

# DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

WASHBURN UNIVERSITY



*Fall 2013 Special  
Edition—Beyond  
the Classroom:  
Historical  
Internships*

## MESSAGE FROM DR. TOM PRASCH, CHAIR

Closing in on finals week, and around the department you can sure tell: a higher-than-usual level of scurrying students, at the computers fixing footnotes on their final drafts, at professors' doors asking for PIN numbers so they can get registered for next term, just stopping by the commons for a quick cup of coffee or a few candies (our secretary, Robin Shrimplin, keeps our basket well stocked for the season). There's a mysterious blue-angel-topped cake on the table, relic of a project for Kelly Erby's John Brown course, but since it's been sitting there a few days now, most everyone leaves it alone. For four of our Phi Alpha Theta students, there are also arrangements to be made: off to the national conference in Albuquerque this January, they have flight arrangements and registrations to arrange, papers to trim somehow down to ten pages. There are almost lines at the copy machines as professors prepare final exams, last handouts, study guides; those professors have that end-of-term haggard look, piles of grading in their offices, postponed projects awaiting final touches, bubble sheets to fill out, hastily called end-of-semester meetings to squeeze onto the schedule, too few days to catch up with the promises made in the syllabus. The exceptions to that haggard standard are the trio of new adjuncts, Washburn grads all, grinning more than usual it would seem, a spring in their step, as they see the end of the term in sight (and try not to think about those dissertations they should spend the break writing). Ah, another semester ending.

It has been another productive semester for Washburn's history department. Our Phi Alpha Theta group has been unusually active, sponsoring well-attended forums on Syria and Egypt, carrying on the tradition of historical movie nights, and offering a full week of the films of Kansas-born pioneering African American photographer, writer, and filmmaker Gordon Parks (with KU filmmaker Kevin Willmott helping out by

leading discussion on the Parks classic *Shaft*). Our professors have been active in developing our campus's interdisciplinary connections, with Kelly Erby and I participating in Tom Averill's faculty colloquium ("Rage for Order" this year's theme), and Erby also organizing a series of gender-studies brownbag lunch-hour talks. We have sponsored field trips, like the one Erby's John Brown students took to Pottawattomie, or the trip to major sites of the Civil Rights era that Bruce Mactavish is planning for this coming spring. We have been offering new courses (like Erby's John Brown course this semester), and next semester we're at work on a number of new team-taught offerings (I'm doing Sherlock Holmes with English's Erin Chamberlain; Erby's doing a new course called "Dining Out" on foodways in history and literature with Tom Averill; Tony Silvestri's teaming with the Music Department's Shiao-Li Ding to offer a course on World Music and History). As always, we have been busy sharing our research in conferences and through publishing.

And, although overall Washburn enrollment has been trending down a bit this term, the number of history majors continues to grow. We try to keep them busy with courses, events, internships, capstone projects, and conferences. We try to move some of them forward as they graduate to graduate programs, teaching jobs, and law schools. And we try to keep track of them after they leave. This issue's newsletter, you will notice, tracks down several recent graduates to ask them to recall internship experiences they had while at Washburn. But as always, we need your help on all this: keep in touch yourselves, let us know what you are up to, and, if you can, support the department so we can keep sending students to conferences and on research trips.

## ABOUT HI 397: INTERNSHIPS IN HISTORICAL AGENCIES

### Students Completing HI 397:

#### “Internships in Historical Agencies” since 2006:

**2006:** Nick Murray, Brown v. Board National Historic Site; Catherine Mack, Brown v. Board National Historic Site

**2007:** Rick Anderson, The Brown Foundation; Ashley Partain, The Brown Foundation

**2008:** Matt Hull, Mabee Library; Sara Heckman, Topeka Center for Peace & Justice; Ashley Partain, Kansas State Historical Society (KSHS); Courtney Woertz, KSHS; Allison Murphy, Mabee Library; Heather Stone, Mabee Library

**2009:** Tanner Carlson, Ritchie House; Sarah Madl, Mabee Library; Amanda Diggs, Mabee Library

**2010:** Chris Hayes, Ritchie House; Brenda Kostner, Baker University Methodist Archives; Matthew Peterson, Ritchie House; Rosa Rosales, Ritchie House

**2011:** Tyler Duree, Mabee Library; Matthew Peterson, Ritchie House

**2012:** Kristina Gaylord, KSHS; Joe Goebel, KSHS

**2013:** Caitlin Sturgeon, Topeka Center for Peace & Justice; Cassandra Blackwell, KSHS; Dustin Burgess, KSHS; Meredith Langfitt, KSHS

