum in 1981. The museum currently holds three flyable WWII aircraft: a B-17 Flying Fortress, a B-25 Mitchell Bomber, and a C-47 Skytrain, as well as many artifacts dealing with war-time and peace-time aviation.

Over the years, the Yankee Air Museum has become intertwined with Eastern Michigan University’s history program. Many of Eastern’s history students have interned, volunteered, or currently work full time at the museum. Julie Osborne, a graduate of EMU’s undergraduate and graduate history programs, currently works as the museum's Curatorial Director. When she became aware of the Yankee Air Museum from a friend who worked there, she began volunteering in the Oral History Department and the Education Department, from 2007-2008. After graduating with her M.A. degree in History, she applied for and received an internship in the Education Department of the museum where she ran four summer day camps throughout the summer months. In 2012, she was hired to take on a full-time position in the collections department. Her job focuses mostly on the artifact and aircraft collections, exhibit work, and aircraft restoration. Most of the work in her department is done by volunteers, so a lot of her day consists of meeting with department heads to make sure all the work is being done correctly. When asked about her favorite part of her job, Julie said that she really enjoys bringing new planes into the museum. Since she has started in 2012, she has brought ten new aircraft into the collection.

Goral Bhatt, a current graduate student in History at Eastern, worked at the museum as an intern. During her time at the museum, Goral worked on the Rosie the Riveter Oral History Project. When conducting preliminary research on Rosies, she became fascinated with the

*Continued on Page 2...*

dynamic shift in the roles of American women during the war. Much of Goral's work consisted of finding Rosies to be interviewed, drafting interview questions, and then interviewing the Rosies and their children. After the interviews, she was responsible for transcribing and then editing them for CD/DVD format. When asked about her favorite part of the job, Goral said, "talking to the Rosies and their children." She loved listening to the women tell their stories, and as a student of history especially appreciated them sharing their wartime photos and documents with her.

After graduating with his M.A. degree in History in 2017, Matthew Stinson started up his own film production business, *Championship Productions*. In 2018, he was hired by Detroit Public Television to create a documentary of the history of the Willow Run Bomber plant and the future of the Yankee Air Museum. Matt created a splendid documentary titled "Saving the Willow Run Bomber Plant," which subsequently aired on DPTV. Using old photographs, interviews, and good camerawork, he crafted a video that captured the determination of those men and women who worked hard to get the Yankee Museum up and running, and who are now working to move the museum into a portion of the old bomber plant itself.

The future of the Yankee Air Museum looks bright, and the many students in History at Eastern Michigan University who have volunteered, interned, or worked at the museum over the years can be proud of the role that they have played in helping the institution museum become one of the premier aviation museums in the Midwest.

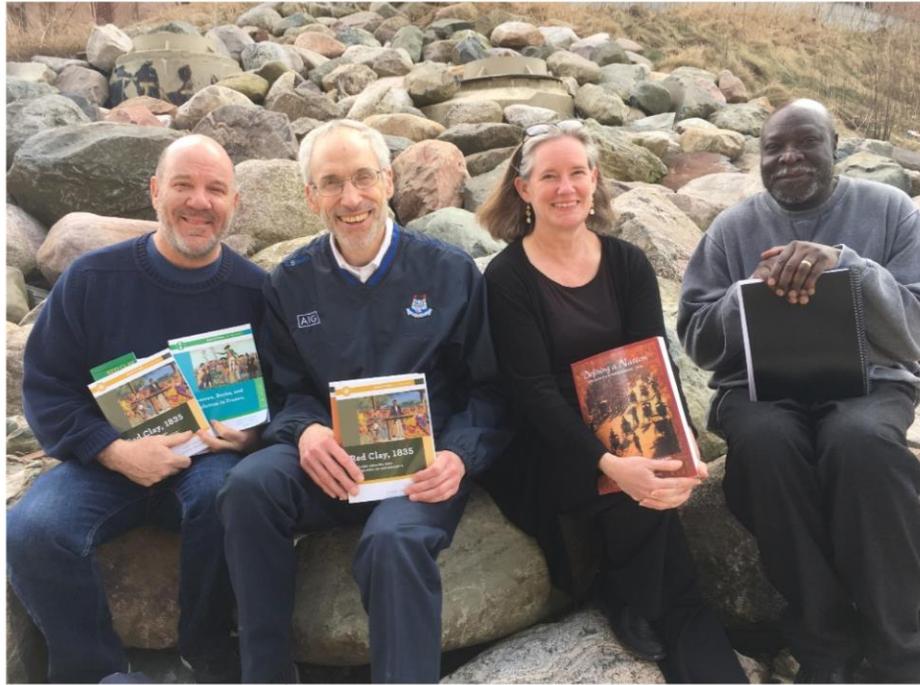


B-24 Liberator bombers in production at the Willow Run bomber plant during WWII



The B-17 bomber "Yankee Lady," owned by the Yankee Air Museum

# *Innovative Pedagogy Transforms History Classes at Eastern*



Pictured: Professors Mark Higbee, Mark Whitters, Mary Strasma (See her involvement in *Reacting to the Past* on p. 7), and Joseph Engwenyu

Over the past twelve years, the classrooms in Pray Harrold have become laboratories where an innovative and dynamic approach to teaching history has turned the age old history classroom upside down. This new teaching method, called “Reacting to the Past,” forces students to turn away from the professor lecturing in the front of the class, and instead they participate in a full-throttled “game” in which each student takes on the part of a character involved in an historical conflict or event. In order to do this successfully, the student has to delve deeply into the ideas at play and the historical context in which the event or conflict took place, and then shape his or her own character’s reactions and responses accordingly.

Some twelve years ago, Prof. Mark Higbee, who teaches African American History at Eastern, heard about this active and engaging means of teaching and decided to attend a workshop at Michigan State University that highlighted this new pedagogical approach. The particular game that Prof. Higbee engaged in during the workshop was based on the French Revolution and took two days to finish. He was struck by how this new style of teaching not only immersed students in the subject matter, but also helped to build their critical thinking, leadership, research, and public speaking skills. Prof. Higbee was stunned by the sheer potential this pedagogy held for his students.

Ever since then, Prof. Higbee has been using “Reacting to the Past” games, such as one that he co-authored, titled “Frederick Douglass, Slavery, and the Constitution,” to bring another dimension into the classroom. No matter the student population or the game, Prof. Higbee is constantly amazed by how these games change the classroom into a “dynamic and lovely learning space” that students are excited to be a part of. Additionally, the arguments and collaboration that students need to achieve during the game provide them with a more hands-on leading experience. Prof. Higbee also noted the many lasting friendships that develop as students participate in these games—something he does not typically see in other classroom environments.

Prof. Mark Whitters also uses "Reacting to the Past" games in his classroom. Prof. Whitters typically uses the games to explain historical religious conflict. The ideas surrounding these religious conflicts are often difficult for students to grasp, especially if the student has little to no exposure to the religions being treated. Prof. Whitters finds that the approach used in "Reacting to the Past" helps students retain the material better than he has seen in traditional lecture based classrooms. He also has discovered that the critical thinking students bring to bear when playing a character in a game is noticeably greater and deeper than what students display in lecture based classroom. Prof. Whitters has recently created a game to be used in the "Reacting to the Past" series, based on the eighth-century Caliph of Baghdad, Harun al-Rashid, and is hoping for publication soon.

Prof. Joseph Engwenyu has advocated for the "Reacting to the Past" approach in teaching history for many years, and finds that each time he has a game in his classroom, he discovers something new and transformative in his students. Prof. Engwenyu observed that students engaged in a "Reacting to the Past" game learn to appreciate the ideologies and arguments that swirled around the people of the time. Historical context also has to be taken into account as students take on and try to understand the persona of the different characters in the game. These games, Prof. Engwenyu explained, show the reality of struggles and conflict in history and how hard it was for certain ideas to be accepted. Like his other colleagues on the History faculty who employ the "Reacting" pedagogy, Prof. Engwenyu enjoys the collaborative effort toward learning that develops among his students as the game unfolds.

The highly innovative "Reacting to the Past" pedagogy offers students an exciting alternative to the traditional lecture based history class by providing students with an opportunity to deeply engage and think about crucial historical problems, and why people made the choices and decisions that they did. This approach sharpens student's critical thinking and calls for collaboration in learning among members of the class. Reacting to the past demands that students do just that—react and think about the past deeply, and as they do so, students gain an appreciation for the complexity of the lives that people in the past lived.

