

## Chair's Greeting

Dear Friends of the UWM Department of History,

The past year has been a very interesting time in the University of Wisconsin System, as we face seismic budgetary and structural changes. As I step into the role of Department Chair, I am grateful to my predecessors for creating a smoothly-run department, which allows us to focus on the challenges ahead. At the same time, your UWM Department of History continues with its work of educating students, producing scholarly research, and serving the university, community, and profession.

You will find in the pages of this newsletter information about students, faculty, and alumni. Are we missing news from you? How has your UWM history major affected your life path? What would you like us to communicate to university administrators and the public about the benefits of a history major? Please send me updates about your professional careers and milestones in your personal lives at [seligman@uwm.edu](mailto:seligman@uwm.edu). I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Amanda Seligman, Professor and Chair



## Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham awarded the National Humanities Medal



Credit: Ralph Alswang, National Endowment for the Humanities

History alumna Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham received the National Humanities Medal in September from President Barack Obama. After graduating from UWM with a bachelor's degree in history in 1969, where she was a member of the Phi Alpha Theta history honors society, she taught American history in Milwaukee Public Schools before earning her doctorate and becoming one of the leading scholars of African American history.

The White House credited her "for illuminating the African-American journey. In her writings and edited volumes, Dr. Higginbotham has traced the course of African American progress, and deepened our understanding of the American story." Professor Higginbotham teaches history at Harvard University, and received an honorary doctorate from UWM in 2014.

After receiving the medal, she spoke about her training at UWM: "I had wonderful professors," she recalled, but the jolt she received from one UWM teacher was a profoundly formative experience. "I wrote a paper on African American soldiers in the Civil War and I think I've written a good paper and I get a C-minus!" she said. "It was heartbreaking." But when she pondered the comments made by the professor, Nathan Miller, she recognized that he was trying to get her to ask questions and to think critically, rather than simply offer a narration of events.

She now considers Miller to be one of her heroes. "There's not a semester goes by that I don't talk about him to my students," she said. "I always tell my students the best friend you can have is someone who gives you honest and constructive criticism, because they can only make you better."

## **Phi Alpha Theta Inductions: 2014 and 2015**

The Delta Phi chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the national history honor society, inducted new members in 2014 and 2015. In 2014, Professor Carlos Galvao-Sobrinho presented a talk relating to his research interests in the ancient world, including slavery and the history of medicine. In 2015, Professor Chia Vang gave a talk about her new research on Hmong fighter pilots during the Vietnam War, and the department also made several graduate and undergraduate awards.

Several members of the chapter also attended the American Historical Association conference in New York in January 2015, and the regional Phi Alpha Theta conference in April 2015.

New undergraduate initiates from 2014 are Brandon Birch, Andrea Buhler, Eric Cisler, Kyle Codie, Kevin Dyke, Cameron Fontaine, Paul Geszvain, Amanda Harper, Kelly Kloth, Kristen Kmetz, Todd Miller, Micheel Moore, Serafina Payne, Jacob Rindfleisch, Caroline Sass, Sam Van Akkeren, Justin Welch, and Kyle Wutke, and new graduate initiates Benjamin Rogaczewski and Margaret Speigel.

New undergraduate initiates from 2015 are: Ronald Blazel, Jamison Ellis, Michael Raspanti, Joshua Remza, Samantha Schwarz, Alexandra Stott, Serena Stuetngen, and David Totsky.



*Phi Alpha Theta officers and faculty adviser Prof. Joe Rodriguez.*

## **Prof. Bud Weare Scholarship Fund established**

An anonymous donor has established the Professor Bud Weare Scholarship Fund in honor of Emeritus Professor Bud Weare, “who inspired the Donor during the Donor’s time as a UWM student.” The fund will provide scholarships to undergraduate students who are history majors or intended majors based on academic merit and financial need. Professor Weare received his PhD from the University of North Carolina, and was a faculty member in the department from 1968 until his retirement.

## **Sgt. Michael Black honored**

Sgt. Michael Black (History major), a combat medic in the Wisconsin National Guard, was given the Soldier’s Medal in December 2014. The Soldier’s Medal is an honor approved by the President of the United States which recognizes soldiers for heroism off of the battlefield. In 2013, Black was in Arizona for a training mission when he drove by a car crash and saved the life of a victim by applying a tourniquet to prevent her from dying of blood loss.

