

# History at Lehigh University

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Welcome to the Spring 2015 issue of *History at Lehigh*, the official newsletter of the Department of History at Lehigh University. *History at Lehigh* is published twice per year in an effort to maintain contact and share information with students, alumni, and faculty.

## *Message from the Chair*

Next fall Lehigh will inaugurate a new president, John Simon, currently provost at the University of Virginia, on Founder's Day, a day that will also begin Lehigh's sesquicentennial celebration. It seems an appropriate occasion to look backward and forward. Lehigh was born during an era of rapid industrialization initiated by the demands of modern warfare. After a shaky start, by the 1880s Lehigh was turning out engineers who spread across the globe building railroads, digging mines, and doing many other things. At the same time, the proliferation of the modern industrial corporation created many jobs for college men, not just engineers, in their multi-layered bureaucracies. Other jobs opened up in government at all levels, but especially in managing the increasing complex technological systems in cities. For more than a century, American institutions of higher education, especially Lehigh, turned out graduates that found good jobs in the industrial American economy. Unfortunately, the forces of history are relentless, and the American Century ended sometime about 1974.

Today's graduates face a much less certain future; the combination of declining American industry and the ongoing Information Revolution have eliminated many types of jobs. For example, Google touts the process of "disintermediation" which is really business-speak for "cutting out the middle man." Not only have many middle men been cut out, but corporate bureaucracies have been shrinking, ostensibly the result of information technologies. These changes in the economy are having an impact on higher education. Today's students, facing ever increasing costs and uncertain job prospects, are choosing "practical" majors. This seems to me to be a short-sighted strategy. In times of uncertainty, one would hope that students would prefer a broad-based education rather than just acquiring specific skills that employers want today. Who knows what the American economy will look like several decades hence? We like to tell our students to prepare for their last job not their first one. We continue to believe that a history degree not only gives students essential skills but also gives them an understanding of the processes of historical change. Hopefully, this is a message we can convey to our students when Lehigh celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday this upcoming fall.



## Accolades

### Faculty

**William Bulman** presented new research this past fall on political decision-making in the British Atlantic world at invited talks at Yale University and Harvard University. In addition, his co-edited volume, *God in the Enlightenment*, is now under contract with Oxford University Press.

**Maria Bárbara Zepeda Cortés** participated as a panelist in an alumni panel on post-graduate employment at the 4<sup>th</sup> UC MEXUS-CONACYT Doctoral Fellows Symposium in Riverside, CA in March. UC MEXUS is the University of California Institute for Mexico and the United States and CONACYT is the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (or Mexico's National Council of Science and Technology). At the end of May, Dr. Zepeda Cortés will be presenting at the XXIII International Congress of the Latin American Association in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She organized the panel titled, "Rebellious Subjects, Greedy Rivals, and a Precarious Empire: Bourbon Dilemmas in Spanish America."

**Kwame Essien** published two journal articles. The first one titled "'Afie ni Afie' (Home is Home): Revisiting Reverse Trans-Atlantic Journeys to Ghana and the Paradox of Return" was published in *Írinkèrindo: A Journal of African Migration*. The second article, "(In)visible Diasporan Returnee Communities: Silences and Challenges in Studying Trans-Atlantic History in Ghana," was published in *Ghana Studies*. Dr. Essien

also wrote a book review of Elizabeth Wrangham's book, *Ghana During the First World War: The Colonial Administration of Sir Hugh Clifford*, which was published in the *Journal of West African History*. This past October, Dr. Essien presented a talk titled "Gendering Diaspora in Ghana: The Role of African American Women in Creating Enabling Environment for Claiming Dual Citizenship and Advantage in Global Tourism," which was a co-sponsored Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies and William R. Scott African Studies Brown Bag Talk here at Lehigh. In November, he organized and chaired the panel, "Ghana from Crises to Stability: Demands for Accountability" at the 57<sup>th</sup> African Studies Association meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Nitzan Lebovic** was invited to give two special lectures this semester. In March, he gave a lecture titled, "The Culture of Bridges: From Franz Kafka's Prague, to Hugo Bermann's Jerusalem" for a special lecture series sponsored by the Society of the History of Czechoslovak Jews and the Consulate of the Czech Republic, held in New York City. The second lecture was titled "Nihilism: The Tradition of Radical Thought," which he presented at Amherst College. Dr. Lebovic also organized the two-day workshop, "Walter Benjamin and Jewish Philosophy," held here at Lehigh in March.



### Graduate Students

**Sean Anderson** presented a paper titled, "Out of Blood, Let the Dance Begin: The Metaphor of Blood in Revolutionary Saint-Domingue," at the LAGO Conference in February.

**Samuel Dodge** presented a paper titled, "Creating Orthodoxy: Textual Debates and Competing Interpretations of Mormonism's Word of Wisdom Revelation" at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Florida State University Department of Religion Graduate Student Symposium. He also gave a paper in March at the 2015 Claremont Mormon Studies Conference.

