Dear Alumni and Friends,

Greetings from Cornell's History Department!

Having completed the second year of my second term as Chair, I am pleased to report continued progress as we strengthen our ability to energize our students about the importance of History in a fast-changing world. Much credit goes to our amazing faculty and staff, as well as our alumni, who this year achieved the distinction of being the most generous Giving Day supporters of any department in the College of Arts and Sciences.

The Department welcomed a whole host of individuals this year, while offering a fond farewell to several others. Michael Williamson joined the department as our new Administrative Manager in January 2018. He came very highly recommended from the Linguistics Department. This critical position had previously been held by our highly regarded Kay Stickane, who retired from the department with many heartfelt best wishes. We also welcomed Georgiana Saroka as our new Accounts Manager and Assistant to the Chair. Georgie assumed the responsibilities previously held by Katie Kristof, our longest serving staff member who had been with us for eighteen years before she moved to Alumni Affairs. We welcome both Michael and Georgie, and wish Kay and Katie much happiness as they embark upon their own new adventures. We also bid a fond farewell to Victor Seow, Assistant Professor of Modern Chinese History who leaves Cornell to continue his research and teaching at Harvard University. Best wishes Victor.

The addition of two new staff members to the Department has been just the beginning of our ongoing efforts to strengthen the Department. This past year we were also successful in making two new faculty hires. Joining us in July 2018 from New York University will be Assistant Professor Mara Yue Du, who received her PhD from that institution in 2017. Her research examines the evolution of political and judicial governance in China from the late imperial to the early twentieth century Republic period. Also enriching our faculty ranks will be Olga Litvak, Associate Professor and the Laurie B. and Eric M. Roth Professor of Modern European Jewish History. Prior to her move to Cornell, she was Associate Professor and the Michael and Lisa Leffell Chair in Modern Jewish History at Clark University. Olga’s research focuses on Russian Jewish history, and more particularly on Jewish nationalist thought.

Good fortune this past year also brought to us a number of post-doctoral fellows, all of whom have brought additional energy.
I am a historian of modern Japan whose research interests encompass the history of the body, medicine and law, race and sexuality, and Japanese international relations. I am writing a book entitled Japan Reborn: Race and Nation after World War II. The book explores a mass-mediated furor with geopolitical implications that erupted in the 1950s over ‘mixed-blood’ children born to Japanese mothers and American fathers stationed in Japan after the war. People often assume that eugenics lost credibility and force after World War II. But in Japan, defeat and occupation only heightened the relevance of race-based eugenics as a prescription for national strength. I trace the activities of a heterogeneous cast of patriots who, in the wake of defeat, reconstructed Japanese nationalism on a new basis: that of the ‘pure race’ rather than the failed state. By focusing on the ideology and politics of “pure blood,” Japan Reborn puts to rest the mistaken notion that all but a reactionary fringe of Japanese turned their backs on nationalism after the war.

Since coming to Cornell, I have designed a number of courses that bridge the gap between my research and the classroom. One of my favorite assignments is the news report. The idea is simple: each week, one student gives an oral report that relates topics in the news to the topic we are studying. Sometimes the report involved the terms of Japan’s surrender in WWII and how they affect today’s territorial disputes and tomorrow's potential wars in Asia. Sometimes the report involves seventeenth-century chastity suicides, which students relate to current debates over sexual harassment, violence, and consent. Whatever the topic, students discover that even ostensibly obscure historical events have current resonance. They teach one another that the present moment is never truly “new,” but always informed by a deep and complex past. In other words, the news report is the quickest way I know to convey the fundamental premise of historical research and analysis. An added bonus is that, in an era of “fake news,” we talk seriously as a group about what makes news “real,” how to recognize it, and where to find it.