## **Congratulations Awardees!**

**A.T. Brown Award for Best Graduate Thesis:** Dmitry Beyer (Fall 2013) and Matthew Hall (Fall 2014), Michael Gonzales (Fall 2015)

**Frank P. Zeidler Graduate Student Award:** Jenna Himsl (Spring 2015)

**Victor Greene Award for Best Undergraduate Research Paper:** Timothy Melgard (Fall 2013), Saiba Kapila (Spring 2014), and Ashly Odom (Spring 2015)

**A.T. Brown Award for Best Graduate Research Paper** Alexis Smith (Spring 2014), Kadie Kroening Seitz (Spring 2014), Nicholas Schuelke (Fall 2014), and Hayley McNeill (Fall 2015)

**Theodore Saloutos Award for PhD Dissertation Research in American History:** Joseph Walzer (Spring 2014)

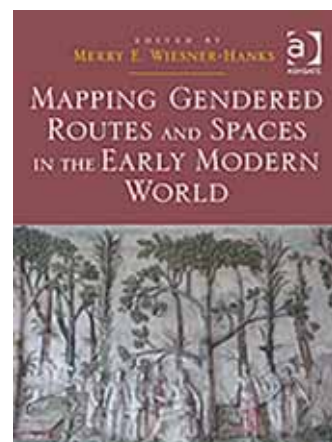
**Frederick I. Olson Scholarship:** Joseph Walzer (Spring 2015)

**Ellen Healy Award for Graduate Studies:** Samantha Machalik (Fall 2015) and Paul Geszvain (Fall 2015)

# New and Noteworthy

## UWM hosts "Attending to Early Modern Women"

The Department and the College of Letters and Science hosted Attending to Early Modern Women June 18-20, an international interdisciplinary conference of scholars interested in women, gender, and sexuality in the early modern period, held every three years. This year's conference theme was "It's About Time," and the nearly 200 participants examined memory, life-writing, women's and men's experiences of time, legacies, the life-cycle, and metaphors of time, among other topics. A collection of essays from the 2012 Attending to Women conference, also held in Milwaukee, *Mapping Gendered Routes and Spaces in the Early Modern World*, appeared this summer, published by Ashgate.



## Bicycling Exhibit opens in Madison



Cyclists ride their bicycles past curious onlookers in Green Bay, Wisconsin, ca. 1890. Credit: Wisconsin Historical Society Image ID #2001

*Shifting Gears: A Cyclical History of Badger Bicycling*, an exhibit based on the 2013 book *Wheel Fever: How Wisconsin Became a Great Bicycling State* by Jesse Gant and Nicholas Hoffman, published by Wisconsin Historical Society Press, opened at the Wisconsin Historical Museum in Madison in February, 2015.

The largest exhibit at the museum in 15 years, it featured 23 bicycles, photos and interactive displays about the long, colorful, and sometimes contentious story of the growth and development of cycling in Wisconsin. It was on display until October, when it moved to the History Museum at the Castle in Appleton, where Hoffman, a graduate of the department's public history program, is Chief Curator.

## UWM / MPM Museum Studies Program exhibit opens

*Hue Knew? An Exploration of Color*, an exhibit by 13 graduate students in the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee/Milwaukee Public Museum's Museum Studies Program, went on display at MPM in May 2015. The exhibit explores how color is seen and the different ways humans have created, interpreted, and been inspired by color, and was on display through March 2016.

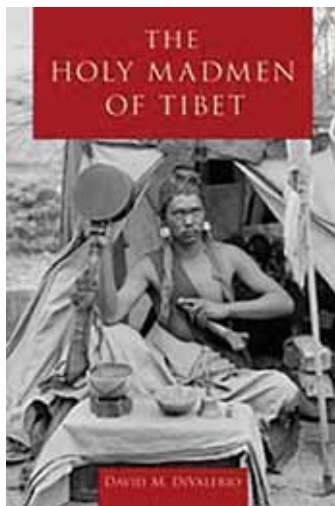


## Professor of Polish history honored



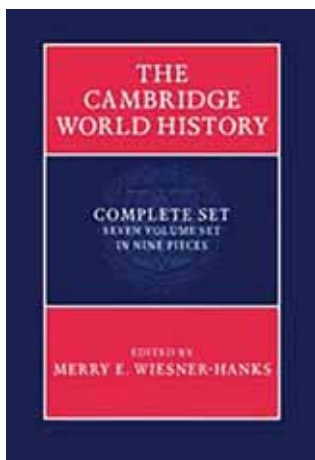
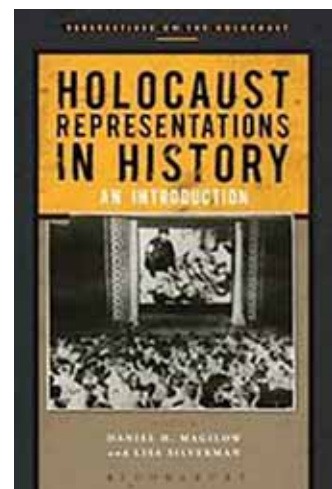
Professor Neal Pease became editor-in-chief of *The Polish Review*, and received the Officer's Cross, Order of Merit, from the Republic of Poland for contributions to spreading knowledge of Polish history. The Polish American Historical Association awarded him the 2015 Mieczyslaw Haiman Medal, for sustained contributions to Polish American studies.

