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Greetings alumni and friends,

What a year! The world has been struck by an unprecedented event, the coronavirus pandemic. Its scale is global, affecting the politics and economy of every nation on earth. At the same time, its consequences are intimate, transforming the daily life of each individual. In the United States, the pandemic and its differential impacts have also stimulated large-scale protests and sharply competing visions of the past. Without doubt, we are experiencing a time of tremendous historical weight, and one in which historians and students of history can uniquely contribute to our understanding.

The History Department is thus especially grateful to our donors and supporters. Your generosity and efforts are an explicit recognition that historical education is a requisite component of informed public discussion and democratic self-governance. We thank you for maintaining a connection to our endeavor.

The pandemic imposed upon the Department several challenges. Among these, remote instruction became mandatory in late March, and all department events were cancelled. The latter included our annual spring awards ceremony and Phi Alpha Theta induction, which was to have been hosted by one of our own alumni, Maine Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap. We had been very excited to hear his nationally renowned insights, and we hope another opportunity returns before long. Sadly, the University commencement was also cancelled, but the Department created a webpage in its place. You will find there statements and photos of our BA, MA, and PhD graduates, a list of student award winners, and brief, engaging commencement comments from the American Historical Association. Please take a look, https://umaine.edu/history/graduation-2020/.

Despite the difficult circumstances, the History Department continued to garner significant recognition for its accomplishments. Professor Liam Riordan won the Outreach and Service Award from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for his outstanding contributions to public history, including numerous projects concerning the Maine state bicentennial, cultural preservation and memory, and National History Day. This is the second year in a row the Department received a College distinction. In the previous cycle, Professor Ngo Vinh Long won the Research Award for his pathbreaking studies of modern Vietnam, peasant societies, and East Asian geopolitics. Additionally, Professor Anne Knowles was named a finalist in the international Atlas of Design competition for her innovative cartographic analysis of Holocaust testimonials. As usual, Department faculty published a large number of research articles, book chapters, academic reviews, and journalistic writings. Most importantly, all faculty members succeeded under the strained and uncertain conditions to deliver top-notch courses and engaged advising. Through dedication, inventiveness, and humor, History Department faculty conveyed expert knowledge and professional skills with compassion and care.

Our students too had a productive and remarkable year. PhD student An Nguyen was awarded the Marilyn B. Young Fellowship from the Society of Historians of American Foreign Relations to complete her dissertation on peaceful South Vietnamese opposition to US policy. She also won the University of Maine’s Chase Distinguished Research Assistantship and scored the Graduate Student Paper Prize at the annual meeting of the New England Historical Association. PhD student Darcy Stevens received a grant from the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati to support a research residency at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Also studying colonial America, PhD student Hannah Schmidt attained a grant from the Society of Colonial Wars to support a research residency at the same library. MA student Dakota Gramour was awarded a David L. Boren Fellowship to study Polish in Poland for his work on multilingualism and Holocaust survival. BA student Hailey Cedor received the University of Maine McGillicuddy Humanities Center Undergraduate Fellowship for her study of Holocaust memorialization and denial in Lithuania. This follows last year’s award to Matt Ryckman.
supporting his research on the early modern reception of *Euclid’s Elements*. Department students were also selected for some very important, paid internships. PhD student Dylan O’Hara is working at the new First Amendment Museum in Augusta, researching the history of the Gannett family and its New England area newspapers. MA student Sean Cox and BA student Jennifer Munson interned at the WVII television station in Bangor to produce forty one-minute segments on Maine state history.

At every turn, the History Department navigated through the unprecedented situation in high spirits while further enhancing its commitment to research, teaching, and public service. My own position as “acting chair” came to an end. The job now returns to the talented hands of my friend and colleague Stephen Miller. The immediate future of department and campus events remains unclear, but we hope you are able to visit us at some time. In the meanwhile, please keep in touch.

**National History Day in Maine, 2019-2020**

This year presented daunting challenges for our statewide history program for grade 6-12 students. COVID-19 led NHD in Maine to hold its first-ever **virtual** state contest on May 2-4, 2020. Nearly 700 students from across the state participated in earlier regional contests, and finalists from these events were invited to the state contest (originally to be in-person at UMaine). The virtual state contest had 302 registered students with 190 projects that were evaluated by 71 judges. This is the largest number in each of these categories since UMaine and the Margaret Chase Smith Library began organizing NHD in Maine in 2014. These strong numbers nicely reflect the 2020 contest theme of “Breaking Barriers in History.”

