

WELLESLEY COLLEGE

Department of History Annual Newsletter

Spring 2015



Dear Friends of the History Department,

As we approach the end of another productive academic year, I would like to welcome our readers to the second issue of our annual newsletter. Continuing Professor Kapteijns' initiative during her time as department chair, we hope that this vehicle will facilitate communication between our alumnae and the department as well as among alumnae themselves. We hope that you will send us brief notes (250 words) about how you are, what you are doing, and whether you would be willing to be featured in the newsletter's brief alumnae profiles. Thanks to Professors Kate Grandjean and Simon Grote for serving as editors.

Prof. Lidwien Kapteijns concluded her tenure as department chair this January and is currently on a three-semester leave. We would like to thank her for her efforts in leading us through the last two-and-a-half years. We also extend our congratulations to Prof. Quinn Slobodian, our modern Europeanist, for his promotion to Associate Professor. In other faculty news, Prof. Kate Grandjean, our early Americanist, was recently featured in an interview in the *Boston Sunday Globe's* Ideas section (March 8) about her well-received book, *American*

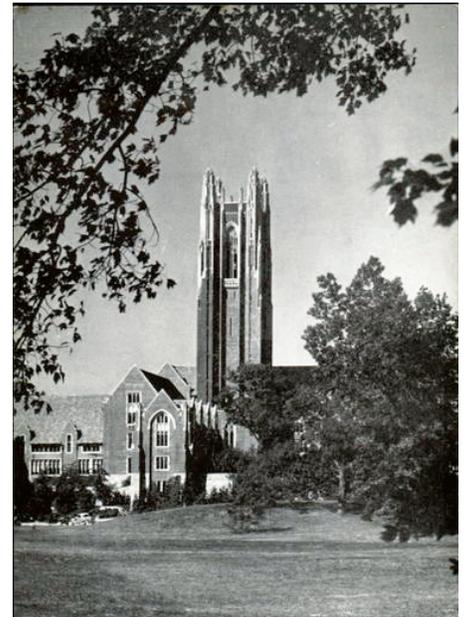
Passage: The Communications Frontier in Early New England, which was published this January by Harvard University Press. Prof. Alejandra Osorio, our Latin Americanist, has been appointed Director of the Programa de Estudios Hispánicos en Córdoba (PRESHCO), one of the study-abroad programs in which Wellesley participates, and will be resident in Spain during the next academic year.

We also have some sad news to communicate. Lin Davina Huang, Class of 2013, passed away on March 10 as a result of injuries suffered in a snowboarding accident. A memorial service was held at Houghton Chapel on April 1. Prof. Pat Giersch shares some thoughts in memory of Davina in this issue.

Please stay in touch. (Contact us at history@wellesley.edu.) We wish you a good summer and look forward to hearing from you.

Tak Matsusaka

Chair, History



THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT

PROFESSORS

Giersch, Kapteijns, Malino, Matsusaka
(Chair), Rogers, Shennan, Tumarkin

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

Osorio, Ramseyer, Rao, Slobodian

ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

Grandjean, Greer, Grote, Quintana

VISITING LECTURER

Blanton

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Anne Wasserman

FACULTY INTERVIEW

Professor Simon Grote

This (abridged) interview was conducted by Emma McMahon, student assistant in the History Department, in March 2014.

Why did you choose to come to Wellesley?

Many reasons! When I first arrived, I was immediately impressed by the natural landscape — not just the beauty but the feeling of a pastoral serenity that reminded me of my childhood, exploring the untamed woods around my family's home in the Hudson Valley, and reading books while looking out at the trees from the second-story window of my bedroom. I find the campus conducive to the same kind of contemplation that I cherished as a child. . . . I was also drawn to Wellesley by the people I met here — colleagues whose palpable confidence that I could enrich the department and the college nearly convinced me they were right!

How is Wellesley different from other academic environments that you have been a part of?

I spent sixteen years affiliated with research universities before coming to Wellesley in 2013. One of the differences that I've found especially gratifying is how Wellesley's smaller size means that faculty who want to form intellectual communities around areas of common interest need to cross departmental boundaries to do so. Two areas in which this necessity has proven intellectually invigorating for me are eighteenth-century studies and book studies, where Wellesley has a remarkable depth and breadth of faculty expertise, as evidenced by the Book Studies Program and the Long Eighteenth Century Working Group. As a participant in both groups, I prize the way in which we challenge each other to expand the horizons of our interests, our questions, and our ways of answering them.

Have you had the opportunity to participate in any activities at Wellesley?

My favorites have been those that involve exchanging ideas with students whom I otherwise might not have the chance to meet. I've had the good fortune to be invited to participate in several events of this type, including "How to Paint History," a discussion of Angelica Kauffman's wonderful painting of a scene from Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona* in the Davis Museum, organized by the Clio History Club; and "From Page to Stage," a panel discussion on theatrical representations of history, organized by Clio and Upstage.

How did you first become interested in history as a field?