### Faculty Reads: Prof. John Wegner

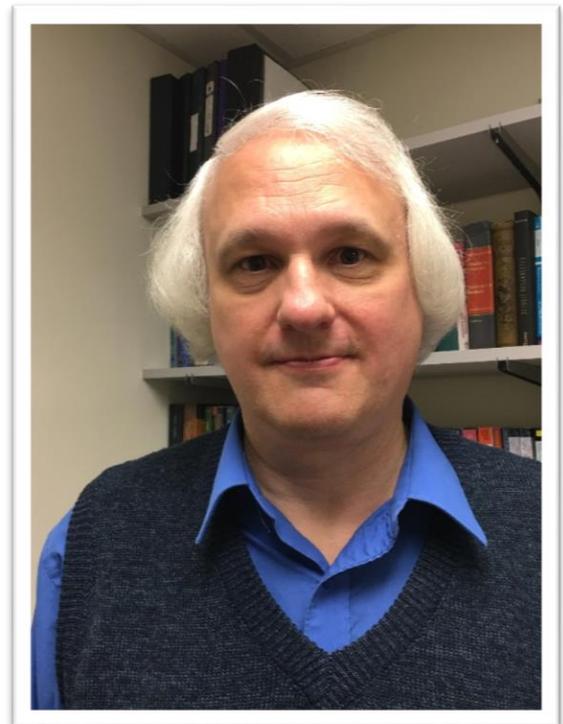
We recently stopped by the office of Prof. John Wegner to ask him what he has been reading lately. Prof. Wegner is a lecturer in History, and has been on the faculty since 2001. He teaches a wide variety of classes in European and American history, and many students take his classes in Michigan History. Prof. Wegner told us that currently he is juggling three books; *The Big Roads* by Earl Swift, *Disruption in Detroit* by Daniel Clark, and *The Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoevsky.

A gift by one of his graduate assistants, *The Big Roads* details the history of the interstate highway system and tells how, thanks to Henry Ford, the mass production of the automobile led to the demand for a national highway system. Prof. Wegner noted that the book gives an interesting explanation for the route that each of the major highways in the system finally took. He likes this book because it shows how Michigan was at the center of the revolution that shaped travel as we know it today in America.

*Disruption in Detroit* talks about the state of the automobile industry after World War II, and its readjustment to focus on the domestic home front. As a result, jobs within the industry were in flux and were unstable for a period of time. Prof. Wegner read this book because he was asked to write a review of it for the Michigan Historical Review.

The last book on his list, *The Brothers Karamazov*, is about three Russian brothers, and is considered to be a classic in Western literature. Prof. Wegner confessed that he is trying to read as many books as he can from a list of the "Great Books of the Western World" that a student gave him. "I'd have to be 200 years old before I'd finish reading every book in the 'Great Books of the Western World,'" he observed. "However, that doesn't mean that I'm not going to try and check off as many books as I can from that list." *The Brothers Karamazov* was on that list, so Prof. Wegner decided to read it. So far he has come to enjoy it, but he warned readers that the abundance of characters in Dostoevsky's work makes the story difficult to follow.

Academically, Prof. Wegner is constantly being drawn to books that examine the social history of the United States. More specifically, he gravitates toward books about the Gilded Age and the Progressive era, because these periods the areas of his academic specialization.



## *From the Department Head*



Prof. Jim Egge

Dear EMU History Alumni and Friends,

EMU recently celebrated our 170th birthday! On March 28, 1849, the Michigan legislature approved An Act to Establish a Normal School, which begins with these words:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representative of the State of Michigan, that a state normal school be established, the exclusive purposes of which shall be the instruction of persons both male and female in the art of teaching, and in all the various branches that pertain to a good common school education; also, to give instructions in the mechanic arts, and in the arts of husbandry and agricultural chemistry, in the fundamental laws of the United States, and in what regards the rights and duties of citizens.

There is a wonderful tension here between the words “exclusive” and “also”: training future teachers was to be the school’s “exclusive” purpose, but the “also” broadens the school’s mission to include instruction in other fields. For decades the faculty of the Michigan State Normal School, later Michigan State Normal College, debated whether the Normal should be (only) a school of education or a college offering instruction in many disciplines. In the end, an expansive view of our mission won out, and the Normal College became Eastern Michigan College, and later Eastern Michigan University.

Another great thing about this preamble is the inclusion of “persons both male and female” in the student body. From its founding, the Normal School was open to students without restriction by sex, race, or ethnicity. Michigan’s only older public institution of higher education, the University of Michigan, excluded women until 1870, but the Normal was coeducational from the start: the first graduating class, the class of 1854, consisted of two women and one man.

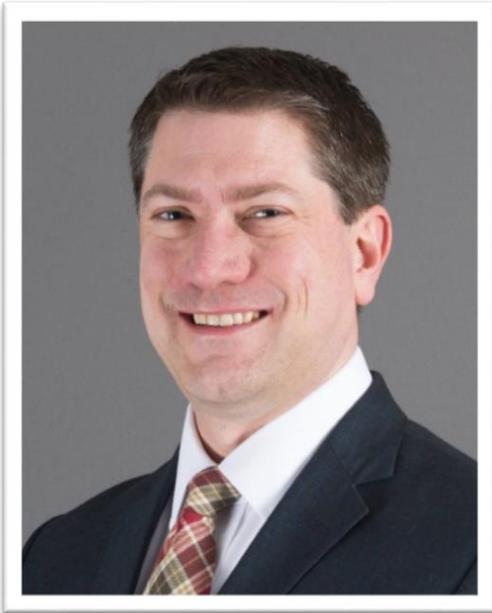
A third inspiring thing about these words is that the school was not only to provide professional and academic education, but also to instruct students “in what regards the rights and duties of citizens.” An educated and dutiful citizenry would be crucial to the growth and welfare of Michigan, which had attained statehood just a dozen years earlier in 1837. Our legislators wisely recognized that teaching citizens their rights and responsibilities is an essential function of education. When the Normal School opened its doors in 1853, the first class taught was titled “Constitution of the United States.”

The Normal School’s original mission of academic, professional, and civic education continues today, and it finds expression in the History Section’s mission statement: “The Mission of the History Section is to increase historical knowledge and understanding and to prepare our students for lives of learning, citizenship, and professional success.” But teaching is not our only purpose: reflecting Eastern’s growth from Normal School to University, this statement recognizes that our mission includes contributing to historical scholarship. This mission to expand our historical knowledge is realized in the research of our faculty and our students, and our mission to educate our students for work, citizenship, and lifelong learning is achieved in our teaching and mentoring. I hope that as you read this newsletter you will be inspired by the many ways in which the History Section fulfills this dual mission, and I thank you for all you do to support our efforts.

Sincerely,

Jim Egge

## *Faculty Focus on Professor John McCurdy*



Prof. John Prof. McCurdy has been teaching History at Eastern Michigan for the past fourteen years, and during that time has established himself as a mentor to numerous undergraduate and graduate students, emerged as a national authority in the history of Colonial America, and has taken dozens of students to New England on his travel course to study Colonial America in Boston, Salem, and upstate New York. His favorite part of being a history professor at Eastern is “getting paid to think, talk, and write about American history.”

After graduating from Knox College with his B.A. in 1995, Prof. McCurdy pursued his interest in history at the University of Chicago, where he enrolled in 1996 and completed his master’s program in one year. Here he focused on the formation of the church in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as a means of expanding his knowledge about colonial religious history. He received a second M.A. degree from Washington University in St. Louis in 2000, and his Ph.D. from the same institution in 2004. At Washington University Prof. McCurdy focused his research on bachelors in early America, and on questions of gender and sexuality during the Colonial era.

Since joining the History faculty at Eastern in 2005, Prof. McCurdy has taught a number of courses in American history such as the introductory survey courses, and upper level lecture courses and seminars on Colonial American History, the American Revolution, and Sexuality in American History. Several years ago he helped to develop and now regularly teaches a course called “The Atlantic World.”

