

HISTORY

Brown University Department of History
Volume 38 / Spring 2024

MATTERS



...rs and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed

Absolute Equality



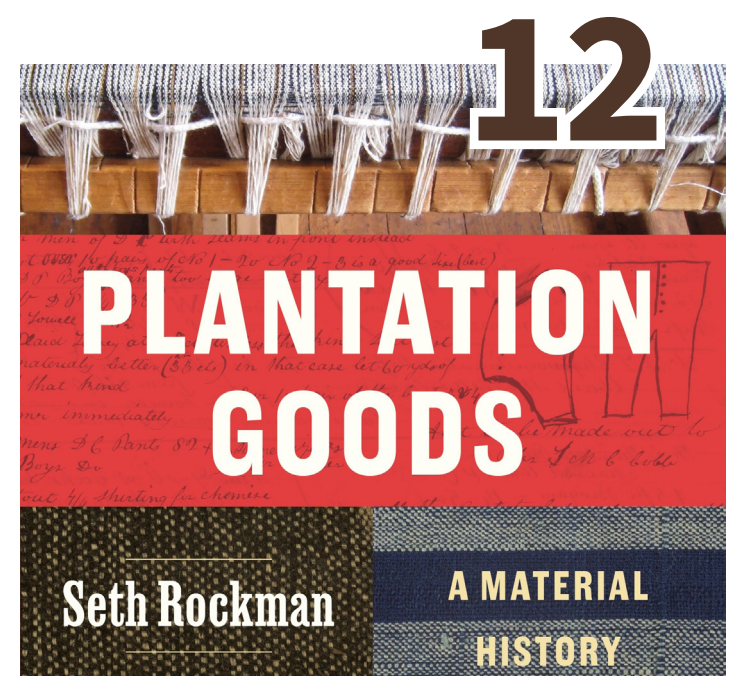
BROWN

History Matters

Brown University Department of History / Volume 38 / Spring 2024

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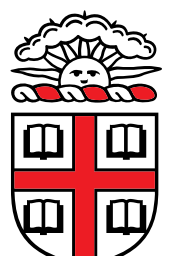
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About the Cover Image

Michael Vorenberg

Associate Professor of History

The 5,000-square-foot mural pictured above adorns a building in Galveston, Texas, at the corner of The Strand and 22nd Street. U.S. Major General Gordon Granger set up headquarters at this site when his force landed in the city in mid-June 1865. On June 19, the army issued General Orders No. 3, declaring that “all slaves are free” and “this involves an absolute equality of personal rights ... between former masters and slaves.” Reginald Adams, the mural’s lead artist, titled the work “Absolute Equality.”

The mural depicts a sweep of African American history, from the transatlantic slave trade to the underground railroad (that’s Harriet Tubman holding a lantern) to the Civil Rights Movement. In the largest frame, Black soldiers look on as Granger signs an order. (When the artist learned that General Orders No. 3 had been signed by one of Granger’s underlings, he changed the “3” to a “1” — order No. 1 had been signed by Granger — and he ran the words of order No. 3 along the mural’s bottom.) Here is the origin of Juneteenth, the name that Black Americans came to call June 19, the day of the “absolute equality” order. The mural



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was dedicated on June 19, 2021, timed to coincide with the passage of the U.S. law making Juneteenth a federal holiday.

In my book to be published next year, *Lincoln's Peace: The Struggle to End the American Civil War* (Knopf), Juneteenth appears as an endpoint of the war. Notice: “an” endpoint, not “the” endpoint.

The surrender of Robert E. Lee to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865, is the endpoint that Americans know best. But it was not the endpoint. More than 50,000 Confederate troops still remained in the field. Emancipation, a stated Union war objective since 1863, had yet to be secured. The proposed amendment abolishing slavery would not be ratified for another eight months. At Appomattox, Grant and Lee did not discuss the fate of slavery. Seven regiments of Black U.S. soldiers — about 50,000 men — were at Appomattox. Their very presence indicated that Black freedom was at hand — but when? Lee’s officers who had “their” slaves with them were allowed to take them home. No Union official issued freedom papers to the enslaved. A few weeks later, not far from the surrender site, a white Virginian sold 16 Black people to a neighbor for some bushels of corn and wheat.