The earliest stimulus, I think, came from my family. I grew up in a household in which it was taken for granted that knowing about people and what they had said and thought and done — yesterday, last year, and long ago — was the key to having a firm grasp on reality. That knowledge gives you access to a huge storehouse of human ideas and experience that can illuminate almost every aspect of life: local politics, world affairs, personal relationships, the economy, science, you name it. It's what allows you to distinguish truth from fabrication, and to understand why things are happening as they are. When I got to college, history seemed to be the most encompassing major — the one that would allow me to study the widest range of ideas — and I used it to fashion a liberal arts curriculum that could bring me closest to that childhood ideal.



Professor Grote

What is your philosophy of teaching?

My principal aim is to create an environment in which everyone, even students new to the study of history, can experience well-earned success. I design my courses as collective research projects, guided by manifestly important questions, where taking risks and making mistakes is the key to deepening our understanding. My hope is that by the end of a semester, everyone in the class will refuse to trust assertions about the past without seeing concrete evidence, and will feel motivated to continue learning, driven by a sustained, self-generated curiosity.

Do you have any new courses or publications that you would like us to know about?

My biggest project at the moment is to finish my book, in which I am trying to explain why early eighteenth-century Europe witnessed an explosion of theoretical writing about beauty and art. I am also designing a new first-year writing course for Fall 2015: "From Miracles to Mesmerism: The Cultural History of the Scientific Revolution" (WRIT117/HIST117). We will try to understand why Western ideas about the natural world changed so radically in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. What excites me most about this course is the opportunity to help students see how the practice of science, something they may be intending to pursue professionally, can be enriched by an historical perspective.

FACULTY NEWS

Pat Giersch. I had a great year teaching, researching, and serving on the Board of Admissions. I once again taught a first-year writing course. The course's content focuses on four topics in Qing (eighteenth-century) China that have influenced our times: gender and family, the expansion of the empire into Tibet, Euro-American writings on China, and the environment. I also took a turn teaching HIST205, the IR-HIST core course on global history. My latest publication came out this fall in a mainland-China-based journal, *Frontiers of History in China*. In January, I was off to the British Library to find British imperial records on Chinese in Burma. Thanks to a travel grant from the American Philosophical Society, this summer I will travel to Taiwan and Yunnan Province, and I'll return to London briefly during my fall sabbatical. When I return to campus next spring, I look forward to meeting many of the great students who were admitted this year. This year, I had the privilege of reading applications for admission, and I am excited about the students who will soon join Wellesley College. To those History Department alumnae who read this newsletter, I hope you will keep in touch with the Department.

Katherine Grandjean. This was an exciting year for me. In August I welcomed my second child, a little girl named Carey. In January, my first book, *American Passage: The Communications Frontier in Early New England*, was published by Harvard University Press. I spent much of this spring promoting the book in interviews, public lectures, and other events. In March, my work was featured in the *Boston Globe*, and since then I have enjoyed hearing from readers, including Wellesley alumnae. I've also been excited to return to teaching, after being on leave. A highlight of my spring semester was taking my seminar on the history of American food (HIST320) to visit the culinary collections at Schlesinger Library in Cambridge, where Julia Child's papers are housed. Teaching my course on colonial history (HIST256) has also been tremendous fun. This summer, I'll give talks in Chicago, Raleigh, Plymouth, and Cape Cod, and will be working on my next book, a study of violence and murder in eighteenth-century America.

Simon Grote. I spent the past year continuing to work on my book manuscript about the origins of aesthetic theory in eighteenth-century Scotland and Germany, now under contract with Cambridge University Press. Working on the book in German libraries last summer led me to investigate the concept of "spiritual taste" in the early eighteenth century, about which I presented at the 2014 German Studies Association meeting and wrote an article ("From Spiritual Taste to Good Taste? Reflections on the Search for Aesthetic Theory's Pietist Roots"), forthcoming later this year. This summer, I will lecture on that topic in Halle,

Germany. Highlights of my teaching included a visit by Kenneth E. Carpenter, former curator of Harvard's Kress Library in the History of Business and Economics, to speak to HIST235 ("The Birth of Economics") and the Wellesley community about the international dissemination of Benjamin Franklin's "The Way to Wealth." I also taught one new course, HIST232, a survey of early modern Europe. Our study of early modern books in Wellesley's

collections benefited from lessons I had learned attending a week-long seminar in July 2014 on "teaching the history of the book" at the University of Virginia's Rare Book School.

