Letter from the Chair

Elizabeth V. Faue

What Can Be Found in a Lost Year? A Historian Reflects on Recovering Timeless Time

In the past year, people have been through the endurance test of this once-in-a-century pandemic. We continue to live under restrictive public health measures, working remotely, meeting online, and social-distancing. Coupled with economic uncertainty and political unrest, the crisis has given historians a challenge. How are we to make sense of it all?

We are, after all, living in a time of timelessness. Devastating losses of lives, opportunities, and traditions have created a sense of being unmoored from time’s anchors—the rituals of baptisms and naming ceremonies, graduations, engagements, weddings, and memorials. Despite recitations of cases, hospitalizations, deaths, and vaccinations, we experienced this year as long stretches of unmarked time. Statistics do not make good mileposts.

Still, many observers have been keeping track for us. They note stunning achievements but also mundane acts in news reports, diary entries, and the products of our craft. Witness historian Heather Cox Richardson’s Letters from an American, distributed through social media, or, at WSU, the Pandemic Perspectives website created by historian Marsha Richmond with WSU faculty and students, and Sylvia Taschka’s poetry at the Humanities Center Conference on Creative Responses to the Pandemic.

Beyond the pandemic, the widespread protest over racial injustice, the invasive campaign to overturn election results, the historic inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris, and the continuing struggle over voting rights and the role of government have reinforced the sense that we are living in times made for historians and demanding the most of us in documenting and interpreting the past.

May I humbly suggest—Come join us!
For my book, I tried to balance primary sources created by Indigenous peoples with sources created about them by Euro-Americans. I used French and British records of political and economic interactions with Indigenous nations (there are thousands of pages of these records) and a smaller number of tribal histories. One source that was important for my work was a 1701 peace agreement signed in Montreal by the French, Indigenous nations of the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley, and the Haudenosaunee. French imperial officials marked this document with their signatures while Indigenous representatives signed with images depicting their clan totems. One’s clan (also known as nindoodem in Anishinaabowin – the language used then and today by Anishinaabes (Odawa, Ojibwe and Potowatomi) nations) was named for an animal progenitor (crane, bear, wolf, otter, etc.). I was able to link an emissary of the crane band of the Myaamia nation (called Miami in European records) to events in Montreal in 1701 and to Myaamia men and women living at Detroit and the Myaamia homelands (present-day Indiana). It was just one of the crucial connections I made using both Euro-American and Indigenous records.
Writing Indigenous Histories: Two Great Lakes Stories

Matt Hoerauf, Brandon Dean

Matt Hoerauf

In 1992, a boy in the Oak Park Public Library complained he did not want to read about Michigan history, instead wanting to read the history of the West, filled with cowboys, Indians, and adventure. That young boy was me. Since that time, I’ve been glad to grow in my appreciation of the rich Indigenous history of the Great Lakes region. Detroit and Windsor represent an old crossing point with deep cultural roots. Oral histories on both sides of the Detroit river along with rich archives at the Detroit Public Library and Fort Malden help tell their story.

They refute a common mythology of the disappearance of Indigenous people. Exposing and exploring this mythology is not only important to Indigenous people and scholars. It also asks larger questions of Canada and the United States treatment of disenfranchised peoples, and the United States history and present of empire building.

Brandon Dean

Studying Indigenous history in the Great Lakes region has allowed me to understand the past in ways that transcend the familiar narrative of European occupation and colonization.

If we take time to investigate, we quickly find that the region’s Indigenous past is all around us. Once we have expanded our perspective to include Indigenous history, our perception of the entire Great Lakes region can transform. Geography itself takes on new meanings that bear witness to the region’s Indigenous past and present. These meanings are multiple, often-contested, and yet undeniably powerful. The very act of visiting, supporting, and spreading the word about Indigenous history sites guarantees that the deep history of the Great Lakes will not remain “hidden” from the region’s non-Indigenous residents and visitors. As historians, our job is to analyze and interpret the past, but this process first begins with the important step of recognizing and remembering that past.
History Making during the Pandemic

Kidada Williams

The coronavirus pandemic has thrown a wrench into historical research, especially for our graduate students, who are staring down the unavoidable realities of the pandemic and the academic jobs crisis. For current students, whose future livelihoods are more uncertain than ever before, these are undoubtedly scary times.