Isabel (Itsie) Hull, the John Stambaugh Professor of History, will be retiring from Cornell on December 31, 2018 after a most distinguished career in which she authored four groundbreaking studies, three of which won major prizes from various academic organizations. Her most recent book, A Scrap of Paper: Breaking and Making International Law in the First World War (2014), won a Certificate of Merit from the American Society of International Law. Her 2004 book, Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany, was awarded a number of prizes, including the DAAD German Studies Association book prize and the Phi Beta Kappa Society Ralph Waldo Emerson Award, while her book, Sexuality, State and Civil Society, 1700-1815, was awarded the American Historical Association’s Leo Gershoy Award. As indicated by the titles of her books, Itsie’s interests have focused on German history, politics, sexuality, war and international law. Besides her outstanding scholarship, Itsie has been an award-winning teacher (1988) and a generous and caring contributor to the Department, College, University, and the larger historical profession. She has served as Chair (1994-96, 1997-01) and Acting Chair (2012-13) of the History Department, as well as the department’s Director of Undergraduate Studies, while also serving on numerous college, university, and professional committees and boards. In retirement, Itsie is looking forward to having more time to enjoy the outdoors while pursuing her passion for mycology, the study of mushrooms. We wish you much joy in retirement, Itsie.
Undergraduate News:
Announcing Honors Students and Award Recipients among our May graduates, Class of 2018

2018 Honors
Dara Cancher: Magna Cum Laude
Anna Canning: Summa Cum Laude
Niall Chithelen: Summa Cum Laude
Amanda Coate: Magna Cum Laude
Christopher Feely: Cum Laude
Eric Noh: Cum Laude
Ethan Skelskie: Magna Cum Laude
Hui Tong: Magna Cum Laude

2018 Department of History Student Awards:
Chalmers, Messenger (Undergraduate)
Awarded to an undergraduate with the thesis giving evidence of the best research and most fruitful thought in the field of human progress and the evolution of civilization during some period in human history or during human history. Two awards given in 2018.
Anna Canning and Niall Chithelen

DeKiewiet, Cornelis W.
Awarded to two/three outstanding history majors (juniors) who have demonstrated unusual promise and excellence in the field.
Ann Balzer, Ephraim Gau, and Kathryn Miller

Duniway, Clyde A. (Book Prize)
Awarded to one student, who is deemed to be the best history/government student in the College of Arts and Sciences graduating with the respective majors.
Niall Chithelen

Lang, Bernard and Fannie
Awarded for best senior honors thesis in US History or American Studies.
Anastasia Gottschalk-Fielding (AMST)

Litchfield, Anne Macintyre
Awarded to two outstanding woman seniors majoring in history.
Dara Cancher and Beatrice Lee

Lustig, George S.
Awarded to the outstanding senior who intends to continue the study of history at the graduate level.
Amanda Coate

West, Bernard E.
Awarded competitively to the most promising undergraduate research scholar specializing in American history.
Anna Canning and Anastasia Gottschalk-Fielding

Graduate Students
Job Placement/Awards Information 2017-18

Tenure-track Positions
Catherine Biba – Hastings College
Ryan Edwards – School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC)
Mattias Fibiger – Harvard Business School

Other Academic Positions
Joseph Giacomelli – 3 yr position at NYU-Shanghai
Tim Sorg – 3yr Post-Doc at Stanford University

Fellowships/Awards
Ai Baba – R.J. Smith Fellowship, East Asia Program
Nathaniel Boiling – Luigi Einaudi Fellowship from Cornell Institute of European Studies
Nicholas Bujalski – School of Criticism and Theory Tuition Fellowship
Benedetta Carnaghi – Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies Fellowship
Joshua Savala – Ford Completion Fellowship
Kelsey Utne – SSRC/IDRF Research Fellowship
Alex-Thai Vo – Mellon/ACLS Fellowship

Messenger-Chalmers PhD Dissertation Award
Joseph Giacomelli (Advisor: Aaron Sachs) – Thesis title: “Uncertain Climes: Debating Climate Change in Gilded-Age America”

Tyler, Moses Coit
est. 1936 by William Austen in his honor) Awarded for the best essay by a graduate or undergraduate student in the fields of American History, literature, or folklore.