Lidwien Kapteijns. I completed my last term as chair of the History Department on January 1 and spent spring 2015 on leave. This fall I taught my class on the history of modern Africa (HIST265) and my international history seminar on histories of ethnic and religious violence (HIST395). In 2014-2015 I published a short essay on transitional justice in Somalia in *Northeast African Studies*. I was invited to speak about my recent book *Clan Cleansing in Somalia: The Ruinous Legacy of 1991* (now in paperback) at the African Studies Center of Boston University, to the Somali Students' Association of Northeastern University, and at the Human Rights Institute of the University of Connecticut. One of my leave projects is a study of women's legal and economic agency in the small Indian Ocean port city of Brava (south of Mogadishu), drawing especially on the (Arabic) qadi's court records of the town for 1893-1900. I am deeply saddened by the death



Professor Quintana
Assistant Professor of History

Works in Progress:
Planners, Planters, and Slaves: The Social Construction of Earth National South Carolina

Research Interests:
The social production of space, the political economy of North America, Slavery in the 18th and 19th centuries, the social history of slavery, and social and political history in North America

FACULTY NEWS

continued

of Davina Huang ('13), who took several classes with me and in May 2014 wrote her research paper on suicide bombers in Israel-Palestine for HIST395.

Tak Matsusaka. Last spring, I taught a seminar about the origins of modernity in Europe and East Asia (HIST352). The course culminated in a workshop in which we discussed our findings and conclusions about the meaning of the category “modern” in historical study. Notes from this workshop provided the basis for two essays I put together for my fall courses. One dealt with what we called the “bureaucratic revolution,” a transformation of the state often associated with early modern Europe but actually pioneered two millennia earlier in ancient China. The other considered the origins of European modernity in comparative perspective. I used these essays as core readings in my fall courses and credited participants in my seminar as coauthors. This material couldn't have been produced without their help. As a result, students in my fall courses were introduced to a wide range of scholarly studies, as processed through seminar discussions, that they would not have been able to access in a lecture course. I plan to pursue other, similar projects in the future. I am currently revising my book manuscript on nationalism, liberalism, and imperialism in Meiji Japan. It's entitled

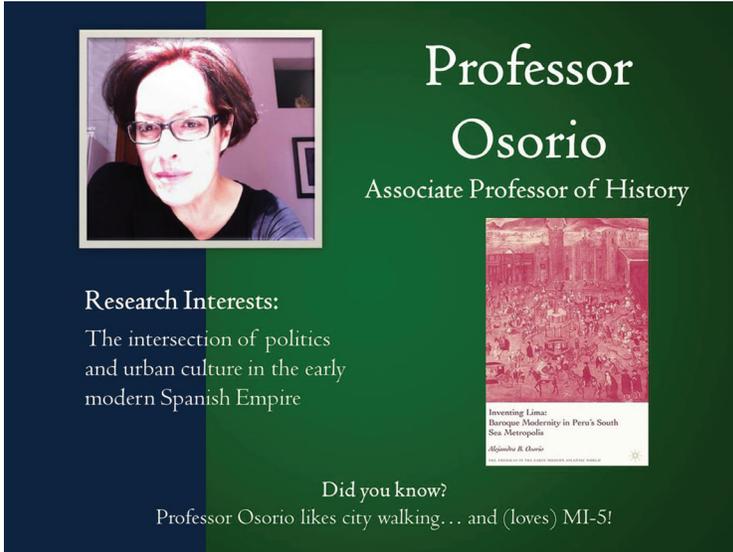
Imperialism and the Nationalist Opposition in Late Meiji Japan: A Study of the Seikyōsha, 1888-1918. I'm also working on a project on the Imperial Japanese Army.

Ryan Quintana. After spending last year researching and writing in the mountains of North Carolina, while on leave, it's been great to be back on campus. I'm currently working on my book manuscript, *“For they alone can affect it”: Slaves and the Production of the Modern Liberal State in Early National South Carolina.* I've presented material related to this project in a number of forums this year. In the fall, I presented on slavery and economic development as part of Brown University's 19th Century U.S. History Seminar. This winter I presented a chapter of the manuscript as part of an

ongoing NEH seminar, “Intended Consequences? The Historical and Contemporary Problematic of Planning,” and participated in a roundtable discussion on slavery and the production of space at the Southern Labor Studies Association Meeting in Washington D.C. This summer, I'll participate in a roundtable on the topic of governance and American political development at the Society for the History of the Early American Republic annual meeting, and next autumn will present my work at the Southern Historical Association meeting. I recently published an article in the *Journal of Southern History* entitled “Planners, Planters, and Slaves: Producing the State in Early National South Carolina.”

Valerie Ramseyer. In 2014 I had two articles published: “Cave Dwelling” in *The Blackwell Companion to Mediterranean History*, ed. Peregrine Horden and Sharon Kinoshita (Wiley-Blackwell) and “Vescovi e monasteri nei secoli XI-XII,” in Giovanni Vitolo (ed.) *Riforma della chiesa, esperienze monastiche e poteri locali. La Badia di Cava e le sue dipendenze nel Mezzogiorno dei secoli XI-XII. Atti del Convegno Internazionale sulla Badi di Cava, 15-17 settembre*

2011 (Salerno: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo). In addition, I am putting the finishing touches on a book chapter entitled “Questions of Monastic Identity in Medieval Southern Italy and Sicily, (c. 500-1200),” which will be published in *The New Cambridge History of Medieval Western Monasticism* in 2016. I am also serving as Co-chair of the Program Committee for the Medieval Academy of America's 2016 conference in Boston.