# Faculty Publications



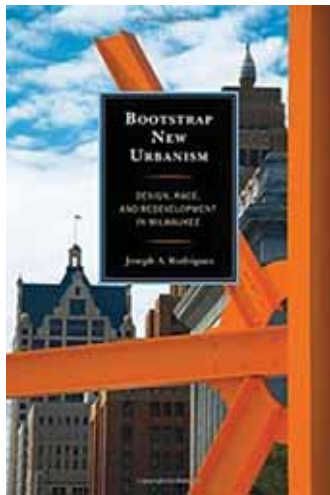
*The Holy Madmen of Tibet*, by David DiValerio, examines the lives and legacies of the three most famous “holy madmen,” certain Tibetan Buddhist yogins who have taken on profoundly norm-overturning modes of dress and behavior, including draping themselves in human remains, consuming filth, provoking others to violence, and even performing sacrilege. They became known far and wide as “madmen” (*smyon pa*, pronounced *nyönpa*), achieving a degree of saintliness in the process. This book offers the first comprehensive study of Tibet’s “holy madmen” drawing on their biographies and writings, as well as tantric commentaries, later histories, oral traditions, and more. By focusing on literature written by and about the “holy madmen” and on the yogins’ relationships with their public, this book offers in-depth looks at the narrative and social processes out of which sainthood arises, and at the role biographical literature can play in the formation of sectarian identities. By showing how understandings of the “madmen” have changed over time, this study allows for new insights into current notions of “crazy wisdom.” In the end, the “holy madmen” are seen as self-aware and purposeful individuals who were anything but insane. Oxford University Press, 2015.

*Holocaust Representations in History: an Introduction*, by Daniel H. Magilow and Lisa Silverman, is an introduction to critical questions and debates surrounding the depiction, chronicling and memorialization of the Holocaust through the historical analysis of some of the most provocative and significant works of Holocaust representation. In a series of chronologically presented case studies, the book introduces the major themes and issues of Holocaust representation across a variety of media and genres, including film, drama, literature, photography, visual art, television, graphic novels, and memorials. The case studies presented not only include well-known, commercially successful, and canonical works about the Holocaust, such as the film *Shoah* and Elie Wiesel’s memoir *Night*, but also controversial examples that have drawn accusations of profaning the memory of the genocide. Each work’s specific historical and cultural significance is then discussed to provide further insight into the impact of one of the most devastating events of the 20th century and the continued relevance of its memory. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015.



*The Cambridge World History*, for which Merry Wiesner-Hanks was the editor-in-chief, is an authoritative new nine-volume overview of the dynamic field of world history. It covers the whole of human history, not simply history since the development of written records, in an expanded time frame that represents the latest thinking in world and global history. With over two hundred essays, it is the most comprehensive account yet of the human past, and it draws on a broad international pool of leading academics from a wide range of scholarly disciplines. Reflecting the increasing awareness that world history can be examined through many different approaches and at varying geographic and chronological scales, each volume offers regional, topical, and comparative essays alongside case studies that provide depth of coverage to go with the breadth of vision that is the distinguishing characteristic of world history. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

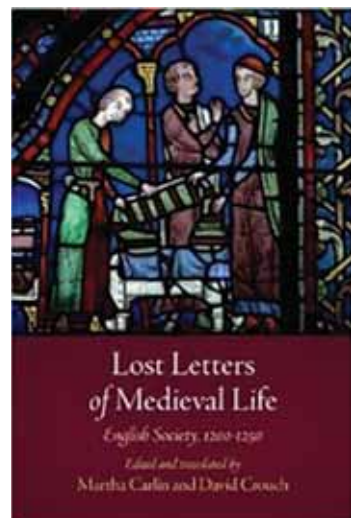
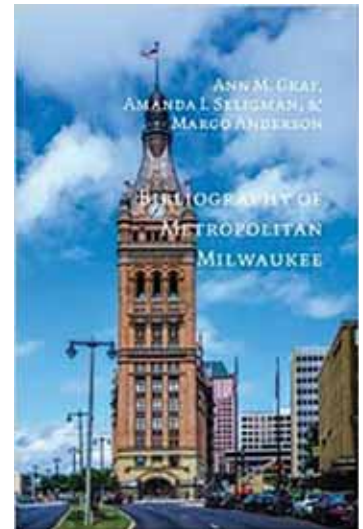
*Bootstrap New Urbanism* by Joseph Rodriguez critically examines the urban design and revitalization initiatives undertaken by both the government and the people of Milwaukee. In the 1990s, New Urbanists followed a city tradition of using urban design to solve problems while seeking to elevate the city’s national reputation and



status. While New Urbanism was not the only design element undertaken to further Milwaukee's redevelopment, the elite focus on New Urbanism reflected an attempt to fashion a self-help narrative for the revitalization of the city. This approach linked New Urbanist design to the strengthening of grassroots community organizing and volunteerism to solve urban problems. The book uncovers a practice with implications for urban history, architectural history, planning history, environmental design, ethnic studies, and urban politics. Lexington Books, 2014.

