

DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN



A NEWSLETTER OF PEOPLE AND EVENTS
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

Greetings from the Chair

Spring 2018



W. Fitzhugh Brundage

Chair, Department of History

Welcome to the spring 2018 issue of the *Department Historian*! Congratulations to the Class of 2018, as well as to those students who will continue toiling away in Hamilton Hall for a little while longer, but already have much to be proud of—as you'll see below.

You'll read about the original research of our undergraduates in the Honors thesis program, as well as our graduate students' innovative teaching, which prods students to take historical thinking outside the classroom. This issue also celebrates the many students and faculty members who have won prizes and fellowships to support their work, as well as the creative forms that historical scholarship can take—from our alumnus John Hall's research for the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Professor Melissa Bullard's bold decision to apply her expertise in the Italian Renaissance to the study of 19th-century Brooklyn. And as always, the newsletter takes a look back in time—to the challenges and opportunities that UNC's History department faced during World War II.

W. Fitzhugh Brundage

Chair, Department of History

[Make A Gift](#)

Department News

[Note from the Director of Undergraduate Studies](#)

As always, the academic year 2017-18 included an impressive amount of daily achievements by students and faculty in the classroom, exploring history across a vast range of topics, eras, and parts of the world. This newsletter cannot pretend to do justice to all of the creativity and hard work by undergraduates, graduate-student teaching assistants, and faculty across two semesters. One class in particular, however, taught by Professor **Karen Hagemann**, deserves mention:

students in HIST259, "Women and Gender in Europe, 18th-20th Century, produced an innovative final group project, a [website](#) "Towards Emancipation? - Women in Modern European History: A Digital Exhibition & Encyclopedia." [Read more here.](#)



Explore the Site - Click on a Field



[History 259 class website](#)

Brett Whalen

Director of Undergraduate Studies

[Oh, the Places They'll Go...](#)

It's time to bid farewell to our graduating seniors, who are embarking on a fascinating range of professional, service, and academic endeavors. We spoke to just a few of them to find out what they're doing next—and why they decided to major in History.



Mary Grady Bell

Post-graduation plan: business analyst in the Atlanta office of McKinsey & Co., a global management consulting firm.

Why study history? "Studying history, and especially writing a thesis, has provided me with valuable skills like how to research, how to write, and how to present effectively. These skills will also benefit me as a consultant where my primary responsibilities will also be conducting research and presenting new findings."

[Read more testimonials from our students here.](#)

Prizes, Honors, Accolades

We all know that our History majors work their tails off. Doctoral candidate (and *Department Historian* reporter) Joshua Tait crunched some numbers and found that at a *minimum*, our Majors read about **10,000 pages**, and crank out roughly **25 term papers** (totaling **195 pages of original writing**) over the course of their

History careers at Carolina—and that’s not counting all the work they do in other departments! So all of our graduating seniors deserve a hearty congratulations.

For many of our students, those long nights in Davis Library have yielded gratifying recognition. [Read a list of undergraduate honors and prizes here.](#)

[History Majors Present Original Research at Honors Symposium](#)

At a recent departmental symposium, **Frances Cayton** explained how Radio Free Europe helped Poland gain greater political autonomy from the Soviet Union in 1956. **Michael Purello** described how American Catholics influenced U.S. foreign policy during the Spanish Civil War. These weren't visiting speakers from another university, but two of the fifteen Carolina history majors who presented their honors thesis projects at the History Honors Symposium in April.



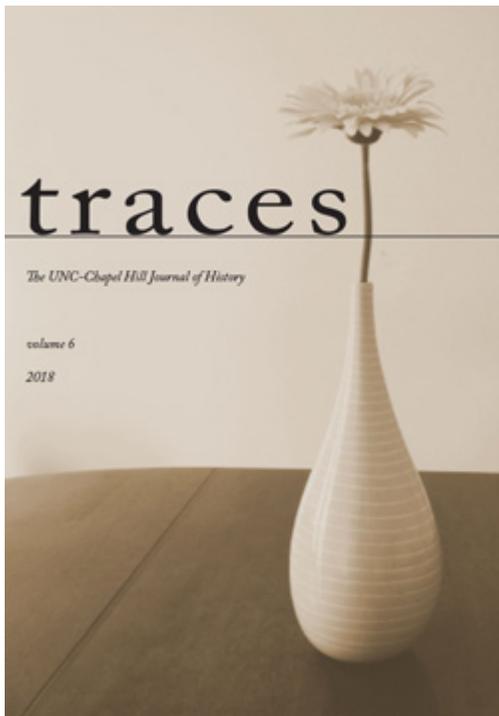
From left to right: Lacey Hunter, Michael Sanders, Olivia Holder, Jacob Bell, and Jeremy Howell discuss their Honors theses

