

May 2016

History Department News

The University of Maine

Recent PhDs:

Barbara Lindsay
The Gospel of the Frontier: Christian Missionaries and Native Americans in the French and British North American Northeast, 1774-1764
 Defended Dec. 2015

Adam Lee Cilli
"The Greatest Good": Black Reformers and the Early Civil Rights Movement in Pittsburgh, 1915-1945
 Defended Jan. 2016

Erik Reardon
Managing the River Commons: Fishing and New England's Rural Economy, 1760-1860
 Defended Apr. 2016

Rachel Snell
"The Place of Happiness": Recipes, Cookbooks and the Negotiation of Domesticity in Anglo-America, 1830-1880
 Defended Apr. 2016

Inside this issue:

New Faculty in the History Department: Meet Anne Knowles, Mark McLaughlin, and Joel Anderson, 1, 7-9

Notes from Chair, 2

Faculty Updates, 2-3

Reading Between the Lines (and in the Margins): Rachel A. Snell and Her Work on Nineteenth-Century Cookbooks and Domesticity in the U.S. and Canada, 4

Graduate Student Updates, 4-5

Alumni Spotlight, 6

How to Contribute, 10

New Faculty in the History Department Meet Anne Knowles, Mark McLaughlin, and Joel Anderson

If you visited Stevens Hall in the past year, you may have noticed some new faces in the halls and a few new names on the office doors. Though the UMaine History Department lost two beloved faculty members—Jay Bregman and Alex Grab—to retirement in 2015, we have been fortunate enough to gain three new members during the 2015-2016 year. These new faculty possess a wide variety of skills and expertise, from historical GIS and mapping to environmental history and medieval studies. As Anne Knowles, Mark McLaughlin, and Joel Anderson continue to distinguish themselves in their fields while teaching at UMaine, their areas of research will become important cornerstones in the department's future, attracting new students and bringing accolades to the university for decades to come.

Anne Knowles: Historical Geographer and Digital Innovator

Anne Knowles joined the department in August 2015. She is an expert in historical geography and various kinds of mapping and digital research methods, including GIS (Geographic Information Systems). Before coming to UMaine, she taught at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth, at Wellesley College, and for thirteen years at Middlebury College. She has received numerous awards for her innovative research, most recently a prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship (2015), the John Brinkerhoff Jackson Book Award from the Association of American Geographers (2014), and the American Ingenuity Award for Historical Scholarship from *Smithsonian Magazine* (2012). Anne's TED-Ed talk on how she used GIS to study the battle of Gettysburg is available online, as is the interactive map of the battle that she developed with the Smithsonian for the 150th anniversary of the battle in July 2013 (<https://umaine.edu/history/faculty/anneknowles/>).

During the past year, Knowles taught a diverse range of courses organized along different historical geographic themes, from the history of cartography to the experience of American immigrants, American landscapes, and the historical geography of North America. In fall 2016 she will be teaching a 400-level course on the Holocaust and a senior seminar on digital and spatial history. Knowles is thrilled to be at the University of Maine and has been overwhelmed by the warm welcome from faculty, staff, and students. She also enjoys being challenged once more as a professor, having transitioned from a small, liberal arts college to a large research institution.



Anne Knowles at History Shop Talk, March 2016

Though Knowles comes to UMaine as a distinguished historical scholar, she did not begin her career in the field of history. She obtained her BA in English at Duke, then worked as a book editor for some years before going to graduate school to study historical geography. She earned an MSc and PhD in Geography at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In addition to her work as a historical geographer, she is also a lover of poetry and the arts, and often finds ways to incorporate her aesthetic and creative sensibilities into her research and teaching. Much of Knowles' work has been centered around historical GIS (HGIS), the use of geographic information systems to map and analyze spatial patterns, past landscapes, and change over time. She is one of the pioneers of this interdisciplinary field, having published the first book on HGIS, *Past Time, Past Place: GIS for History* (2002) and several other benchmark publications. (**"New Faculty" continued on page 7**)

Notes from the Chair

By Stephen Miller



Hello Alumni! As promised, we are back with our annual newsletter. Things here in Stevens Hall are finally quieting down after another busy year which witnessed the arrival of new faces and the departure of some very familiar ones. This May, we said goodbye to Suzanne Moulton and Ulrike Livingston who ran things here for us for many years. Suzanne was with us for 28 years! I don't think there was ever a question asked by a student or faculty to which Suzanne didn't have the answer. She knew the ins and outs of the university better than anyone and mentored our students at such a critical time in their lives. Ricki joined us in 2008 and welcomed everyone who walked through the office doors. She contributed so much to administering our grad program. They both will be sorely missed.