*The Bibliography of Metropolitan Milwaukee* by Ann M. Graf, Amanda Seligman, and Margo Anderson provides a starting point for further research into the city and surrounding areas. It includes resources for Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha counties. Subjects covered include places, biographies, race and ethnicity, politics,

business, the economy, charity, religion, the arts, architecture, recreation, health, gender, the natural environment, media, infrastructure, bibliographies, and archives. Organized into 19 thematic chapters that are further organized by topic, this volume offers the most comprehensive bibliographical resources about the Milwaukee area ever produced. Marquette University Press, 2014.



*Lost Letters of Medieval Life: English Society, 1200-1250*, edited by Martha Carlin and David Crouch, reveals everyday life in early thirteenth-century England in vivid detail through the correspondence of people from all classes, from peasants and shopkeepers to bishops and earls. The documents edited here include letters between masters and servants, husbands and wives, neighbors and enemies, and cover a wide range of topics:

politics and war, going to fairs and going to law, attending tournaments and stocking a game park, borrowing cash and doing favors for friends, investigating adultery and building a windmill. While letters by celebrated people have long been known, the correspondence of ordinary people has not survived and has generally been assumed never to have existed in the first place. Martha Carlin and David Crouch, however, have discovered numerous examples of such correspondence hiding in plain sight. The letters can be found in manuscripts called formularies – the collections of form letters and other model documents that for centuries were used to teach the arts of letter-writing and keeping accounts. The editors present letters from two such manuscripts,

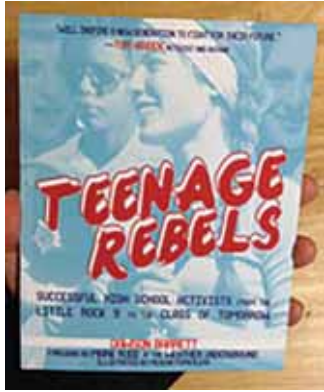
here in their first printed edition, both in the original Latin and in English translation, with each document contextualized in an accompanying essay. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

Stacey Olikier and Amanda I. Seligman authored, “Understanding Family and Medical Leave at a Large Public University,” which appeared in Catherine R. Solomon and Erin Anderson, eds., *Family-Friendly Policies and Practices in Academe*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015.

Katherine Paugh, published three articles, “The Curious Case of Mary Hylas: Wives, Slaves and the Limits of British Abolitionism,” in *Slavery & Abolition* 35.4 (2014): 629-651; “Yaws, syphilis, sexuality, and the circulation of medical knowledge in the British Caribbean and the Atlantic world,” in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 88.2 (2014): 225-252; and “The Politics of Childbearing in the British Caribbean and the Atlantic World during the Age of Abolition, 1776–1838,” in *Past and Present* 221.1 (2013): 119-160. The latter was the winner of the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians article prize for best article on women/gender/sexuality by a woman resident in North America.

# Alumni and Student Publications

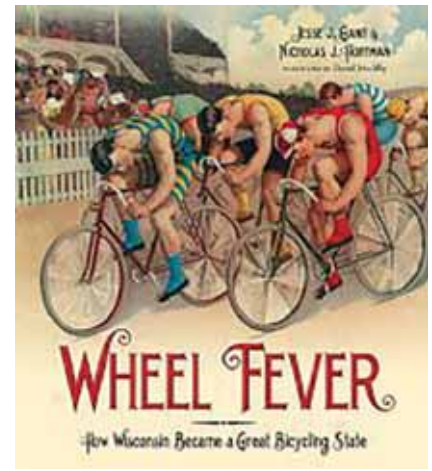
Our students and recent graduates have been publishing their research in many different venues. Along with the book mentioned in the story on Laura Godden, those noted below are ones we know about; if you have published a work, or know of others we have missed, please send information about them to the department ([history@uwm.edu](mailto:history@uwm.edu)) and we'll put them on the website and in the next edition of this newsletter.



Dawson Barrett (PhD '13), *Teenage Rebels: Stories of Successful High School Activists from the Little Rock 9 to the Class of Tomorrow*. The book provides a glimpse into the laws, policies, and political struggles that have shaped the lives of American high school students over the last one hundred years. Through dozens of case studies, Dawson recounts the strikes, marches, and picket lines of teens all over the U.S. as they demand better textbooks, start recycling programs, and protest the censorship of student newspapers. With historically-influenced artwork and accessible writing, this book is for anyone who has ever challenged the rules and wished for a better world. Dawson spent the summer on a book tour with a stop at People's Books in Milwaukee August 7. Microcosm Publishing, 2015.