At the symposium, honors thesis writers divided into three panels: Twentieth-Century World, Religious History, and Early Modern Empires. Each panelist gave a short presentation on their thesis, and attendees asked questions and offered feedback. Symposium participant **Jeremy Howell** appreciated the strong turnout and the thoughtful questions he received. "I think the energy is great," Howell said. "I'm not sure that would be the case at every school, that undergraduate research would be taken seriously. As a student doing undergraduate research, I always felt that what I was doing was important." [Read more here.](#)

--Aubrey Lauersdorf

[New Issue of *Traces* Hits the Newsstands](#)

The latest volume highlights the recent work of UNC's undergraduate and graduate students on the theme "Institutions and the Human Body." It opens with four outstanding undergraduate articles that point out connections between governments, perceptions, physicians, and disease that constitute the history of public health in the United States and Britain. Two graduate essays feature original research



that further explores the interactions between institutions and the body. Our “Living History” section includes an interview with UNC Social Medicine and History professor Raúl Necochea, whose work relates closely to this theme. Finally, our “Tales from the Archive” and book review sections highlight the experiences of graduate history students in archives around the world and show their scholarly tact in reviewing historical monographs.

--Sarah Miles, graduate co-editor

[Phi Alpha Theta Hosts Quiz Bowl for Local High School Students](#)

The Phi Alpha Theta High School History Quiz Bowl - UNC Phi Alpha Theta's main annual event - is a history trivia competition for regional high schools held every spring. Organized by the History Quiz Bowl Committee, an undergraduate and graduate student organization comprised of PAT and non-PAT history and history-adjacent UNC students, who write and edit the questions, plan the matches, and organize and staff the event, the quiz bowl pits teams of 2 to 4 high school students against each other over ten matches to answer questions on diverse historical topics covering everything from the earliest human civilizations to current events. The two teams with the highest cumulative scores then face off in a heated final match to decide the winner. [Read more here.](#)



2018 Quiz Bowl volunteers (left to right): Thomas Burnett, Daniel Harrell, Meredith Norman, Chris LaMack, Ellie Edwards, Whitney Sprinkle, Maya Kapoor (back row); Swee Yik Goh, Matthew Ricigliano, Grant Peet, Lacey Hunter (front row).

--Chris LaMack, Phi Alpha Theta

Alumni Spotlight

[Alum John Hall Writes Official History of Counter-Terrorism for the Joint Chiefs](#)



*John W. Hall, Ambrose-Hesseltine Associate
Professor of U.S. Military History
(photo courtesy UW Madison)*

In some ways, the average working day of **John Hall** (M.A. '03, Ph.D. '07) as an Army officer is not unlike his workday as a [professor of Military History](#) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve, Hall was placed on active duty last August to work in the Pentagon as an historian for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The History Office of the Joint Staff asked Hall to write the official history of the Pentagon's war against violent extremism. He will trace the development of counter-terrorism policy from the 1990s to the present. Hall is writing a history that is

still unfolding, so he gathers evidence by not only researching at the Library of Congress and the National Archives, but also by observing meetings among senior Pentagon officials. Because Hall's official history will consult documents considered "top secret," it won't be publicly available in its entirety. [Read more here.](#)

--Aubrey Lauersdorf

Out of the Archives

[Department by the Decade: The 1940s](#)

World War II had profound effects on the American home front—including UNC's Department of History. When the war came to Carolina, our faculty, staff, and students quickly responded to the nation's changing needs.



