NEH Grant Underwrites Agricultural History Workshop for Teachers

In July 2007, nearly 120 teachers from across the nation came to Tillers International near Kalamazoo to study “The American Farm in U.S. History.” Led by co-project directors Lynne Heasley and Fred Dobney, principal faculty Wilson Warren, Sharon Carlson and Dick Roosenberg, and project instructors Kristin Szylvian and graduate student Robert Duke, and several national experts, the teachers gained hands-on experience in historical farming techniques, artifacts, and documents. They learned how to incorporate rural history and material culture into their curricula. The program was funded by a National Endowment for the Humanities grant in the program, “Landmarks of American History Workshops for Teachers.”

Tillers International, a non-profit organization that researches and promotes the use of simple, historical agricultural techniques, co-sponsored the workshops with the WMU Department of History.

Below—teachers learn about historical farm technology in The American Farm in U.S. History workshop. Photo Courtesy of Linda Waagen and Tami Hunter

William Donohoe Receives Alumni Achievement Award

On October 19-20, 2007, the department hosted William Donohoe (BA, History, 1959) and his wife Margaret Donohoe. Faculty and students were fascinated as Bill Donohoe showed images of some of his urban renewal projects created during his successful career in planning and development in New York City. He also described how the study of history led him, first, to the Peace Corps, and later to his current profession. He also gave valuable advice to our Public History students and faculty after hearing their presentation on their project, “Working Waterfronts” dealing with the changing harbors of Benton Harbor and St. Joseph, Michigan. In recognition of his lifetime accomplishments, Donohoe received a College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Achievement Award.
Dear Friends,

In this newsletter we are happy to bring you news about the many ways in which the faculty of the WMU history department continue to serve our students while also contributing to the scholarship of our discipline. Whether teaching in the classroom, supervising interns, or working with public school teachers in special workshops, we are contributing to the professional expertise of those under our tutelage.

We are also mindful of the rich heritage of our department. We were pleased this fall to honor our emeritus colleague, Dr. Ernst Breisach, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of his joining the WMU faculty. On Oct. 27, 2007, over 100 colleagues, friends, and former students gathered to hear Dr. Breisach discuss his career and his work in a talk entitled “Life and History: Personal and Professional Reflections.”

His lecture was preceded by a presentation by Dr. David Barclay, Professor of History at Kalamazoo College and Executive Director of the German Studies Association. Dr. Barclay spoke on “The Crisis in Central Europe between the World Wars,” describing the context of Ernst Breisach’s youth.

Ernst Breisach’s scholarship is known throughout the profession. His latest book, On the Future of History: The Postmodernist Challenge and Its Aftermath (2003) is still gaining critical acclaim. His widely used Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, & Modern, first published 34 years ago, has just appeared in a third edition. With great pride, friends and colleagues recognized Dr. Breisach’s outstanding contributions to the profession and to the WMU history department. He is an inspiration for us all.

Some of you will have known Dr. Breisach as a teacher or as the chair of the department when you studied at Western. If you would like to receive a DVD recording of his and Dr. Barclay’s lectures, you may order them at a small charge by e-mailing cheryl.lay@wmich.edu by January 30, 2008.

Thank you for your interest in our department and for your continued support. Remember that you can stay abreast of our activities at any time by visiting our website: www.wmich.edu/history.

—Marion (Buddy) Gray, Professor and Chair
Curricular Changes in Process

The Department has begun, as part of a regular assessment process, a revision of its curricular offerings for each of its majors and minors: Liberal Education, Public History, and Secondary Education. History faculty determined they wanted to enhance the professional nature of the programs, provide students with necessary skills to succeed in their chosen majors, and eliminate roadblocks to timely graduation. These changes will contribute to the new Western Edge program by assisting students in completing their degrees in an orderly and timely manner.

All majors will take History 2900, a general introduction to the discipline. The course is designed to help history students learn to see the world as historians and will give explicit attention to fundamental research and methodological skills, general and discipline-specific writing skills, and basic historical knowledge.

Intermediate-level writing-intensive courses will address relatively broad chronological content within a clear geographic focus. They are designed to build upon skills and knowledge gained in the introductory courses.

Senior-level courses, primarily thematic in nature, will meet criteria for WMU’s Baccalaureate Writing requirement. Content will build on broad or introductory knowledge established at the previous levels and will involve more advanced and specialized study of a historical issue.