Prof. McCurdy has played an active role as a mentor to numerous students in history, serving for more than ten years as the faculty sponsor for the history honors society, Phi Alpha Theta. In this capacity he has helped the students in this organization plan field trips and organize their meetings, and he has presided over the annual induction ceremony of new members that occurs toward the end of each academic year. Over the years he has helped a number of students prepare to present their scholarship at the annual Phi Alpha Theta Conference hosted each fall term by the University of Toledo. Prof. McCurdy says, “I really enjoy the EMU students, many of whom are hard-working, inquisitive, and bright.”

On four different occasions Prof. McCurdy has led students on his travel course to New England that focuses on Colonial and Revolutionary War America. Students who participate in this course visit sites in and around Boston, Massachusetts, and upstate New York where many crucial events took place in early American History. Prof. McCurdy likes teaching the American Revolution while standing on the places where the Boston Massacre, Boston Tea Party, and Battle of Lexington took place. He also enjoys the opportunity this program provides him to get to know the students outside of class as well.

In addition to attending a wide variety of conferences both abroad and in the United States, Prof. McCurdy has, over the years, produced a number of works for publication. His early work focused on issues of manhood in the colonial and Revolutionary War periods, and culminated in the publication of his first book titled, *Citizen Bachelors: Manhood and the Creation of the United States*, by Cornell University Press, in 2009. More recently, his work has explored the quartering of British troops in colonial America and the problems that arose from British attempts to force Americans to house their troops. His monograph on this topic, which will be published this year (2019) is titled *Quarters: The Accommodation of the British Army and the Coming of the American Revolution.*, Prof. McCurdy is quick to thank the university and colleagues for the support that he has received over the years that has enabled him to become so productive as a scholar, “I am appreciative of the support I’ve received from the department, university, and colleagues to pursue my research and publish two books.”

## *Faculty Focus on Professor Mary Strasma*



Prof. Mary Prof. Strasma joined the history faculty at Eastern Michigan in 2009, and since that time she has taught Latin American and World History to hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students at Eastern. She is among the growing number of history faculty who employ the “Reacting to the Past” pedagogy in their classroom, and she has found this new approach to teaching history to be extremely effective and rewarding. When asked about the best part of teaching, Prof. Strasma explained that apart from the good energy she receives from instructing, she enjoys working with students and seeing their “lightbulb moments.”

For her undergraduate studies she attended Macalester University in St. Paul, Minnesota, and then went on to pursue her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Latin American History at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. While finishing up her dissertation, she taught at St. John’s University and Shepherd University before joining the faculty at Eastern in 2009.

As a teacher, Prof. Strasma has seen extreme improvement in her students since beginning to use “Reacting to the Past” games within her classrooms. She employs a variety of games and loves the depth of student engagement with the historical material that she sees when using this teaching method. She has also been amazed to see students continuing to collaborate and research material outside of the classroom beyond what was expected, to achieve their character’s goals. She suspects that students are propelled to go deeper into the historical context and events of the time either because they get caught up in the material, or because they are seeking a competitive edge when pursuing their character’s goals.

Last year Prof. Strasma published an article titled, “What happens after Reacting: A Follow-up Study of Past RTTP Participants at a Regional Public University,” that she co-authored with several of her colleagues at Eastern. In this article she and her co-authors explored the positive, long term effects that the “Reacting” method had on students. They argued that students who engaged in classrooms that used the “Reacting to the Past” method early on in their college careers were more engaged, worked harder, and acquired better research skills in their college careers. Prof. Strasma and her collaborators also showed that as a result of exposure to the “Reacting” pedagogy, students developed good communication skills, were better at critical thinking and argumentation, and in understanding sources.

Prof. Strasma’s early academic work focused upon the changing perceptions of the Chilean people toward the repressive dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1988). More recently, she has begun examining how pro-Pinochet partisans have started to argue that the events that took place under the Socialist government of Salvadore Allende in the years before Pinochet’s coup in 1973 actually necessitated both the coup and the repression that it brought. She now wants to examine the conflicting views of the pre-coup years and make sense out of the competing views that have emerged about this period and the Socialist government that ruled over Chile in these years. For this research project, she noted that many of the sources she needs, such as newspapers, have been digitally archived and are readily available online. She is optimistic that she can carry out much of her research while in Michigan, using these online sources. However, at some point she will need once again to travel to Chile to speak directly with policy-makers, historians, and activists in order to complete her research.

## A Student Reacts to the Reacting to the Past Experience



Jared Marsh's experience using the "Reacting to the Past" format to study history gives glowing testimony to the effectiveness of this approach to teaching history. Jared is a chemistry and biology major at Eastern Michigan University, and he hopes eventually to become a doctor. In the fall of 2018 he enrolled in Prof. Mary Strasma's World History course (Hist 110) because he loves history and wanted to incorporate more history classes into his schedule. When asked what he thought about the "Reacting to the Past" game in which he participated while in Prof. Strasma's class, his eyes lit up. He expressed his appreciation for the immersion into historical events that the game allowed, as his class studied the effects of nineteenth century industrialization in England. The game that Jared participated in, titled "Rage Against the Machine," focuses upon the conflicts and debates among the laboring class during England's Industrial Revolution.

Jared elaborated on his experience by noting his surprise at how wrapped up he got into the mindset of his character and how the historically based debates that the students engaged in during class created conflicts for his character to which he had to strategically adapt and adjust. Moreover, he noted that the game provided a certain context for the outcomes of historical events that a student would not typically gain

from reading a textbook. He also liked how the flow of the "Rage Against the Machine" game illuminated the humanity of historical events and demonstrated the great impact that certain events and political decisions had on the everyday lives of these people. Understanding this led to a better grasp of why people acted the way that they did.

The flexibility of the game, he recalls, encouraged students to become immersed in the study of the events, arguments, and people of the Industrial Revolution, and he also believed that this was what gave the game its element of entertainment as well. While the historical debates and goals of his own character remained fixed, he found other students pushing other arguments for their characters as they strove to achieve their character's goals. These counter-forces often impeded or conflicted with the arguments and goals that Marsh was trying to advance for his own character, and this led him to identify with the same desperation or panic that his character faced during these historical events when his own desires were being threatened. He noted that this immersion into the life and mind of the characters of the game went beyond the classroom; when he and his classmates saw one another outside of class they referred to each other by their characters' names!

Jared also mentioned that his desire to perform well in the game motivated him to do research on the Industrial Revolution outside of the classroom, to gain a better understanding of what options his character had in obtaining his objectives in the game. The strategic advantage gained by doing research outside of class was quickly realized by other students as well. He observed that the innovative "Reacting to the Past" pedagogy, coupled with the more traditional elements of study that Prof. Strasma used, gave him a deeper understanding of history than he has ever gotten from any of his other history classes. He wishes that there were more classes like the one he took from Prof. Strasma.

## More Photos from the Yankee Air Museum



Female transfer pilots ferried newly built bombers to bases across the country, where their Army crews would then put them into service in the war

## *Graduating Senior Max Harrison Reflects on His Time at Eastern*



In the fall 2016, Max Harrison began his undergraduate studies at Eastern Michigan University. Now in his senior year, he will soon graduate with a double major in History and Mathematics. On the history side of things, Max has gained a lot of experience working as an intern in several archives. This has enabled him to pursue his own area of historical interest, which is the history of rural America, and particularly the American Midwest. He is especially interested in studying rural education, which he believes “is representative of these community dynamics.”

Max said that while every one of the professors he has had in the department has been fantastic, his “favorite professors to be around are those who are passionate about their field and serious about their research; ones that he can tell love what they do. Professor McCurdy, Professor Nation and Professor Delph all stand out to him in this way.” When asked about his favorite

history course he noted that Professor John Knight’s Arab-Israeli Conflict course was at the top of his list. Max explained that he knew “very little about the historical context of the tension in the region” before he took the course, and he “gained a deeper appreciation of the ongoing conflict there.” Additionally, he noted that the two travel courses he participated in, Professor Ramold’s “Civil War and Reconstruction” course and Professor Delph’s “Power Place and Image in Florence and Rome,” have been the best part of his undergraduate education. Max is an advocate for “immersing people in history,” and believes that “there is really no better way to learn about those topics.”