All 52 first and second-place winners in Maine went on to the national contest held June 14-20 via Zoom. The nationally recognized Outstanding Affiliate winners were Joshua Justice from Greely Middle School and Anika Noack, Genevieve Sychterz, and Hannah Osmer from Bangor High School. We also had two national finalists, both from Greely schools in Cumberland Center. Meredith Cloutier placed 7th in the nation in the middle school category for her paper about the success of the “Radium Girls” in fighting for environmental and labor law reforms in 1950s New Jersey, and Matthew Gilbert’s documentary film about puffin restoration on Maine islands placed 10th in the nation at the high school level.

To see the virtual showcase with student projects (and for more information about NHD in Maine), please visit: [http://www.mcslibrary.org/national-history-day-in-maine](http://www.mcslibrary.org/national-history-day-in-maine).

The next state contest will be held at the University of Maine on May 1, 2021, and the theme will be “Communication in History: The Key to Understanding.” As always, UMaine students, faculty, staff, and alumni are encouraged to participate as NHD in Maine judges next year!

John Taylor  
State Coordinator, National History Day in Maine  
Museum Assistant, Margaret Chase Smith Library

Anne Kelly Knowles had a busy year directing the Holocaust Ghettos Project. This three-year, NEH-funded project involves six UMaine research assistants and students and faculty at Duke University and Washington University at St. Louis. Highlights included Anne's involvement in the closing plenary session at the Lessons & Legacies Holocaust conference in Munich on the November anniversary of Kristallnacht, and publication of an article describing the project's approach to building an interdisciplinary database, co-authored with UMaine History PhD student Justus Hillebrand. A new branch of the project is exploring how extreme weather in winter and summer affected ghetto residents and forced laborers. The Weather Project brings together majors in Earth Science, History, International Affairs, and Climate Change -- the research team’s most interdisciplinary effort yet! The project also welcomed PhD student Maja Kruse this year. Maja is putting her background in linguistics and geography to use in building an historical, digital gazetteer of ghettos and refining the team’s historical territorial boundaries. Zoom enabled the team to continue working together from Denmark to Oklahoma. In June we will host a virtual workshop testing ghettos data in collaboration with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Michael Lang was appointed Visiting Professor at Carleton University (Ottawa) for his 2020-2021 sabbatical year.


Mark McLaughlin spent much of the 2019-2020 academic year co-organizing the Atlantic Canada Studies Conference, originally scheduled for May 2020, but which has been postponed to May 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He also attended the biennial meeting of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States in Montreal, Quebec in November 2019. McLaughlin submitted a piece to a journal forum, made significant progress on two co-authored article projects, wrote a book review and book review essay, and wrapped up his book manuscript, under advance contract with UBC Press. In addition, he was invited to serve on the advisory board of the academic journal The Canadian Historical Review.

Stephen M. Miller spent his sabbatical working on two books. The first examines the career of Field Marshal George White, a veteran of the Indian Rebellion, Second Anglo-Afghan War, Third Anglo-Burmese War, and the South African War, and is entitled, George White and the Victorian Army in India and Africa: Serving the Empire. It will be published by Palgrave-Macmillan later this year. The second book, Queen Victoria’s Wars: British Military Campaigns, 1857-1902, a project which brings together thirteen leading military historians, will be published by Cambridge University Press early next year. Miller also published an article in the South African Historical Journal entitled, “Edgar Wallace’s War: Reporting and Making the News in South Africa, 1898-1902.” He presented a paper on that topic at the “New Perspectives 120 Years Down the Line” conference at the War Museum of the Boer Republics in Bloemfontein, South Africa.
Liam Riordan's public history work related to the Maine state bicentennial continues on varied fronts. His “Mount Desert Island and the Long Struggle for Maine Statehood” appeared in Chebacco: Journal of the MDI Historical Society in 2020. Six other essays in this “Before 1820”-themed volume were written by his current and former graduate students. He is also at work on an essay collection related to the statehood era and its commemoration that will be co-edited with Richard Judd. It has received a publication subvention from the Maine State Bicentennial Commission. Liam’s contributions to public history have been recognized by the Maine Historical Society, which awarded him its Neal W. Allen, Jr., History Award in June 2020, and by the UMaine College of Liberal Arts & Sciences’ Outstanding Faculty Award for Service and Outreach in 2020. His research on loyalists continues with the essay “Recovering Loyalism: Opposition to the American Revolution as a Good Idea” to appear in The Cambridge History of the Age of Atlantic Revolutions, Volume One: The Enlightenment and the British Colonies.