The first Juneteenth did not happen with the “absolute equality” order 10 weeks after Appomattox. It happened one year after the order, on June 19, 1866, when Black people in Galveston gathered outside army headquarters to celebrate the anniversary and, by doing so, to remind everyone of the promise of “absolute equality.”

U.S. officials needed reminding. Back in late summer 1865, white army officers had arrested dozens of unemployed freed people in Galveston. “Who do you belong to?” they asked. Those naming their former masters were told to return to them. Those giving no name were told they worked for the army now; if the army had no work for them, they could be put in prison. A *New York Times* correspondent scoffed: “What has become of the ‘absolute equality of personal rights?’” U.S. officials pointed to a line at the end of the original order advising freed people “to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages.” Army officers often embedded conflicting messages within their emancipation orders.

For the Black people of Galveston, though, there was no ambiguity. The war for “absolute equality” was won and done.



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A Word from the Chair

Ethan Pollock

Chair, Department of History

Joseph Brodsky, a poet forced into exile by the Soviet government, wrote in his essay “Less Than One”: “As failures go, attempting to recall the past is like trying to grasp the meaning of existence. Both make one feel like a baby clutching a basketball: one’s palms keep sliding off.” He was attempting to recall his own past, but I think the same feeling can apply to historians. We attempt to clutch the past. We often fail; we try again. But we also occasionally hold on for a moment and use those moments to inform a world desperate for meaning. Whether people are interested in the Middle East, Ukraine, Oppenheimer or the presidential election, they invariably turn to historians to give them new perspectives and to deepen their understanding. The faculty and students in our department strive to provide that perspective and understanding. This striving sometimes takes the form of scholarship. (See, for instance, the list of faculty books on page 7). Our effort to help others “recall the past” also takes place in our classrooms. This year we taught more than 1,700 students in 85 courses ranging from China’s Early Modern Empires to Energy and Power: An Environmental History of North America, from The Mexican Revolution to Becoming Medieval. In each case, our faculty, graduate students and undergraduates work together to search for meaning and wisdom in a complicated world.

To keep our department up-to-date and engaged, we invite cutting-edge scholars for talks, workshops and other events. And thanks to a generous gift from a Brown alumna, this year we are undertaking two postdoctoral searches, one in labor history and the other in diversifying historical epistemologies. Each will bring a scholar to Brown for two years to develop their projects, share their innovative research and teach our undergraduate students. This year we have also been very fortunate to welcome Tiraana Bains to our faculty as a new assistant professor. Bains received her Ph.D. from Yale in 2021. Before coming to Brown she was a postdoctoral fellow in modern intellectual history at Dartmouth College. She is a historian of modern statecraft as it emerged in a British imperial context in the 18th century. This year Bains taught The Global British Empire and The Intellectual History of Imperialism.



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The cycles of the department are such that new arrivals are counterbalanced by bittersweet departures. This summer, James N. Green, the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Professor of Latin American History, will retire after nearly two decades at Brown. As a co-creator of the Brazil Initiative at the Watson Institute, director of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, the driving force behind the Opening the Archives Project, and as a faculty member in both history and Portuguese and Brazilian studies, Green has had an impact on Brown that is both broad and profound. In April, dozens of students and peers from around the world gathered for a conference at Brown to celebrate his scholarship and mentorship. That event and talking to Green makes one thing clear — although he’s retiring, he remains indefatigable. His list of plans and projects (including books, films and an opera!) remains impressively long — worthy of someone in mid-career. We will miss him, even as we follow his exploits from afar.

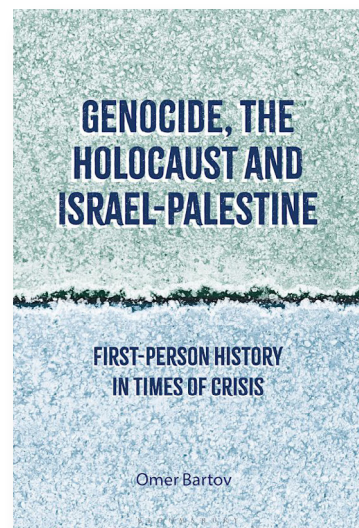
This newsletter goes out to the Department of History’s extended community of faculty, postdocs, graduate students, students and alumni. Drop us a line. Let us know how you are doing. We very much appreciate hearing back from you.