Nick Hoffman (MA '06, Public History) and Jesse Gant, *Wheel Fever: How Wisconsin Became a Great Bicycling State*.

Meticulously researched through periodicals and newspapers, *Wheel Fever* traces the story of Wisconsin's first "bicycling boom," from the velocipede craze of 1869 through the "wheel fever" of the 1890s. From the start, it has been defined by a rich and often impassioned debate over who should be allowed to ride, where they could ride, and even what they could wear. Many early riders embraced the bicycle as a solution to the age-old problem of how to get from here to there quickly and easily. Yet for every supporter of the "poor man's horse," there were others who wanted to keep the rights and privileges of riding to an elite set. Women, the working class, and people of color were often left behind as middle- and upper-class white men benefited from the "masculine" sport and all-male clubs and racing events began to shape the scene. Even as bikes became more affordable and accessible, a culture defined by inequality helped create bicycling in its own image. *Wheel Fever* is about the origins of bicycling in Wisconsin and why those origins still matter, but it is also about our continuing fascination with all things bicycle. From "boneshakers" to highwheels, standard models to racing bikes, tandems to tricycles, the book is lushly illustrated with never-before-seen images of early cycling and the people who rode them: bloomer girls, bicycle jockeys, young urbanites, and unionized workers. Laying the foundations for a much-beloved sport, *Wheel Fever* challenges us to imagine anew the democratic possibilities that animated cycling's early debates. Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2013.

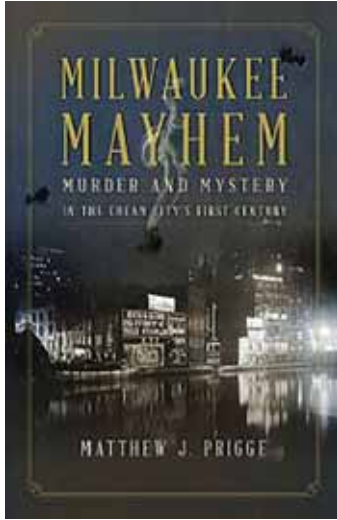


Cameron Bradley (MA '09), "Hybrid Identities: Ethnicity, Religion, and the Janissaries in Sixteenth-Century Constantinople," in *Mediterranean Identities in the Premodern Era: Islands, Entrepôts, Empires*, eds. Kathryn Reyerson and John Watkins. Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate Press, 2014.

Kevin Kolesari (BA '14) published an article that began as a research paper written in the department's History 600 capstone course. Titled, "The Siege of Milwaukee: The Cause and Effect of Anti-German Sentiment," it appeared in *The Americanist Independent: A Quarterly Journal of United States History* 1, no. 8 (Spring 2015), 44-64.

Matthew J. Prigge (PhD student), *Milwaukee Mayhem: Murder and Mystery in the Cream City's First Century*. From murder and matchstick men to all-consuming fires, painted women, and Great Lakes disasters – and the wide-eyed public who could not help but gawk at it all – *Milwaukee Mayhem* uncovers the little-remembered and rarely-told history of the underbelly of a Midwestern metropolis. *Milwaukee Mayhem* offers a new perspective on Milwaukee's

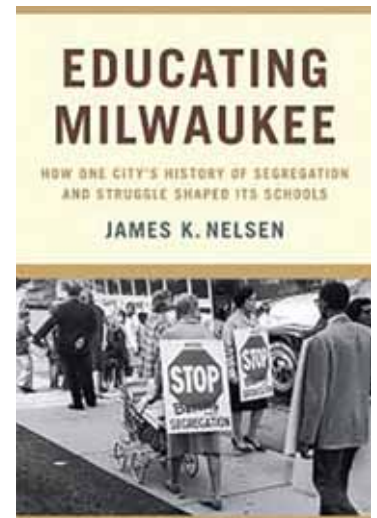
# Graduate Student Publications [CONT.]



early years, forgoing the major historical signposts found in traditional histories and focusing instead on the strange and brutal tales of mystery, vice, murder, and disaster that were born of the city's transformation from lakeside settlement to American metropolis. These stories are presented as they were recounted to the public in the newspapers of the era, using the vivid and often grim language of the times to create an engaging and occasionally chilling narrative of a forgotten Milwaukee. These stories are the orphans of Milwaukee's history, too unusual to register in broad historic narratives, too strange to qualify as nostalgia, but nevertheless essential to our understanding of this American city. Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2015.

James K. Nelsen (PhD '12), *Educating Milwaukee: How One City's History of Segregation and Struggle Shaped Its Schools*. This book traces the origins of the modern school choice movement, which is growing in strength throughout the United States. It follows Milwaukee's tumultuous education

history through three eras – "no choice," "forced choice," and "school choice." Nelsen details the whole story of Milwaukee's choice movement through to modern times when Milwaukee families have more schooling options than ever: charter schools, open enrollment, state-funded vouchers, and neighborhood schools. Yet Milwaukee's impoverished African American students still struggle to succeed and stay in school. *Educating Milwaukee* chronicles how competing visions of equity and excellence have played out in one city's schools in the modern era, offering both a cautionary tale and a "choice" example.