In addition to his studies, Max has volunteered at the Ypsilanti Historical Society since he began taking classes at Eastern. Max’s favorite part of working for the Ypsilanti Historical Society was “getting to learn the history of a community almost entirely through primary sources and discussion.” Before moving to Ypsilanti, he knew very little about the community, and being able to learn about the history of Ypsilanti through working in the archives has been very exciting. He also observed that his weekly time in the museum gave him something to look forward to, and acted as an excellent stress-reliever when things at school were getting tough. The two biggest projects he has worked on at the society include reorganizing the Education and EMU General Subject files, along with cataloging, organizing, and cleaning up the archival stacks.

Although he doesn’t see himself working as an archivist after college, Max readily acknowledged “how important this work has been to helping [him] as a historian.” Because of his experience working in the archives in Grand Blanc as well as in Ypsilanti, having to do archival research for his college history papers was never been intimidating to him. In the end, Max says that he looks at his volunteering “as his contribution to the greater Ypsilanti community. Preserving and interpreting the history of the community assures him that he is making a difference during his time in college.” Max will continue his studies this fall, when he will enter the Ph.D. program in History at Iowa State University.

## World WAR II: Stepping Into the Past



John Frye, currently a student in Eastern's M.A. program in History, has always been fascinated with military history. During his undergraduate and graduate career at Eastern, he has taken full advantage of the multiple opportunities afforded him by the domestic travel and study abroad courses created by the History Section's professors. As a traveler both internationally and domestically, he has visited multiple locations to study the history that unfolded there.

His participation in these courses included two of Prof. Ramold's programs, his "Civil War: Combat, Culture and Place," which he enrolled in during the winter term of 2014, and Ramold's "Operation Overlord: D-Day and Beyond," which John first did in 2015. He enjoyed these experiences so much that he actually went on both programs a second time! Further

pursuing his interest in military history, he travelled with Prof. Kauffman in the summer of 2017 to study World War II and the Holocaust in Poland. This experience led him to participate the following year in another of Prof. Kauffman's study abroad programs, "Nazi Germany: History and Memory," in which he visited the cities of Munich, Nuremberg, and Berlin.

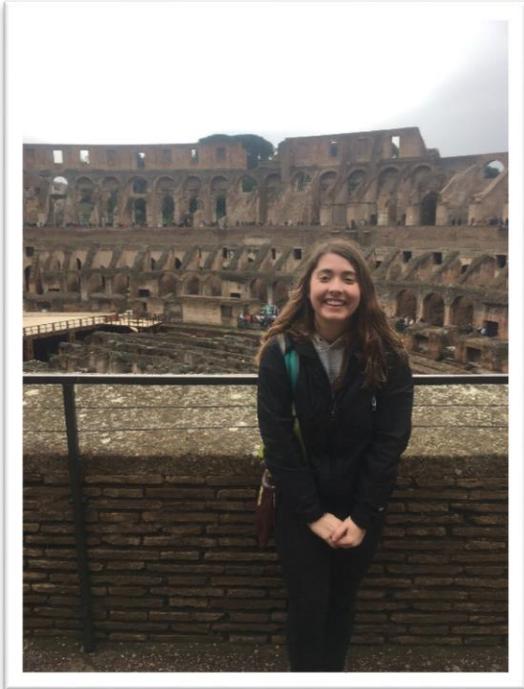
"One good thing about traveling history courses is that they give a better understanding of history," John said. "Standing on the beaches of Normandy or the multiple battlefields of the Civil War is humbling and really makes a person feel small." As a military historian, John mentioned that being able to see these remarkable sites first hand after reading many books about them over the years really puts into perspective the details he loves about military history. He finds the tactical details, the deployment of new technologies, and the amphibious operations used in both theatres of the Second World War to be

extremely fascinating. Being able to visit the bombed-out German bunkers on Normandy beach, and to see and hold artifacts from the different battles, which he had the opportunity to do at the D-Day Museum in France, was life changing. John also enjoyed following the movements of the 24th Michigan Infantry Regiment and Michigan's Iron Brigade during the Civil War on Prof. Ramold's travel course.

John encourages students to participate in these history courses that unfold outside of the classroom. "Traveling is always fun," John explained, "but you get to go with friends and great professors from EMU to see these places." He even noticed that students who were not majoring in History returned from these travel courses with a newfound appreciation for the subject.



## *When in Rome...*



Study abroad is one of the most memorable and beneficial aspects of many students' academic careers. This is very much the case for Rachel Kindred, who participated in Prof. Delph's study abroad program in Italy, "Power, Place and Image in Florence and Rome, over winter break in 2018. As a double major in History and Art History, Rachel was inspired to take the leap and experience the history, culture, and art of late Medieval and Renaissance Florence and Rome first-hand for eight days during her junior year. Reflecting upon her time in Italy, she remarked that "my favorite part of the experience was to just be in Rome and Florence and be constantly surrounded by history. To walk past one-hundred year old or even one-thousand year old buildings all the time was pretty mind blowing."

Rachel's experience during her study abroad trip surpassed her expectations as she wandered the streets of Florence and Rome, and studied the history and art of these two cities in person. The work of art that left the greatest impression on her was Michelangelo's David in Florence. "I've studied it numerous times in my art history classes," she said, "so to be able to see it in person was so amazing.

It's so much bigger than you think it's going to be! I just couldn't help but be in awe." She also enjoyed visiting St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, and climbing to the top of the dome of the Cathedral in Florence, from where she had a spectacular view of the city and surrounding countryside.

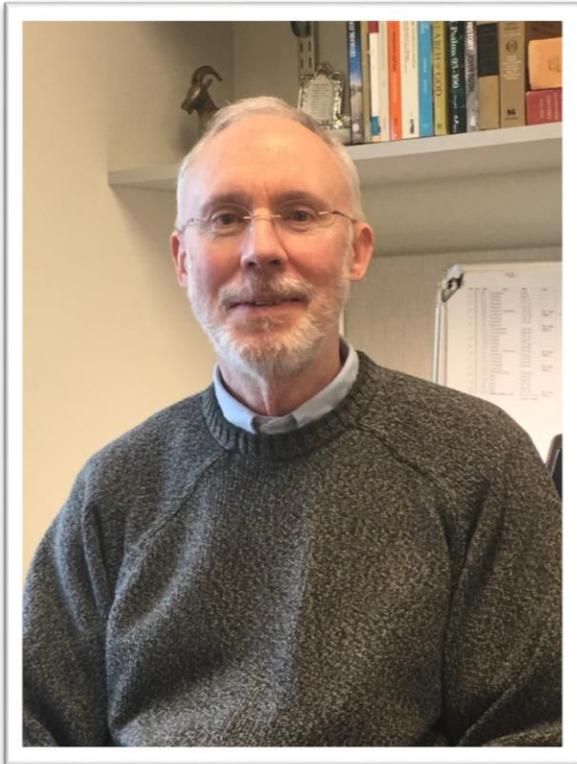
In addition to learning a great deal about the history and culture of Florence and Rome, Rachel also developed a deep appreciation for the Italian cuisine that she had. It was, she said, amazing. "I don't think there was a single meal I had that wasn't absolutely delicious." And like so many other students who have participated in this program, she became deeply fond of gelato.



As a final remark, Rachel urges students who might be considering doing study abroad to overcome their fears and do it! Don't worry about what friends will go along, or wonder if you will be lonely on the trip. You'll absolutely make friends, she said, maybe even life-long friendships, on your trip. Don't think of it as a risk, but a means to enrich your perspective and place within this world.



## *Dr. Phil and the Phoenicians*



One of the most fascinating yet least well-known of all ancient cultures is that of the Phoenicians. The Phoenicians were primarily merchants, who by 1200 BCE had settled in and around the area we know today as Lebanon, at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. Sailing from the cities of Byblos, Tyre, and Sidon, their ships crossed the Mediterranean, and eventually they established the city of Carthage, in modern day Tunisia. Ancient inscriptions and texts left by these people can be found across the breadth of the Mediterranean, and yet until recently, these historical artifacts had attracted little attention from historians.

This is changing dramatically, thanks in no small part to the work of Prof. Phil Schmitz, a member of the History Faculty at Eastern. Since joining the history faculty as a lecturer in 1990, Prof. Schmitz has devoted his academic career to studying and translating these inscriptions, and publishing his findings so that the larger academic community can profit from his work. Prof. Schmitz developed an interest in the Phoenicians during his graduate studies at the University of Michigan where, while working on his M.A. degree (1981) he studied Near Eastern Languages and Literatures. For his Ph.D. work, he focused on Carthaginian inscriptions and what they revealed about this fifth-century BCE Phoenician city and its culture.

