Greetings from the Chair

I am pleased to bring you our Fall 2018 newsletter where you’ll find the latest news on faculty publications, history internships, and class trips. As always, we thank our alumni and friends for their continued support and interest. We love hearing from you!

Dr. Shiho Imai

At the Museum

History majors, Emma Woolley (’20) and Zacharey Blackmer (’19) were featured in the Watertown Daily Times for their work this fall transcribing the 19th century letters of Sewell Raymond, cousin of Benjamin Raymond who founded the town of Potsdam. Twenty boxes of Raymond family letters and papers are housed in the Potsdam Museum, now among the largest collection in its archives. Dr. Thomas Baker, associate professor of history and Director of the Office for Student Research and Creativity coordinated this undergraduate research apprenticeship project with funding by the Kilmer Grant. One of the most interesting letters was from John Raymond during the Civil War era. In the article, Dr. Baker explains that Raymond was able to meet President Abraham Lincoln upon pleading to the police officer to jump the queue and “let him down the line,” having “come a very long way.” The difficulty of deciphering period language and cursive handwriting aside, the students gained invaluable experience familiarizing themselves with archival materials and research. You can also see a writeup and photo of the trio on SUNY Potsdam’s Facebook page.

Photo (Bottom): Emma Woolley, Dr. Thomas Baker, and Zacharey Blackmer at work at the Potsdam Library.
Alumni News

William Barr II ('17) co-authored an article titled, “Then and Now: Women Engineers’ Perspectives on Changes and Challenges in the Field Since the 1970s,” in the March 2018 issue of State of Women in Engineering Magazine. He worked as a research assistant for Dr. Laura Ettinger at Clarkson University on her project, “Breaking Ground: American Women Engineers from the Baby Boom Generation.”

Alana Coulum ('14) is a librarian at Queens Library. Using her Japanese language skills, she has started a small Japanese picture book collection at the library and organizes a once-a-month Japanese Storytime event. Both a History major and an Asian Studies minor at Potsdam, she received her M.A. in Library Science at St. Johns University.

Jessica Peña ('11) is an Admissions Processor at Marymount California University in Ranchos Palos Verdes. She received her M.A. in World History at CUNY City College.

Stephanie Baran (Tooke)('03) is teaching middle school and high school social studies at the New York State School for the Deaf in Rome. In the past two years, she has entered two of her classes in the New York State Historical Archives Contest open to grades 4-12. Last year, both of her classes received honorable mention. Congratulations!

Heather Reiffer ('95) is the Executive Director of Historic Sugartown, Inc. in Malvern, PA. Majoring in Anthropology and minoring in history at Potsdam, she was a Historic Deerfield Summer Fellowship recipient and an intern at the St. Lawrence County Historical Association. She holds an M.A. in history and certificate in Museum Studies from the University of Delaware. She has been working in historic site administration in Greater Philadelphia for 20 years.

Faculty News

Dr. Steven Stannish gave a talk titled, “Shadows of Heresy: The Reign of the Pharaoh Akhenaten and Its Aftermath,” for the Philosophy Forum on November 7th. Akhenaten (ca. 1352-1336 BC) is among the most controversial figures in Egyptian history. He patronized the worship of a single god, the Aten, or “Solar Disk,” and wrought changes to the politics, art, and official language of the Nile Valley. Modern scholars have characterized Akhenaten as a fanatical monotheist – or a false prophet – whose revolution offended and enraged his subjects. The talk assessed the accuracy of this description, suggesting a more complex story. His article, “Papyrus Rollin 213 and the Aftermath of the Amarna Period,” is forthcoming in the Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities.

Faculty Publications

Dr. Axel Fair-Schulz’ edited collection of Rosa Luxemburg’s political writings is now available in print from Verso Books. Co-edited by Peter Hudis and William A. Pelz, The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg, Volume III contains speeches, articles, and essays on strikes, protests, and political debates that culminated in the 1905 Russian Revolution. Dr. Fair-Schulz also contributed an article titled, “The Fall of the Kaiser and the Promise of Revolution,” in the Nov. 9, 2018 issue of the Socialist Worker, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the overthrow of the German monarch, Wilhelm II.
Trip to Washington, D.C.

Together with Dr. M. J. Heisey and Dr. Shiho Imai, five SUNY Potsdam students traveled to Washington, D.C. for a backstage tour of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum and George Washington University Textile Museum this fall. All of the students have worked on the Gibson Gallery’s upcoming exhibit of Chilean Arpilleras, or narrative appliques created in protest of the oppressive Pinochet regime in the 1980s, through Dr. Heisey’s “Practicing Public History” (HIST350) and Dr. Tamara Feinstein’s “Chile: Dictatorship and Democracy” (HIST395). Funded by the BOB grant, the trip supports the college’s applied learning initiative.


Learn more about studying history: www.potsdam.edu/academics/AAS/History

Faculty News (continued)

Dr. Gaylynn Welch’s article, “Suffrage at the School House Door: The 1880 New York State School Suffrage Campaign,” is now available in New York History’s Summer/Fall 2017 special print edition commemorating the Women’s Suffrage Centennial. She was also invited to give a presentation at the Massena Public Library in October in conjunction with the Women’s Right to Vote Traveling Exhibit from the Northern New York Library Network and New York Heritage. She serves as chair of the Nebraska biographies for Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1600-2000, edited by Thomas Dublin and Kathryn Kish Sklar, and published by Alexander Street Press.

Dr. Tamara Feinstein’s students in her “Chile: Dictatorship and Democracy” class (HIST395) participated in a Skype session with Dr. Steve Stern, Emeritus Professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Dr. Stern is the author of numerous books and articles in Latin American history including, Reckoning with Pinochet: The Memory Question in Democratic Chile (Duke University Press, 2010).

Student Internships

Ingrid Taveras (’19) completed an internship at the Red Cross this summer. One of her favorite tasks involved volunteering for the Hudson Valley Paws for Cause, an organization that works with the Red Cross to help those in need of emotional support. The dog therapy event also involved children reading to certified Reading Education Assistance dogs. An International Studies major and History minor, she is studying in Morocco, fulfilling her intercultural experience requirement.
Get involved and stay connected. Please email Dr. Shiboi Imai at imaiis@potsdam.edu or Laura Peary at pearyl@potsdam.edu with any information that you would like to add to our homepage or newsletter. Visit us on Facebook.

At the Library

Rebecca Carlin (’19) was an intern at the Potsdam Public Library this fall. She helped organize its “Living Library” event in December. The interactive project featured Barb Heller, host of Spring Fever on North Country Public Radio, Joe Liotta, founder of the Norwood Village Green Concert Series, Frank Palumbo, former teacher in Gouverneur and friend of author Ray Bradbury, and Bryan Thompson, town historian of DeKalb and owner of Blue Heron Farm.

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