In our last newsletter, I mentioned the new faculty we had just hired. All of them have lived up to what we expected and much more. Joel Anderson joined us as our new Medievalist. Joel received his PhD from Cornell. He specializes in the Icelandic world and introduced our first history course with an exclamation point in the title: The Vikings! Joel is working on a program for next year to bring a workshop to campus to discuss Icelandic Sagas. Mark McLaughlin arrived in January from the University of New Brunswick's History program. Mark is an environmental historian who works on New Brunswick's forest industries. Mark holds a joint appointment in Canadian American Studies. Mark has developed a new course on the History of Comics. Last but not least, Anne Kelly Knowles joined us from Middlebury College. Anne is an historical geographer who is currently involved in an interdisciplinary collaboration raising new questions and providing new insights into the Holocaust. Her work has been supported by a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and more recently a National Endowment for the Humanities Grant. Thanks to Anne we now have a new Digital History Lab set up on the first floor of Stevens. When you are visiting us next, please ask to take a look!

This Spring, we held our annual Phi Alpha Theta Induction and History Department Awards ceremony. As always, it was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our graduate and undergraduate students. We have been so lucky over the years to receive generous donations from our alumni, which allow us to honor our students and support their continuing work in the field of history. We also welcomed back Larry Richards, a 1970 graduate from the UMaine history program and Honors College. Larry is a strategic advisor and project manager and the founder of the P-BEC Design Team. Larry spoke to our graduating seniors about how they can use the critical thinking, research methods, and analytical skills they learned from us when they leave UM and venture out into the business world. If any of you are interested in meeting and networking with our students, please drop us a line. I am sure they would love to talk with our alumni.

I want to thank everyone for their support of the History Department at the University of Maine. Whenever you are in Orono, please stop by!

*** Faculty Updates ***

Joel Anderson: Joel Anderson joined the Department in the fall of 2015 after completing his PhD in Medieval Studies at Cornell. His final year of dissertation writing was funded by an Andrew W. Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship. At UMaine, he has enjoyed teaching a wide variety of courses, from lower-level surveys on ancient and medieval Europe to upper-level seminars on the Vikings. This spring, he spoke at an invited lecture on the uses of literacy in the medieval North at Colby College. In collaboration with the UMaine Humanities Center and the Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship of Scholars in Critical Bibliography, he looks forward to helping organize a series of campus events on "Sagas and Story" over the coming academic year (2016-17).

Mazie Hough: Mazie Hough has spent a great deal of time this year engaging with the work of public history. She has continued her work with the Maine Humanities Council in collaboration with domestic violence projects in the state as a discussion leader for literature and violence against women. She has also been working with a statewide group to develop an exhibit on women's suffrage, which will be housed in the Maine State Museum in 2019 and will contain biographies of Maine women suffrage activists and an online encyclopedia of women's suffrage in the US.

Richard Judd: Last year, Dick Judd's *Second Nature: An Environmental History of New England* (University of Massachusetts, 2014) won the Janes P. Hanlan Book Award for best book by a New England author. Judd was given the award in October 2015 at the fall meeting of the New England Historical Association. The *Historical Atlas of Maine* (University of Maine Press, 2014), which was co-edited with Judd by Stephen J. Hornsby and Michael J. Hermann, was the winner of the American Association of Geographers 2016 Globe Book Award. Judd is currently finishing two manuscripts on Henry David Thoreau. In *Concord's Poem: Henry David Thoreau and the Deep Experience of Place*, Judd examines decades' worth of Thoreau's journal entries related to the seasonal rhythms and natural history of Concord, Massachusetts and their broader significance for literary and environmental history. In *Finding Thoreau: The Meaning of Nature in the Making of an Environmental Icon*, he utilizes the diverse body of critical work on Thoreau as a lens through which to understand the American environmental imagination as it has shifted over the last 150 years.

Michael Lang: During the past year, Michael Lang published a chapter in the *Cambridge World History, Volume 1: Introducing World History, to 10,000 BCE*, which was edited by David Christian and published by Cambridge University Press in 2015). His chapter, entitled “Evolution, Rupture, and Periodization,” discusses the treatment of time in historical writing since the eighteenth century. He has also been involved with the American Historical Association and the Lumina Foundation in establishing curricular goals for university degrees in history, and he presented a paper on this topic at the AHA meeting in Atlanta during January of 2016. This year, Lang was appointed Director of the University of Maine’s International Affairs Program, which is an interdisciplinary major involving seven academic units.