Professor Osorio
Associate Professor of History

Research Interests:
The intersection of politics and urban culture in the early modern Spanish Empire

Did you know?
Professor Osorio likes city walking... and (loves) MI-5!

Guy Rogers. In early 2014, I focused on teaching my Wellesley courses and my MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) “Was Alexander Great: The Life, Leadership, and Legacies of History's Greatest Warrior” for WellesleyX/edX. Since its 2013 publication, my book *The Mysteries of Artemis of Ephesos* has generated a great deal of interest, both in scholarly journals and popular venues, including featured reviews in *Minerva* and in *Humanities*. The first Mandarin edition of my textbook, *Roots of the Western Tradition: A Short History of the Ancient World*, was published in 2014 by Shanghai's Brilliant Press. Routledge also re-published my first book, *The Sacred Identity of Ephesos*, in its programme of distinguished works of scholarship published over the last 100 years. In fall 2014 I received a grant from the Koch Brothers Educational Foundation to

lead a collaborative student-faculty lecture series, study, and research seminar, “Rome and America: Freedom, Slavery, and Redemption.” I was also elected to the international editions of “Who’s Who” and noted “Contemporary Authors.” In 2014 I became Kenan Professor of Classics and History at Wellesley College, and I’ve also recently served on the Advisory Board of the Freedom Project and on the Advisory Committee of the Albright Institute. Outside of the college I remain a supporter of animal welfare, Italian oenology, and classical music, especially the period between 1756 and 1791.

Quinn Slobodian. I had the good fortune of spending 2013-14 as a postdoctoral fellow at the Freie Universität in Berlin where I continued work on my manuscript on the intellectual history of neoliberalism and the concept of the world economy. The book has grown out of a seminar I have taught several times on world economic orders (HIST334). Parallel to the world economy book, I put together an edited volume on the connections between communist East Germany and the non-Western world. It includes contributions on everything from the East German solidarity with imprisoned African-American activist Angela Davis to the way Cubans perceived the fall of the Berlin Wall. This book sprang in part from my lecture course on Postwar Europe and the Three Germanies. In the past year, I have presented my work in Geneva, Bologna, Exeter, Kansas City, and Tokyo.

Alejandra B. Osorio. For two years I have been busy directing Latin American Studies. Next year, I will be the resident director of the PRESHCO program in Cordoba, Spain. This year, with Professor Malcolm Smuts (UMass-Boston), I co-organized an international conference on viceregal courts in the British and Iberian Worlds. It will be held this June in London. I also co-organized a panel with Professor Kirsten Schultz (Seton Hall University) on “Empires, Histories, and Historiographies: The Iberian and the Ottoman in Perspective,” for the Association of Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies (ASPHS) meeting. Last fall, I was invited to teach a doctoral seminar on colonial historiography at the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) in Quito, Ecuador, where I also delivered the annual Magisterial Lecture in Andean Studies, titled “Cities, Empires, Nations: Historiographical Look into the Spanish Habsburg Empire from Viceregal Lima.” I have been invited by the Ministry of Culture of Colombia and the National Museum of Colonial Art to deliver an annual distinguished lecture this summer on the theme of architecture and the colonial city. I am also working on my book manuscript on the articulations of architecture, urban design, ceremony and the law in making the Spanish king legitimate in the seventeenth-century Spanish Empire. This fall, I offered a new seminar on the role of ruins in historical writings and understandings of modernity, from the sixteenth through the

nineteenth century in the Spanish Empire, which was great fun to teach. Finally, I was appointed to the Editorial Advisory Board of *Renaissance Quarterly* and elected as the Americas Representative to the Renaissance Society of America (RSA).

Nina Tumarkin. In summer 2014, the *Journal of Cold War Studies* published my review of *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance* (Berghahn Books), an edited volume close in theme to my current book project, which explores memory politics in contemporary Russia. At the February 2015 Camden Conference, “Russia Resurgent,” I gave a related lecture, “History Matters: Politics of the Past in Putin’s Russia” (to an audience of 950 people). In 2014-2015 I have had several appearances on public radio talk shows in connection with both the Russia-Ukraine war and the February 2015 assassination of Russian opposition figure Boris Nemtsov. Nemtsov was a personal friend and had spoken at Wellesley on several occasions. In summer 2014 I gave five lectures on successive Eurasian empires while on a Harvard alumni travel program in China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Turkey. In Kyrgyzstan I met with the U.S. Ambassador, Pamela Spratlen, a Wellesley alumna who has since become ambassador to Uzbekistan. In May 2015 I will travel to Moscow, to research commemorations of the 70th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany.