Department Receives Third Federal Grant to Support History Teachers

The U.S. Department of Education awarded Western Michigan University’s History Department, the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA), and the Kalamazoo Valley Museum their third $1,000,000 Teaching American History (TAH) grant to help southwestern Michigan teachers improve their professional skills in U.S. history. The new TAH grant will focus on early U.S. history instruction for fifth grade teachers. The lead faculty include Wilson Warren (who also directs the grant for the history department) and Joe Brandao from WMU as well as Sean O’Neill from Grand Valley State University and Tim Hall from Central Michigan University. Instruction will take place in two-week summer workshops from 2008 through 2010.

History Media Lab is Here

The department has opened its new digital media lab, conveniently located in 4154 Dunbar Hall. Paid for with student technology fees which are available through the university’s distributed computer plan (DCP), the media center has resources for both undergraduate majors and graduate students.

The center contains iMac workstations, a mobile laptop cart, a color scanner, laser printer, two digital cameras, and two digital video cameras. The DCP grant, which was authored by assistant professor Ed Martini and coordinated by the department’s IT committee, also funded two new software items: Final Cut Pro, for creating and editing high quality video projects, and the Past Perfect museum management program, purchased with our Public History programs in mind.

The lab is available for history students to work on media-related projects, such as film or web design, to work on more traditional assignments, or simply to check their email between classes.

During the fall 2007 term, the lab was staffed by Graduate Assistant Stacey Moore, along with help from several undergraduate work study students. Matt Schuld replaces Moore in the spring.
Rubin Receives Humboldt Foundation Fellowship

Eli Rubin is the recipient of a highly competitive two-year Alexander von Humboldt research grant. The Humboldt Foundation is a non-profit organization established by the Federal Republic of Germany for the promotion of international research cooperation.

Rubin is pursuing a project entitled “Material Memory: Marzahn, Socialism, and the GDR,” in which he will assess communist-era housing projects of the East Berlin suburb, Marzahn. Rubin is evaluating the complete replacement of both the built environment and people’s personal possessions during the transformation of Marzahn.

He is interested in how these changes altered the relationship between personal memory and citizens’ understandings of their own history.

Julien and Pastrano Awarded Second NEH Grant

Catherine Julien and Pablo Pastrana, of the History and Spanish Departments respectively, have been awarded a second $100,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The grant will allow them to continue their work transcribing and translating a body of approximately sixty-sixteenth-century documents written by members of the Cabeza de Vaca expedition to the Pantanal, the largest wetland region in the Americas, located on the border between Brazil and Bolivia. Approximately eighteen Spaniards produced the expedition documents, all of which are originals written in their own hand.

This unique collection will enable scholars and students to study these rare primary sources relating to the European exploration of the New World.

Kachun is Winner of WMU’s Emerging Scholar Award

Associate Professor, Mitch Kachun, a WMU faculty member since 2001, has focused his research and scholarly publications on American history, and he is recognized as a leading scholar on the topic of African American historical memory. He is author of Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Celebrations, published in 2003.

In 2006 he published, with co-editor William L. Andrews, The Curse of Caste; or the Slave Bride: A Rediscovered African American Novel. Rediscovery of this forgotten work has generated national attention for changing the timeline of African-American literature.

Kachun is on sabbatical in 2007-08, researching a new project, which will document the many and varied historical representations of Crispus Attucks, who died in the Boston Massacre and who is considered by many African Americans to be a “founding father.”

Berkhofer Receives Achievement Award in Teaching

The WMU College of Arts and Sciences awarded Robert F. Berkhofer III a 2007 Faculty Achievement Award for Outstanding Teaching. He was honored with this distinction because of his success in three different areas of teaching: general education courses, advanced undergraduate instruction, and graduate instruction and mentoring.

Among the achievements noted by the nominators was Berkhofer’s innovative use of technology in the classroom. He is spending the academic year 2007-08 on sabbatical in England, researching a project on forgeries in the Middle Ages.
Martini Receives Grant to Study History of Agent Orange

Assistant Professor Ed Martini has been awarded a FRACSF grant to conduct archival research for his new book project, “Agent Orange: An International and Interdisciplinary History.” Tracing the history of Agent Orange as a material artifact, this project will contribute to scholarship in a number of fields, including environmental studies, military history, the history of science and technology, and the history of United States foreign relations.

Support from the grant will allow Professor Martini to travel to largely untapped collections housed at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland; the National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, Maryland; and the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University. In addition, this summer Professor Martini will travel to Vietnam to study the ongoing effects and legacies of the chemical war.

Faires Receives Albert B. Corey Prize

At the 2007 American Historical Association (AHA) annual meeting in Atlanta, Nora Faires received the Albert B. Corey Prize for her co-authored book, Permeable Border: The Great Lakes Basin as Transnational Region, 1650-1990, published jointly by the University of Pittsburgh Press and University of Calgary Press in 2005.