**2014:** Lindsey Schwartz, Topeka Center for Peace & Justice; Dustin Ross, Placement TBA

During the past seven years, 24 students have completed HI 397, the Department’s elective course known as “Internship in Historical Agencies.” Since 2006, Professor Rachel Goossen has supervised our history interns, whose placements have included the Kansas State Historical Society, *Brown v. Board of Education* National Historic Site, Mabee Library, and the Ritchie House. Additionally, students completing a minor in WU’s “Peace, Justice, and Conflict Resolution Studies” have earned credit for internships at the Topeka Center for Peace & Justice. Placement opportunities are limited only by students’ creativity and interest in the region’s historical and archival sites: several years ago, Brenda Kostner completed an internship at the Methodist Archives in Baldwin City, Kansas, in preparation for entering seminary following graduation from WU with a history degree.

Internship requirements include a minimum of 124 hours of supervised work, in which Goossen visits interns on site at the beginning, midterm, and end of the semester-long internship. Depending on student placements, projects might focus on organizing nineteenth-century archival collections of documents; preparing website publication of photographs for the KSHS’s “Kansas Memory” online initiative; working with middle-school students on history projects in a local summer

Peace Camp; or a range of other possibilities.

Some interns have parlayed their internship experiences into professional positions. Nick Murray, our first student to be placed at the *Brown v. Board of Education* National Historic Site, currently serves as a National Park Service ranger in Topeka. Rick Anderson, a former Brown Foundation intern, is employed as a National Register Historian at the Kansas State Historical Society. Other successful interns have headed into graduate programs in fields as diverse as museum studies, public history, library science, and educational administration.

Our department’s involvement in placing students with local agencies has a decades-long history, stretching back to the commitment of Professor Bill Wagon (now Emeritus), who developed close relations between our department and the Kansas State Historical Society, as well as with the Shawnee County Historical Society. He mentored dozens of history interns prior to his retirement. Goossen, who holds an M.A. in Public History as well as a Ph.D. in History, enjoys her work each semester with students who are continuing this tradition on our campus and beyond. For inquiries about internship opportunities in 2014-15, contact her at [rachel.goossen@washburn.edu](mailto:rachel.goossen@washburn.edu).

## INTERVIEW WITH MEREDITH LANGFITT, 2013 KANSAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY (KSHS) INTERN

### **What made you want to do an internship?**

I was interested in an internship due to my career goal, which is to work within a museum or archival setting. I have a passion for public history. I wanted to experience the opportunities research, creativity, and education in this field.

### **Describe your internship experience—where did you work, what were your responsibilities?**

In fall 2013, I worked with the Museum Education division at the Kansas Historical Society, in Topeka Kansas. My responsibilities included helping to coordinate public events. I also personally researched social media trends within the museum education field and developed a plan to integrate new social media tools and technology into the museum's existing educational material. Finally, I wrote and submitted an article on Upton Sinclair and his relationship with the state of Kansas for the online encyclopedia *Kansapedia*.



### **How did your internship experience supplement or complement your coursework?**

I am an Anthropology, with a minor in history. This background fits well with my career plans. The research skills I learned in coursework enabled me to complete research independently in my internship. In turn, my internship taught me new skills, like how to put my conclusions into action!

### **How did your internship experience shape your future career plans and goals?**

My internship has convinced me that work in a field that is based on historical preservation and research is, indeed, for me. After I graduate in December 2013, I want to continue to work in teaching people of all ages that anyone can make a connection to a moment in history. History offers something for everyone.

## SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendars for the annual Lincoln Lecture! This year's speaker is Professor John Stauffer, Chair of the History of American Civilization and Professor of English and African and African American Studies at Harvard University. The title of Dr. Stauffer's Lecture is "Giants: The Parallel Lives of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass." The lecture will be held February 6 at 7 pm in the Washburn Room of the Memorial Union. It is free and open to the public.

## CAITLIN STURGEON, 2013 INTERN WITH TOPEKA CENTER FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

Washburn introduced me to myriad learning experiences, both inside and outside the classroom. I was a student worker for the Washburn University Foundation and had career aspirations of working for a nonprofit organization. My internship experience with the Topeka Center for Peace and Justice developed a new skill-set that made me more marketable and ultimately helped me realize my career goal and secure a permanent position at the Foundation.

