



The University of Montana held classes outdoors during the influenza epidemic of 1918.

The World As Seen From Mount Sentinel

The UM History Newsletter — Fall-Winter 2017

Chair's Update ... 2

Celebrating the Career of Harry Fritz ... 2

UM History Senior Brings the 1830s To Life ... 3

Two New Faculty ... 4

Capitalism and Democracy in U.S. History ... 5

9th Annual Hampton Lecture ... 6

Alumni Report: Witnessing History ... 6

2017 Grad Cohort ... 7

Research and Awards ... 8

Chair's Update

In the 1830s, Count Aleksandr Benckendorff, spymaster and councilor to Tsar Nicholas I, instructed Russian university professors to present their nation's history to young (male) students in unambiguously positive terms: "Russia's past was admirable, its present is more than magnificent, and its future lies beyond anything the boldest mind can imagine."

The purpose of studying the nation's history was not to ask hard questions, but to inspire loyalty to the flag and throne.

Indeed, the logic of empire saw higher education as a means to an overtly political end: the molding



of obedient minds and the forging of dutiful subjects. To prevent impressionable youth from succumbing to the temptations of free thought, state officials subjected humanities departments across the Russian empire to a ruthless program of prioritization and alignment that revamped the university catalog, purged "dangerous" subjects from the curriculum, and stressed the acquisition of practical skills over the cultivation of critical analysis and interpretation. Fortunately, such days are long behind us.

Though the University of Montana is undeniably in a state of transition, it is no Nikolaevan hyperbole to say that the History Department endures and thrives.

We're proud to report that two History professors received singular recognition this past year for their record of outstanding teaching and scholarship: Richard Drake was named the inaugural Lucile Speer Research Professor of History and Politics; and Anya Jabour was appointed Regents Professor, the highest distinction in the Montana University System.

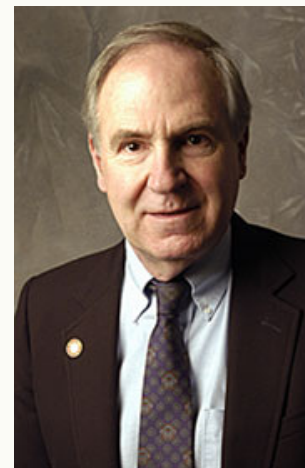
We're delighted also to welcome two new faculty to the department – Professors Claire Arcenas and Eric Schluessel – and bid a warm and heartfelt thanks to Emeritus Professor Harry Fritz, who retired (again) this spring after a half century of inspired service to the University of Montana.

In the pages that follow, you will find good news. You will hear from an alumna who took her degree far off the Montana map; from a student who educates the public; from young researchers peering into the fissures of American history; and from faculty whose work challenges and celebrates the past.

This department flourishes because of its community – not only our students and faculty, but our alumni and friends who believe in our mission. We are proud of our successes, and we are grateful for your support. As always, we're very interested in hearing from you, so please pass along any updates or events that we can include in our newsletter. Best wishes for a successful year.

Robert H. Greene is Associate Professor of History and Chair of the Department of History. His specialties include religion in the Russian Empire and Soviet Union.

Celebrating the Career of Harry Fritz



40 years wasn't enough, so he went for 50. Professor Harry Fritz officially retired ten years ago, but he all but refused to leave the

classroom. For the past decade he's continued to teach outrageously popular undergraduate courses on the American Civil War and American Military History as well as a spate of room-filling MOLLI courses through UM's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Now he tells us that he's putting the lecture notes down for good. We'll see.

In April, dozens of friends and colleagues gathered in Missoula to honor Harry's 50 years of excellence in teaching, research, and service at UM. And in October, we celebrated when Harry received UM's Distinguished Alumni Award. We're also excited to announce that the Harry Fritz Fund for Student Achievement, which supports student scholarship, has reached its initial fundraising goal. Thanks to all who have contributed!

To join in honoring Harry, please send a check payable to "UM Foundation – Fritz Fund" to Prof. Kyle G. Volk, UM Department of History, 32 Campus Drive, Missoula, MT 59812.

Hands-On History

UM History Senior Brings the 1830s to Life



At OSV's Fourth of July parade

This summer, I had the opportunity to work as an intern at Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts. OSV is a living history museum dedicated to inspiring the public while educating about rural New England life from the 1790s to the 1830s. The farms, households, gardens, and shops are always alive with some kind of activity – costumed historians display the trades that would have been common in rural New England.

I worked as an interpreter and spent the summer gardening, dyeing wool, sewing, knitting, cooking over a hearth, making butter and cheese, and teaching in the school, all while wearing 1830s reproduction clothing. It was a unique, hands-on way to experience and teach history. I gained a great deal of practice engaging with the public but also now have a number of more obscure skills to thank OSV for, like milking cows by hand and cleaning out a nineteenth-century root cellar.