The Corey Prize is jointly sponsored by the AHA and the Canadian Historical Association and is awarded biennially to the best book dealing with the history of Canadian-American relations or the history of both countries.

Schmitt Retires

Peter Schmitt, a beloved teacher, who joined the WMU History Faculty in 1965, will enter a new phase of his life by retiring at the end of the Spring 2008 semester. He is known as a pioneer in Environmental History, especially for his book, Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America, first published in 1969 and reissued in 1990. He is also widely respected as an expert on the built environment of Kalamazoo and vicinity. His Kalamazoo: Nineteenth-Century Homes in a Midwestern Village (1976) and Kalamazoo: The Place Behind the Products (1998), the latter co-authored with alumnus Larry B. Massie, contribute to Schmitt’s widespread reputation as the expert on the built environment of Kalamazoo and vicinity. His Kalamazoo: Nineteenth-Century Homes in a Midwestern Village (1976) and Kalamazoo: The Place Behind the Products (1998), the latter co-authored with alumnus Larry B. Massie, contribute to Schmitt’s widespread reputation as the expert on the history of our region. He also co-authored, with Massie, Battle Creek: The Place Behind the Products.

Thousands of WMU students and former students admire Professor Schmitt as the instructor of the informative and entertaining course “Popular Art and Architecture in America.” The enrollments in this course are so high that he has been called the “Student Credit Hour King” by a WMU administrator. He taught a variety of courses, including Public History, History of the American West, and, early in his career, a pioneering course on African American history.

Medievalist Joins Department

The Department of History is delighted to announce the appointment of Dr. Luigi Andrea Berto. A native of Venice, Italy, he earned his Ph.D. from the University of Venice. A specialist of the early medieval period, he wrote his dissertation on “War and Violence in Early Medieval Chronicles of Southern Italy.” He is the author, editor, or translator of four scholarly books published in Italy and numerous articles. Before coming to WMU, Dr. Berto taught at SUNY Binghamton, the University of Michigan, and Rutgers University. The department selected him from a broad pool of candidates, not only because of his scholarship, but also because he is a dedicated and successful classroom teacher.
Faculty Publications

Warren Publishes New Study of Meatpacking Industry

Ambitious in its historical scope and its broad range of topics, *Tied to the Great Packing Machine: The Midwest and Meatpacking* by Wilson Warren tells the dramatic story of meatpacking’s enormous effects on the economics, culture, and environment of the Midwest over the past century and a half. Focusing on the lives of people working in the industry, Warren situates the history of meatpacking in both its urban and rural settings—including the huge stockyards of Chicago and Kansas City to today’s smaller meatpacking communities. The book presents a complete portrayal of meatpacking’s place within the larger agro-industrial landscape.

Martini Publishes Study of U.S.-Vietnam Relations

Beginning where most histories of the Vietnam War end, *Invisible Enemies: The American War on Vietnam, 1975-2000* examines the relationship between the United States and Vietnam following the American pullout in 1975. Martini shows how the United States continued to wage war on Vietnam “by other means” for another twenty-five years. He reinforces his assessment of American diplomacy with an analysis of the “cultural front”—the movies, myths, memorials, and other phenomena that supported continuing hostility toward Vietnam, while silencing opposing views of the war and its legacies. He argues that the “American War on Vietnam” was as much a battle for the cultural memory of the war within the United States as it was a lengthy economic, political, and diplomatic campaign to punish a former adversary.

Professor Bruce Franklin to Present 2007-08 Hamner Lecture

The distinguished cultural historian H. Bruce Franklin will present the annual H. Nicholas Hamner Lecture in History on Thursday, April 10, 2008. The topic of his presentation will be “War Stars: The Super Weapon and the American Imagination.”

Franklin, John Cotton Dana Professor of English and American Studies at Rutgers University, is author, co-author, or editor of eighteen books and over 200 articles dealing with American cultural history. Many of his writings interpret the United States’ place in world affairs. He is known for his analysis of the Vietnam War and its role in the American imagination.

Franklin’s April lecture will be based on his book, *War Stars*, which Choice magazine described as “a marvelous study that weaves together some of the most important developments in US military history, a survey of popular literature, and an overview of American culture.” While on campus, Franklin will also meet with history classes and confer individually with interested students and faculty.

The Department of History’s Hamner Lecture Series was generously endowed in 1999 by Professor Emeritus H. Nicholas Hamner, a member of the WMU History Faculty 1956 to 1992. Nick Hamner remains a loyal friend and supporter of the department.

