

The

History Department

Wayne State University

Raven Award

Laura Kennedy (pictured below) is a student in the joint **MLIS** and **MA in Public History** program. She is a **2017 Ronald Raven Award** recipient, which enabled her to work at the **Reuther Library** on a recently uncovered group of negatives from the *Daily Collegian* (near right). The negatives date from about 1950 to 1960. The internship is giving Laura hands-on experience in processing a collection, a skill that will serve her well in her career as an archivist. It is also giving her the opportunity to learn from practicing archivists, which she finds informative and helpful.

Alumnus **Ron Raven**, who founded the award, learned his archival craft at **Wayne State**. Apprenticeships, like the one **Laura Kennedy** had at the Reuther, represent one of the diverse career paths open to History majors.



Hands-On History

Students launch themselves into fulfilling careers by having high impact experiences during their training. One such opportunity comes via internships and practicum. The **Ronald Raven Annual Award** provides a tuition stipend and a semester-long internship at the **Reuther Library**. Our partnership with the **Henry Ford Museum** offers students like **Ben Thomason** (above) additional opportunities to present history to public audiences. Thanks to generous donors who fund grants, like the **Sterne-Lion award's Mike Loewe**, we send students to archives around the country, where they practice the craft of history. Look for more on internship and research opportunities in issues of our newsletter and our e-mail list. Our apprentice historians are everywhere!

Save These Dates!

Visitors

3/19-20: **Caroline Merithew** on Gender & Academic Labor

3/29: **Kit French** on Material Culture

Spring Reception

4/10: **Otis-Reider Symposium**—featuring **Christine Cook, James McQuaid, & Sean O'Brien**, & a poster session on **Women Suffragists**. Awards ceremony.

Conferences

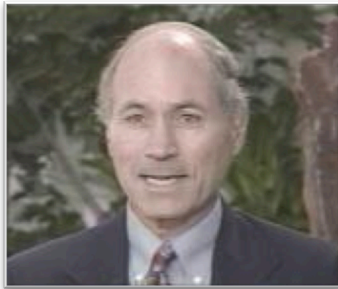
3/30: **Borderlands**

3/30: **Humanities Center: Revolution**

4/12-14: **Religion and Citizenship**

Melvin Small, Professor Emeritus, on the History of History

For more than two decades, one of the most popular courses on campus focused on the **history of the Vietnam conflict** and enrolled the considerable story-telling skills of



Melvin Small, a distinguished emeritus professor in our department. It was, according to *The South End*, an essential part of the **Wayne State** experience.

A former chair, and the author of such key works on the era as: *At The Waters Edge* (2005), *The Presidency of Richard Nixon* (1999), *Democracy and Diplomacy: The Impact of Domestic Politics on U.S. Foreign Policy, 1789-1994* (1996), *Covering Dissent* (1994), and *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves* (1988), **Mel Small** has played an important role in the leadership of the Department and in the historical scholarship on foreign policy, peace movements, and the history of the Johnson and Nixon presidencies. Graduating from **Dartmouth** and from the **University of Michigan**, he was hired by **Wayne** in 1965. He has been active in the **faculty union**, among the **Abraham Lincoln Brigade** veterans, and, since his retirement, in **Wayne State's Academy of Scholars**. He also mentored several graduate students over the years, including **Natalie Atkin (University of Windsor)**, **Dave DeSilvio (Wayne)**, **William Elster (University of Detroit-Jesuit High)**, **Guolin Yi (Arkansas Technical University)**, **Frank Koscielski (ret)**, and **Timothy Kiska (University of Michigan-Dearborn)**.

As a member of the **postwar generation**, Mel Small was a witness to changes in the Department and the University. In a recent email, he recalled that, when he came to Wayne, the Department was growing into what became a faculty of nearly 40 historians. By 1970, that cohort included **Christopher Johnson**, **Sam Scott**, **Richard "Dick" Place**, and **Stanley Shapiro**. They joined what was then a department dominated by those who had come of age

in the **Great Depression** and had experience in **World War II**. Many of the younger professors joining the Department *"were liberals or moderate radicals, active not only in local and national politics but also in university politics."* To quote Mel, *"[t]he AAUP union that was established in 1972 was a response, in part, to undemocratic departments like ours where five senior members met periodically at the chair's home to decide on promotion, tenure, and salaries."* Needless to say, political differences—as well as family status, friendship, and demeanor—mattered in those decisions. *"In 1968, four of us joined about fifty others to participate in civil disobedience by standing on the sidewalk after a [Martin Luther King, Jr.] memorial service to challenge the governor's proclamation restricting public activities outdoors involving more than three people. When the dean...read about us in newspapers, he asked the chair whether he could fire us. The chair, no radical, did, however, advise him against it."* Despite these conflicts, Small said, *"The increasing pro-union and liberal faculty receive[d] tenure and promotion."*

Small was promoted to full professor in 1976. In 1978, under new union rules, Mel then became chair of the Department, a sign of generational change. He finished his term in 1986. Those seven years, he recalled, were a time of cutbacks and the loss of faculty positions. The Department was able to hire only two historians to replace those it had lost to retirement or competitive hiring. By 1990, the Department had shrunk to 24 regular faculty. Mel retired in 2010.