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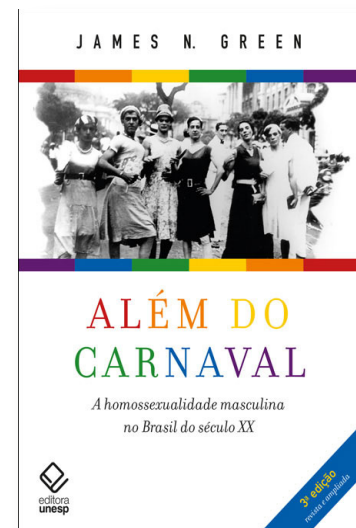
Recent Faculty Books

New Books



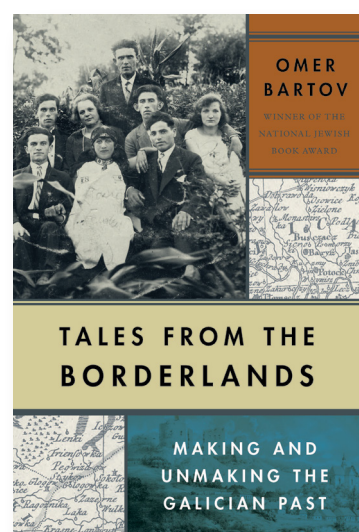
Omer Bartov

Genocide, the Holocaust, and Israel-Palestine: First-Person History in Times of Crisis,
Bloomsbury Academic
(August 2023)



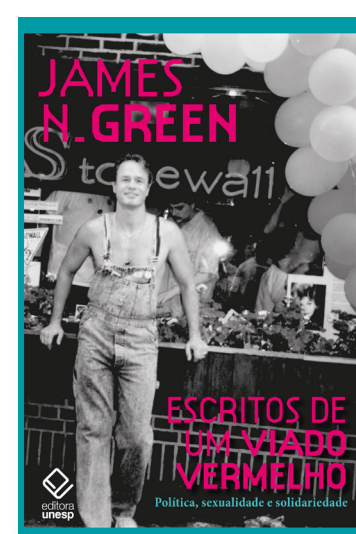
James N. Green

Além do Carnaval: a homossexualidade masculina no Brasil do século XX, 3rd expanded edition,
Editora da UNESP (March 2022)



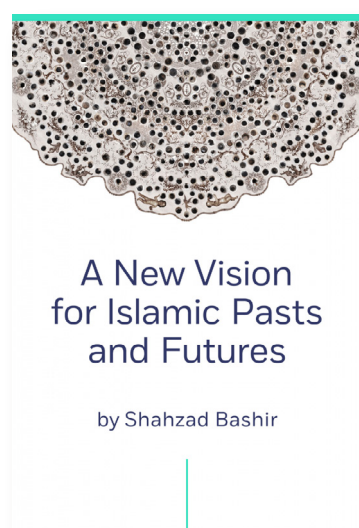
Omer Bartov

Tales from the Borderlands: Making and Unmaking the Galician Past,
Yale University Press (2022)



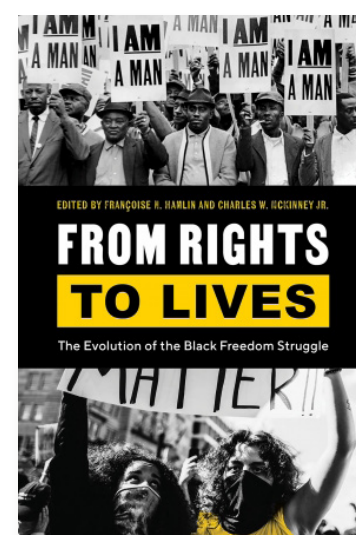
James N. Green

Escritos de um viado vermelho: política, sexualidade e solidariedade [Writings by a Red Faggot: Politics, Sexuality, and Solidarity]
São Paulo: Editora da UNESP
(March 2024)