Stephen Miller: Stephen Miller was interviewed for Criterion’s release of Bruce Beresford’s 1980 film *Breaker Morant*. The piece is included as one of the Director-Approved features. Miller also served as a consultant for BBC’s “Who Do You Think You Are?” In addition to chairing the Presidential Panel at this year’s annual meeting of the Society for Military History held in Ottawa, Miller co-presented with Jessica Miller a paper at the Britain and the World Conference, University of London, entitled “The Hague Convention and the South African War.”

Micah Pawling: This year, Micah Pawling’s article, “Wabanaki Homeland and Mobility: Concepts of Home in Nineteenth-Century Maine,” was accepted in *Ethnohistory*. He was also invited to present at a conference, entitled “Property: Claims to Ownership and Responsibilities of Stewardship,” which took place at Bates College in October of 2015. The paper he presented at that conference was “‘A labyrinth of uncertainties’: Penobscot River Islands, Family Land Lots, and Native Women Proprietors in Nineteenth-Century Maine.” Pawling is finishing his book manuscript on Wabanaki homeland and the importance of water in the nineteenth century.

Howard Segal: Segal’s major current project is editing a history of the University of Maine since 1965, when David Smith’s *The First Century* ends. The principal theme is the evolution of a traditional land-grant institution focusing on agriculture and engineering into a much larger and more diverse institution. The book will be published by the University of Maine Press in 2017. Segal has also guest edited a special issue (July 2017) of *Maine History* on the same topic. Segal also continues to review books and to write essays for the *Times Higher Ed* (London) and op-ed pieces for both the *Portland Press-Herald* and the *Bangor Daily News*. Additionally, Segal has become a blogger for the Bangor Daily News under the topic of “Education: Future Imperfect.” Segal has received the 2015 Lyman Tower Sargent Award for Distinguished Scholarship from the Society for Utopian Studies and will deliver the keynote address at the organization's 2016 annual meeting in October 2016.

Scott See: Scott See has been collaborating with three Canadian academics on a project entitled, “Unrest, Violence, and the Search for Social Order in British North America and Canada, 1749-1876.” The collaborators received a substantial Partnership Development Grant of \$119,600 from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council in Canada. Partner institutions supporting the project include the Gorsebrook Research Institute, the Canadian-American Center (UM), and the Atlantic Canada Studies Centre. This three-year project involving over twenty scholars examines how British North Americans, Indigenous Peoples, and Canadians envisaged social order, understood threats or challenges to it, and imagined how tools of government could be used to control disorder or achieve new social objectives. See contributed a paper on “Notions of Disorder and Violence in British North America” at the University of New Brunswick conference in June 2015. He also composed and delivered a formal summary of the twenty papers at the conference’s conclusion. The next series of formal papers were presented at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax in June 2016. More information on the project can be found on a blog post at the *Borealia* website: earlycanadianhistory.ca.

Stefano Tijerina: Stefano Tijerina had a book chapter accepted for publication, which will appear in *Lecturas Transnacionales: Relaciones Internacionales y Economía en las Américas en el Siglo XX*, a volume edited by María Aparecida Lopes and María Cecilia Zuleta. The title of the chapter is “Demarcando una Estrategia Latinoamericana: Las Iniciativas del Sector Privado Canadiense en Colombia, 1904-1953.” Tijerina also presented at the 23rd Biennial Conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States (ACSUS) in Las Vegas, Nevada and V Encuentro de Jóvenes Historiadores in Barcelona, Spain. He was appointed Director of the Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine in October of 2015 and created *The Glocal*, a *Bangor Daily News* blog, for the social justice organization.

Reading Between the Lines (and in the Margins)

Rachel A. Snell and Her Work on Nineteenth-Century Cookbooks and Domesticity in the U.S. and Canada

Rachel Snell defended her dissertation, *The Place of Happiness: Recipes, Cookbooks, and the Negotiation of Domesticity in Anglo-America, 1830-1880*, on April 21st of this year. Her PhD committee consisted of UMaine professors of history, Liam Riordan (chair), Scott See, and Mazie Hough; Ben Friendlander of the English Department, and Joe Conforti, who is a retired professor of American and New England Studies at the University of Southern Maine.

Originally from Maine, Snell earned her BA in history at UMaine in 2006. After completing her MA at the University of New Hampshire, Snell returned to her alma mater for her doctoral studies in 2010. She cited positive experiences working with her advisor, Liam Riordan, a supportive environment provided by both the History Department and the Honors College, and exciting teaching opportunities as being among her reasons for returning.