## *Friends of History*

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our alumni and friends for their generosity towards the History Department. Your contributions allow us to enhance the educational experience of our students, providing support for their research, travel to academic conferences, visiting speakers, and prizes for their excellent work. We recognize all donors to any fund that supports the History Department as a "Friend of History," and would like to thank those who have contributed since the last edition of this newsletter in 2013.

*Diana L. Ahmad  
Linda A. Bachand  
Gabrielle T. Boehm  
Martha Carlin  
Judith M. Daniels  
Roger Daniels  
Dennis L. Day  
Judith A. DeGroat  
Ellen M. Engseth  
Bruce S. Fetter*

*Patricia J. Gardner  
Michael Gauger  
Michael T. Gibbons  
Julie Hardwick  
David and Ann Healy  
Matthew D. Healy  
David E. Herrewig  
David W. Krueger  
Nancy Lee  
Robert A. Otwell*

*Neal H. Pease  
Martha J. Prince  
Laura E. Tabili  
John J. Trerotola  
Carol F. Vondrell  
James F. Willetts  
Robert H. Wooley  
Anonymous*

# Featured Alumna: Laura Godden

After graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee with a master's degree in history in 2011, I took a position as an archivist in the Special Collections and Area Research Center at Murphy Library, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. I have been employed here for over three years now, and I enjoy my work immensely! Every day, I am engrossed in local history, research, community service, and the education of university students. In the past three years, this position has brought me several exciting opportunities.

My most recent on-the-job exploit was being granted a press pass from the White House to document President Barack Obama's July 2nd, 2015, visit to UW-La Crosse. This event was historic for our university because it was the first time a sitting president has visited our 106-year-old campus. Much to my regalement, I bore witness to the presidential address on middle-class economics in the company of the professional news media, including the national press pool. I was selected for this opportunity because as an archivist, preserving existing materials already in the collection is only part of my job duties. Archivists also proactively preserve current documents and records, thus saving the history of today for the historians of tomorrow. I recently found out that of all the photographs taken at the event, our university has chosen mine to hang in a public space of honor on campus.

When I applied for my current position, I mindfully highlighted my photography skills and their potential utilization. Thus far, I have taken thousands of photos on campus and around the community. Most images have been of typical campus landscapes, area scenes, and local events, but others have been more unique. For example, when UW-La Crosse hosted the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR), I photographed Grammy Award-winning musician Bill Miller from the front row of his concert at the event. I have also taken photographs of the NCAA Division III Track Championships; history students during the various aspects of their studies for the UW-La Crosse History Department web page and social media; and multiple library events for the Murphy Library newsletter, *Fine Print*.

Receiving a White House press pass is a major highlight from my job but not the only one. I also provided research assistance, produced photographs, and guest wrote a chapter in Emeritus Art History Professor Leslie F. Crocker's book, *We've Hung the Lantern: A Visual History of the First 50 Years of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse*. Moreover, I have an integral role in a UW-La Crosse History Department project titled, *Hear, Here*. Officially launched this spring, this public history project focuses on under-represented populations and makes oral history recollections publicly visible and easily accessible to the community. Additionally, last summer, I worked with a PBS History Detectives researcher to obtain historic steamboat photographs from our collection for a nationally-aired television episode on the Sultana steamboat disaster.

One of the best parts of my position within the archives of Murphy Library is that my efforts seem very much appreciated by students, faculty, community members, and researchers. Authors have even thanked me in the acknowledgments of their books. Most recently, I received thanks in *A Black Gambler's World of Liquor, Vice, and Presidential Politics: William Thomas Scott of Illinois, 1839-1917* by Bruce L. Mouser and *The Letters of Robert Frost, Volume 1, 1886-1920* edited by Donald Sheehy, Mark Richardson, and Robert Faggen.

The largest project I have worked on lately involved a year of intensive research and writing. My colleague Paul Beck and I wrote a book utilizing the historic postcards from Murphy Library's collection. Published by Arcadia Press, *Postcard Series: La Crosse*, was released in February. It features five chapters that show La Crosse's parks, businesses, homes, daily life, government buildings, and leisure activities, as well as some special events and disasters. The book focuses on the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century. I enjoyed working with the postcards because they provided insights about people not traditionally included in



[Cont. Page 11]



# Alumni News

Diana L. Ahmad (BA '74 and MA '79) has been named “Curators’ Teaching Professor” in the Department of History and Political Science at the Missouri University of Science and Technology. She sends her thanks, in particular, to Drs. Horsman and Healy for all their guidance and for the role model they provided.