One part of Wayne State’s mission is being "unafraid to try new things and learning" from results. I see that moving through fear and uncertainty in our students’ broadening their skill sets and cultivating new talents to weather these storms and find impactful, fulfilling careers on the other side. The injustices of our times command our attention and also seem to be fueling our students’ desire to think about and with various public audiences to address them. Much of this involves experimenting with new modes of communicating their academic knowledge to wider audiences, which requires more work than a traditional paper to an audience of one (or twenty). But students report finding the new insight and skills acquired to be just as, if not more, fulfilling.

Individual and institutional fear of change or experimentation can diminish celebration or recognition of professional courage and innovation so I’m making a point to do it here. I see the bold work our students are doing and want you to see it, too.

I saw it first hand in my African Americans, History and Memory seminar where students grappled with questions about the intersections of race, rights, memory and trauma in the United States. Students made projects representing a clash of history and memory or creating new ways of understanding or remembering the past, several of which are featured below. Many said these would not be their last creations. I look forward to seeing their work.
For the last few months, I have been working part-time at the Holocaust Memorial Center in their Education Department. Although I have been a volunteer docent for three years, I’ve been brought on in this new role to help facilitate what the museum is calling “Virtual Museum Experiences.” While student groups are not able to come to our Center for in-person tours, we are offering VMEs as an option to use HMC artifacts from our collection to facilitate an interactive exploration and discussion with students during the pandemic. In my new role, I create these presentations based on key themes or events during the Holocaust and then facilitate them virtually to classrooms all over the state. It has truly been a wonderful experience!

I had finished both my internships but had no job lined up.

I applied from Maine to California. I applied for fellowships, starting positions, jobs not related to my field, anything I could remotely develop a resume and cover letter for. I even got a few interviews, some at impressive institutions. I even reached out to a headhunting company, but nothing stuck. It was stressful, time consuming, and emotionally draining. Luckily, I got some data entry work for a non-profit and was connected with a documentary project that needed a database built for their research. Meanwhile, I also worked for a food delivery service, took on a part time retail job, taught karate, and started teaching swim lessons. I vowed to pause my search at the end of the summer and wait until the new year.

This is when I was offered my current position as a school librarian. My current employers found my resume on a database which I had long forgotten about. It wasn’t magic, it was happenstance combined with hard work and some foresight in putting myself out there in ways I had not always considered that led to my current job. In the grand scheme of things, 5 months looking for a job isn’t that long, especially during a pandemic when so many people were searching for work. In fact, I’m grateful I didn’t just walk into a job because while searching I gained a lot of skills and had the opportunity to work on some interesting projects by being up front with people about the fact that I was looking for work and willing to work hard.

I graduated with my MLIS and Archival Certificate in the spring of 2020 as the pandemic hit.
Grad Students Unearting Port Huron’s Black History

Rochelle Danquah, Kayla Wendt

The African American community in Port Huron, Michigan, in collaboration with the Port Huron Museums (PHM), is working to install a permanent exhibition and a series of education programs at the Carnegie Center that tell the story of African American life, history, and cultural contributions to the city.

Doctoral student Rochelle E. Danquah and MAPH student Kayla Wendt are a part of the team to develop the Port Huron Black History Project (BHP) in conjunction with the African American Community Committee, which provides guidance, support, and program development for the BHP. Kayla, the museum’s interim education manager, is a member of the museum’s curatorial team, and Rochelle, a native of Port Huron, is a member of the Community Committee, and has presented lectures at the Detroit Historical Museum (2019), University of Windsor (2019), Detroit Public Library (2008), and Port Huron Museum (2007) on Black Americans in Port Huron in the nineteenth century.

The BHP and the PHM projects include the installation of a permanent exhibition, oral histories, and the collection of objects and materials. Periodically, the permanent exhibit will rotate objects and materials, so visitors can engage and enjoy diverse storylines.