The Annual Hamner Lectures bring historians of national and international repute to our campus. The lectures are open to the public and often attended by colleagues from other institutions as well as individuals from beyond Kalamazoo.

Details of the 2008 Hamner Lecture will be posted on the Department of History website at www.wmich.edu/history.
On Wednesday, April 4, 2007, the Department of History hosted its first ever History Happening, an open house designed to honor history majors and minors and encourage their deepening involvement with history as a discipline and a profession. Despite an early April snowstorm, over 150 students attended. They had opportunities to talk with faculty about their research projects, to learn about public history internships, to discuss intern teaching experiences with fellow students, and to enjoy a pictorial history of the department.

History students also heard from classmates who had participated in study abroad and others who had received Undergraduate History Fellowships to attend conferences or promote research. Members of Phi Alpha Theta, the national history honorary society, talked about their organization and encouraged other students to join.

Many students left the Happening with new history books and other prizes they had won at the first Annual Historically Significant Raffle.

Awards announced at the History Happening and the Undergraduate History Fellowships are possible thanks to the generosity of History Department emeriti, many of whom continue to contribute regularly to the education of history majors through financial giving. Special thanks goes to professor emeritus Dale Pattison for his generous support of undergraduate student awards.
During the summer of 2007 Public History interns served in all corners of the United States from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Coast to the Southeast Atlantic to the flood devastated Gulf Coast to the arid Southwest. Public History students worked to gain insight into how to apply the theory they learn in the classroom to a professional setting.

- Maggie Donohue received an internship from the Historic Hattiesburg (Mississippi) Downtown, Incorporated, a non-profit corporation that promotes historic preservation and community based flood and storm recovery policy.
- Erika Paul spent her days aboard the USS Midway as part of her duties as an intern at the San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum.
- Janea Schimmel completed an internship at Colonial Williamsburg where she did research on musical instruments used in Virginia prior to 1825.
- Nathan Nietering served as an intern at the Detroit Historical Society’s Department of Collections.
- Graduate student Kenna N. Graham ventured high into the mountains of New Mexico to work at the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument. She assisted National Park Service personnel in the research and preparation of a new site interpretive plan.
- April Ott conducted research for the North Berrien County Historical Society.
- Tara Blurton gained hands-on experience in collections management and exhibits at the President Gerald R. Ford Museum in Grand Rapids.
- Scott Nichols, Andrew Rakowski, and Bonnie Kelly completed internships at the WMU Archives and Regional History Collections.
- The Collections and Curatorial Department of the Holland Museum sponsored Patrick Jouppi’s internship.
- Among Sara Schultz’s duties at the Michigan Maritime Museum in South Haven was developing and implementing educational programs on board the Friends Goodwill.

Public History undergraduate and graduate students complete a minimum of 240 internship hours.

Judith F. Stone Award Assists Graduate Student

Upon the occasion of Professor Judith Stone’s retirement in December 2006, President Emeritus and Interim President Diether Haenicke established a scholarship in her name. A specialist in modern French social and gender history, Dr. Stone was the Mary U. Meader Professor of Modern European History.

The Judith F. Stone Award, to be granted annually, provides financial support to help defray costs in conducting research for a doctoral dissertation preferably on a topic in European or European-related history.

The award was made possible through the generosity of Beulah Kendall, who contributed funds to the WMU foundation to be used for student academic support initiatives.

The first recipient of the award is Ph.D. student Emilie Bruce, who is researching her dissertation on the topic, “Constructing Gypsyness: History of Voyageurs in France, 1830-1930.”

Judith Stone serves as Bruce’s dissertation director.
Graduate Students Win Awards

David Zwart, a Ph.D. candidate in American History, received a West European Studies Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship to study the Dutch language at the Summer Dutch Institute at Indiana University, Bloomington, for summer 2007. The fellowship carries a living allowance stipend and a tuition grant. He will write a dissertation on Dutch migrants to America.

Travis Bruce has won the Graduate College Dissertation Completion Fellowship. The competitive award is based on superior scholarly achievement and is designed to assist full-time doctoral students with the completion of their dissertations. Bruce’s dissertation is entitled “The Politics of Intercultural Exchange: The Taifa of Denia and the Western Mediterranean.” Denia, today a small coastal resort town in Spain, was during the eleventh century a major Mediterranean port and an important Spanish-Muslim principality.