Initially interested in nineteenth-century reform movements and the expansion of women's sphere beyond the home, Snell increasingly focused her research on questions related to female domesticity after stumbling upon a cookbook collection at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts. Surprised by the abundance of cake recipes and the lack of emphasis on practicality and frugality in these cookbooks, she followed up with trips to the University of Guelph in Ontario, the Winterthur Library in Delaware, and other smaller archives in both Canada and New England to view additional cookbook collections. Her cross-border analysis was inspired by her work with the Canadian-American Center and her courses on Canadian-American history at the University of Maine, both of which imparted a transnational historical perspective.



Photo by Eileen Hagerman

One of Snell's discoveries during her research was that the print cultures of Ontario and the northeastern U.S. were intricately connected from 1830 to 1880 and that publishers engaged in a great deal of borrowing and reprinting across the border. For this reason, and for her work's emphasis on food, she considers her work to be a cultural history. She also views it as a women's history, because of the way in which it explores the experiences of ordinary women who used and annotated the cookbooks in her study. Through her sources, Snell observed patterns related to changes within family life and women's education and the ascendance of mass food production during the nineteenth century. She also saw, reflected within them, the emergence of a new strata of urban, middle-class women who were interested in proper etiquette and the entertaining of guests at elaborate dinner parties. Though few of the cookbooks in these collections were written with the poor and working class in mind, Snell argues that they do shed light on the experiences of ordinary women. The handwritten notes, scrawled into their the margins—often amid food stains and children's drawings—subtly reveal, not only personal preferences, but a willingness to adapt and appropriate the imperatives of experts in middle-class domesticity. As such, Snell's dissertation challenges the idea that a single, rigid domestic ideology ever gained universal or hegemonic control among nineteenth-century women. The homemakers in her work did not passively consume culture. They actively shaped it, forging for themselves a broad range of domestic ideologies that were as fluid as the national borders that they crossed.

In addition to her coursework and doctoral research, Snell also spent many of her years at UMaine teaching in the Honors College and engaging in academic service work, especially in the emerging field of digital history. In 2012, for example, she and another colleague revived the *Khronikos* history blog and continued to operate it until 2014, and, in 2013, she began writing for the Recipes Project, which is an international group of scholars who share their research related to recipes through blogging. She also assisted the Mount Desert Island Historical Society with several projects. All of this service work, according to Snell, stems from the knowledge that anyone who attends a land-grant university benefits from taxpayer money and, as such, their education comes with an obligation to give back to the broader community.

Now that Snell has successfully defended her dissertation, she will fully enter the job market later this year and, like many graduate students in recent years, she intends to cast a wide net. In addition to seeking traditional tenure-track employment at a college or university, Snell is also considering jobs in public history and digital humanities and is open to the possibility of working as a consultant and pursuing a career in the private sector. She is also interested in future opportunities with the Honors College where she will be teaching a course entitled, *Food and the Shaping of American Identity*, as an Honors Tutorial during the Fall 2016 semester.

When asked what advice she might offer new or prospective graduate students, Snell emphasized the importance of having a "burning desire" to do that kind of intensive work that a humanities degree requires. Because the job market is tight for many, and because there is no guarantee of riches for even the most successful in these fields, she said, "It has to be a passion, not a vocation."

*** Graduate Student Updates ***

Charles Deshaies, from September 2014 through October 2015, conducted research and political analysis for a member of the Canadian Parliament, and has been compiling and historicizing post-election data since November 2015. He also attended a Canadian Studies conference at McGill University during February of 2016 and is currently writing his first book review and putting the finishing touches on his dissertation, which he hopes to defend in 2016.

Eileen Hagerman, in 2015, published an article in *Maine History*, entitled, “Old Roots and New Shoots: How Locals and Back-to-the-Landers Remade Maine’s Local Food Economy” and presented at the Annual Meeting of the Agricultural History Society. She also became the book review editor for *Maine History* and joined a cross-disciplinary research team examining the impact of industry on the Penobscot watershed. This spring, her article, “Water, Workers, and Wealth: How ‘Mr. Peabody’s’ Coal Barge Stripped the Green River Valley,” was accepted by the *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*. Currently, she is finishing her dissertation research on northern New England’s alternative food economy during the mid-to-late twentieth century.

Andrew Kobylarz performed an internship with the staff at Fogler Library, selecting and scanning documents from the Paul W. Bean Civil War Collection and uploading them to Digital Commons. This exciting experience and the skills he gained from it were highlighted in the *Maine Archives and Museums Newsletter*.