Matt Ryckman was a senior history major during the 2019-2020 academic year. He will be continuing at UMaine, pursuing a master’s degree in computer science starting in 2020-2021. As a double major in math and history, Matt combined a love of mathematics with history to develop a capstone that dove into the interesting and often understudied world of the history of mathematics. This capstone, completed in the Fall semester of 2019, focused on an eighteenth-century edition of Issac Barrows’ translation of Euclid’s Elements. He tracked the book’s provenance from the original editor of the edition, through a private collector, to the UMaine special collections. He hopes to possibly pursue this crossover of mathematics and history in the future, emphasizing the need to involve good historians, as opposed to solely good mathematicians, in the writing of math history.

In pursuing a master’s degree in computer science, Matt will be taking courses on human-computer interaction, and may develop projects with history in mind. He would like to continue his work in the history of math and science, and the history of computer science would be a great vein in which he could continue that work.

In his spare time, Matt studies Japanese, plays classical guitar, and has recently gotten into building PCs. Many of these hobbies were developed or honed at UMaine, and Matt is grateful to the university for the opportunities provided, both in and out of the classroom.

An Thuy Nguyen is a current PhD candidate in the UMaine history department. Her dissertation, titled “The Third Force: South Vietnamese Urban Opposition to the Nixon Doctrine in Asia, 1969-1975” centers on Vietnamization and Operation Phoenix, and the urban South Vietnamese resistance to these two pillars of the Nixon doctrine. An studies four groups within this ‘third force’ of anti-war resistance: Buddhists, students, Catholics, and women. Her work has won her two prestigious awards recently, the Chase Distinguished Research Assistantship from the University of Maine and the Marilyn B. Young Dissertation Completion Fellowship, from the Society of Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR). While some of her archival research travel plans have been put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic, she does plan on using the resources provided by these awards to help with further archival research and dissertation writing.
This past spring semester, An held the Susan Hunter teaching fellowship, teaching HTY 104, U.S. History since 1877. While the onset of the pandemic made for a somewhat hectic end of the semester, the fellowship helped An hone her teaching skills and adapt to the challenges of transitioning to an online format course. She is also currently working on a book chapter on the Vietnamese diplomat Madame Nguyen Thi Binh and has an upcoming publication in the *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*. Following the completion of her dissertation, An would like to continue her research and work in the U.S.

Faculty Spotlight

**Mary Freeman** has been with the department for two years. Her research centers on 19th century American history, particularly slavery and abolition. She is working on a book project centered on letter writing in the anti-slavery movement. She is also working on a project on African-American anti-slavery activism in Maine around the mid-19th century. She taught two new classes this past year: a graduate level course on Slavery, Abolition, and Race in American History and an undergraduate level course on Slavery, Politics, and Memory in American history. In addition to her own research and teaching, she is the managing editor of *Maine History* and leads a staff of three graduate students. Started in the early 1960s and long helmed by Professor Emeritus Judd, *Maine History* is the only peer-reviewed journal dedicated solely to the history of the State of Maine. The journal is made possible through a collaborative effort between the Maine Historical Society and the UMaine history department. Harmonizing nicely with the public engagement mission of UMaine, *Maine History* reaches a wide audience of historians and history enthusiasts both within and outside of Maine. While assuming the mantle of managing editor has been no small task, Mary has continued to ensure that journal operations run smoothly. Everyone should keep their eyes out for the Maine State Bicentennial Double issue this coming Autumn!