As a student, I constantly sought out new ways to be challenged. When my senior year came around, I realized I had plenty of experience inside the classroom,



but not as much as I would have liked outside of

academia. This led me to find a new challenge to broaden my knowledgebase. Having worked as a student worker for our university's nonprofit, the Foundation, I gained a deep respect for fundraising and considered making it a career path. With only one nonprofit organization under my belt, I needed more experience to make sure nonprofit work would

be a good fit for me in the long-run. Dr. Goossen suggested I obtain an internship at a nonprofit organization. This opportunity both challenged me and allowed me to further whether I would enjoy a career working for a nonprofit.

Fortunately, I already had a nonprofit organization in mind. The summer before my senior year I had volunteered at Peace Camp, hosted by the Topeka Center for Peace and Justice (TCPJ). TCPJ is a small nonprofit whose mission "is to promote justice and peace through education and action for social change by working with individuals and organizations in the greater Topeka community." Through that experience, I had gotten to know the executive director, Jim McCollough.

As an intern for TCPJ, I was entirely in charge of implementing the organization's anti-bullying initiative. The goal of the program was to assess the current state of bullying in Topeka public schools, assess how best to improve anti-bullying initiatives at the school and district level, and provide any resources that could help the schools and school district better address bullying. Most of my semester was spent meeting with school counselors (the administrators charged with implementing anti-bullying campaigns in schools), the Kansas State Department of Education, and communicating with the Southern Poverty Law Center (TCPJ's partner in ending bullying). I was able to use my skills as a history major throughout the semester since considerable research needed to be done on bullying, its effects, and the best ways for schools to address the issue.

My internship with the Topeka Center for Peace and Justice taught me how a small nonprofit works and how to implement research to obtain tangible results. Most importantly, it taught me that the nonprofit world was, indeed, a perfect fit for me. My extensive research for TCPJ and my knowledge of how nonprofits work made me an ideal candidate for a new, permanent position at the Foundation after I graduated from Washburn. As the prospect researcher for the Foundation, I continually hone my researching skills and my work is used to secure gifts for Washburn.

### PHI ALPHA THETA FALL INDUCTEES

This year, Phi Alpha Theta, the History Honorary Society, was pleased to induct the following students: Logan Brooks, Adam Fritz, Jeffrey Schuh, and Casey Woodward.

Students are inducted into Phi Alpha Theta after completing a minimum of 12 semester hours in History and earning at least a 3.1 GPA, demonstrating excellence in the history coursework.

## NICK MURRAY, 2006 INTERN WITH BROWN V. BOARD NHS



I began to contemplate life after college when I entered my junior year of college in 2005. My initial goal was to graduate college with a degree in history and become a high school history teacher. Teaching history was the only thing I could think of doing with a B.A. in history. I have family members who work in public schools and I always saw myself teaching. Now, however, I began to think about other career opportunities in the field of history and education.

I was sitting in Dr. Rachel Goossen's Social Studies Teaching Methods class and she announced that the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site was interested in a student intern with a background in history and education. I jumped at the opportunity to pursue another possible career path.

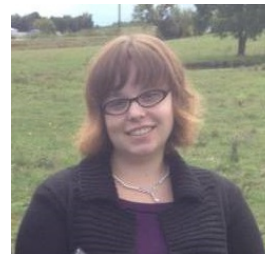
I became an intern for the National Park Service at Brown v. Board of Education NHS in 2006. I worked on creating lesson plans for a curriculum packet for elementary school students, provided tours of the facility, and presented education programs to students visiting the site. At first I was a little out of my element. I had limited experience with elementary students because my educational emphasis was on junior high and high school students. However, I felt like the work I did really mattered. I knew the lesson plans I helped to create would be used by thousands of teachers and this inspired me to create better lesson plans.

During my internship, I applied the critical thinking and writing skills I had gained as a history major to help create an elementary-level curriculum packet. The curriculum packet went on to win regional and national awards. The education department was so satisfied with my work that they offered me a student position at the site.

Suddenly, a new world of opportunities opened in front of me. With the Park Service, I could use my passion and knowledge of history and participate in the role of an educator, but not limit myself to a classroom. It was a win-win for me.

My career in the National Park Service has taken me to other sites, but I happily returned to Brown v. Board of Education NHS in November 2012 as an Education Technician.

## KRISTINA GAYLORD, 2012 INTERN WITH KSHS



My experience interning with the Kansas History Museum was an amazing one. I had already been a volunteer with the museum for three years. But as I reached my final semester of college, I realized I was going to be a few credits short of graduating. With an already over-packed schedule, I realized I needed an upper-division course that would require little in-class time. This made an internship a perfect choice. I figured I was already at the museum most of the week as a volunteer, why not see if I could get credit for it?