Erik Reardon, this year, was awarded the Chase Distinguished Research Assistantship and successfully defended his dissertation this April. He also presented at the New England Historical Association’s fall conference in New Haven, Connecticut and has a forthcoming article with *The New England Quarterly* entitled, “Fishing and the Rural Economy: Farmer-Fishermen and the Merrimack River, 1800-1846.” After revising his dissertation, he will begin work on an upcoming research project with Maine Sea Grant, the Mount Desert Island Historical Society, and Acadia National Park.

Elisa Sance received the New England-Atlantic Provinces-Quebec Fellowship for the 2015-2016 academic year. She presented her preliminary research on public schools, language, and citizenship in the Madawaska region post-1842 at the Alice R. Stewart Lecture Series on campus and at the 22nd Association for Canadian Studies in the United States Biennial Conference in fall 2015. Sance recently joined Trent University's *Confederation Debates 1865-1945* digital humanities project. She also co-founded the graduate student group UMaine Women in Academia and began serving as the webmaster for the History Graduate Student Association.

Daniel Soucier, during the previous academic year, held the Alice Stewart Research Fellowship in History from the Canadian-American Center on campus. Furthermore, he taught European Military History after receiving the Susan J. Hunter Lectureship from the Graduate School. Off campus, Dan served as a Resident Research Fellow at the David Library of the American Revolution, Hal Rothman Research Fellow for the American Society for Environmental History, and presented his work at conferences in Seattle, Middlebury, Worcester, Boston, Ottawa, and Las Vegas. He also served as Advisory Board Member for Professional Development and Public Engagement for the American Society for Environmental History, Web Developer and Executive Member of the Northeast Atlantic Canada Environmental History Forum, and as Editor of the Maine Historical Society’s publication *Maine History*.

Alumni Spotlight:

Larry Richards and the Unlikely Doors that a History Degree Can Open for Students



Photo courtesy of Pyrde
Brown Photographers,
Princeton, NJ

This spring, the department invited UMaine history alumni Larry Richards to speak at the annual Phi Alpha Theta awards ceremony. Originally from Dexter, Maine, Richards graduated from the honors program in 1970 under the advisorship of John Hakola. Since then, his career took a seemingly unusual turn for a history major. He went into business, obtaining an MBA in strategic management from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in 1981. He eventually went on to found the P-BEC Design Team, a firm in Princeton, New Jersey, which assists clients in a wide variety of industries in responding to challenges through better asset management, structural organization, and strategic marketing. He also works as a strategic advisor and project manager for a wide variety of companies and institutions. Before founding P-BEC, he served as the CEO of Diversity Financial Network, a financial services and economic development organization for underserved communities from 2005 to 2008, and, before that, of Diversified Information Technologies, a healthcare information and financial services company out of Scranton, Pennsylvania from 2004 to 2005. Additionally, he has authored articles and given numerous talks

on topics related to effective management and technological design. Though Richards did not pursue the academic, legal, or political paths common to many who hold a history BA, he asserts that his degree has been a critical asset in his career.

When describing the value of a history degree, Richards emphasized the ability of the discipline to interpret societal patterns and shape our responses to problems. This skill, according to Richards, not only represents a societal good, but also a powerful tool in the business world. For example, while working in the technological innovation industry, he discovered that the work of STEM graduates, which is more overtly valued in such industries, often requires input from those with other skill sets, especially those with “sophisticated analytical skills,” such as history majors. Richards also asserts that the need for the skills possessed by those with history degrees is “not lost on corporate executives” who are often on the hunt for new talent in written communication and socioeconomic analysis.

While Richards values his skills as a history BA, he also attributes much of his success to positive experiences as an undergraduate at the University of Maine. “UMaine opened my eyes to a new world of opportunities,” said Richards, who also expressed his appreciation for the history department faculty who remain “mentors,” “guideposts,” and sources of inspiration nearly a half-century later. Richards warmly recalled the dedication of department faculty, especially that of John Hakola, Dave Smith, and Stu Doty, who “made [him] think” and “taught [him] to analyze, not merely memorize, historical facts.” These kinds of skills, according to Richards, “will increasingly represent the difference between those technology and business initiatives that make a tangible, sustained contribution” and those that languish.