Even before he received his Ph.D. in 1990, Prof. Schmitz began publishing studies dealing with Phoenician culture and inscriptions. Since that time, he has turned out a veritable torrent of articles and books that have allowed scholars to gain a much better understanding of these people and their important contributions to the ancient world. Among his forty some articles are many that deal with the grammar of the Phoenician language, and efforts to understand how it was vocalized. Several articles provide important translations of newly discovered inscriptions or revisions of older, erroneous translations. Perhaps more intriguing for students would be his deciphering of Phoenician graffiti splashed on pottery, or his findings published in an article titled “The Owl in Phoenician Mortuary Practice.” A further article derived from limestone inscriptions, describes Phoenician sacrificial practices. In addition to his many articles, Prof. Schmitz published a collection of his essays in 2012 in a book titled *The Phoenician Diaspora: Epigraphic and Historical Studies*. Currently he is co-authoring a second book titled *Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions*.

Prof. Schmitz’s labors have not gone unnoticed. He was hired as a tenure-track professor in History at Eastern in 1993, and now holds the rank of Full Professor. Outside the university, his scholarship has been acknowledge both at home and abroad. In 2013 he was asked to write a chapter on “Phoenician and Punic Religion” for the prestigious *Cambridge History of Religions in the Classical World* series. Over the years he has served on numerous editorial boards for journals, and has presented his work at scholarly conferences in Rome, Italy; Oxford, England; Mainz, Germany, and Beirut, Lebanon. The academic world of Phoenician studies has benefited from and will continue to benefit greatly from the work of Prof. Schmitz.

## *History Graduate Writing Workshop*

In 2017 graduate students Irene Mora, Goral Bhatt, and Amberlynn Britt came together to form the History Graduate Writing Workshop. The Writing Workshop seeks to help graduate students make connections with fellow classmates, and meets for peer review of coursework, presentations, term papers, and thesis chapters. The group also provides a space for graduate students to hold conversations about graduate work and gain insight into the next steps to take after completing the M.A. degree. The Workshop members meet monthly, usually at the end of the month. The current president is Goral Bhatt, and supporting her are two officers: Lacey Opdycke and Joshua Ringuette.

Many students who attend meetings note that the Writing Workshop is an excellent opportunity to improve their writing skills and gain new friends. Jesse Yaeger, who started the graduate program in the fall 2018 semester, noted that she “wanted to make connections with others so we could be supportive of each other and our studies.” She was especially grateful for the workshop because she was working on a 30 page paper during the fall semester and needed some guidance. By attending the Writing Workshop, she was able to meet new friends and received “incredibly helpful advice about my own research, including some great ways to frame my research within the existing historiography.”

During the fall 2018 semester, the organization held a “Practice Your Presentation” workshop, open to both undergraduates and graduates, where students could meet and practice giving their presentations for the upcoming University of Toledo Phi Alpha Theta Colloquium. At this meeting each presenter gave their talk, held a question and answer session, and received positive and constructive feedback from their peers. Three members of the History Graduate Writing Workshop went on to present their work at the Toledo conference: Maxwell Harrison, Lacey Opdycke, and Ann Remp. For each of these students, the practice session provided by the Writing Workshop helped to give them confidence and poise when they actually presented their papers at the conference. The Writing Workshop will continue to meet next year, and all graduate students in History are invited to attend.

### *More Photos from the Yankee Air Museum*



A massive fire destroyed the original home of the Yankee Air Museum in 2004. The museum reopened in October 2010 in its current location.

## Phi Alpha Theta



Eastern Michigan University is home to the Alpha Beta Mu chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the honor society for history students. Phi Alpha Theta has over 970 chapters throughout the United States and over 400,000 members. The Alpha Beta Mu chapter at Eastern was begun by Prof. Michael Homel in 1984. The 2018-2019 officers are President Roxanne Reinhardt, Vice- President Joshua Ringuette, Treasurer Isaac Vanderwal, and Secretary Alexander Nuttle. The faculty sponsor for the group is Prof. John McCurdy. In April 2018, the chapter initiated seven new members and continues to grow each year, offering a great deal of support to students academically and socially.

This year Eastern's chapter of Phi Alpha Theta hosted a number of events for history students, both graduate and undergraduate, to enjoy. In the fall, the society's members organized the History Section's "Meet and Greet Gathering," which took place at Tower Inn. During this event students were able to enjoy a meal, meet professors and other students, and get a feel for the History Program at Eastern.

Several times over the course of the year, the society hosted a pizza luncheon and invited in different students and professors who talked about classes, scholarships, travel courses, and much more. Another popular event, organized by Roxanne Reinhardt, was for chapter members to attend a lecture in the History Speaker Series, and then go out to dinner with the guest speaker afterwards. These get-togethers were organized to help history students gain access to the speakers so that they could ask critical questions about the speaker's talk or discuss their own research with him or her.

Outside of events hosted at Eastern Michigan, Members of Phi Alpha Theta also planned excursions to museums and other historical institutions throughout Michigan. This Halloween season, members visited the Governor Warner Mansion in Farmington, Michigan, where they had a tour of the home and enjoyed hot cider and donuts, and heard a lecture on ghosts around a campfire. The society also organized an end of the semester Christmas Party at Side Track in Depot Town. This allowed students to get together and relax after a long fall 2018 semester. The gathering also included a White Elephant book exchange, so everyone left dinner with a new book to read over Christmas Break. If you are interested in Phi Alpha Theta or any events hosted by the society, please contact Dr. John McCurdy or visit EMU History's Student Groups webpage.

### 2018 Inductees

Philip J. Kotwick  
Olivia Pearce  
Joshua Ringuette  
Sabrina Sawhney  
James C. Stumbo  
Taylor Styes  
Justin Wike

## *Alumni Spotlight*

### *Todd Reck*



Todd Reck's deep passion for history began when he was a young boy. His mother and father were both teachers, and he lightheartedly remarked that many family vacations were similar to school field trips in the way that his parents made the experience as educational as possible. These childhood experiences helped Todd grow to love the study of history and culture, and he decided when it came time to go to college that these were the things he was going to pursue.

Todd began his undergraduate studies at The University of Michigan in 1991, where he majored in history and anthropology. Developing a passion for archaeology as an undergraduate, he then attended Boston University where he received his Ph.D. in archeology in

2004. For this degree, he carried out archaeological excavations at Fort Michilmackinac on the shores of Lake Michigan. He then worked as a field supervisor for three seasons overseeing further archaeological digs at the fort.

Most students would have gladly stopped their educational careers at this point, but Todd's thirst for historical inquiry led him to enroll in Eastern's M.A. program in History in the fall of 2004. He did this with the goals of strengthening his teaching skills and gaining a deeper knowledge of history, to compliment his archeological background. For his concentration in U.S. history, Todd had the opportunity to study with Profs. Chamberlain, Vinyard, and Homel, while his concentration in European history enabled him to take classes with Profs. Moss and Delph. One of the highlights of his time at Eastern was his study abroad trip to Florence and Rome, on Prof. Delph's winter break program in 2006. Todd received the Marilyn Hill Scholarship from the History Section to help finance this learning experience.

Todd also worked as a graduate assistant in History, helping various professors in the classroom, and as an assistant to the department head. In this latter capacity he developed skills handling enrollment data, managing student records, and processing evaluations. Upon receiving his master's degree in the winter of 2006, he taught history on the community college level for several years.

Currently Todd works for the University of Wisconsin in Madison, as the Divisional Manager for Student Experience. Here Todd works on student retention for the university, and also builds relationships between campus partners, enrollment staff, and financial aid. His job aligns well with his passion for higher education and working with students to achieve their educational goals.

## *Alumni Spotlight*

### *Cassandra Thayer*



Cassandra Thayer's graduate school journey began at Eastern Michigan University in the fall of 2015, when she began working on her M.A. degree in History. Cassie came to Eastern after having completed her undergraduate degree in history at the University of Michigan - Flint. She was attracted to Eastern's graduate program in History because of its reputation. She recalled quite a few people in UM-Flint's history program had gone on to receive their master's degree in history from Eastern, and had loved everything about the program. Additionally, one of her professors at UM-Flint, Dr. John Ellis, was an Eastern alumnus, and he pointed out the program to her because he believed it would fit her interests.