Each day working in the village brought a new experience and piece of the past to explore, whether it was carrying pitchers of switchel (a drink made with vinegar, molasses, and ginger – essentially the Gatorade of the 1830s) to the tired farmers cutting hay, or speaking with a visitor from Afghanistan who saw many parallels between the lifestyle of her childhood and the one depicted in the village.

Working in the village taught me that any hands-on activity – like dyeing or managing a hearth – is an art, just as much as engaging with the public is. I went to OSV to gain more experience conversing with visitors, since I hope to make a career in public history. The dual nature of work in the village taught me that life at a living history museum can be hectic, but I am still up for the challenge of the physical and mental work involved with bringing the past to life for the public.

I also found the village caused me to think about public history and our

relationship to the past in a way I had not before. I learned firsthand how an average New England farmer could have found ways to live frugally. Seeing one historical way of life being practiced caused me to question: where can some of this historical wisdom cross over to improve our daily lives? Could it play a part in addressing problems like climate change?

I wore a number of tyres, or aprons, in the village this summer that had a dozen or so patches all over them, yet they still did their job of keeping my gowns clean. I also served drinks like lemonade and shrub from glass pitchers whose handles were broken off but refitted with tin ones. From little details like these I got the impression that nineteenth-century New Englanders must have been more inclined than we are to fix or repurpose things rather than throw them out. *(continued on page 3)*



UM History Senior Ellen Watterson dyes yarn at OSV

Take sewing for example. Sewing and knitting (and to a lesser extent dyeing wool) were common skills among both adults and children, and your average person likely would not have thrown out a piece of clothing if it grew faded or torn. Some families may have known how to revive faded clothing by dyeing it at home, and

"The village caused me to think about public history and our relationship to the past in a way I had not before."

your average person wouldn't throw away a piece of clothing just because it had a hole in it. Even if, say, a gown became too faded or worn out, that garment could be converted into another piece of clothing, like a petticoat, or cut into strips and made into a braided rug. Today, I think we do more throwing away than mending or reusing.

I saw the importance of allowing history to inspire. Seeing how visitors were often inspired by their time in the village helped me realize how important it is in public history to encourage visitors to look for meaningful connections between their own lives and the lives of all our ancestors.

When the woman from Afghanistan visited, we ended up having a long

conversation. I happened to be working in the kitchen of one of the farm households making butter and soft cheese. When this woman saw my friend and I churning butter by hand and warming up the milk for cheese-making with hot coals from a fire, she became very excited and told us of how our work by hand and our cooking methods were similar to how her family lived in Afghanistan. When she saw the kind of broom we

had in the kitchen she also told us of how her mother used to wake up early every morning to sweep the floors of their home. Without public history, would we have made that connection?

Ellen Watterson will graduate from UM History in May 2018.



Prof. Claire Arcenas



Prof. Eric Schluessel

UM History Gains Two New Faculty

History is delighted to welcome two new assistant professors to our community!

Claire Arcenas comes to us from Stanford University's Department of History, where her dissertation asked, "How did John Locke become 'America's philosopher?'" Prof. Arcenas teaches American History 101, where she has swiftly become a student favorite, and is offering creative new courses on digital humanities. Prof. Arcenas has received numerous grants for her research since arriving at UM, including a prestigious award from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Eric Schluessel completed his PhD at Harvard University's program in History and East Asian Languages. His research focuses on the history of modern China and Central Asia. Prof. Schluessel is a joint hire with the Department of Political Science, where he teaches courses in Chinese politics and thought, and he directs the program in East Asian Studies. Prof. Schluessel spent the summer of 2017 conducting field research in Nanjing and Changsha, China, for a project on the social and religious history of demobilized soldiers in the nineteenth century.

Scholarly Synergy

Capitalism and Democracy in U.S. History



Law, Capitalism, and Democracy in U.S. History meets in the seminar room

To what extent did slavery spur the rise of modern American capitalism? When did ordinary Americans first organize to combat the tyranny of the majority? Why did so many Progressive reformers of the early twentieth century advocate eugenics? To what extent was the New Deal a major rupture in the history of American government? If the United States today only contains 5% of the world's population, why does it house 25% of the world's prison population?

These pressing questions and many others have been on the table this past semester in Professor Kyle G. Volk's new graduate course, *Law, Capitalism, and Democracy in U.S. History*. A scholar of democracy and our department's Director of Graduate Studies, Volk says his course reflects an emerging scholarly synergy in the department's graduate program. "When you consider the turbulent political and economic climate of the past decade," Volk explains, "it's no surprise that graduate students are framing research projects that interrogate the history of political and economic power."