His advice for history majors who might, like him, pursue a career in business was for them to be confident in—rather than apologetic for—the broad scope of their training. By emphasizing how their history degree has provided them with a suite of skills that can be applied toward understanding complex problems and designing innovative solutions, he argues, history majors can access a diverse range of employers and eventually carve out a niche for themselves in the business world. After all, Richards, says, “it is the ability to support individual interpretations with sophisticated analysis and well-founded conclusions that matters [in history], not the recitation of dates, names, and facts,” and this ability lies at the heart of many challenges in an “increasingly complex global economy.” As concerns about the place of the humanities in today’s job market continue to influence the career decisions of young people at colleges across the United States, Richards’ unique perspective is certainly worth considering.



Richards’ keynote address at UMaine’s 2016 Phi Alpha Theta Awards.
Photo by Eileen Hagerman.

New Faculty Continued...

After nearly twenty years as a scholar of nineteenth-century American immigration and industrialization, Knowles' career took a surprising turn in 2005, when she received a call from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. "We have heard a lot about GIS," the caller, Michael Haley Goldman, said, "and we are wondering if you can help us figure out how it might be useful for studying the Holocaust." Thus began a new, collaborative research venture as Knowles became a founding member of the Holocaust Geographies Collaborative (HGC), a group of geographers and historians who have been working together since 2007.

In 2008, the group received a major research grant from the National Science Foundation to explore the potential of using geographic methods, including GIS, in Holocaust Studies. The results were published in *Geographies of the Holocaust* (2014), for which Knowles was lead editor. She describes this phase of the HGC project as focusing primarily on the "Nazi universe," because the group used Nazi central planning documents and material provided by the Holocaust Museum to visualize the construction of Auschwitz and the development and demise of the SS concentration and labor camp system. The project did not, however, impart much of a sense of the emotional landscape or victims' first-person perspectives. This, according to Knowles, is one of the limits of GIS in spatial history. It is poorly suited to representing personal experiences. With help from an NEH Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant, members of the Collaborative will be learning methods in corpus linguistics so that they can analyze Holocaust survivors' testimony for its spatial content.

Knowles has also established a new Digital History Lab in the History Department. She anticipates that the lab will include, among other things, three computers equipped with double monitors, GIS and graphics programs, corpus linguistics software; a color printer; storage for her growing collection of maps; and light tables for manual cartography. The lab has already doubled as a learning space for students. She hopes that this facility will increasingly attract more graduate students and raise interest in spatial history among faculty and students alike.

Also in the interest of making the UMaine History Department a hub for digital and spatial history, Knowles helped organize a popular history "shop talk" series, which this year highlighted spatial research methods and pedagogy using digital technologies. The series was partly inspired by the CHE (Center for Culture, Environment, and History) colloquium at University of Wisconsin-Madison, which one of its founders, William Cronon, invited Knowles to address in fall 2015. The series at Wisconsin eschews the formality of a full-length presentation and focuses on vigorous discussion of works in progress. While this year's shop talks at UMaine focused on digital and spatial history, they will likely grow to include a wider variety of topics to foster the continued exchange of ideas in the History Department.

According to Knowles, most children have an innate sense of spatial awareness, and young people today live in a world "saturated by spatial logic" via mobile navigation, gaming, and social media devices and applications. This is why she strives to find ways to bridge the gap between geography and history by building on students' existing knowledge and providing new spatial skills in easily digestible formats. She enjoys seeing the "waves of recognition" as they grow over time among her students. "For me," Knowles said, "teaching comes down to a couple basic questions: What can I do to open students' minds to new ideas? How can I equip them with the skills they need to think in new ways? And how can I help them master those skills so that they can become confident, independent thinkers?" Each student has a "spark," Knowles believes, "a desire to learn something new" that can be accessed through effective teaching. Though most of her teaching experience has been with undergraduates, Knowles also looks forward to working closely with graduate students at UMaine, especially since they are prepared to grapple with the kind of methodological issues that spatial history raises.

Part of Knowles' recipe for success as a teacher and a scholar is her refusal to accept intellectual limits. Every skill and disciplinary perspective that she acquires becomes another tool in her toolbox rather than hardening into a *modus operandi*. This has allowed her to simultaneously build her reputation as a specialist in several areas while exploring a wide range of subjects. She acknowledges that this willingness to experiment is risky in today's academic job market and that it might not be ideal for everyone. She also attributes her success in part to the ability of spatial methods, such as GIS, to liberate researchers by consistently inspiring new questions.

Knowles' willingness to innovate and collaborate and her propensity for thinking outside of the proverbial box have already begun to attract interest from graduate and undergraduate students. We look forward to seeing how her influence will continue to impact the department and the university in the coming years.