In the years since then, much has happened. The Department went through a generational transition that began slowly in 1990 with the hire of a labor historian and picked up pace with the retirement of the faculty cohort in which **Mel Small had played a central leadership role**. Today, while traditional strengths are represented, there is a greater range of historical fields, which harkens back to the Department's 1960s heyday. Even in retirement, **Mel**, like his colleague **Chris Johnson**, has remained active in scholarship, publishing additional studies and continuing to influence generations of students and the larger public.



Alexandra Cervenak

Alexandra Cervenak graduated from **Wayne State** in 2007 with a double major in **History** and **English**. Since 2010, she has worked at **Plimoth Plantation** as a **Historical Interpreter**. She also works as a **Site Supervisor** and **Foodways Specialist**. Here, she shares her work at **Plimoth** and her path to a fulfilling & impactful career.

History at Plimoth Plantation

Plimoth Plantation is a living history museum that represents the lives of **Pilgrims** and **Wampanoag** in 17th century **New England**. As a historical interpreter, I portray the life of a 1620s New Pilgrim resident, who traveled to America on the **Mayflower** or a subsequent ship. Who I portray changes annually, but will always be a person who existed in the historical record. I embody this person by learning the scholarship, dressing in reproduction period clothing, speaking in an English accent for the period, and reading *tons* of primary sources. I speak to museum visitors “in character” and demonstrate skills and lifeways—sewing, gardening, open hearth cooking and baking in a wood-fired oven. *I love making guests feel like they walked into living in a 1600s painting.*



It Runs in the Family

Love for **Wayne State** and interest in **public history runs in my family**. Both my parents are **Warriors** and deeply involved in the **Hamtramck Historical Museum**. My mom, **Cynthia** (c/o 1974), is a longstanding member of the **Hamtramck Historical Commission**. My father, **Thomas**, who graduated with a MA in Anthropology in 1980, uses his experience as a director of social work agency to write grants to benefit the museum. Even my brother, **Christopher**, a current student in Interior Design, offers tips on exhibits.

Tips

A career in public history wasn't immediately evident to me as something I wanted to do. I discovered it as a way to share the history I learned in school with a wider audience. If you're interested in the public history world but your background isn't in that field, there are paths to those positions. I work with people with degrees in everything from history and education to drama and costume design through divinity, all of which can lend different insight for our guests. *If you're interested and passionate about something you can get a museum visitor interested in it, too!*





History Major Addie Walsh launches the Undergraduate Museum Club

Are you a history major or minor looking for a club to join? Do you like visiting museums? Have you ever wanted to take a **behind-the-scenes** tour of the **Detroit Historical Museum** or the **Detroit Institute of Art**? If so, the **Undergraduate Museum Club** is the club you've been looking for.



My name is **Addie Walsh**. Last year, I started the **Museum Club** after I noticed there were not many clubs for **History** students. Since we began, we have gone on a private tour of the **Detroit Historical Museum** and a **historic architecture tour** with the **Detroit Experience Factory**. We will be having **private tours** of the **Museum of Anthropology**, the **Detroit Historical Society archives**, and the **Dossin Great Lakes Museum** this winter semester.

Museum Club is not just for History majors. We have members from all over the university, including **Marketing, Foreign Language, Nutrition and Food Science, and English.**

Our **Detroit Historical Museum** tour was led by **Tracy Irwin** (above, left), the **Director of Exhibitions and Collections**. She showed

us the **Detroit 67** exhibit, which features the timeline, causes, and effects of the Uprising in Detroit. **We learned how the curators put together the exhibit and about the challenges they faced trying to show the conflict from different points of view**, something average visitors would not get to learn.

The **Detroit Historical Society** has over **250,000 artifacts**, many of which are not on display to the public. This semester, we will have the rare opportunity to explore this vast collection.

There is a museum for everyone in metro Detroit! There are historic villages, a maritime museum, museums of modern art, fine art, African American and Arab American history, and even one museum specifically geared toward elementary students!



Fun, easy to join, free admissions, and no big time commitment. What more could you ask for in a club?

What museums would you like to see? We'd love to hear from you and have you join us.