Cassie's graduate experience at Eastern allowed her to work in history as well as in the other areas she was passionate about: academic libraries, archives, and preservation. "I knew my love of history was too broad to dedicate my study to one area of research," she explained. Thus while working on her degree in history she also worked at the Bruce T. Halle Library for three years at the Information Desk, where she assisted patrons with research and worked on special projects with the information librarian. She also worked as an intern in the library's archives, where she made a cased display on EMU Geography Professor Mark S.W. Jefferson and his time as chief cartographer of the American Delegation to the Paris

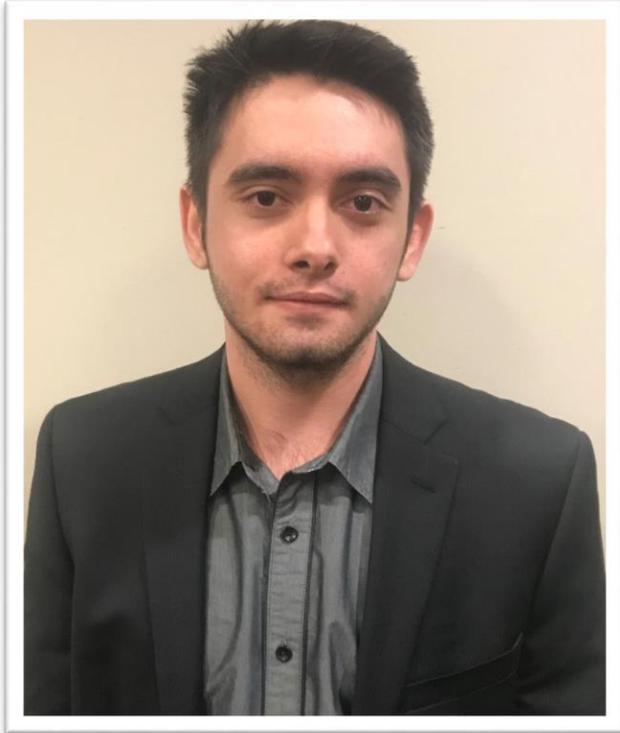
Peace Conference in 1919.

She noted what an important part her membership in various organizations was to her graduate experience at Eastern. "I was a proud member of the Student History Association and served as Student Vice-President of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society," she noted excitedly. In addition to completing the History M.A. program, she also took many historical preservation courses to receive a Cultural Museum Studies Certificate. Cassie now works as a Senior Media Assistant for LSA Technology Services at the University of Michigan.

Cassie has a few pieces of advice for current graduate students in history. Consider participating "in organizations such as the Student History Association in order to meet new people," she urged. "They are students just like you and can form a support system that is invaluable if you find yourself struggling." Additionally, she pointed out that is important to seek opportunities to present your research. She explains that this serves as a significant way to build confidence as well as a successful resume. Finally, she believes that each student should take advantage of Eastern's various study abroad programs. After studying abroad twice, she noted that she made some of her best friendships on these trips, in addition to seeing first hand many of the places she had been studying.

## *Opperman Fellowship*

### *Alex Logan*



This year's Opperman Fellow Scholarship recipient is Alex Logan, who began his graduate studies in history this past fall (2018). The goal of this two year fellowship is to attract outstanding students into the M.A. program in History at Eastern, and offer them broad support while they complete their degree. Opperman Fellows are expected to enter the thesis track of the M.A. program, and having completed their studies at Eastern, move on to the Ph.D. level.

Alex, though now a United States' citizen, was born in Romania and grew up in Gabon, Africa, where he graduated from a French high school. He came to America in 2012 and enrolled in Delta College, where he earned an Associate Degree of Arts. During this time, he also worked as a summer research fellow at The University of Michigan in the Bicentennial Office. While working as a research fellow at Michigan, he began to explore the archives housed in the Bentley Library as well as the Gerald Ford Presidential Library. He received the Presidential Transfer Scholarship from Wayne State University, where he graduated with B.A. in Political Science and History in the summer of 2018. After

graduation, Alex knew he wanted to attend graduate school and began to search for scholarships.

Knowing that Prof. Jesse Kauffman taught on the history faculty at Eastern played a big role in his decision to choose the school for his graduate studies. Alex explained that "it is not easy to find a faculty with the exact same areas of interests" as the student, and his areas of interest aligned with the areas in which Prof. Kauffman specializes. He was also assured that he would be properly advised for his thesis, which further persuaded him to come to Eastern. Already attracted to Eastern's history program, when one of his professors at Wayne State told him about the Opperman Fellowship, he quickly applied for it. He was delighted, then, when he received news in the summer of 2018 that he had been awarded this prestigious fellowship in history.

Alex's research focuses on French and Romanian relations from the nineteenth through the twentieth centuries, with an emphasis on the First World War. Additionally, he is also interested in better understanding "the physical and psychological impact of WWI on the soldiers who served in the conflict." When asked what inspired his research, he said that his cultural background, being born in Romania, and his experience in a French high school were major influences. His interest intensified when he realized the current lack of scholarship and research done on Romanian history.

Alex notes that so far his experience as a graduate student in History at Eastern has been pleasant. He has found his professors to be friendly, and they have made his classes enjoyable. He also appreciates that the faculty are readily available and eager to answer any questions he may have.

## Speaker Series

This year the History Section's Speaker Series featured talks by a wide variety of historians. Students and faculty heard presentations on subjects ranging from how historians can use tribal archives effectively, to the struggle by black women in Washington D.C. to gain civil and voting rights in the era leading up to and through World War II. The crowded auditoriums testify to how popular this series is, and students in history greatly appreciate how these lectures expose them to cutting edge research and new trends in history.

Eric Hemenway, who is the Director of Archives for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, visited Eastern in September 2018. He discussed what his job consisted of on a day to day basis in the archives, and what his goals were for the field of Native American archival research. He also explored how tribal archives are being used today in the field of historical interpretation.

He was followed in October by Gregory Evans Dowd, Professor of History at the University of Michigan. Prof. Dowd's talk on "fake news" was based on his book *Groundless: Rumors, Legends, and Hoaxes on the Early American Frontier*. He discussed why "half-truths, deliberate lies, and outrageous legends" emerged in the first place, how they grew, and why they were given such credence in the New World. Interestingly enough, he explained how Benjamin Franklin used his printing press to deliberately spread rumors and half-truths.

November featured a talk by Dr. Marlous van Waijenburg, who is currently a visiting scholar in the Department of Economics at the University of Michigan. She produced a stimulating talk on the economic prospects for sub-Saharan Africa, arguing that the recent population boom, coupled with increasing industrialization, may lead to the eradication of much poverty by 2030 in Africa.

Students and faculty alike were enthralled by the presentation of Tracy Neumann, Assistant Professor in History at Wayne State University. Prof. Neumann shared her research on the redevelopment of Pittsburgh in the 1970s and 1980s. She explained how the city government used enticements and tax breaks to persuade companies to build their headquarters in Pittsburg, replacing the former steel mills.

A talk by Mary-Elizabeth Murphy, an Associate Professor in History at Eastern Michigan, focused on a chapter of her newly published book: *Jim Crow Capital: Women and Black Freedom Struggles in Washington, D.C., 1920–1945*. Prof. Murphy detailed how black women waged an early civil rights movement in Washington D.C. during the 1930s. Prof. Murphy's talk revealed the ways in which these early struggles for civil and voting rights in Washington, D.C. shaped the postwar black freedom struggle, and still resonate today.

Joseph W. Ho, Assistant Professor in History at Albion College, closed out this year's Speaker Series in March. His presentation focused on the Second Sino-Japanese War and how recently discovered photographs, films, private letters, and transnational encounters shaped, and were shaped by, wartime perceptions. He illustrated how, by examining primary sources, such as the work of American missionaries, one can see "widespread violence, political fragmentation, and local contingencies in surprising, world-changing ways."

A slate of top notch, interesting historians made this year's Speaker Series very successful, and students and faculty alike greatly appreciate this forum which exposes them to new and exciting areas of research and historical methodology. Plans are already underway to ensure that next year's series will be equally exciting.