Mark McLaughlin: Canadian and Environmental Historian and “Social Media Guy”



Photo Courtesy of Mark McLaughlin

This spring, Canadian environmental historian Mark McLaughlin joined the History Department. McLaughlin earned his PhD in history in 2013 from the University of New Brunswick (UNB) after receiving his MA, also in History, from Memorial University in 2004. Before coming to UMaine, he spent twenty months as a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow in the Environmental and Resource Science/ Studies Program at Trent University from 2014 to 2015. McLaughlin’s dissertation, entitled, “*Trees Are A Crop*”: *Crown Lands, Labour, and the Environment in New Brunswick’s Forest Industries, 1940-1982*, focused on the development of the forest industries and forest management in New Brunswick during the mid-to-late twentieth century. McLaughlin is cross-appointed with the Canadian-American Center, which means that half of his course load is devoted to Canadian Studies.

This spring, McLaughlin began teaching a 300-level special topics course, entitled *Booms & Busts in North American History*, which examined resource exploitation and the commodification of nature in North America since 1500, which he hopes to eventually make into some form of permanent course at UMaine. This fall, he will begin teaching a 200-level *History and Comics* course in which he will use comics as teaching tools and as primary sources, providing students with the skills to examine comics as locations of history and as parallels to the broadening of historical inquiry. According to McLaughlin, these courses allow him to historicize and problematize students’ notions about national boundaries, popular cultural trends, and historical methodologies. He has found comics to be especially useful in his efforts to encapsulate complex ideas while keeping students more fully engaged in the classroom.

While McLaughlin’s interest in comics is primarily in conjunction with how they have shaped and been shaped by environmental thought over time, his work as an environmental historian was inspired by a rural upbringing. Raised in the potato-farming region of northwestern New Brunswick and in a family that was instrumental in organizing their chapter of the National Farmers’ Union (and which continued to farm long after entering the academic world), McLaughlin was imbued with a deep understanding of the relationship between humans and the natural world. Within this agrarian-intellectual milieu, he began developing an interest in land stewardship, observing similarities within the region’s rural culture and resource use patterns, and expanding his work to encompass a cross-border, bioregional historical analysis.

In many ways, McLaughlin’s appointment might be considered a homecoming. Not only was his PhD advisor, Bill Parenteau, a former student of UMaine history professor, Richard Judd, but he was also very active as a graduate student in helping to plan the UMaine-UNB graduate student conference, which put him in regular contact with many UMaine faculty and graduate students. He has also been active in the Northeast-Atlantic Canada Environmental History Forum (NACEHF), which was founded by Brian Payne, another UMaine PhD graduate mentored by Judd.

Since arriving at UMaine, McLaughlin has been familiarizing himself with the inner workings of the university, revising articles for publication, and reworking his dissertation into a manuscript, which is under advance contract with the University of British Columbia Press. His current research focuses on how Canadian resource scientists of the 1940s and 1950s frequently came to identifying as ecologists in the 1960s and 1970s, and occasionally went on to engage in wider debates and advocate modern environmental values as public intellectuals. He also has a side project, which examines how governments in Canada have used comics to convey certain messages to citizenries over the last several decades.

Additionally, McLaughlin is engaged in a variety of social media projects, serving as a regular blog contributor to *Acadiensis* and *The Otter*, the latter of which is affiliated with the Network in Canadian History and Environment (NiCHE), an organization with which he has worked closely over the years. Many of his media skills will also be put to use in ways that will benefit the history department at UMaine, especially since he has unofficially become the “social media guy,” creating perhaps-long-overdue Twitter and Facebook accounts for the department. These outlets will allow scholars and prospective students in distant locations to become more aware of research and events taking place in the department. McLaughlin’s connections to UNB and the Canadian historical community in general have also made him an ideal advisor to a group of graduate students in the process of reorganizing the UMaine-UNB conference in 2016.

With his cross-border, environmental history focus; his organizing and social media savvy; and his ability to connect with students through the use of popular culture, McLaughlin is, in many ways, a perfect fit for the history department, its needs for the future, and the signature and emerging areas to which the department contributes at the university level.

Joel Anderson: Medieval Studies Scholar and Viking Enthusiast



Photo Courtesy of
Joel Anderson

Joel Anderson joined the history department in fall 2015 semester and began teaching courses in European history with an emphasis on medieval Europe. Though new to UMaine, he is no stranger to the state, having obtained a BS in history from Bates College in 2005 before traveling to the University of Oslo on a Fulbright (2006), obtaining an MA in Medieval Icelandic Studies from the University of Iceland (2008), and receiving his PhD in Medieval Studies from Cornell in 2015. Despite his extensive travels, Anderson became very fond of Maine during his undergraduate studies at Bates, a sentiment reinforced by brief stints working in Maine at a law firm and later as a high school teacher. It was in this state that he developed an interest in history and medieval studies, which shifted increasingly toward the Vikings as he continued to travel abroad. As such, Anderson was excited to return to his “second home” and pursue his academic career at UMaine.