Caption: Students in uniform in a UNC lecture hall in 1943 (Yackety Yack, 1943-4; courtesy University Archives)

After the United States declared war in late 1941, UNC faced a reduction in enrollment as young men and women joined the armed forces. (The University opened its doors to women in the late nineteenth century, but it would continue to exclude African Americans until the 1950s.) History courses were not immune to declining enrollment. Southern historian **Albert Ray Newsome**, who served as Department Head during the war, counted 333 undergraduate students in history courses in the first months of 1943 and only 233 the following fall. But business wouldn't be slow for long. [Read more here.](#)

--Aubrey Lauersdorf

Faculty Spotlight

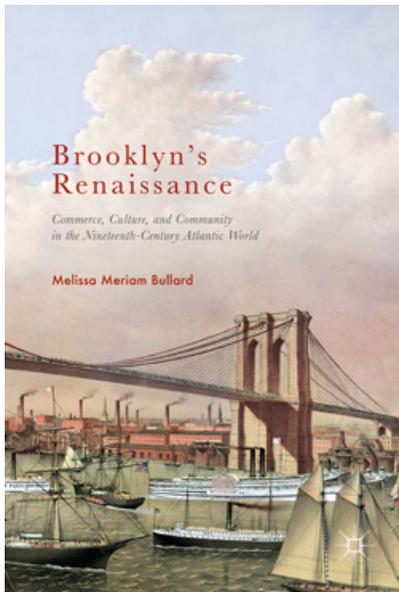
[Prizes, Honors, Accolades—Part II](#)

This spring, **Kathleen DuVal** received a [fellowship](#) from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, which will allow her to spend next year working on her next book, a history of American Indian dominance prior to 1850. DuVal was also elected a member of the Society of American Historians this year.

UNC honored **William Sturkey** with one of this year's [Diversity Awards](#), which recognize "work advancing an inclusive climate for excellence in teaching, research, public service and academic endeavor."

The UNC General Alumni Association recognized **Lloyd Kramer** with the [Faculty Service Award](#), which honors faculty members who have "performed outstanding service for the University or the alumni association."

[Melissa Bullard's Second Sailing](#)



When **Melissa Bullard** tracked down the origins of a family heirloom, she embarked on an exciting new project far afield from her usual work. An expert on the Italian Renaissance, who has published widely on the Medici family and Italian finance, Bullard's latest book, [Brooklyn's Renaissance: Commerce, Culture, and Community in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World](#) (Palgrave, 2017) led her to the very different field: 19th-century U.S. history and the Atlantic World. [Read more here.](#)

--Joshua Tait

[Digital Media Offer New Outlets and Challenges for Faculty](#)

"People I hadn't seen since high school started texting me, saying 'I just heard you on my favorite podcast!'" said **Matt Andrews**, teaching associate professor and undergraduate adviser for the History department, after his appearance on the top-rated podcast, [99% Invisible](#). Podcasts and other new media avenues

like Twitter have created new ways for historians to engage wide audiences. But they present their own challenges, too.

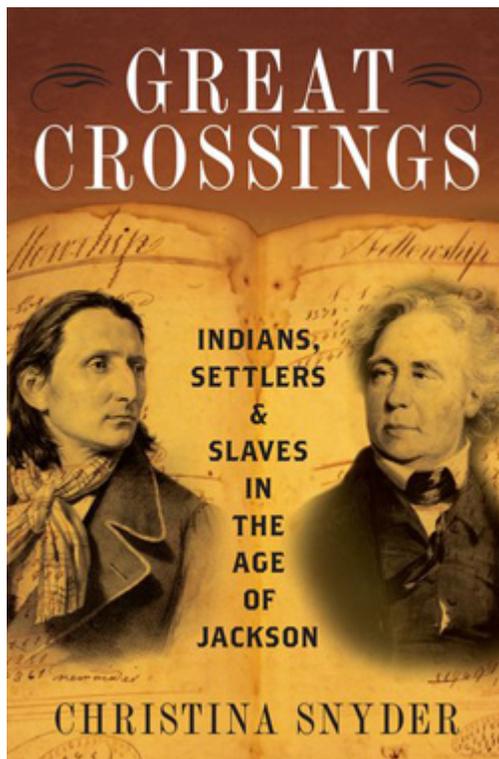
[Read more here.](#)

--Joshua Tait



Graduate Student News

[Prizes, Honors, and Accolades—Part III](#)



Congratulations to recent Carolina PhD **Christina Snyder** (PhD 2007) on winning this year's Francis Parkman Prize, bestowed by the American Society of Historians on "a nonfiction work of history on an American theme published the previous year that is distinguished by its literary merit."

