It is once again time to reflect on the end of a productive academic year in the History Department. Amidst ongoing economic uncertainty, we have much to celebrate. This was a particularly strong year with regards to graduate student achievements, and another banner year for our undergraduate program. We congratulate Karen Cox on her promotion to the rank of Professor, and Ritika Prasad, on her successful reappointment as Assistant Professor. As the home of three scholarly journals and twenty-seven historians with active research and publication agendas, our department is proud of its accomplishments in historical scholarship. As highlighted in the “Faculty Newswire,” Mark Wilson won a prestigious fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities. With a funding rate of only 6 percent and only approximately 80 fellowships awarded nationally per year, an NEH Fellowship is a rare and remarkable achievement. Notably, Mark’s is the fourth such award in the last seven years in our department. Ritika Prasad was awarded a Junior Faculty Development Award from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and will be able to spend Fall 2012 working on her book manuscript.

continued on pg. 2
Whereas our History program directors will update readers elsewhere in this newsletter on the curricula that they supervise, I am happy to report on the continued growth of the interdisciplinary Latin American Studies program housed in our department. The undergraduate program currently has 38 majors, and the M.A. program, 17 students. Two M.A. graduates who have taught part-time in our department earned acceptance to Ph.D. programs, with funding. Dan Cozart will pursue a Ph.D. in History at the University of New Mexico, and Amy Kennemore will enroll in the Ph.D. program in Anthropology at the University of California-San Diego. Another graduate student, Erin Fiorey, had an article accepted for publication. I appreciate the efforts of the current Director of Latin American Studies and Professor of Political Science, Greg Weeks, in continuing to build up the profile of the program, as well as the recruitment efforts of our current undergraduate coordinator and Associate Professor of Spanish, Carlos Coria. Greg just accepted a new position as Chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, and the department is pleased to welcome Carlos as the new Director of Latin American Studies. Congratulations to both Greg and Carlos!

While we are on the subject of transitions, our department will face a few, as usual. Next academic year, Dan Dupre will once again serve as interim chair while I am on sabbatical leave. Thank you for your willingness to serve us again in that capacity, Dan! We also welcome two new faculty members: Erika Edwards, an assistant professor with a specialization in colonial Latin American history, and Sonia Robles, a visiting lecturer who will teach Liberal Studies courses as well as upper-level courses in U.S. and Latin American history. Unfortunately, it is also time to say goodbye to Jerry Dávila, who has received an appointment as the Jorge Paulo Lemann Chair in Brazilian History at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. During his ten years here at UNC Charlotte, Jerry has been one of the architects of our Latin American Studies program; a prolific scholar and caring teacher who will be missed by faculty and students alike. Good luck and thank you, Jerry!

I wish you all a happy and successful summer!

Jurgen Buchenau

Dr. John David Smith delivered several public speaking engagements in March and April. He delivered the keynote address at the “Slavery and Freedom in the Piedmont” conference at Johnson C. Smith University; the Julia A. Flisch Lecture at Georgia College, State University, Milledgeville, GA; and he lectured on race and the Civil War at the 17th Annual American Democracy Symposium at Kent State University in Ohio.

Dr. Steve Sabol published an article entitled “Comparing American and Russian Internal Colonization: The ‘Touch of Civilization’ on the Sioux and Kazakhs,” was published in Western Historical Quarterly XLIII (Spring 2012), 29-51.

This spring has been a busy and exciting time for the students in our M.A. program. In addition to organizing a fabulous 24th annual Graduate History Forum, they have been presenting papers at conferences, working in public history internships, defending theses, passing comprehensive exams, and gaining acceptance to Ph.D. programs.

Particular congratulations go to the following students:

The retiring officers of the Graduate History Association—Evan Faulkenbury, Steve Roswold, Marissa Johnson, Ali Wiedrich, Katie Roberson, Elizabeth Rohan, and Kelly Summerow—for their excellent leadership of the organization this year.

Steve Roswold, Sean Whittaker, and Sarah Beckhardt, who all presented their work at the UNC-Charlotte Graduate Research Fair in February.


Jason Doom, for presenting a paper entitled “Restructuring the US Information Agency for Dialogue and Human Rights” at the Society for History in the Federal Government Annual Conference held at National Archives II in College Park, MD, in March.

Susan Mayer, for being awarded the position of Special Collections Exhibits and Outreach Graduate Assistant, in which capacity she has created two exhibits, one on Charlotte’s identity through sports (on the 10th floor of the library and online at http://charlottesports.omeka.net) and another on Charlotte democratic activity through community activism, now on the first floor of the library.


Kyle Cox, Samantha Bible, and Brenna Ralston for passing their exams in April.

Evan Faulkenbury, for his acceptance with funding to the Ph.D. program in history at UNC-Chapel Hill.

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Former student Jim Harris for his acceptance with a university scholarship to the Ph.D. program in history at the Ohio State University.