NEW COURSES INTRODUCED IN 2014-2015

HIST 232 The Transformation of the Western World: Europe, 1350-1815

Prof. Simon Grote
Fall 2014

HIST 341 At The Margins: Social Movements and Counterpublics in the Twentieth-Century United States

Prof. Matthew Blanton
Fall 2014

HIST 359 Speaking Ruins: Antiquity and Modernity in the History of the Spanish World

Prof. Alejandra Osorio
Fall 2014

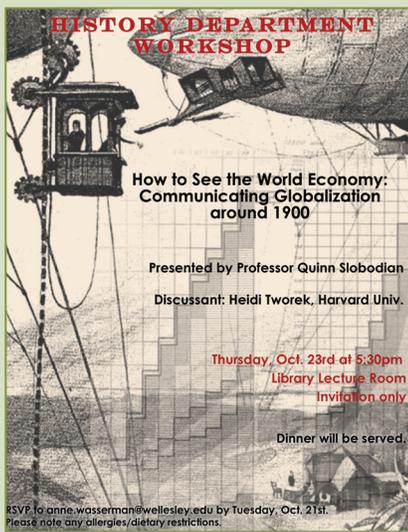
HISTORY DEPARTMENT FACULTY WORKSHOPS AND GUEST LECTURES

THE HISTORY WORKSHOP

The History Department has revived its faculty research seminar for members of the History Department and other historians or period- and area-specialists on campus. Each semester one or two History Department faculty members present research-in-progress to Wellesley College historians and other colleagues. Last year Professor Ramseyer presented her research.

History Workshop, Fall 2014

How to See the World Economy: Communicating Globalization around 1900



Hosted by the History Department. Speaker: Prof. Quinn Slobodian. Discussant: Heidi Tworek (Harvard University), whose research focuses on the history of the media and communications at the turn of the twentieth century. October 23, 2014.

manuals to schoolbooks. Mr. Carpenter explained the process by which Franklin's anonymous text spread widely and deeply into the Western world. December 4, 2014.

Adam Smith in Calcutta: Indian Critics of World Economy in the Imperial Age

Hosted by Prof. Slobodian and Prof. Rao. Speaker: Prof. Kris Manjapra (Tufts University). Prof. Manjapra's research is in modern South Asian and German history, and he is especially interested in transnational approaches and postcolonial critical perspectives. His most recent book is *Age of Entanglement: German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire*. It compares and connects the rise of modernism in Germany and India in the period of British world power. February 11, 2015.

The Power of Story in Moments of Crisis

Speaker: Prof. Paul A. Cohen (Prof. of History Emeritus, Wellesley College). How do we account for the enduring power of stories? In his new book, Prof. Cohen explores the role played by popular memory in modern communities confronting crisis: Joan of Arc in wartime France, the Battle of Kosovo in the conflicts of the Balkans, Masada in modern Jewish memory, King Goujian of ancient China in the politics of the Nationalist Party, and the stories of Alexander Nevsky and Henry V as retold in film in Soviet and British propaganda of World War II. Drawing on his long career as a scholar of China, Prof. Cohen shared his reflections on the study of history, remembering the past, and the intellectual journey that led him to an understanding of "the power of story." April 23, 2015.

GUEST LECTURES

WWI Centennial Lecture

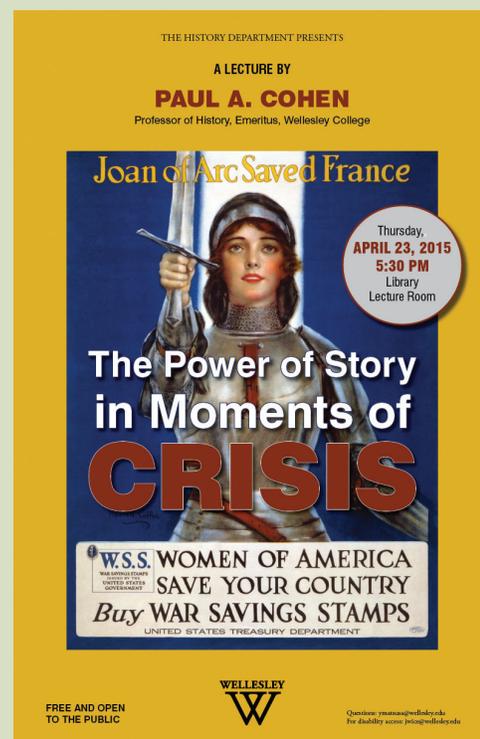
Europe Since 1914: Integration and Disintegration

Speaker: Timothy Snyder, Professor of History, Yale University. Professor Snyder analyzed major events during the century of European integration and disintegration, 1914-2014. September 24, 2014.

How Economic Ideas Travel:

The Incredible Journey of Benjamin Franklin's "The Way to Wealth"

Hosted by Prof. Grote. Speaker: Kenneth E. Carpenter. Benjamin Franklin's "The Way to Wealth" began its existence in Philadelphia as the untitled preface to Poor Richard's Almanac for 1758. Despite not having a formal title—or author's name—and despite being published on the periphery of the British Empire, it gradually spread around the world, eventually being published in twenty-six languages, in well over a thousand appearances. Franklin's paean to hard work and frugality was issued for a variety of audiences, from elites to peasants and servants, and in formats ranging from newspapers to advice



THE HONORS PROGRAM AND THE F.A.O. SCHWARZ FOUNDATION HONORS SEMINAR AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year a small number of outstanding students choose to undertake honors work in History. Candidates for honors in History build upon the knowledge learned and skills developed in their previous coursework by crafting their own interpretations of the past. This experience can be richly rewarding: it offers students an opportunity to work closely with a faculty adviser, to think deeply about a significant intellectual problem of their own choosing, and to grow as a researcher, writer, and thinker.