## *Honoring Faculty Legacies*

This past year saw the retirement of two longtime members of the History faculty at Eastern, Prof. George Cassar and Prof. JoEllen Vinyard. Together they taught and served on the History faculty at Eastern for a combined total of 82 years. Throughout his career as a teacher and scholar, Prof. Cassar taught military history to hundreds of students, while keeping up a vigorous schedule of research and writing. When he retired at the end of winter term in 2018, Prof. Cassar was the second longest serving faculty member on Eastern Michigan's campus, having started teaching here in the fall of 1968. Prof. Vinyard joined the History faculty at Eastern Michigan in 1986 as our Michigan historian, and for 32 years taught U.S. and Michigan History. Reflecting upon her career at Eastern, Prof. Vinyard said that working with students and fostering their educational development as they grew into professionals was her greatest pleasure. To honor each of these two outstanding professors and the legacies that they leave, we are creating two new scholarships in their names.

The first scholarship is the Cassar Scholarship, which focuses on assisting graduate students with a passion for military history. Prof. Cassar created a scholarship for a Philosophy graduate student to honor the memory of his brother, Stephen G. Cassar. His colleagues in History wanted to honor Prof. Cassar in a similar fashion, and thus are creating this scholarship which will be given on an annual basis to a graduate student working in military history.

The scholarship that the History section is naming after Prof. Vinyard was originally called the History Essay Prize. The History Essay Prize was created in 2016 by Prof. John Knight, to recognize the best paper written by an undergraduate in history each academic year. This has been a very successful competition, with a large number of students submitting their work for consideration over the past three years. Because of her dedication to the success of our undergraduate students during her teaching career, the Essay Prize is being renamed after Prof. Vinyard as the JoEllen Vinyard History Essay Prize.

## Help fund two new student awards!

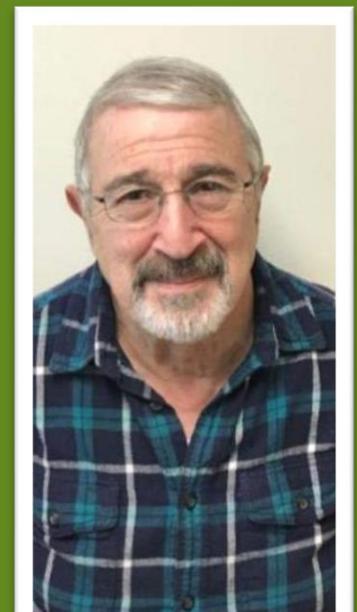


Please support our campaign for the  
JoEllen Vinyard History Prize and  
the George H. Cassar Scholarship in  
History at

[donate.emich.edu/project/15373](https://donate.emich.edu/project/15373)

Every gift helps us reach our goal of  
raising \$10,000 by May 17.

Please contact Department Head James Egge  
at [jegge@emich.edu](mailto:jegge@emich.edu) with any questions.



# Undergraduate Symposium Spotlight



The annual Undergraduate Symposium is one of the most exciting times of the year for history students at Eastern, as it allows them to present their research to a wide audience and demonstrate what they have learned. Many of the students who have participated in the Symposium look back on their experience with pride and reflect on how important this experience was to their education. Catherine Waldecker, who presented her work during her junior year in the 2018 Undergraduate Symposium, is one such student. Catherine is majoring in History and Anthropology, with a focus on women in Medieval Europe and in the Americas. Eventually she would love to work for a museum or in historic preservation.

For the 2018 Symposium Catherine presented a piece titled “The White Woman’s Burden: Women’s Suffrage and American Imperialism.” This paper explored why a number of American women involved in the suffrage movement backed U.S. attempts to eradicate a movement for independence in the Philippines from 1899 to 1902. This was a piece that she had originally written for her Hist. 300 class that she took in the winter of 2017. However, the inspiration for the paper came to her after she had read an article on the subject in Hist. 336 Women in U.S. History since 1865 that she was taking the same

semester. Prof. Mary-Elizabeth Murphy, who was teaching the class in women’s history, was so impressed with the research paper that she encouraged Catherine to revise it for presentation in the Undergraduate Symposium. Spurred on by Prof. Murphy, she began working on the paper to get it ready for the Symposium.

After numerous drafts and endlessly rehearsing how she was going to present her research, it was finally time to deliver her paper. Catherine felt her previous experience in theatre helped her, because she loves being in front of an audience. She was also excited to share her academic interests with others who were equally interested in what she had to say. The questions and suggestion that she received from her audience delighted her as they gave her new perspectives, suggested material to look into, and even offered different avenues of research for her to think about for the future. Though theatre helped her acquire skills for talking in front of an audience, she believes that the Symposium gave her new skills in presenting her academic work in a more professional setting that she believes she will use again in the future.

## 2018 Undergraduate Symposium Presenters

*The Gospel of Thomas: An Examination of the History and Theology of a Religious Text*  
**Jack Collins**

*The Old English Translations Under King Alfred the Great*  
**Katlyn Dudek**

*Jacqueline Cochrane and the Forgotten Female Pilots of World War II*  
**Lacey Opdycke**

*The American Revolution and Evangelical Thought*  
**Roxanne Reinhardt**

*Truman and Israel: A Personal Connection*  
**Nadine Sabri**

*The White Woman’s Burden: Women’s Suffrage and American Imperialism*  
**Catherine Waldecker**

# Graduate Research Conference Spotlight



When invited by Prof. Delph to present his work in the Graduate Research Conference in March of 2018, Daniel Bowlin was a bit apprehensive about appearing before a large audience and sharing his research. At the same time, due to his background in radio and broadcasting, he was not quite as apprehensive as he might have been. This prior experience, coupled with his own enthusiasm in sharing his research, culminated in a very positive session for Daniel in last year’s Graduate Research Conference.

Prior to transferring to Eastern Michigan University to pursue his interests in History and Media, Daniel had attended the Specs Howard School of Broadcast Arts, where he studied sound engineering and then pursued a career in radio. He then attended Schoolcraft College where he discovered his passion for History, and especially for the History of Religion. Daniel transferred to Eastern Michigan University in the fall of 2014, and completed his undergraduate studies in December of 2016, graduating Magna

Cum Laude. He then enrolled in the Graduate Program in History, and has been working toward his M.A. in History since that time, focusing on European and World History.

One of the first classes that he took as a graduate student was Prof. Delph’s seminar on the European Witchcraze in the fall of 2017. It was in this class that he began working on the paper that he would eventually present in the Graduate Research Conference, “Heresy, Housewives, and Martin Luther.” Daniel was led to this topic because he wanted to investigate Luther’s influence on and link to the belief in witches during the Reformation era. After reviewing this paper, Delph suggested to Daniel that he present it at the upcoming Research Conference in the following winter term. At first, Daniel was a bit nervous about the idea. He was not as anxious about presenting in front of people as some people would be, thanks to his past experience in radio broadcasting. What did make him a bit apprehensive was the idea of presenting research on a topic that he only had just dove into, and answering questions about it.

Any fears that he had melted away once he began presenting his work during his session at the 2018 Graduate Research Conference. He felt it very rewarding to share his interests with an audience that was engaged and interested in his topic, and the experience proved to be not nearly as stressful as his imagination made him believe it would be. Daniel enjoyed his session so much that he is excited to participate again in this year’s Graduate Research Conference, where he is scheduled to present a paper based upon his current research for his M.A. thesis titled, “The American Phantasmagoria: The Rise of Spiritualism in Antebellum America.” Daniel definitely recommends students take the opportunity to present their research in the Graduate Research Conference; the feedback that a student receives on his or her work, plus the experience of public speaking, are both very worthwhile.