Louisa Rice (MA '01) is now an Associate Professor at UW-Stout.

Nick Hoffman (MA '07) was awarded the Jane LaChapelle McCarty-MLK Community Leader Award at Appleton's annual community celebration of the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The award honors individuals who have brought the community together in the spirit of Dr. King. Hoffman, who is the Chief Curator at the History Museum at the Castle in Appleton, was chosen for curating several exhibits about forgotten voices in history, including immigrants and local African Americans.

Cameron Bradley (MA '09), finished his PhD in History at the University of Minnesota, with a dissertation titled “Between Brothers: Brotherhood and Masculinity in the Later Middle Ages.” He is currently a lecturer at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Matt Prigge (MA '12 and current PhD student) is a freelance author and historian from Milwaukee and the host of "What Made Milwaukee Famous," a weekly local history segment on WMSE 91.7. His work has been featured in local and national publications and has won multiple awards, including the 2013 William Best Hesseltine Award from the Wisconsin Historical Society Press. Since 2011, he has led sightseeing historical tours of Milwaukee's rivers and harbor for the Milwaukee Boat Line. In 2013, he created the Mondo Milwaukee Boat Tour, an evening historical tour of some of the city's most infamous sights. *Milwaukee Mayhem* is his second book, he writes a history blog for Milwaukee's *Shepherd Express*, and he has authored several articles for the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*.

Monica Drake Pierce (MA '13, Public History) has just been appointed the director of the Lake Wales Depot Museum, in Lake Wales, Florida. As reported in an article in the Lake Wales paper, she hopes to provide a more populist outreach. “I really am looking forward to working with the community,” Pierce said. “I am naturally curious about what makes a place a place, and I am looking forward to communicating with the community and getting their feedback of what makes Lake Wales truly unique and wonderful, and having the community help to write their history themselves.” She sees big potential in this small museum. Her own personal philosophy is that museums, whether small or large, should serve as community centers with programs that draw people in and help cater to local cultural needs. “My philosophy is to include the community in really setting up the museum, looking for what they are looking for, and what programs and outreach they are inserted, and getting involved with the community members, learning what it is about and what it means to them.”

Dawson Barrett (PhD '13) is Assistant Professor of History at Del Mar College, Corpus Christi, Texas, and Beth Robinson (PhD '13) is Professional Assistant Professor of History at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Dawson and Beth, and their daughter Genora, were in town for a reading of Dawson’s book at People’s Book Store. At right is Beth holding Genora, along with Brice Smith (PhD '10) holding his and Carrie Wadman's (UWM English PhD '12) son Gideon.



Richard Lartz (MA '15, Public History) is the curator for the Carbon County Museum in Rawlins, Wyoming.

Ashley Zampogna-Krug (PhD '12) is an Assistant Professor at Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, New Jersey.

## Contact Us

Do you have news to share? We welcome your stories, updates and feedback on your UWM experiences. We also welcome alumni involvement – current students can benefit from your time and expertise in so many ways. Re-engagement with UWM and the Department of History is just a phone call or email away: Amanda Seligman, Dept. Chair, (414) 229-4361, [history@uwm.edu](mailto:history@uwm.edu)

# Public History Students Set Twitter Ablaze

Special Feature By *Chloe Christiaansen, Guest Writer*

“Injuries: Gaping head wound and a crushed foot. #Ivehadworse #occupationalhazard #imfine #MKE92,” tweeted Milwaukee Fire Chief James Foley about Milwaukee’s catastrophic Third Ward fire in 1892.

Behind the keyboard sat UWM Public History graduate student Brooke Uhl in a room full of nine other volunteers, eight of them UWM students, at the Milwaukee Public Museum. Each managed a Twitter account portraying a historical figure involved in the fire and live-tweeted over the course of four hours as if they were living through the conflagration. The event highlighted the reopening of the newly renovated Streets of Old Milwaukee Exhibit on Dec. 11, 2015.

The tweeters were recruited by MPM Educator and UWM history and museum studies alumna Jaclyn Kelly (MA '11), who approached Professor Genevieve G. McBride for help drumming up excitement for the Streets’ reopening. The exhibit showcases what life was like for Milwaukeeans from the 1890s through World War I. “The Twitter event was a way to help the public understand the nature of history,” Kelly said. “History is about the experiences of real people.”

In turn, McBride adapted her graduate seminar, “History of the Midwest,” to include live-tweeting event, in addition to the required research papers.



Photo courtesy of Milwaukee Public Museum.

“I knew that they could do it, and they could teach me how to do this project. I use many social media platforms but had avoided adding a Twitter account,” McBride said. “Now, I have live-tweeted current events, but using social media to re-enact historical events is a new learning experience for all of us.”