The project proposal includes relocating the James R. Leonard Community Center Memorial Wall to the museum, which is currently on display at the Leonard Community Center. The wall recognizes the accomplishments of prominent African Americans in the community. The Community Committee also intends to highlight Port Huron’s Black neighborhoods, businesses, churches, and African Americans’ contributions to education, sciences, arts, and humanities. We see the Black History Project as a true testament to the power of how the African American Community Committee and the Port Huron Museum become important stewards to collecting, preserving, and telling the story of the Black presence in the Blue Water area. We hope you check it out.
Nursing Clio. Hart also won the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching.


Karen Marrero’s book, *Detroit's Hidden Channels*, was re-published by the University of Manitoba Press. She won a *College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Excellence in Teaching Award* and *Board of Governors Faculty Recognition Award* for her book and was profiled by the *American Historical Association* in their member spotlight.

Tracy Neumann wrote "Incorporating Labor History in a public history curriculum" for the *National Council of Public History*.

Alumni News

Caitlyn Perry Dial, an MA alumni, was interviewed as part of the documentary EASTLAND: Chicago’s Deadliest Day which received two Midwest Emmy Awards for Best Historical Documentary and Best Original Music & Sound Design.

Beth Fowler (PhD 2014), current Senior Lecturer in Wayne State's Irvin D. Reid Honors College, won a General Education Teaching Award.

Christopher Wilson (MA History 2007), now Director of Experience Design at the National Museum of American History, is the recipient of Wayne State's 2021 Distinguished Alumni Award.


Sylvia Taschka won a COVID-19 grant from the Humanities Center for her project entitled “Pandemic Poetry.” She will write a cycle of poems loosely based on the ten biblical plagues.

Kidada Williams published "Writing Victims' Personhood and People into the History of Lynching" in the Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. She is hosting "Seizing Freedom," a new popular podcast docudrama on African Americans during the Civil War Era by VPM and Witness Docs. You can listen anywhere you get podcasts and access other materials by visiting seizingfreedom.com.

The Department proudly recognizes our students' achievements

Graduate Students

Degree Completions

Matt Hoerauf, MA. "Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa: Myths, Memories, and Messages for Present Times."
In 2019 I was chosen as a Gilder Lehrman History Scholar and flown out for a life-changing week-long trip in New York City.

I had focused my studies in civil rights and current events had inspired me to pursue a career in civil rights law. I realized I wanted to partake in the history I had been studying so passionately. Before I knew it, I was Cambridge-bound for an incredible summer at Trials, a Harvard pre-law summer program. This program, along with months of studying for the LSAT and utilizing the analytical and critical-thinking skills I had gained as a historian, helped me gain acceptance to my dream school: New York University School of Law.

While I am so excited to embark on my next journey, it genuinely hurts to leave. I loved every second of my journey as a history major, but I am most saddened by the greatest achievement I leave behind: History Club, which I co-founded in 2017. This year, having served as the singular club president for the first time, I was especially emotionally involved. We offered tutoring services, but mainly enjoyed sharing captivating historical conversation. I made sure to pass on as many words of wisdom to my fellow history nerds as I could.

Some noteworthy advice for current/future students: Stop doubting yourself. You’ve got this. Apply for everything! As Dr. Williams told me, "the worst they can do is say 'No' but you have to give them a chance to say 'Yes!'"

And to fellow children of immigrants: stop trying to separate your passions and your career, they can be one and the same.
**News & Notes**

**2021 Graduate Awards**

*The department had our second virtual awards ceremony in place of our spring reception. For the complete listing, including photos and project titles, find us on the social medias at: HistoryatWayne.*

**Merit Awards**

**Joe L. Norris Endowed Award**

Brandon Dean, for his paper titled “Believing They May Wish Some of Their Children Hereafter Educated’: The Treaty of Fort Meigs and the Origins of the Catholepistemiad”

**Richard D. Miles Endowed Award**

Tom Yaari, for his paper titled “The Mizrahi ‘Memory Boom’: The Collective Memory of the Exodus of Jews from Arab and Muslim Lands”

**Michael C. Simo Annual Scholarship in History**

Sean O’Brien, for his paper titled “Jack Kirby: How Jewish Americans Punched Back”

**Research Awards**

**Dr. Gerald Dreslinski Research Award**

Brandon Dean will conduct research on 18th and 19th c. Algonquin diplomacy at the Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archaeology in Bloomington, IN.