Three Recent Ph.D. Recipients Publish Scholarly Books

Andrea Elizabeth Donovan published in 2007 William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings with Routledge. Morris, best known as a British artist and craftsman, founded in 1877 the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and led the organization in its struggle to safeguard old buildings, including many built in the Middle Ages. He was at the center of a cultural struggle of industrializing Europe, where the built landscape was changing rapidly. Andrea Donovan completed her Ph.D. in 2004 under the direction of Professor Emeritus Dale Porter. She holds a tenure-track position in Art History and Humanities at Minot State University in North Dakota.

R. Clifford Jones is author of James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventists, published in 2006 by the University Press of Mississippi. The book recounts the life and career of Humphrey, a black Seventh-Day Adventist minister in Harlem who developed plans for a utopian community for blacks. After the SDA leadership revoked his ministerial credentials, Humphrey established an independent organization, the United Sabbath-Day Adventists. Clifford Jones, who received his Ph.D. in 2001 under the direction of John Salillant, is an associate professor at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Saillant holds a joint appointment in History and English.

Kevin Kain is co-translator and editor with Katia Levintova of Ioann Shusherin’s From Peasant to Patriarch: Account of the Birth, Upbringing, and Life of His Holiness Nikon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia (Lexington Books, 2007). Nikon (1605-1681), Patriarch of Moscow, was a religious reformer whose work contributed to the schism of the Russian Orthodox Church.

This annotated translation makes available to students and scholars in the English-speaking world a valuable primary source written by Nikon’s close advisor, Shusherin. Kain completed his Ph.D. in 2005 under the supervision of John Norman and teaches in Humanistic Studies and History at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay.

Alumnus Massie Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

The Historical Society of Michigan presented its first Lifetime Achievement Award to Michigan historian Larry Massie, who received three degrees from the WMU Department of History. The Society lauded Massie for devoting “nearly all of his adult life” to researching and interpreting “our state’s rich history.” In addition to authoring at least 20 books and numerous articles, Massie has served as an archivist, an appraiser, a board member of at least four historical organizations, a book collector, a designer for seven exhibits, a presenter in hundreds of schools, a publisher, a researcher, a teacher and a volunteer.
The Endowment for the Study of New France was created with an initial $100,000 gift in honor and memory of Dr. Joseph L. Peyser. Dr. Peyser was an eminent scholar of New France who wrote widely on the history and culture of the French in North America and, in particular, in the Great Lakes region.

Based on his extensive research in the archives of France, Canada and the United States, Dr. Peyser published edited translations of important documents, many of which had long escaped the attention of historians. He also published studies of French exploration and settlement, of French/Native relations, and of French cartography. His fascination with New France extended not just to the dealings of the elite and powerful—such as kings and priests—but especially to documenting the day-to-day lives of the voyageurs and early settlers.

Dr. Peyser's research unearthed long-lost maps that corrected previous historical assumptions about key French/Native American sites in Illinois and Michigan, including the correct identification for the location of the previously undiscovered Fort St. Joseph in Niles, Michigan. Fort St. Joseph was an important French trading post, and is currently under archaeological investigation and development by Western Michigan University.

The Joseph L. Peyser Endowment aims, primarily, to provide financial assistance in support of research, defined as broadly as were Dr. Peyser's interests, on the history and culture of the French in North America including: the history of the French presence in North America and in the Great Lakes region; the culture (language, arts, material culture, built environment) of the French in North America and in the Great Lakes region; the history and culture of Native peoples with whom the French interacted in North America and the Great Lakes region; the history of Native-French interactions in North America and the Great Lakes region.

In recognition of Dr. Peyser's broad range of interests, collaborations, and interdisciplinary work, applications for support will be accepted from faculty and graduate students from WMU, as well as from other institutions traveling to WMU to consult the French Michilimackinac Research Project Collection. The materials, on indefinite loan to WMU from Mackinac State Historic Parks, represent one of the largest collections outside of France and Canada of French language documents related to the French presence in North America. Dr. Peyser was instrumental in identifying and gathering the documents from archives in France, Canada, and the United States. Funds may also be used to support New France-related research, conferences, or educational initiatives conducted by community historical associations or other not-for-profit organizations working in affiliation with WMU.

For more information contact:
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www.wmich.edu/history/peyserendowment
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*Recent donors will be included in the next issue of the newsletter.
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In a time when state funding is increasingly restricted, the support we receive from friends and alumni is vitally important. Such funds are used to take advantage of new or unbudgeted opportunities in order to enhance the teaching or the research of the department, or to assist students in achieving their educational and professional goals. Thank you for considering a gift to the WMU Department of History.

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