More than reacting to current events, Volk notes, UM graduate students are

also joining a much broader renaissance in the histories of the American state and American capitalism that has made an impact throughout the American historical academy. Recent graduate Jonathan Del Buono (MA '16), for example, defended a thesis last spring that exposed the business interests behind U.S. imperialism in Central America during the mid-nineteenth century. PhD candidate Pat O'Connor's dissertation explores the political economy of tobacco in the late nineteenth century while Jared Norwood's dissertation investigates the emergence and operation of

federal vocational rehabilitation policy after World War I.

The newest class of graduate students shows that many are choosing to study at UM precisely because of the History Department's strengths in these fields. Patrick Swart (MA '19) aims to probe the relationship between railroads and agriculture in the American West while Joshua Pretzer (MA '19) looks to understand the links between evangelical Christianity, entrepreneurial capitalism, and modern conservatism. Kylie Landie (MA '19) has begun work on the role of personal health in the New Deal's famed Civilian Conservation Corps. PhD student Liz Barrs is researching the confluence of public and private power that fueled Near East Relief in the 1920s.

Kyle Volk is Associate Professor of History and author of Moral Minorities and the Making of American Democracy (Oxford University Press, 2014)

If you'd like to join the exploration, here's a truncated reading list from Professor Volk's class. Feel free to email him at kyle.volk@umontana.edu for a copy of the full syllabus.

Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (Harcourt Brace, 1955)

Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (Basic, 2014)

Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (Harvard, 2012)

Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Harvard, 2008)

Sam Lebovic, *Free Speech and Unfree News: The Paradox of Press Freedom in America* (Harvard, 2016)

Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Harvard, 2016)

9th Annual Hampton Lecture

In October, the History Department welcomed historian and legal scholar Daniel J. Sharfstein from Vanderbilt University to campus to deliver the ninth annual Hampton Lecture. Sharfstein is the award-winning author of *The Invisible Line: Three American Families and the Secret Journey from Black to White* (2011) and, most recently, of *Thunder in the Mountains: Chief Joseph, Oliver Otis Howard, and the Nez Perce War* (2017). Professor Sharfstein spent three days at UM meeting with

faculty and students and presenting at the Lockridge Workshop, where graduate students had the opportunity to talk with him about his latest book project.

Professor Sharfstein's visit culminated with a public lecture on "The Wilderness of American Power: Understanding Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce War." The lecture was packed with an audience of more than 150 people from the Missoula and UM communities and was followed by a lively question and answer session.

In his remarks, Professor Sharfstein reflected on how debates over the meanings of equality and liberty in the United States are as pressing in 2017 as they were in 1877. We were particularly delighted to have Professor Sharfstein speak on October 5th, which marked the 140th anniversary of the end of the Nez Perce War. We would also like to thank our co-sponsors for the talk, the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail and the Rocky Mountain Museum of Military History.

Witnessing History

We checked in with UM History/Journalism alumna and globetrotting photojournalist **Holly Pickett '02**. Ms. Pickett took her degree to Cairo, Egypt in 2008 and soon found herself embedded with US soldiers in Afghanistan. Later Ms. Pickett photographed events during the Arab Spring of 2011. Her nuanced storytelling and sensitive portrayals of life in conflict zones led her to report on the ongoing refugee crisis. Ms. Pickett is now based in Istanbul and New York City.

What first attracted you to History?

I think my interest in current events drew me to the study of history. I still remember seeing photographs from Afghanistan as a high school student, probably around 1996, after Kabul had fallen to the Taliban, and trying to unravel what I was seeing. I sensed that learning about the past was the key to understanding the present. I also craved intellectual

challenges, and I thought a history major would put my writing and analysis skills to the test, and hopefully improve them. (It did.)

I was inspired in some measure by all of the history classes I took at UM, but I have to credit Professor Mehrdad Kia with really turning on a light to North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia, regions where I would later spend a decade living and working. Professor Kia is a gifted lecturer and storyteller, and he was one of the first people who inspired me to learn more about this part of the world. Those classes and the material I learned turned out to be pretty significant in my life.

How are you using your history skills today?

I am witnessing and documenting history. Photographs, stories, sound, moving image—all are documents that add to the record of how we live today. I am using my writing, researching, and analytical skills to

go below the surface of what I see to try to get at the root of two questions: why is this happening, and what is the broader significance of these events? I first practiced this taking a step back to ask the big questions in my history classes at UM.