Contact me for more information!
Addie Walsh fv7383@wayne.edu

Insight

When Economic & Natural Disasters Strike by Jorge L. Chinae



This past summer, public discussion about the **debt crisis** in **Puerto Rico**, which has been estimated at between **\$70 and \$130 billion**,

drew extensive national and international attention. Although many put the blame on **predatory banking practices**, others connect it to the failure of **Operation Bootstrap**, an economic revitalization plan instituted in the late 1940s that replaced farming with industrial development. The much-trumpeted modernization scheme fell short of expectations due to the substandard wages paid to local workers and its inability to generate allied entrepreneurial activity. Large-scale voluntary and government-sponsored Puerto Rican emigration to the mainland U.S. dates precisely from this 30-year period.

Two back-to-back hurricanes in late 2017, **Irma** and **María**, devastated the island's already weakened and poorly maintained road, water, and electrical services and may have **claimed around 1,000 lives**. An estimated **300,000 Puerto Ricans left hastily** to the U.S. mainland since October 2017.

In response to these developments, a new entity was created: **PROMESA**, which stands for the **Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act**. While supporters praise the fiscal board, its critics see it as **an extension of the bankruptcy measures adopted in Detroit**, and understandably worry about the **erosion of retirement funds, the closing of public schools, major cuts to state-funded university budgets and federal healthcare programs**, and the **privatization of utility companies**. *Sadly, nearly three months after the destructive atmospheric disturbances, the bankrupt non-incorporated U.S. territory remains in the eye of the storm.*

PBS's 'The Vietnam War' by Mel Small

As someone who taught a course on the **Vietnam War** for



over 35 years and who has written about the War, I consider the **Ken Burns-Lynn Novick** series to be a significant contribution but, as one might expect, with many problematic areas.

On the positive side are the **lengthy interviews with American, North Vietnamese, Viet Cong, and South Vietnamese soldiers**, almost all of whom are now critical of the War; **the grim battle footage**; the **music**, although I wish the haunting songs of the era were not so abbreviated; and the careful and fully reported analysis of the fall of South Vietnam in 1975.

I was not happy with the portrayal of the **Antiwar Movement** as a mostly unruly mob that disrespected the soldiers it wanted to bring home, the relatively superficial approach to policymaking, the secondary role assigned to the **ARVN** and **South Vietnamese**, not all of whom were corrupt and ineffective, and **the unprecedented illegal actions of the FBI and CIA**. Critics on the Left, many of whom were participant-observers during the period, have assailed the series for whitewashing the decision makers who appeared to have had the best of intentions. I disagree with that assessment.

Anyone watching the complete series will have to conclude that American presidents from **Harry Truman** through **Richard Nixon** lied to the public and generally escalated US involvement because they feared the political beating they would have taken for having "lost" Vietnam. *Furthermore, I wish I had had access to parts of this valuable source when I was teaching my Vietnam War course.*

Benjamin Thomason's Trip to D.C.

Last summer history major **Ben Thomason** travelled to **College Park, Maryland**, which is just outside **Washington, D.C.**, to visit the **National Archives**. Archives II, the College Park site, is a 1.8 million square foot building that houses both civilian government and military records.



Thomason went there to research the United States' involvement in **German reparations** and the **Dawes and Young plans** after **World War I**. He also explored American policies and inter-allied negotiations during the **occupation of Germany after WWII**.

While conducting his research, Thomason learned how people saw Germany after the Second World War. He said, *“Many Europeans Americans were doubtful that Germans could ever be trusted with having their own military or even that they could learn and embrace democracy or racial equality within a few decades.”* He also learned how diverse the opinions were on issues of German reparations after WWI.

“I have read very convincing arguments that both support and condemn the Treaty of Versailles and the methods of German reparations. I think this just goes to show that History is always more complicated than we tend to think of it in retrospect and there is always great uncertainty and unexpected consequences in the course of human events.”

While there, Ben did what most historians do while in the field—take in the sites. He visited the **Smithsonian American Art Museum**, which houses dozens of original portraits of the **Founding Fathers**,



influential Americans of the 18th and 19th centuries, and presidents as well as 20th and 21st century modern art and sculpture. He also visited the **Newseum**, which is themed around news media and **First Amendment** issues. It includes exhibits on music in politics, terrorism from the 20th century to today, front page news articles from pre-revolutionary times to today, censorship and First Amendment suppression around the world and **Pulitzer Prize** winning photographs every year from the beginning of the institute. He did not see everything he wanted to, however. If he had to do it again, he would be sure to arrange tours of the **White House** and the **Capitol Building**.

Ben's Tips for Future Student Researchers:

“Be prepared to take pictures or scans of a lot of documents and make sure to record all the information on the boxes, files and documents that you look at. This will not only allow you to go back and see exactly what was written or things you might have missed when using the documents in your research but will also make citing them properly much easier.

Find time and bring what you need to relax and enjoy the trip while you're not working. Try to call friends/family, start conversations with people or go out somewhere because feelings of isolation or loneliness will likely start to bother you and get in the way of doing your work or having fun. Remember to eat well and don't tell yourself you're too busy or it's too expensive to eat somewhere when you need to. Lastly, bring some things for fun that don't require an internet connection partly because it's good to disconnect sometimes but mostly because you may stay at a hotel that has terrible WiFi.”