Alumni Spotlight

**Dale Potts**’ work while at UMaine centered on nature writers, both from Maine and away, in an environmental history context. He examined nature writers in the mid twentieth century and their impact on the environmental movement of the 1960s. He is now an associate professor of history at South Dakota State University, where he teaches environmental, social and cultural, Native American, and modern U.S. history. Dale is excited to potentially teach a course on Native American filmmakers in the coming semesters. He is working on a project centered on mass marketed pulp fiction and Native American representation in the early twentieth century. He is also continuing his research into nature writers, carrying on the discussion about their impact on the public’s perception of environmentalism in the 1960s. This work keeps him tied to the state of Maine, and places Maine in the national context of the larger environmental movement. His advice to UMaine History students: During your studies, try to utilize what makes UMaine unique, especially UMaine’s History department. The wide variety of subjects and methods is enriching, take classes outside of your wheelhouse. That uniqueness allows students to draw on “different areas and experiences.” There are numerous opportunities, available through the Canadian-American center, for instance, but also through lectureships and fellowships within and outside of the department, and other avenues that allow students to gain experience in teaching. “If you have the opportunity to teach a class… then that experience is invaluable” Dale emphasized the importance of that first teaching opportunity, “once you get the first opportunity to teach, then others start to arrive.”
Jacques Ferland retired this Summer. He has served as a mentor and friend to countless undergrads, grad students, and faculty members at UMaine. Jacques has had a storied and expansive career at the University of Maine. He has worked on environmental, Native American, and borderlands history, moving through each subfield to weave them together into a connected story of Maine and the Canadian borderlands. Appointed in September of 1985, Jacques’ thirty-five years at UMaine have been productive and inspirational. In the late 1980s, Jacques was presented with the opportunity to speak at a labor history conference in Sydney, Australia, something he described as “quite an adventure.” This talk was later published, requiring another adventurous flight to Australia. He was also instrumental in the early development of the Native Studies program here at UMaine. He contributed to a borderlands history conference in the late 1990s which ended up being developed into an important text for students of the field. When asked for his ‘top three’ publications during his tenure at UMaine, he listed the following: “The Command of Money in Shaw’s Borderlands,” in New England and the Maritime Provinces — Connections and Comparisons, edited by Stephen Hornsby and John G. Reid; “Les Chevaliers de Saint-Crépin du Québec, 1869-71: une étude en trois tableaux,” in the Canadian Historical Review 72, no. 1; and, “Tribal Dissent or White Aggression? Interpreting Penobscot Indian Dispossession Between 1808 and 1835,” in Maine History 43, no. 2.

As graduate coordinator, Jacques helped to grow the department’s graduate student numbers and ensconce a series of strategies to ensure graduate student funding. His mentorship was an important part of many UMaine students’ time in the history department. Jacques has certainly done his part to help guide the historians of the future with his advice and generosity.

Some parting advice to students is to make sure that they work on their ‘practical’ skills as well as their research. UMaine has a wealth of opportunities for grad students, and taking advantage of teaching opportunities and courses that help you develop expertise outside of your specific research track is really valuable. Also, never underestimate the amount of research you will need to do in order to write a good paper! If you have put a significant amount of time into research, it will improve and facilitate your writing, and will help prevent writer's block.

Now that he has retired, Jacques plans to spend time with his family and explore the Northeast.

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**Graduates from the History Department in 2020**

**Bachelor of Arts**

- Brianna Ballard
- Emily Jean DeCristofano
- Hannah Deschenes
- Joseph Flaherty
- Jared Gay
- Cliff Greco
- Dan Hicks
- Justin Jermyn
- Brittany Kucera
- Parker Lambert
- Cheyenne Laszlo
- Jennifer Munson
- Kyle O’Brien
- Matt Ryckman
- Collin Soucy
- Nathan Soule

**Master of Arts**

- Zachary Beals
- Sean Cox
- Lydia Elwell
- Andrew Mallory
- Martin Novum

**Doctor of Philosophy**

- Ronald Baines (awarded posthumously)
- Charles ‘Chuck’ Deshaies
- Joseph R. Miller
- Annie Tock Morissette
HOW TO CONTRIBUTE
TO THE UMAINE HISTORY DEPARTMENT

If you enjoyed this newsletter or value the work being done by the History Department to help the University of Maine fulfill its mission as a land-grant institution while raising its profile at home and abroad, consider making a contribution. Donations can be made online through the following website: http://umaine.edu/history/

You can also contact the History Department through the following:

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