## 2018 Graduate Research Conference Presenters

*Charles Horton Cooley and the Patterns of the Social Gospel*  
**Taylor Styes**

*Heresy, Housewives, and Martin Luther*  
**Daniel Bowlin**

*Diane Nash- No Retreat, No Surrender*  
**Sharon Burrell**

*Russian Witchcraft and Medicine*  
**Isaac Lee Klooster**

*King James VI and the North Berwick Witch-Hunt: Denmark Mattered*  
**Justin F. Krasnoff**

*Mujeres Forging a New Identity in Michigan*  
**Irene Mora**

*Double, Double Toil and Trouble,” James I and the Jacobean Witch Plays*  
**Jacquelyn Odum**

*Jean Bodin and his Demon-Mania: Witchcraft in Early Modern French Academic Thought*  
**Joshua Ringuette**

*White Power: Parallel Institutions in the United States and South Africa*  
**Goral Bhatt**

## *List of Graduates from M.A Programs in History 2018*

### *Congratulations Graduates*

Sharon Burrell

*M.A. in History  
Winter 2018*

Megan Brunner

*M.A. in History  
Winter 2018*

Adam Franti

*M.A. in History  
Winter 2018*

James Pederson

*M.A. in Social Science  
Winter 2018*

Cassandra Thayer

*M.A. in History  
Winter 2018*

Sarah Burch

*M.A. in History  
Summer 2018*

James Middleditch

*M.A. in History  
Summer 2018*

David Ramunno

*M.A. in History  
Summer 2018*

Penny Wasalaski Adams

*M.A. in History  
Summer 2018*

Kadir Yapici

*M.A. in History  
Summer 2018*

### **Prof. Richard Nation**

We recently caught up with Prof. Prof. Nation, and asked him what he had been reading lately. As a former member of the 4-H Club, he is anxious to get his hands on a copy of *The 4-H Harvest: Sexuality and the State in Rural America*, by Gabriel N. Rosenberg. Prof. Nation explained that this book represents the first comprehensive history of the 4-H organization and explores how it transformed rural communities. Prof. Nation also wants to read *Queering the Countryside: New Frontiers in Rural Queer Studies* by Mary L. Gray, Brian J. Gilley, and Colin R. Johnson. He explained that this collection “is bringing queer theory into studying the countryside.” He noted that the word “countryside” that appears in the title of this work is used often in his field of study, and he wonders if this book will be a transformative work like others that have used the term in their titles. After talking to Prof. Nation, we see that professors, like students, are extremely busy during the semester, and look forward to picking up some new and interesting books to read in their free time.



## *Opperman and York Scholarships*

With the History Section offering nearly \$30,000 in scholarships each year, students majoring or minoring in History are able to benefit from generous donors who have decided to support students in achieving their academic goals. The scholarships range from those that help pay for tuition and fees to grants that will support students studying abroad. Two of these donors are Judge Daniel Opperman and George York, and both have very interesting stories.

Judge Daniel Opperman was born in Flint, Michigan and grew up on his family dairy farm in Millington, Michigan. He attended Eastern as a Presidential Scholar from 1974-1978, and majored in both History and Political Science. After graduating Magna Cum Laude in 1978, he attended Wayne State University School of Law from 1978 to 1981, where he was a member of the Wayne Law Review. Graduating Magna Cum Laude in 1981, he passed the State of Michigan Bar the same year. Currently, Judge Opperman is a Federal Bankruptcy Judge in the Eastern District of Michigan, and holds court in Flint and Bay City. “While no day is ‘typical,’ explains Judge Opperman, “I usually have either court hearings or trials every day of the week and conferences when I don’t have hearings or trials. We handle both consumer and commercial bankruptcies. The Eastern District of Michigan is one of the busiest courts in the USA.”

Judge Opperman has helped establish three different scholarships in history: the Opperman History Student Travel Fund, the Opperman History Research Fund, and the Opperman Fellowship in History. “Our motivation to donate,” explained Judge Opperman, “is a desire to give back to EMU and help increase student success and experiences at EMU.” At the time that he began to donate to the History Section, the real need was to offer help for students to travel abroad. This resonated with Judge Opperman, as he recalled being “lucky to go on one of Dr. Wittke’s groups in 1978 to West and East Germany (the country was divided then) and the experience was transformative.” This helped to establish the Opperman’s travel fund at EMU. Additionally, there was a need to get graduate students in History out of Southeast Michigan to do more archival research, so the Opperman History Research Fund was established. Finally, “the Graduate Committee, led by Dr. Delph and with the support of Dr. Nation, the Chair at the time, developed the concept of the Opperman Fellows.” Judge Opperman hopes that this will lead to a better experience for students at Eastern, and also to motivate professors and lecturers to continue their excellent work. In the end, he wants to emphasize giving back “to those people or institutions that make a difference to you and to come back to EMU to support whatever needs to be supported.”

A few years ago, little was known about the second donor, George Robert York, so Department Head Jim Egge and Prof. Richard Nation decided to learn more about his life. They discovered that George was born in 1924 in Strator, Illinois, and grew up in Dearborn, graduating from Fordson High School in 1943. He served in the U.S. Army and then attended both Paducah Junior College and Dearborn Junior College. He began his studies at Eastern in the early 1950s, where he majored in History and minored in English and Physical Education. He participated in Eastern’s History Club and was a member of Sigma Alpha Delta and Pi Gamma Nu. In 1954 George graduate with his B.S. from Eastern and also earned his State Secondary Certificate to teach high school. After college, he settled in Monterey, California where he worked as a waiter and later opened a successful restaurant, The York of Cannery Row.

Before his death in 1980, George set aside money in his will to be donated to Eastern Michigan University’s History Section to create a scholarship “for a male [history] student majoring in education.” This would later be changed to provide funding for any history student majoring in the Secondary Education program. In the end, students and faculty are very thankful for George York’s donation, as it continues to aid future educators achieve their academic goals.

## *Undergraduate Scholarships 2018*

**Elizabeth S. Adams Memorial  
Endowed Scholarship**

Nadine Sabri

**Gavin Clabaugh and Margaret  
Engle Travel Award**

Yura Kim

**Fred J. Ericson Memorial  
Endowed Scholarship**

Roxanne Reinhardt  
Catherine Waldecker

**George R. York Endowed  
Scholarship**

Hannah Miller  
Amanda Miotke

**Neil McLarty Merit Award  
Endowed Scholarship**

Joseph Aninos

**Elizabeth Warren Endowed  
Scholarship**

Arianna Gregor

**Esther Walker Barnard Scholarship**

Rebecca Clarke

**Friends of History & Philosophy  
Scholarship**

Rebecca Clarke

## *Graduate Scholarships 2018*

**Richard Henry "Hank" Abbott  
Memorial Endowed Scholarship**

Keli Boyd

**Richard Davis Goff Endowed  
Scholarship**

Goral Bhatt

**Opperman Fellowship in History**

Alex Logan  
Annabelle Nolasco

**Reinhart and Bert Wittke  
International Study Endowed  
Scholarship**

Goral Bhatt

## *Faculty Publications*

### *Prof. Mary-Elizabeth Murphy*

*Jim Crow Capital: Women and Black Freedom Struggles in Washington, D.C., 1920-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

### *Prof. Jesse Kauffman*

Prof. Kauffman saw his book, *Elusive Alliance: The German Occupation of Poland in World War I* (Harvard University Press, 2015), translated into Polish and published as *Iluzoryczne Przymierze* (Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 2018).

### *Prof. Phil Schmitz*

“General History of Phoenician Epigraphic Studies,” *Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici* 29 (2019): 1-7.

“Research Tools.” *The Oxford Handbook of the Phoenician and Punic Mediterranean*, ed. Carolina Lopez-Ruiz and Brian Doak. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

### *Prof. Mark Whitters*

“Story-Telling about the Seven among Christians, Jews, Muslims,” *Conversations with the Biblical World* (Spring 2018).

## *Prof. Mary-Elizabeth Murphy*

We recently sat down with Prof. Murphy to ask her what books she has been reading. On the fun side of her reading list are Elena Ferrante’s *Neapolitan Novels*, a series of four books that follow the lives of two sisters that live in Naples, Italy. A couple of memoirs have also captured Prof. Murphy’s attention, such as Eva Hagberg’s *How to be Loved*. This memoir is about a woman’s journey to obtain her Ph.D., but falling terribly ill while doing so. However, the vulnerable state her illness left her in brought her closer than ever to her friends and family.

Prof. Murphy has been reading several books for academic purposes, among them Saidiya Hartman’s work, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*. She came across this work while attending a conference on black girlhood at the University of Michigan where Hartman was the keynote speaker. Another book she is reading is *Silk Stockings and Socialism: Philadelphia’s Radical Hosiery Workers from the Jazz Age to the New Deal*. It was one of those books that she had known about for a while, and finally she decided to read it in order to gain a first-hand impression of the work. Like many of her colleagues in History, Prof. Murphy appears to enjoy a balance between reading academic works and reading books for pleasure.



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