Gabriella Friedman (4th year Ph.D. student in English) for “The Tunnel That No One Had Made’: Colson Whitehead’s Infrastructural Speculation”

Katherine Thorsteinson (4th year Ph.D. student in English) for “Unsettling the Grounds of European-Indigenous Contact: Givenness, Forgetfulness, and Canadian Prairie Literature”

Congratulations to all graduates!!
This year, once again, the Cornell Historical Society played a huge role in building the intellectual community of the History Department. All the students, faculty, and staff benefit from the Society’s enthusiasm and initiative. Kudos and huge thanks to the leadership team: Ephraim Gau (President), Lukasz Rzycki (Vice President), Claire Walton (Secretary and Social Chair), and Anna Canning (Treasurer and Director of the History Advising Program), plus the two Editors-in-Chief of the Society’s signature publication, Ezra’s Archives, Marie Ceske and Becky Cardinali.

This is the eighth year of Ezra’s Archives, and the articles are as impressive as ever, demonstrating once again the ways in which college students can intervene in professional debates and make contributions to the existing literature. Students from Stanford, Johns Hopkins, the University of Chicago, and Northwestern offered papers on L. Frank Baum’s career as a window dresser; the American colonial project in Hawai’i; questions of orthodoxy in medieval Christianity; baseball as a potentially revolutionary pastime; and “residential pruning” in a California town known as the “Mexican Beverly Hills.” I was delighted to note that the author of the baseball article is the son of one of my graduate mentors. (I, of course, had no role in the selection of the articles; the editors of Ezra’s Archives operate entirely independently, to their great credit.) Marie and Becky did a fantastic job with the issue, and they had a committed staff working with them, including Managing Editor Kyra Patton, Head Copy Editor Lukasz Rzycki, Layout Editor Liza Mansbach, and PR Representative Lauren Goldstein, plus five Senior Editors, six Copy Editors, and a whopping 30 Staff Editors. Great work, everyone!

The annual publication of Ezra’s Archives represents a huge amount of labor, but that doesn’t prevent the Historical Society from sponsoring numerous other events and activities throughout the school year. The History Advisor Program is going strong, connecting experienced students with first-year and transfer students who have expressed an interest in the History major. This year, the Program was managed by Anna Canning, a graduating senior who also wrote a fantastic Honors thesis. Another deeply committed graduating senior, Vice President Lukasz Rzycki, in addition to leading the copy editing team for Ezra’s Archives, served as the point person for CHS’s second annual “Making History Accessible” Lecture. At the well-attended October talk, Lukasz introduced this year’s featured speaker, Professor Nathan Connolly of Johns Hopkins, whose lecture was entitled “What’s Yours Is Mine: Family and Property in an Age of Land Grabbing.” It was an unusual and compelling presentation, reflecting deep research in social and economic history. But it was also quite personal, in the end, since the central figures in the talk turned out to be members of Connolly’s family. Afterwards, several CHS members attended a dinner/conversation with Connolly at Becker House, and as we were wrapping up Connolly made a point of telling me how impressed he was with the group’s level of engagement and line of questioning.

The Historical Society also continued its tradition of inviting Cornell’s own history professors to dinner. This year, the group hosted Mary Beth Norton, Mostafa Minawi, and Itsie Hull. Having attended two of those three events, I can attest that a little pizza and wine and a few timely questions can sometimes go a long way in spurring professors to reveal secrets of the profession. Occasionally, at these dinners, one might even learn about aspects of the Cornell History Department’s deep, dark past…. CHS also started a new tradition this year, hosting screenings of recent movies (like The Post and Darkest Hour) that the group’s members expressed (a purely intellectual) interest in seeing. Congratulations to the whole organization, and especially to the group’s graduating seniors. The History Department is grateful for all that you contribute!
The Department of History is working to connect both our graduate and undergraduate students to career options outside the academy. A new initiative chaired this year by Professor Oren Falk is organizing a list of professional opportunities and creating a webpage to catalogue them. An excellent example, spearheaded by the American Historical Association, is Imagine Ph.D. The webpage link is currently under our Academics tab and we hope that you will visit it as we continue to expand the list.