**Michael D. Patterson Memorial Award**

Christian Bozeman, to conduct research on *The Messenger and the Harlem Renaissance* at the New York Public Library and Schomburg Center for Research on Black Culture.

**Charles F. Otis & Dr. Jeffrey L. Reider Scholarship in the History of Gender & Sexuality**

Allie Penn will create a StoryMap from her research on the women of the 1913-1914 Keweenaw Copper Strike.

**Kruman-Lion Endowed History Graduate Student Award**

Jamie McQuaid will conduct research on the queer history of autoworkers at the Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, the Bentley Historical Library, and with the Burton Historical Collection.

Katie Parks will conduct research on Catholic women’s responses to Nazi family planning policy at the Archive of the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising and the State Library of Bavaria.

**Alfred H. Kelly Memorial Research Award**

Branden McEuen will conduct research on eugenics at the Rockefeller Archives Center.

**Service Awards**

Antoine Durocher and Elizabeth Chevalier Award

William Wall-Winkel

**Dr. Louis Jones HGSA Award**

James McQuaid

Rae Manela
News & Notes

2021 Undergraduate Awards

Because of Covid-19, the department had our second virtual awards ceremony in place of our spring reception. For the complete listing, including photos and project titles, find us on the social medias at: HistoryatWayne.

The Place Gateway Award:
Zarin Farook
Audrey Cho

The Rolf and Jennie Johannesen Endowed Memorial Award:
Nicholas Rhein

The Faculty Undergraduate History Award:
Kaitlyn Burke

Marlene J. Mayo Endowed Support Fund:
Rebecca Phoenix

Phi Alpha Theta Inductees:
Olivia Barron
Alexandra Batton
Mya Berger
Melissa Bolton
Aubrey Carr
Miranda Cottone
Duncan Enright
Arik Fritz
Maxx Harrington
Robert Henderson
Luke Hyde
Joseph Mchahwar
Trevor Mrowczynski
Alexandria Olson
Dale Robb
Emily Shelton
I miss the archives. I know we have much bigger fish to fry. Covid variants are prolonging and deepening the crisis. We're in the midst of yet another surge and racing toward 600,000 souls from the U.S. Lives remain turned upside down and inside out as we hit our individual and collective pandemic walls. I know this.

Still, I miss the archives, and being in a community of archives-based scholars, I doubt I'm alone. This isn't just busyism or pandemic boredom, although we are, in fact, quite busy, and bored, but many of us, especially primary caregivers to kids, siblings, and parents, are downright exhausted. And, it's not just about the delayed completion of projects. Rather it is our very work as historians--with the hidden secrets, puzzle pieces, and testimonies in search of adequate witnesses that enable us to bring history to life and light.

Archivists and librarians--our collaborative partners--have been amazing at making materials available but that's no substitute for the tactile and sensory sparks of being physically present in manuscript collections.

In September, I slipped into the Law Library to gather data for my research on the intractability of rape in Detroit. I moved fast, using the Scannable app (recommended by my HIS 3000 students), scanning everything in about an hour. It wasn’t long enough or all I needed, but it broke the fever. But now it's back. We’re fortunate to have a new presidential administration and a miraculous vaccine, but the rollout has been messy. Vaccine hesitation, refusal, and breakthrough are likely to prolong the crisis, meaning we have no idea when we'll be able to return to the archives for good, without masks. So the missing continues.

And, I miss our students. But giving them a glow up here is rewarding. If you want to do the same or have a story to tell, let me know. The rules haven’t changed--don’t be boring, and yes, you must include images.

If you’re Making a Gift to the Department, we’re asking that you take one additional step to ensure your gift reaches us: please visit https://clas.wayne.edu/history/make-a-difference and Choose History!