Professor Henry Frederick Schwarz

Because of a generous grant from the F.A.O. Schwarz Foundation, honors students in History are eligible for the prestigious F.A.O. Schwarz Foundation Scholarship, established in memory of Professor Henry Schwarz, former chair of the Department of History. The scholarship grants funds for student research activities (including travel to archives and other collections) as

well as a student senior-year stipend. The Schwarz Foundation grant also funds the department's Honors Seminar, which brings the department's honors students together with their advisors and other faculty members throughout the year. In 2015-2016, the Schwarz Honors Seminar will be directed by Prof. Quintana.

Three students will pursue honors in History in the 2015-2016 academic year:

Ayesha Anwar (Schwarz Scholar), supervised by Prof. Ryan Quintana.

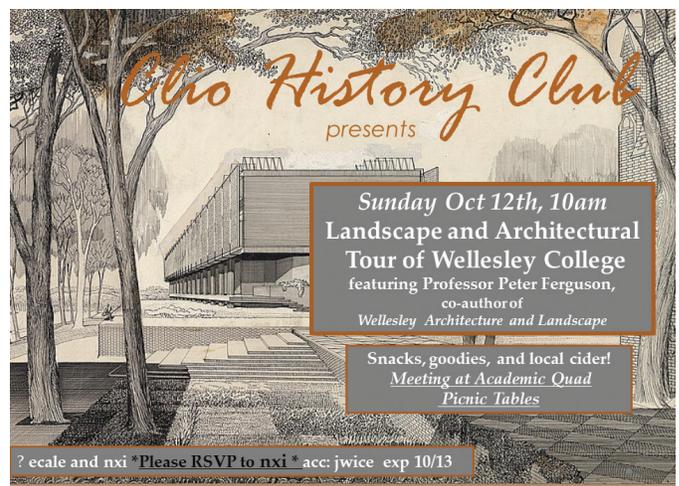
Pelumi Botti (Schwarz Scholar), supervised by Prof. Quinn Slobodian.

Zhongji Wu, supervised by Prof. Pat Giersch and Prof. Tak Matsusaka.

A Word from CLIO

This fall, Clio History Club hosted an architectural and landscape tour of Wellesley College's campus, led by Professor and Art Historian Peter Ferguson. We also toured the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow House in Cambridge in mid-October and invited Prof. Guy Rogers to our annual professor lunch. On October 29th, in collaboration with Disabilities Services, as well as the departments of History and Political Science, we helped with the screening of the documentary *Lives Worth Living - A History of the Disability Rights Movement in America*. Both the director and producer were in attendance to answer questions afterward. As a grand finale to our events, and in celebration of the debut of Upstage's production of *The Lion in Winter*, we hosted a panel entitled "From Page to Stage," on the topic of theater in historical translation, featuring Prof. Diego Arciniegas, Prof. Adriana Brook, Prof. H  l  ne Bilis, and Prof. Simon Grote.

CLIO E-board: President, Ashley Cale '15
Treasurer, Sharon Liu '17
Secretary, Adela Curtin '17



ALUMNAE INTERVIEWS

Mary Combs '71

This (abridged) interview was conducted by Jacqueline Baker, student assistant in the History Department, in November 2013.

Why did you become a History major?

I chose History because I realized that when you choose History, you choose everything. Art, music, literature, drama, political science, economics, the art of warfare are the classic fields. But History is also botany, medicine, astronomy and geophysics. It's about nutrition, fashion, shopping and manners. It is about hard facts and imagination. It requires the exercise of empathy and understanding, the suspension of prejudice, the development of the detachment needed to understand human choices that may be repellent in order to comprehend the consequences of those choices. It means understanding the blindness and prejudices of other historians in order to avoid the pitfalls that tripped them up. It means celebrating the work of historians (often women) who looked beyond the battlefield and the council chamber to examine and celebrate daily life.

What was the most valuable thing you learned during your time at Wellesley?

Acquire and exercise the critical habit of mind that does not take things at face value. Never stop asking questions—as true for an historian as for a biologist. Answers should lead to more questions. You may have a deadline that keeps you from pursuing those answers, but you should still ask the questions. Learning never stops. You are never “done.”

Be prepared to justify your work. Try to use primary sources. Always question your sources' biases. Put yourself in their places if your sources are human beings, in the places of the people who created them if they aren't. Know their limitations.

Know that the body of knowledge is constantly changing. New information means review and perhaps the discarding of cherished ideas. Let them go. That is research; that is life. Embrace the new. (But ask those questions.) There is intrinsic value in knowledge and experience that has nothing to do with money.