During his first year in the department, Anderson taught introductory courses on the history of ancient and medieval Europe and the history of modern Europe in addition to upper-level courses on the early Middle Ages, the Vikings, and a senior seminar on the history of media technologies. This fall, he will once more teach the History of Ancient and Medieval Europe. Additionally, he will offer a 200-level course on heresy and witchcraft and a graduate seminar, entitled Medieval Matters. He has also been very busy with volunteer and service work, serving as a member of the department’s undergraduate committee, as a faculty advisor for the undergraduate History Club, as a volunteer for Maine National History Day, and as a faculty liaison to the track and field and cross-country teams. Additionally, he has been working on a series of book reviews, an article for a volume on the English peasants’ revolt in 1381, and a revision of his dissertation, which he hopes to begin converting to a monograph in the coming year.

Anderson’s dissertation, *Imagining Universal Government at the Edge of the World: Institutional Forms in Norse Bishops’ Lives*, examines a group of Icelandic sagas known as the bishops’ sagas. These biographical narratives tell the lives of many of Iceland’s thirteenth- and fourteenth-century bishops and provide insight into their relationships with distant centers of power, such as the papacy. According to Anderson, the remote clerics who wrote these sagas, while acutely aware of the legal system with which they were entangled, often repurposed papal law for their own idiosyncratic purposes. Furthermore, he argues that this historical tendency speaks more broadly to the ways in which power flowed through the European medieval church and to the limits of its hegemony. More generally, the thrust of his work reflects a global turn in history and an attendant movement to more closely examine peripheral regions, such as northern Europe.

Though Anderson’s work pushes at the edges of standard narratives in medieval history, he enjoys encapsulating those traditional narratives in content-driven lecture courses. Drawing on his diverse experiences teaching first-year writing seminars at Cornell and high-school English courses in Maine, Anderson encourages students to think in dialogue with the distant past, to see it on its own terms as well as through the lens of the present. Balancing sameness and difference when confronting historical subject matter is a key feature of Anderson’s approach and has influenced the kinds of primary sources that he brings into the classroom. One strategy is to draw comparisons between the visual elements of medieval, early modern, and contemporary texts, examining illuminated manuscripts from the Middle Ages, Reformation-Era propaganda, and websites frequented in the present day. Anderson enjoys building discussions around these visual sources, adapting student engagement techniques he developed in smaller-scale courses at Cornell to the larger lecture-hall format of his introductory courses at UMaine. His experiences teaching high school in Maine have further aided him by providing an understanding of where many incoming students are coming from in terms of background knowledge.

Anderson’s appointment also provides opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration. In consultation with a broad range of sources, often of a literary or linguistic nature, he has familiarized himself with Latin, Old Norse, Old English, Middle High German, and many contemporary Nordic languages, and in doing so has forged connections to scholars in other disciplines. One such connection has been with the CLAS-Honors Preceptor of English Sarah Harlan-Haughey with whom he is co-organizing a series of talks in 2016-2017. The talks will explore the theme of “Saga and Story: An Interdisciplinary Exploration from the Vikings to Our Time” and will be co-sponsored by the UMaine Humanities Center and the Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship of Scholars in Critical Bibliography, a grant that Anderson holds.

With Anderson’s broad cross-disciplinary expertise, his eagerness to collaborate with scholars in other departments, and his expansive approach to medieval and ancient history, there is little doubt that he will take the history department at UMaine in some new and exciting directions.



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“Your contribution in support of the UMaine History Department means a lot to us. The Department has initiated some recent changes like the creation of a History undergraduate writing lab staffed by a graduate student, increased support for History club, the celebration of and support for National History Day, and the production of this newsletter! Contributions such as yours will support these programs and others and make a tangible difference for both students and faculty. All of us here in Stevens Hall deeply appreciate your thoughtful gift.”

—Stephen Miller, Chair

Note: The bulk of this newsletter was generated by Eileen Hagerman through a series of interviews during the spring 2016 semester and was produced as a token of appreciation for the department’s generous funding of her graduate studies in environmental history. As such, she takes full responsibility for any errors, omissions, or other shortcomings it may possess. If you have any questions or concerns about the articles herein, she can be reached at eileen.palmer@maine.edu.

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