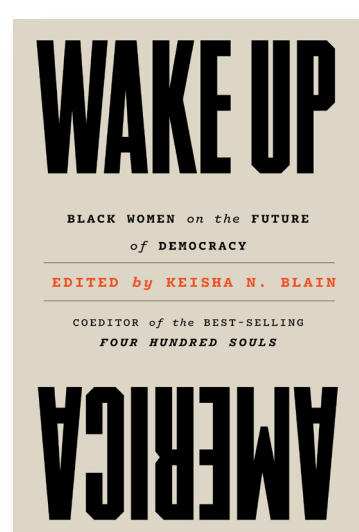
Shahzad Bashir

A New Vision for Islamic Past and Futures,
MIT Press (August 2022)



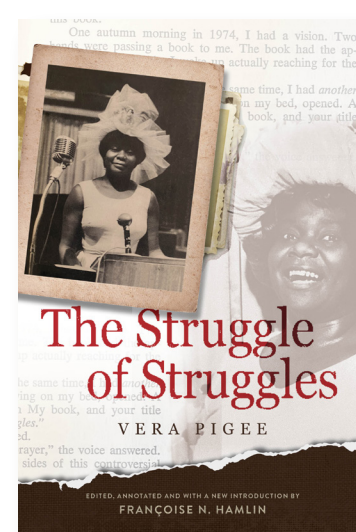
Françoise Hamlin

Co-edited with Charles W. McKinney Jr.,
From Rights to Lives: The Evolution of the Black Freedom Struggle,
Vanderbilt University Press
(March 2024)



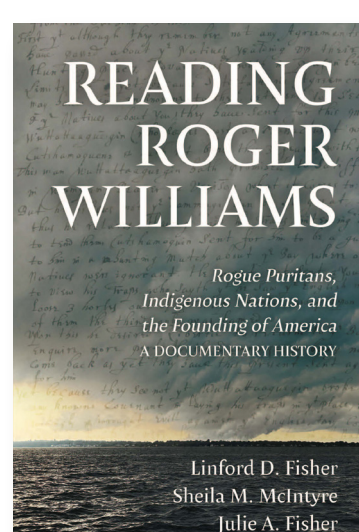
Keisha N. Blain

Wake Up America: Black Women on the Future of Democracy,
W.W. Norton (February 2024)



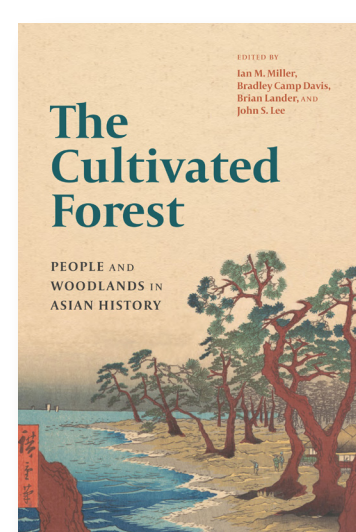
Françoise N. Hamlin

The Struggle of Struggles by Vera Pigeo, republication with an introduction, annotation and timeline,
University Press of Mississippi
(March 2023)



Linford Fisher

Co-authored with Sheila McIntyre and Julie Fisher,
Reading Roger Williams: Rogue Puritans, Indigenous Nations, and the Founding of America – A Documentary History,
Pickwick / Wipf and Stock
(March 2024)



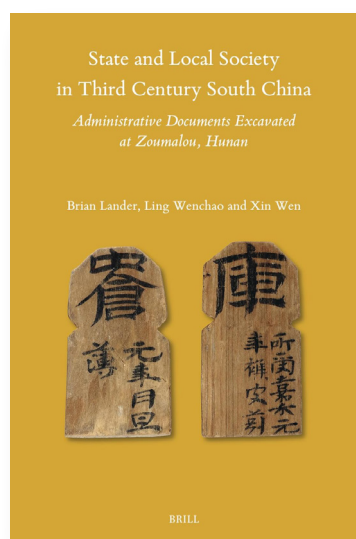
Brian Lander

Co-edited with Ian Miller, Bradley Davis and John Lee,
The Cultivated Forest: People and Woodlands in Asian History,
University of Washington Press
(November 2022)