The undergraduate program is also continuing with its alumni outreach to inspire students to apply their history skill set across many industries. This year, Associate Chair, Paul Friedland organized a joint program with the College of Arts and Sciences, and with the support of the Becker Alumni Fund, brought History Alum Jordan Fabian to speak to undergraduates about What You Can Do with a History Major? Fabian is currently a White House correspondent for The Hill newspaper. An article by the College is on our website if you would like to learn more about Jordan’s work and the impact his major had on that work. Our Alumni column Speaking Words of Wisdom from 2016, which is posted on our website, serves as a point of inspiration for History majors as they examine the myriad of careers that alums pursue after Cornell. We will be updating our Alumni page this summer, so again, check our website.

We encourage students to like our Facebook Page and follow us on Twitter for up to the minute broadcasts of postings.

The Harold Seymour Lecture in Sports History, made possible through a generous grant by George Kirsch, was chaired by Professor Lawrence Glickman, Stephen and Evalyn Milman Professor in American Studies. Amy Bass gave the lecture titled: “Listen to Athletes for a Change: Race, Politics, and Sports.” This engaging title attracted many people to hear Bass, a professor of history at the College of New Rochelle, New York and author of the recent book, One Goal: A Coach, a Team and the Game That Brought a Divided Town Together, about Somali immigrants, soccer and a Maine community.
he department faculty continued their impressive record of major publications this academic year (2017-18). Visit our website to learn more about faculty publications and to inspire your summer reading. Books published by the faculty this year include:

Judith Byfield (co-editor), *Global Africa: Into the Twenty-First Century*
Professor Judi Byfield co-edited this new volume of essays with Dorothy Hodgson. Published by University of California Press, this volume documents the significant global connections, circulations and contributions that African people, ideas, and goods have made throughout the world—from the United States and South Asia to Latin America, Europe, and elsewhere.

This book of texts presents and situates a collection of extracts from both widely known texts, by such figures as Copernicus, Newton, and Lavoisier, and lesser known but significant items, all chosen to highlight the emerging technical preoccupations of the early modern period. The selection of extracts highlights the emerging technical preoccupations of this period, while the accompanying introductions and annotations make these occasionally complex works accessible to students and non-specialists.

Maria Cristina Garcia, *The Refugee Challenge in Post-Cold War America*
This work chronicles the struggles of Russian refuseniks, Chinese dissidents, Rwandans fleecing genocide, as well as Haitian and Cuban boat people among those seeking sanctuary from persecution. Her meticulous research and incisive analysis illuminates the confusions and inadequacies of United States refugee policy under Republican and Democratic presidents alike.

Durba Ghosh, *Gentlemanly Terrorists: Political Violence and the Colonial State*
This book focuses on an underground radical political movement in early and mid-twentieth century India and the ways in which political violence against the British colonial state became an important, but historically underemphasized, form of protest. While Gandhi’s nonviolent protest movements are often seen to be the hallmark of anticolonial protest, the book follows how the colonial state invested in security and emergency legislation to contain what they felt was an active terrorist threat.

Sandra E. Greene, *Slave Owners of West Africa: Decision Making in the Age of Abolition*
This groundbreaking book explores the lives of three prominent West African slave owners during the age of abolition. These first-published biographies reveal personal and political accomplishments and concerns, economic interests, religious beliefs, and responses to colonial rule in an attempt to understand why the subjects reacted to the demise of slavery as they did. Greene emphasizes the notion that the decisions made by these individuals were deeply influenced by their personalities, desires to protect their economic and social status, and their insecurities and sympathies for wives, friends, and other associates.

Sandra E. Greene (co-editor), *African Slaves, African Masters: Politics, Memories, Social Life*
Edited by Alice Bellagamba, Sandra Greene & Martin Klein. The essays in this volume offer biographical sketches of both masters and slaves to analyze the consequences of decolonization and democratization on former master-slave relations. They examine the history and anthropology of specific places and cultural practices, memories, and silences for what they reveal about contemporary legacies. These essays illuminate slavery as an integral part of Africa’s past and powerful emotions elicited among Africans to this day.