Have Fun.

News & Notes

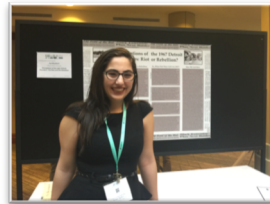
Graduates

Lynda Litogot completed her degree requirements by defending "Searching for their Voice: Nineteenth-Century White Women's Strategies to Become a Force in the Abolitionist Movement." Congratulations, Dr. Litogot!



Undergraduates

Aya Beydoun joined 25 students from across the country, beating out more than 70 applicants, to present a **Detroit 67** poster at the **AHA**, in **Washington, D.C.** We even saw her on **CSPAN** asking a question.



Ali Kahil won the award for **Exceptional Presentation** for his poster "General Henri Mathias Berthelot: Savior of Romania and Founder of Great Romania" at the **Undergraduate Research Conference**.

Alumni

The Urban History Association awarded **Josiah Rector** the **Michael B. Katz award** for the **Best Dissertation in Urban History**. He also had "The Spirit of Black Lake: Full Employment, Civil Rights, and the Forgotten Early History of Environmental Justice" published in *Modern American History*.

Guolin Yi has accepted a tenure track position at **Arkansas Tech University** in **Russellville, AK**. Congratulations!

In Memoriam

The Department extends its deepest condolences to the family and friends of doctoral candidate **Amanda Hoover**. The department has established a



fund in her memory to support graduate student travel. Please check the website for info.

Faculty

Jorge Chinae's "Legal and Extra-Legal Measures of Exploitation: Work, Workers, and Socio-Racial Control in Spanish Puerto Rico" was published in *Revista Brasileira do Caribe*.

Jennifer Hart's book *Ghana on the Go: African Mobility in the Age of Motor Transportation* is a finalist for the 2017 **Herskovits Award** for the **African Studies Association**. This is the most significant prize for Africanist historians. We're keeping everything crossed, Jennifer!

Liette Gidlow debuted in the *Detroit News* and *The Conversation* with essays on voting rights and activist women.

Karen Marrero's "Borders Thick and Foggy": Mobility, Community, and Nation in a Northern Indigenous Region" was published in *Warring for America: Cultural Contests in the Era of 1812*.

Carolyn Vieira-Martinez published Language, Space and the Disregarded in *Radical History Review* 130.

Danielle McGuire and **Kidada E. Williams** wrote "Raped and Left on the Road, She Said #MeToo. Jurors Said, 'No, not You.'" and "Say Her Name. Shawana Hall. She is a Hero," which appeared in *Bridge Magazine*.

Andrew Port published "'Awkward Encounters': East German Relations with the Third-World 'Other,'" in *German History* 35:4 and "Rethinking Regime Stability: The Life Stories of 'Loyal' East German Activists in the Early German Democratic Republic," in *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 58:2.

Aaron Retish has been awarded an **Imre Kertész Kolleg Fellowship** at the **Friedrich Schiller University Jena** in **Jena, Germany**, where he will be a fellow in residence in the Fall 2018. He also wrote "Remembering and Forgetting in Russia," in *Origins*.

Good Things Happening

From current and former students presenting posters at the AHA and getting **behind-the-scenes tours** of local museums to receiving **internships** and **interpreting the past at historic sites** through faculty sharing **Insight** on economic and national disasters and the **Vietnam War**, the Department's embrace of researching the past and connecting it to the present day is on full display.

We hope to continue sharing this great work in our forthcoming issues. To do it, we need your help. We welcome your updates about what you're doing as well as your contributions to **Insight**. We want great photos of events you attend or host. You do not need fancy equipment, just the same mindset you use while taking photos of loved ones. We remain enthusiastic about **profiling innovative, public facing, and student-centered projects**.

As **Wayne State** celebrates its sesquicentennial, we are commemorating our anniversary as a department. Please keep an eye out for details about events where you can learn more about our role on campus and our impact on the larger global community.

In September, the Department will host our **second alumni gathering and fall reception**. Last fall, alumna **Mary Steinbauer** (top) joined us, sharing details of her career as a picture editor for **Time-Life** books and editor of special issues of **Life Magazine**. On September 25, **Dennis Barrie** will join us to discuss his career in museums.

As always, we owe big thanks to all of the contributors for this issue as well as to the staff and faculty who make it available. ~KEW, PhD



"Historians are investigators. We're researchers. We're analysts. We put together a picture that transcends time and space. That's fundamental, and the fact that we have donors who support this research is really phenomenal."

– Samuel Hogsette –

Doctoral Student, Wayne State Department of History

Pivotal
Moments
OUR CAMPAIGN FOR
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