Put yourself in the place of the people who are your subjects using your imagination, empathy, compassion and sense of humor while maintaining perspective. Any work or play, profession or avocation—including citizenship and parenthood—can be enhanced by these skills.

What was your career path after graduating from Wellesley?

The job market had dried up by the time I graduated. I started in the Smithsonian's Office of Public Affairs as a receptionist. At the time, I never dreamed it was the beginning of a career. Nor did my employer. My plans to teach vanished as I was promoted and given writing and editing responsibilities and work handling publicity for projects like the Festival of American Folklife. I was editor of the in-house newspaper for several years. The creation of the Smithsonian News Service, a package of four free feature stories distributed to newspapers around the country, was one of the best projects to come out of our office, and a six-week trip to India with two colleagues to write a series of features for the 1985 Festival of India cultural exchange was perhaps the biggest adventure of the years while the News Service was running. Exhibition openings, presidential visits, celebrity donations and more filled the days. In the late 1990s, we were focused on the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Smithsonian's founding, including an unprecedented traveling exhibition that took me to Kansas City,

Portland, Ore., New York City, Birmingham, Ala., and St. Paul, Minn., for extended stays.

How has your History major been a resource for you? What was most valuable about your History major?

My writing and editing skills were undoubtedly honed by the discipline of writing to suit my professor, Mr. Cox, not unlike the training a good journalist receives. You lost points for going one



Mary Combs

Mary Combs Interview

continued

line over the assigned two-page length. You might have a beautifully written paper, but if you didn't justify your statements with footnotes, you were in trouble.

Knowing how to identify a reliable source is another skill I used to take for granted. The explosion of information in the past few decades has turned it into a survival skill today, as masses of bad or outdated information is to be found along with the good.

From a philosophical perspective, history teaches you to take the long view of the course of this world. Depending on where you choose to stand, it can be depressing or encouraging. I choose the hopeful stance: What has been accomplished before can be accomplished again.

What advice would you give students?

If you have found your passion and know for sure what you want to specialize in, go for it, but enjoy exploring all the other things available to you. Enrich your brain at every opportunity.

Diversify within your specialty. I majored in medieval history, but one of my most profound experiences at Wellesley was a seminar on "Germany during the Weimar Republic." I signed up because of the professor. The course transformed my view of World War II and answered the question I had been asking myself since I was old enough to watch old movies on TV: How could a man like Hitler come to power?

Try not to sacrifice the quality of your education to the pursuit of top grades. If your GPA really is vital to your future, audit or explore a subject that interests you unofficially or online, if you can find the time. Use your advisors to figure out how to get that experience without hurting the numbers.

Don't commit yourself to a leap into graduate school just for the sake of going. (This is vital if you are still searching for your passions.) And there, by the by, is another flaw in the conventional wisdom. You can love more than one thing; you can be a poet and an engineer.

Consider the possibility that your passion hasn't been invented yet, or that it has been invented but isn't in the mainstream as a vocation, or that it is out there in the sea of Good Ideas that are waiting for someone to put them to use. If you have found your passion and it is not something that will support you financially (yet), acquire skills that will allow you to enjoy your passion in the off time.

WELLESLEY
CLASS OF 1971



ALUMNAE INTERVIEWS

Janet Packer '70

This (abridged) interview was conducted by Jacqueline Baker, student assistant in the Department of History, in November 2013.

Why did you become a History major?

I decided to become a History major because it was the most flexible major, letting me roam widely in my course selections. I was fascinated by the relationship of art, music, literature, and philosophy—the *Zeitgeist* of a period—in its political, economic and social context.

What did you appreciate most about your time at Wellesley?

My education at Wellesley was invaluable. It allowed me to better understand the world and find my place in it.

What was the most valuable thing you learned during your time at Wellesley?

What was most valuable about your History major?

The most valuable thing I learned at Wellesley was how to work hard. My History major gave me the confidence that a problem could be solved by asking the right questions, finding the right methodology, examining the sources carefully and coming to reasoned conclusions. More broadly, it gave me a perspective on human life, of seeing one's life and times as part of the great pageant of human events. I see the present always shaped by the complex forces of the past.

How has your History major been a resource for professional life?

As a concert violinist, my approach to learning music is always to study a composer's work in historical context—to research the musical style of the period, and the development of the composer's individual style—to create a convincing and moving performance. My historical approach led to using authentic bows of the period to perform repertoire. I present lecture-demonstrations on topics such as Baroque style and the evolution of the violin bow, using artwork, treatises and musical examples to show the relationship between technology, musical style and bow technique. Just recently, I came full circle back to the topic of my senior thesis, Louis XIV's patronage of the arts. As faculty at the "Rethinking Bach" workshop at Queens College this summer, I will be lecturing on French Baroque string playing and its influence in Germany on the music of J.S. Bach.

What has your career path been since graduating from Wellesley?