I requested to work with Education and Exhibit Design, areas of the museum with which I had no experience. I found myself doing everything from creating museum guides, to putting up wall plaques, to entering objects into the accession files in the registrar. It was a busy semester, but I loved it. I was able to see and do things I never had before and I learned a great deal more about the craft of museum sciences.

From this experience I was better able to plan my future career goals. I had known before that I wished to continue my studies and obtain a graduate degree in museum studies. During my internship, I realized I loved working in education outreach programs. I also enjoyed being able to work in multiple departments. I decided that my first choice of career would be to become a museum director in a small town or county museum. However, if I were to go into a larger museum, I would like to go into education.

Since the internship, I have continued on this trajectory. I am currently working on my Masters degree in museum studies through Johns Hopkins wonderful online program. For any history student who is considering a museum career, or who just wants to play at a museum a few days a week, I strongly recommend doing an internship. For me it was a practical convenience, but also an invaluable learning experience. I truly miss being at the Kansas History Museum, and cannot wait to begin my museum career.

## HEATHER STONE, 2008 INTERN WITH MABEE LIBRARY

In summer 2008, I was working towards completing my B.A. in history at Washburn University. I was still undecided as to how I wanted to apply my skills as a historian after graduation. Several faculty members in the History Department recommended that I complete an internship to explore my career options. That summer I was fortunate to have the opportunity to be an intern at Mabee Library.

Interning at the library opened my eyes to a whole new world. While I had spent many hours, days and months studying and researching in the Library, I never realized the intricacies behind how Mabee Library operated. I was fortunate to get to spend considerable one-on-one time with different staff members throughout the Library, and I learned firsthand about how they enabled the Library run smoothly. I learned about interlibrary loans, serials, cataloging, and reference services. I even shadowed Dean Alan Bearman to learn about the managerial side of the Library's operation. I began to see libraries in a whole new light. The staff was extremely helpful in answering my many questions and provided me with guidance as I plotted my next steps after graduation.

Throughout my internship at Mabee Library, the faculty and staff subtly planted the idea of attending Library School and obtaining a Masters of Library and Information Science (MLS) in my mind. That fall, I took a leap of faith and decided to apply to Library Schools. One of my applications asked me to interview a librarian and I interviewed David Winchester, Mabee's Serials Librarian. He gave me some valuable advice: While Library School is important; the most valuable lessons will be learned on the job. That advice was very true and I continue to learn something new every day in my current job.

In August 2011, I graduated with my MLS with an emphasis in Archives and Records Management from Indiana University, Bloomington. I accepted my first job that November at the Kentucky Historical Society



as a Project Archivist under a NHPRC grant processing the Kentucky Folklife Program Collection. After completing the grant I enjoyed a brief stint at the Kentucky Department of Library and Archives while searching for a more permanent position. Within a few months I accepted my current position as Assistant Curator (Archivist) of Photographs and Prints at the prestigious Filson Historical Society in Louisville, KY. Today, I work on processing, preserving, and providing access to photographic and print materials from our collections. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the incredible faculty members of the Washburn History Department (especially Dr. Kim Morse), and the faculty and staff of Mabee Library for helping me succeed and find the career of my dreams.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FALL 2013 GRADUATES!

BRITTANY CHASSER, MARY-LUCIA DARST (WITH HONORS), AMANDA  
 PHILLIPS, KYLE SHANKS, PEYTON SLOAN, DONALD FINCH, BENJAMIN  
 GEHRING, JONATHAN RODVELT, JOSEPH GOEBEL, &  
 STEPHEN POTTER (WITH HONORS)

### Attention Alumni & Friends!

Keep us current on your activities and contact information! Complete this form and send it to Dr. Kelly Erby, Department of History, Washburn University, 1700 SW College Ave, Topeka, KS 66621, or send by email to [kelly.erby@washburn.edu](mailto:kelly.erby@washburn.edu)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

News: \_\_\_\_\_

General donations to the Department of History are always welcome to further the activities of students, faculty, and general program needs.

Checks can be made payable to “Washburn University Foundation—History Department” and mailed to 1729 SW MacVicar Ave Topeka, KS, 66604. We appreciate your support!

Did you know the WU  
 Department of History  
 has a page on  
 Facebook?



**Like us!**