As a journalist, I want to get as close to the truth as I possibly can. That's the goal. I am constantly trying to put events and developments into the correct context. My history background helps me do this, because, in my view, that's what true historians are trying to do as well. I don't know if I stand out because of this, but I think it means I'm doing my job correctly.

Is there anything you'd like our community to know?

The study of history is an extremely useful basis for journalism. History students learn not only to write and research, but how to think. I can't recommend it enough!

2017 Grad Cohort

UM History's MA and PhD programs continue to attract talented, hardworking young historians from across the country. Let's welcome our latest crop of scholars!



PhD student **Kayla Fox** studies American history with Prof. Anya Jabour. She is the department's new Moser-McKinney Fellow. Her research interests are at the intersection of race, gender, sexuality, and law.

MA Students



PhD student **Elizabeth Barrs** studies American history with Prof. Kyle Volk and has received the George and Jane Dennison Fellowship in support of her study and research. Her research interests focus on late 19th and early 20th century U.S. political history and the role of private organizations in U.S. international relations.

BA Loyola University of Chicago
MA Eastern Kentucky University



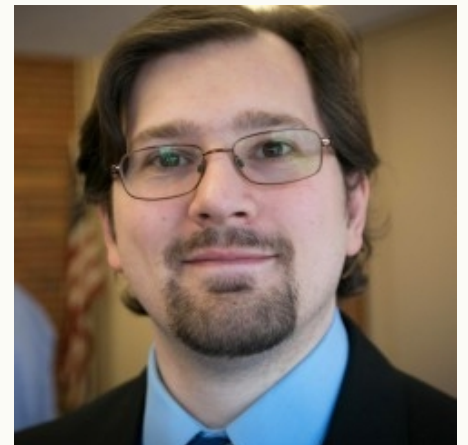
Donovan Douglas, Modern U.S. History; Immigration & Ethnicity, Prof. Mike Mayer



Scott Barnett, Modern U.S. History; Religion & Native Americans, Prof. Tobin Shearer



Patrick Swart, 19th C. U.S. History; Political Economy; U.S. West, Prof. Kyle Volk



Joshua Pretzer, Modern U.S.; Business, Politics, & Religion, Prof. Kyle Volk

Research and Awards

Prof. Tobin Miller Shearer published his new book *Two Weeks Every Summer: Fresh Air Children and the Problem of Race in America* with Cornell University Press. Prof. Shearer conducted years of oral interviews with people who participated in a program that brought African American and Latino urban youth into suburban and rural white households between 1939 and 1979. Prof. Shearer's book reveals how this attempt to give non-white children "fresh air" intersected with the racial tensions and anxieties of this critical period in modern American history.

Prof. **Anya Jabour** was promoted to Regents Professor, the highest promotion a professor can receive in the Montana University System, on November 17, 2016. Prof. Jabour was previously named UM's Distinguished Scholar in 2013 for her numerous books and articles and extensive service to the university, including the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program, the Global Leadership Initiative, and MOLLI.

Prof. **Richard Drake** was named the first Lucile Speer Research Chair in Politics and History on April 24, 2017. This unique position honors Lucile Speer, a celebrated UM librarian and Montana citizen.

Prof. **Claire Arcenas** received a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in support of her research on John Locke in American thought and culture. Prof. Arcenas presented her research at UM's new Humanities Institute in spring 2017.

Prof. **Eric Schluessel** published four articles and book chapters — one in Chinese — on the history of China's Muslim borderland. His co-authored chapter in *A Companion to Chinese History* (Wiley Blackwell) presents a new introduction to the history of law in China.

Prof. **John Eglin** spent the summer of 2017 at Yale University, where he worked on the private papers of James Boswell (1740-1795), a remarkable Scottish traveler and scholar whose complicated personal



Prof. Anya Jabour with the original Regents Professor Paul Lauren

life spanned all of Europe.

Prof. **Kyle Volk** published "The Consequential State: Public Law and the Release of Energy in Nineteenth-Century America" in the *American Journal of Legal History* (June 2017) and "Apply Liberalism Liberally: Incest and the Troubled American State" in *Reviews in American History* (March 2017).

Prof. **Linda Frey** received the Hagley H. B. du Pont Fellowship for research at the Hagley Museum and Library.

Prof. **Jodi Pavilack** traveled to Santiago, Chile to lecture on her research on Latin American labor movements during the Cold War.

Prof. **Mehrdad Kia** published a new *Encyclopedia of the Persian Empire* with Greenwood Press.

Last but not least, Missoula's own *Independent* newspaper took a reader poll and found that Tobin Miller Shearer and Kyle Volk are the two **best professors at UM!**



Prof. Tobin Shearer discusses his book with Prof. Frank Guridy at Columbia University