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24th Annual Graduate History Forum

Each year the Graduate History Association (GHA) and the History Department sponsor a forum featuring historical research by advanced undergraduate and graduate students. This year’s event took place on April 13th and 14th at the Barnhardt Student Activity Center and included round-table discussions by history faculty and public historians as well as individual presentations by students from UNC-Charlotte and several other institutions. The forum commenced Friday evening with opening remarks from Dr. Christine Haynes, Director of Graduate Studies. Dr. John David Smith, the Charles H. Stone Distinguished Professor of American History at UNC-Charlotte represented the faculty with a fascinating talk entitled “Piedmont Pastoral: Race and Place in Thomas Dixon’s “The flaming Sword.””

Saturday’s session began with introductions from GHA President Evan Faulkenbury. The body adjourned to salons where upon panels analyzed a variety of topics including: “The Struggle for Rights,” “Women and World War II,” and “War and Peace.” The keynote presentation titled “My Heart Jumps Happy When I…” Hear that Music: Powwow Singing and Indian Identities in Southeast North Carolina” was given by Dr. Clyde Ellis, Professor of History and University Distinguished Scholar at Elon University. To end the festivities, Faulkenbury and Steven Roswold awarded the Best Overall Paper Award to Bradley Dickson of NC State University for his work titled “In Search of the “Ancient Dwellers of the New-World: Antiquarianism, Sacred History, and the Indian Subject in John Lawson’s A New Voyage to Carolina”; the Best Graduate Paper Award for “Cultural Diplomacy of the Carter Administration” to Jason Doom of UNC-Charlotte, and Best Undergraduate Paper Award entitled “My own people have a name for me: Two Spirit, From Tradition to Identity” to Katherine MacDonald of Elon University.

We would like to get to know our alumni better! In each edition of the Newsletter we will spend a minute (or so) with an alum from a random area of the world.

Will you be next?

60 Seconds with an Alumna

Patricia Ann Cotham “Tricia”, 2001

Hometown: Matthews, NC

Degrees: UNC-Charlotte, B.A. History, UNC Master of School Administration

Current Legislative Position: House Member

What is your fondest memory at UNC Charlotte’s Department? My fondest memory is how History was brought to life in class.

We found never ending inspiration in? My former students inspire me.

What are three words that describe you? Three words that describe me are: confident, informed and kind.

What do you do when your not working? When I’m not working I’m playing with my toddler.

What do you still wish you could learn? I still want to learn how to play golf.

What are five random facts about you? Five random facts about me:

• I am the youngest woman to ever serve in the NC General Assembly
• I was CMS Teacher of the Year in 2001
• I used to be the Chick Fil A mascot - my first job!
• I still have a good jumpshot.
• I am on President Obama’s Truth Squad.
Dr. John David Smith, the Charles H. Stone Distinguished Professor of American History, was born in Brooklyn, New York and spent his formative years in Bergen County, New Jersey. He originally intended to be a professional percussionist and enrolled in the prestigious Baldwin-Wallace College Conservatory of Music near Cleveland. Eventually, he succumbed to the “siren song” of history and the American South thus dedicating his academic life to the study of the Civil War, African American Slavery and emancipation.

In 1977, Dr. Smith earned his doctorate in Southern History from The University of Kentucky. Subsequently, he spent twenty-two years at North Carolina State University being named the Graduate Alumni Distinguished Professor of History in 1992. In 2000 his seminal work, Black Judas: William Hannibal Thomas and “The American Negro” won The Mayflower Society Award for Nonfiction. This historical biography chronicles the moral mendacity of a Black man’s racial self-hatred and his free fall into pariah status within African American society.

Firmly committed to history in its various guises, Professor Smith has authored, edited, or co-edited twenty-one books and has published more than 150 scholarly articles in journals such as Journal of Negro History, Civil War History, and American Archivist. His criticism has appeared in the London Times Literary Supplement, the Chronicle of Higher Education as well as newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals throughout Australia, The United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States. Additionally, he has appeared on the History Channel as an authority on the U.S. Colored Troops and on National Public Radio and Voice of America discussing conservative racial thought during the Age of Jim Crow.

Professor Smith lives in the Myers Park neighborhood of Charlotte with his wife Sylvia, an attorney and Senior Lecturer of German at UNC-Charlotte, and their Panamanian Terrier, Max. Generations of students are indebted to Dr. Smith for his integrity, informality, irreverent sense of humor, glittering research and his altruistic pattern of hard work.

James Hogue, associate professor of history at UNC-Charlotte took part in a special session at the American Historical Association in Chicago in January 2012 to celebrate the scholarship of his dissertation advisor, James M. McPherson of Princeton University. Professor McPherson’s works on the Civil War have won numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize, the Lincoln Prize, and the Pritzker Prize in Military History. He is also past president of the American Historical Association and has been a well-known champion of the preservation of Civil War sites and the National Park System. Professor Hogue, who received his Ph.D. in history from Princeton in 1998 under McPherson’s direction, contributed an article, “The Strange Career of Jim Longstreet: History and Contingency in the Civil War Era,” to a volume of essays by McPherson’s graduate students entitled The Struggle for Equality: Essays on Sectional Conflict, the Civil War, and the Long Reconstruction. Video of the academic session discussing Professor McPherson’s multifaceted contributions to the study of American History is available at the AHA website and on the History News Network website.