During the live-tweet event, students composed 140-character messages using the hashtag #MKE92, denoting a term that could be searched on Twitter to follow along with each historical figure as events unfolded during the fire. The students based their tweets on a timeline of the fire developed by Kelly and her office.

Uhl adopted the persona of James Foley, the fire department chief at the time of the Third Ward fire. Other historical figures included then-Archbishop Frederick Katzer; Otto Falk, head of the state’s National Guard at the time; and Edward P. Bacon, then-Chamber of Commerce President.

Bacon was portrayed by Margaret Spiegel, another graduate student in the Public History program. She was in charge of researching Bacon’s life and his role during the fire. Outside of the knowledge that he became a central figure in the city’s relief efforts for fire victims the morning after the flames had been quenched, little else was known about Bacon. A majority of Spiegel’s tweets were based on inferences she made about his personality.

“I didn’t get a real clear sense of what his personal voice was like. I envisioned him as a kind, sympathetic man based on his involvement with Milwaukee charities,” she said. She and her classmates gleaned their information from research with the Milwaukee County Historical Society and the UWM Library Archives. Uhl in particular swore by the book *Beertown Blazes: A Century of Milwaukee Firefighting*, which detailed the history of Milwaukee firefighting and James Foley.



**James Foley** @1892JamesFoley · 1h  
#Chicago #Racine #Sheboygan #Kenosha #Oshkosh Keep those streamlines intact. #wecandothis #MKE92

← ↻ ❤️ 1 ⋮



**Eliza Stanton** @1892EStanton · 1h  
I hear the streets in the Ward look absolutely devastating. I pray everyone is alright. #thinkingofyou #mke92

← ↻ ❤️ ⋮



**Deirdre Quirke** @1892DQuirke · 1h  
There are Sisters saying the rosary. It is soothing to close my eyes and listen to their words over the distant shouts of firemen #mke92

← ↻ ❤️ ⋮



**Thomas Clancy** @1892TomAClancy · 1h  
@1892JamesFoley Yes! We can do this! #mke92

← ↻ ❤️ ⋮

[View conversation](#)

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# Faculty News

## **Professors Kris Ruggiero and Glen Jeansonne Retire**

Professors Kris Ruggiero and Glen Jeansonne both retired from the department in 2015.



*Glen Jeansonne with some of his former students.*

Glen was a member of the department for thirty-seven years, during which time he was awarded both the UWM Undergraduate Teaching Award and Alumni Association Teaching Award. He published twelve books, and edited two others, often working with former students as co-authors providing guidance and direction. He also served as a consultant for film, television, and radio on issues involving political figures of the twentieth century. One of his books, *Gerald L. K. Smith: Minister of Hate*, won the Wisconsin Writer's Award for Best Academic book, the Gustavus Meyers Award for research related to bigotry, and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. His contributions to Louisiana history have been many and varied and have been recognized with the William C. Rivers Award for Lifetime Achievements in Louisiana Studies, the Presidential Scholars Award from Louisiana State University-Shreveport, and his election as a Fellow of the Louisiana Historical Association for Lifetime Contributions to Louisiana History.

Kris was a member of the department and the Director of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies for 15 years, maintaining its federal funding as a Title VI National Resource Center. She was the author or editor of several books and many articles, and presented her research to audiences on five continents. Kris promoted international and cross-cultural understanding through her teaching, curriculum development, and community involvement.



*Kris Ruggiero*

## **Laura Godden [Cont. from page 8]**

standard histories. I did my best to share those insights with others at UW-La Crosse's annual Faculty Research Day and the La Crosse County Historical Society's summer lunch series, History in a Bag. John Davis of Wisconsin Public Radio interviewed Paul Beck and I about the book on Newsmakers.

My post-graduation experiences at Murphy Library have been exceptional and memorable, and I am excited about what the future may hold. I hope everyone at UW-Milwaukee is doing well. I often miss being a TA and chatting with all of the knowledgeable people in the department! Take care everyone, and go Panthers!

## **Streets of Old Milwaukee [Cont. from page 10]**

"He was very instrumental in helping Milwaukee fight fires," Uhl said. That included hiring more firefighters, purchasing additional fire engines and horses to haul them, and convincing the city to pay for cisterns. "He did all this because he was in the Chicago Fire in 1871. He also would have known about the Peshtigo Fire. I think he wanted to minimize loss of life," she explained.

Based on their research, the students drafted about 40 tweets per historical figure. Once the event got going, however, the participants found themselves building on the energy of one another and improvising tweets as inspiration struck. Uhl racked up more than 100 tweets by the end of the event.

"It was so much fun," Spiegel said. "It was a really good challenge to convey that information in a short space and make it fun and engaging with the hashtags."

"A lot of younger people don't come to museums," Uhl added, "but I think it is one way of using technology to interact with the younger demographic." The live-tweet was a social media success, and Kelly hopes to attempt other events in the future in partnership with UWM students.



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