**Rachel Engl** was awarded a semester-long dissertation fellowship from The McNeil Center for Early American Studies. She also received a dissertation fellowship from the Lawrence Henry Gipson Institute for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

**Elizabeth Erwin** was a presenter at a faculty professional development colloquium at Lehigh Carbon Community College on the subject of "Incorporating Popular Culture into Your Curriculum."

**Kim Fabbri** was awarded a Dale S. Strohl '58 Dissertation Support Fellowship.

**Galina Hanley** will be presenting a paper at the 2015 Australia New Zealand American Studies Association conference at Monash University Caulfield in July.

**Andrew Dyrli Hermeling** was a participant in the roundtable discussion, "Interrogating Methodologies in Eighteenth Century Americanist Scholarship" in March at the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Annual Meeting in Los Angeles. His presentation was titled "Bold Speakers: Using Microhistory to Recover Indigenous Political Voices in the Trans-Appalachian

West, 1765.” He will also be presenting a paper titled, “Negotiating Informal Empire: Trans-Appalachian Diplomacy, 1765,” in July at the International Conference of Europeanists held in Paris.

**Christine Hill** attended an intensive two-week course in decorative arts (from the 17<sup>th</sup> through the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries) at the Winterthur Institute in September. Programs included an introduction to the principles of connoisseurship, engagement in “room studies,” and participation in workshops that allowed for close examination of artifacts. She received an award from the Winterthur Institute Scholarship Fund to cover the tuition costs for the course. Christine also received a dissertation fellowship from the Lawrence Henry Gipson Institute for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

**Andrew Stahlhut** presented a paper titled “Iroquois Transformation and the Growth of the Northeastern North American Borderlands in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries” at the University of Maryland conference, “Metamorphosis: Transformations of Borders, Identity, and Place” in February. In March, he was part of a panel titled “Engaging Students in

Complex Description: Three Projects, Multiple Languages, and EAC-CPF in the Classroom” at the Council on Library and Information Resources meeting at the University of Pennsylvania. Also in March, Andrew presented the paper, “Borderlands History and the Shape of Empires: Dutch Commissioners, the Iroquois, and the Fate of a Continent, 1691-1755” at a conference held at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. In April, at the spring meeting of the New England Historical Association, he presented the paper titled “Albany’s Commissioners for Indian Affairs, the Iroquois, and New England Indian Politics in a Larger Borderlands Context, 1691-1755.”

**Kristin Tremper** presented a paper, “Sudden Death: Changing Causes of Death and Medical Authority in Eighteenth-Century America” at the Southern Association for the History of Medicine and Science in Jackson, Mississippi in March. She also received a dissertation fellowship from the Lawrence Henry Gipson Institute for Eighteenth-Century Studies.



### *Alumni*

**Silas Chamberlain** (PhD, 2014) was recently named executive director of the Schuylkill River National Heritage Area and will begin this position in May. The SRNHA is a small non-profit with six full-time employees that lead a variety of conservation and heritage development initiatives across the five county Schuylkill River watershed, including Philadelphia. One of the organization's signature projects is the development of

a 130-mile, multi-use trail along the Schuylkill River between Philadelphia and Pottsville. Silas will succeed Kurt Zwikl, (MA, 1982) who has held the position for the last twelve years and will be retiring.

**Amanda Daddona** (BA, 2009) finished a Master’s in American Studies at Trinity College this past fall.



### *Gipson Institute Events*

The Gipson Institute sponsored a visit this semester from Dr. Patrick Spero, who is an assistant professor of History and Leadership Studies at Williams College and the current Scholar-in-Residence at the David Library of the American Revolution. He gave an informal lunch

discussion about his latest research, which focuses on the American Revolution in a global context. Later in the day, he gave a formal presentation titled, “Frontiers and the Geopolitical Imagination of Early America.”



### *Environmental History Lecture Series*

This semester the History Department co-sponsored “Keystone State Environmental Histories: A Public Lecture Series.” Several of the talks were videotaped

and can be viewed through the Department’s website: <http://history.cas2.lehigh.edu/>

**Join the History Department Facebook Page:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/LehighUniversityHistoryDept>

## Lehigh University Department of History

If you have any information for future newsletters, please contact the department.

### *Department Chair*

John K. Smith  
jks0@lehigh.edu  
(610)758-3365

### *Coordinator*

Janet Walters  
jtw0@lehigh.edu  
(610)758-3360

### *Graduate Assistant*

Rachel Engl  
rae210@lehigh.edu  
(610)758-5984

Lehigh University  
History Department  
Maginnes Hall  
Bethlehem, PA

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(Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of this list, but if you notice an error or omission, please contact the Department of History, College of Arts and Sciences, Lehigh University, 9 West Packer Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18015. Our phone number is 610-758-3360.)