The prize committee praised Snyder's book, [Great Crossings: Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in the Age of Jackson](#) (Oxford, 2017), as a beautifully written narrative of the complex encounters between Native Americans, African-Americans, and Anglo-Americans, particularly through the Choctaw Academy in the Kentucky borderlands. The book brings "an intriguing cast of characters to life: the Indian-killer turned educator and politician

Richard Mentor Johnson, founder of the school; Johnson's enslaved wife and daughters, Julia, Imogene, and Adaline Chinn; dozens of brilliant and sometimes resistant Native students—Peter Pitchlynn, Joel Barrow, and Wash Trahern among them—whose lives were irrevocably changed by their years at the academy." *Great Crossings* "makes new and important arguments through a gripping story, brilliantly told." Snyder is the McCabe Greer Professor of History at Pennsylvania State University.

Our current graduate students are already well on their way to such accomplishments. If you thought that the list of undergraduate awards was lengthy, then settle in and grab a cuppa before you click on this link to all the fellowships and prizes won by our graduate students this year. [Read more here.](#)

Instructors Bring Public History into the Classroom

UNC students often expect to write academic papers that no one but a professor or teaching assistant will read. Yet increasingly, instructors in the History department are designing assignments that ask undergraduates to use the skills they learned in class to reach a much broader audience beyond the walls of the university.



Mary Elizabeth Walters, a Ph.D. candidate and teaching assistant for Professor **Joe Glatthaar's** course "War and American Society, 1903 to Present" this semester, helped each student create an oral history of a veteran and write a feature article based on their interview. Because soldier experience in war is a central theme of the course, the oral histories fit naturally into the curriculum and allow students to hear a broader range of perspectives. [Read more here.](#)

--Aubrey Lauersdorf

Soldier-Scholars Bridge the Classroom and Battlefield

In 2008, Captain **Lauren Merkel** graduated from the University of North Carolina with a degree in Political Science. A cadet in the Reserve Officer Training Corps, she was commissioned as a junior officer in the United States Army. Merkel served in Afghanistan, Jordan, Kosovo, and in the United States. In 2016, she entered graduate school at her *alma mater*, this time in History. She won't be here long: next fall, she will leave Chapel Hill for the United States Military Academy at West Point, where she will teach cadets in a required course on the history of twentieth-century warfare.



The U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY, where officers selected for graduate work at UNC often go on to teach [courtesy www.usma.edu]

This demanding career trajectory has become surprisingly common at UNC. The History graduate program has a strong reputation and long-standing relationship with the Armed Services. The Department has helped to educate a new generation of officers and bring academic methods and thinking into the military. Graduates of the program include Lt. General **H. R. McMaster** (PhD, 1996), a former National Security Adviser under President Trump, and retired Colonel **Gregory Daddis** (PhD, 2009), a highly regarded historian of the Vietnam War. [Read more here.](#)

--Joshua Tait

Gifts to the History Department

The History Department is a lively center for historical education and research. Although we are deeply committed to our mission as a public institution, our "margin of excellence" depends on generous private donations. At the present time, the department is particularly eager to improve the funding and fellowships for graduate students.

Your donations are used to send graduate students to professional conferences, support innovative student research, bring visiting speakers to campus, and expand other activities that enhance the department's intellectual community.

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The Department also receives tax-deductible donations through the Arts and Sciences Foundation at UNC. **Please note in the "memo" section of your check that your gift is intended for the History Department.** Donations should be sent to the following address:

UNC-Arts & Sciences Foundation
Buchan House
Attn: Ronda Manuel
523 E. Franklin Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

For more information about creating scholarships, fellowships, and professorships in the Department through a gift, pledge, or planned gift please contact Ronda Manuel, Associate Director of Development at the Arts and Sciences Foundation: ronda.manuel@unc.edu or (919) 962-7266.

This email is for friends of the UNC Department of History, through the Arts and Sciences Foundation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



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