After graduating from Wellesley, I continued my studies at Brandeis University in the history of ideas, intending to get a Ph.D. and teach. But I became tired of academia, and returned to my first love, music. I had been playing the violin and performing since I was a child. I resumed my violin study, played as a free-lancer with many professional groups in Boston, including the Boston Pops and Boston Opera, and began teaching violin. I gained invaluable skills performing with a contemporary music group, Dinosaur Annex. At the Longy School of Music, where I was a faculty member, I took on an administrative role as Director of Preparatory Studies, and later, as the school expanded its professional division, was Chair of Conservatory Strings for twelve years. About fifteen years after graduating from Wellesley, I began a solo performing career. Since then I have toured throughout the United States, and in Europe, Latin America and China, giving recitals, appearing with orchestras, and presenting lecture-demonstrations and



Janet Packer

master classes. I have added to the violin repertoire by commissioning and premiering violin works from distinguished composers, and made recordings on the Centaur, Northeastern, New World-CRI and MMC labels. I invite you to my website, www.janet-packer.com, for updates.

What has been your biggest challenge since graduating from Wellesley?

My greatest challenge was finding my own path. Once I realized that I loved to teach violin, and that I loved to perform, I was able to evolve a life balancing the two.

What advice would you give current students at Wellesley?

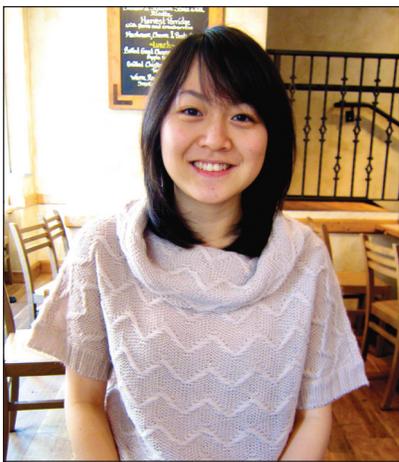
Take your time, don't feel you need to know your whole future path yet. Explore different options, try things until something feels right. You can find opportunities to use your creativity, and work for the general good—the foundations of a satisfying life!

TRIBUTE TO DAVINA HUANG '13

On March 10, 2015, Davina Huang '13 passed away from injuries sustained in a snowboarding accident.

The History Department offers its deepest condolences to Davina's family and friends. Davina was a distinguished International Relations/History major, winning the 2013 Barnette Miller Prize for best essay on a topic in International Relations and the Barnette Miller Prize for distinction in international history.

On April 1, the Wellesley community held a memorial service, and Professor Pat Giersch offered the following remembrance of Davina.



Davina was an International Relations History major, and I, along with our chair, Professor Matsusaka, and other colleagues, had the privilege of teaching Davina in her major courses.

As professors, we spend hours in the classroom and offices with students, but we still understand only parts of their personalities and talents. And yet, we get to witness students grow and mature over the course of a crucial set of years—years when they are building their intellectual capacity and deepening the critical thinking that will allow them to be autonomous individuals.

It is a joy to do such work. And in Davina's case, it was particularly awesome to witness her intellectual growth.

When I first met her as a sophomore, Davina was just beginning to realize her talents. Two years later, by the time she enrolled in my global history class as a senior, Davina could have co-taught the course. I still remember how she wrote a paper on European imperialism in Southeast Asia that remains the best piece ever written on the topic in any year of the course. At the same time,

she shared her ideas generously in class, providing others with a model of how to join in the conversation.

Her abilities impressed many of us. In Professor Matsusaka's seminar on the Japanese empire, Davina wrote a research paper on comparative urban planning. The paper later won the Barnette Miller Prize for the best essay in international history, and Davina would go on to win the History Department's prize for outstanding work in International Relations.

As a student, then, Davina was gifted, but, of course, she was so much more than her collection of academic honors, impressive though they are.

I admired Davina's friendliness and her energy. While at Wellesley, she ran the Japan Club, participated in College government, and adventured around the globe to participate in volunteer projects. I remember Davina going to teach in the Guihuasi monastery in Zhongdian (Shangrila), Yunnan Province. Located on the borders of cultural Tibet, this town can seem far from the bright lights of Singapore or the bucolic Wellesley Campus. But this was Davina—a person fully engaged in the wider world.

Once she left Wellesley, that admirable energy of hers led her to find time for volunteering in Chicago's Chinatown—despite her fulltime job. When I saw her last fall and she told me this, I thought “same old Davina”—still able to accomplish so much despite having the same twenty-four-hour day that the rest of us struggle with.

Now our struggle, however, is to come to terms with Davina's death, and all I can say, on behalf of myself and my colleagues, is that it was a privilege to work with her—and we will miss her. And we offer our deepest condolences to Davina's family and friends.





Graduating Seniors

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 Ashley Cale
 Rachel Dickert
 Sarah Fechter
 Nicole Kang
 Caitlin Laughlin
 Meaghan Leech
 Jamila Michael
 Taylor Rondestvedt
 Mariam Saifullah
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Jessica Allan
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