Many distinguished historians of the American South have acted as lightning rods in reshaping their profession. They did so by contributing to the storehouse of information about how people and societies behave. Duke University’s John Hope Franklin exposed and challenged the insidious nature surrounding the history of human oppression. Yale professor C. Vann Woodward fought valiantly for the cause of social justice and rebelled against pretentious jargon and scholarly obscurantism. Columbia’s Eric Foner outspokenly criticized the times our nation rebelled against pretentious jargon and scholarly obscurantism. Woodward fought valiantly for the cause of social justice and emancipation.

The beatiy of these extraordinary historians.

Dr. John David Smith
The Charles H. Stone
Distinguished Professor of American History

MILITARY HISTORY FIELD TRIP

Kings Mountain National Battlefield Field Trip, 4.1.2012.

Jim Hogue’s American Military History elective, HIST 2120.
An Undergraduate Student’s Perspective

Scholarship evokes the thought of financial support to enable academic progress. During my freshman year at UNC Charlotte, I was fortunate to receive an assistantship through the Charlotte Area Historical Society to support the research for my master’s thesis. This financial assistance allowed me to fully immerse myself in the study of history, and I am truly thankful for this opportunity.

During my sophomore year, I was able to participate in an Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) workshop, which was a turning point for me. This workshop provided a platform for students to present their research findings and receive feedback from peers and faculty. It was during this workshop that I discovered my passion for historical research and the importance of critical thinking.

Moreover, I have been a member of the History Department’s honor society, the Phi Alpha Theta, and this involvement has provided me with valuable networking opportunities and professional development. I have also had the opportunity to volunteer at local historical sites and museums, which has given me a deeper understanding of the importance of preserving our heritage.

Reflecting on my academic journey, I have come to realize that the study of history has been more than just acquiring knowledge. It has been a journey of self-discovery, where I have learned to think critically, analyze information, and develop a sense of perspective. I am grateful for the opportunities I have had and am looking forward to the future, where I aim to continue my academic and professional pursuits.

Nicole Germano

A Graduate Student’s Perspective

The study of history has enlightened me with a greater level understanding of the causes and effects of human events. Currently, I am not certain how the twists and turns of life will relate to my study of history. I am working diligently, searching for the appropriate internship as well as part-time employment that will improve my chances to secure a position in law enforcement or government. The study of history will provide me with the information and understanding of the events that will help me to make informed decisions.

Nicole Germano

T. Evan Faulkenbury
Several weeks ago, while meeting with a colleague, he offhandedly commented that; “there are many who feel that historians are egomaniacs.” This assertion cut through me like a Centurion’s sword and I immediately began obsessing about my chosen profession. First, let us define the term egomaniac. According to The Free Dictionary an egomaniac embodies an “obsessive preoccupation with the self.”

Attempting to interpret this definition was the basis for a new obsessive preoccupation with both me and the people around me. So I began by asking myself “Am I actually an egomaniac and are all historians egomaniacal?

Let’s face facts; the public rarely understands what historians do or why they are necessary. We’ve often been asked, “What do you really do?” Inevitably, in a social setting or cocktail party, we hear the gibe, “You historians don’t do anything important. You don’t produce anything. You don’t save lives or contribute to the national economy.” However the question is worded or the idea implied, we are often asked what is the point is of spending our energies on historical research, teaching, and study, especially regarding the far-flung, distant past.

A suitable retort to questions about our alleged usefulness is this: “Is our collective memory irrelevant? Meaningless? Nonexistent?” Historians are the engines that drives long-term social and cultural memory. We continually hammer home the points of who we were, who we are, how we got here, and the progress we have made, even the progress we haven’t. Throughout the centuries, historians like Josephus, Carter G. Woodson, and Arnold Toynbee have questioned all the answers and answered all the questions that haunt mankind. As a culture and society we need to know what has been tried, worked, and not worked if we are to avoid mistakes of the past, benefit from past successes, and to a mass depository of realistic models from which to inspire new innovations and solutions to new problems.

Mythology, legends and folklore will not serve as a substitute: for to deal effectively with reality, we need to understand our reality, and not view it through the lens of fantasies and idealizations. Of course there always will be ideologues, demagogues and mythmakers in our midst. There are also pseudohistorians who mimic the work of true historians and care not about facts or accuracy. They do not benefit society but real history can, and it requires well-trained and experienced historians. We cannot do without them. Are these the rantings of an egomaniac? Maybe…

Designed by: Irina Bakalenko

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The History Department needs your help in fulfilling our core functions of providing excellent undergraduate and graduate education as well as outreach to the greater Charlotte community, and engaging in cutting-edge historical research. You may pay by check by printing, completing, and mailing this form along with a check payable to the UNC Charlotte Foundation.

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Make sure to designate your gift to History.
On the 2nd page under gift designation select “Other” and then type “History General Fund.”

Thank you for your contribution!