CHAIR’S LETTER CONTINUED

to the department and enriched our course offerings. As they conclude their time with us, we wish - Susana Romero (Latin American History), Joe Giacomelli (U.S. Environmental History), Ian Merkel (European and Brazilian Intellectual History), and Noam Maggor (U. S. Economic History)- all the best as they move on to other positions and opportunities.

At the same time, we are pleased to welcome back for a second year, Marysia Jonsson (Early Modern European History) and Adrienne Johnson (U.S. History) while we look forward to welcoming two new post-doctoral fellows, Nel de Mûelenaere and Mackenzie Cooley. We also welcome this year Professor Victor Pickard who will be in residence with us during the Fall 2018 semester. A special congratulations to Adrienne whose book, *Diet and the Disease of Civilization*, was published this year.

There is much good news to report about our Department faculty. We are especially pleased to congratulate Professors Ernesto Bassi (pre-modern Latin American and Caribbean History), Mostafa Minawi (Modern Middle East History), and Julilly Kohler-Hausmann (Modern U.S. History) on having received the enthusiastic endorsement for tenure from the History Department and the Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences. We fully anticipate these endorsements to be positively received by the Provost and the Board of Trustees. Congratulations as well to Durba Ghosh, whose promotion to Full professor was approved by the Provost and was effective January 1, 2018.

Our faculty also received a number of distinguished external fellowships, prizes, and honors this year. Julilly-Kohler Hausmann’s book, *Getting Tough: Welfare and Imprisonment in 1970s America*, was picked as
one of CHOICE’s Outstanding 2017 Academic Titles. It also won an Honorable mention for the Frederick Turner Award from the Organization of American Historians. Ernesto Bassi’s book, An Aqueous Territory: Sailor Geographies and New Granada’s Trans-imperial Greater Caribbean World, was awarded an Honorable mention by the 2018 Bryce Wood Award Committee of the Latin American Studies Association. Paul Friedland won a prestigious fellowship from the Guggenheim Foundation for his new book project, A World without Race: The Dream of a Universal Republic in the Revolutionary French Caribbean, 1794-1802; Aaron Sachs received a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) to work on his new book project, Melville and Mumford; or, The Art of Rediscovery in Traumatic Times; and Edward Baptist received major grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to expand and complete the Freedom on the Move database/website.

With regard to our undergraduate curriculum, department faculty began a long overdue review of the requirements for the History major. Not having assessed these requirements in over 30 years, we felt it was time to determine if the current expectations were still appropriate for our 21st century students. The conversations have been both thoughtful and stimulating. We will resume this review in the new academic year (2018-19).

While teaching and research constitute the primary activities of our faculty, the department would not be able to function well without the administrative services that our faculty provide. Among the faculty in leading roles this past year was Jon Parmenter, Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS). We thank Claudia Verhoeven for her service as Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) this past year. She will be continuing in this role in the Spring of 2019, with Derek Chang stepping into this role for the Fall of 2018. Paul Friedland completes his second year as Associate Chair, and will be passing his baton to Maria Cristina Garcia. Thank you all for your selfless and outstanding service.

It goes without saying that neither I nor any of the other faculty who serve in administrative roles in the Department would have been able to successfully complete our tasks this past academic year without our extraordinary support staff. Kay Stickane and Michael Williamson have served as our Administrative Managers while Katie Kristof and Georgiana Saroka have served as our Accounts Coordinators and the Chair’s Administrative Assistants. Barb Donnell is our Graduate Coordinator while Judy Yonkin serves as our Undergraduate Coordinator and Claire Perez is our Communications Assistant. We thank them for their invaluable service.

Finally, the support we have received from our alumni has been especially important. Alumni contributions made possible two special events this year. In addition, alumni funds made possible graduate and undergraduate student research at home and abroad as well as many other lectures, seminars, and programs for individual classes. We thank all of you.

As this academic year comes to a close, we very much hope that some of our former students will make it to Ithaca this year and we look forward to seeing you personally. In the meantime, let me thank all of you for your continued interest in and generosity toward the department and its students.

Sincerely,

Sandra Elaine Greene

Sandra E. Greene
Chair, Department of History
Stephen ’59 and Madeline ’60 Anbinder Professor of African History