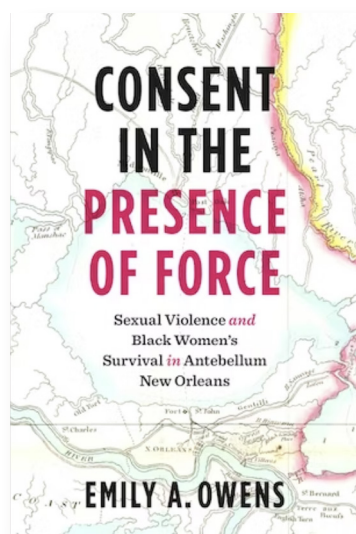
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Faculty Books | New Books



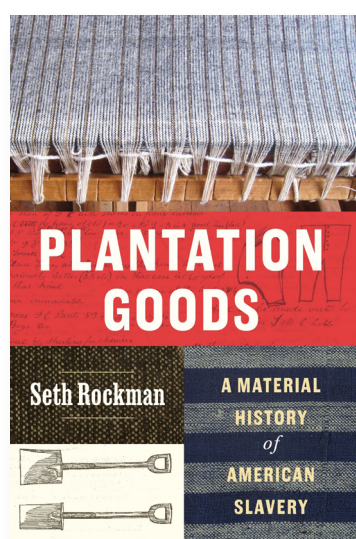
Brian Lander

Co-authored with Ling Wenchao and Xin Wen, *State and Local Society in Third Century Administrative Documents Excavated at Zoumalou, Hunan*, Brill (March 2024)



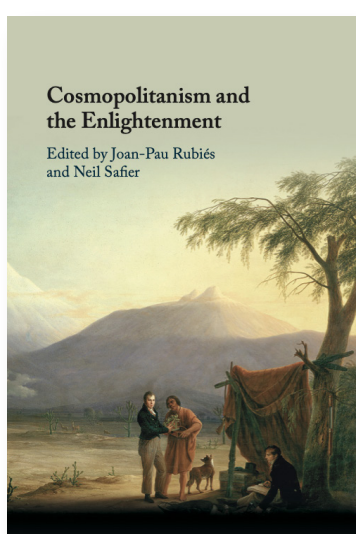
Emily Owens

Consent in the Presence of Force: Sexual Violence and Black Women's Survival in Antebellum New Orleans, University of North Carolina Press (January 2023)



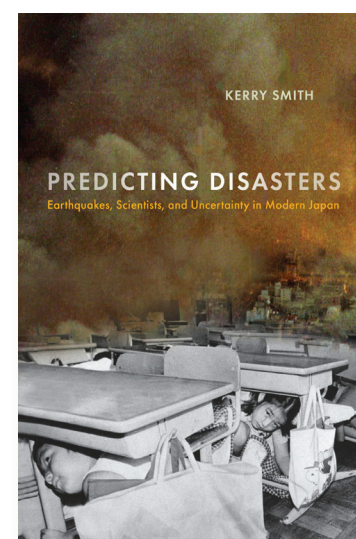
Seth Rockman

Plantation Goods: A Material History of American Slavery, University of Chicago Press (November 2024)



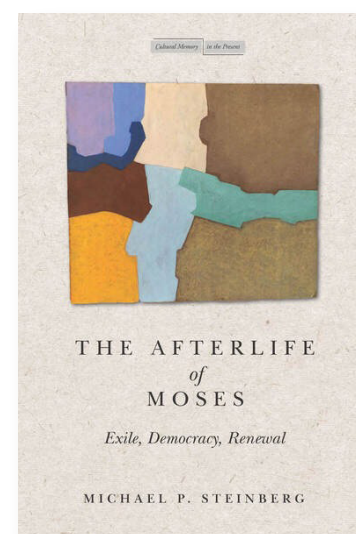
Neil Safier

Co-edited with Joan-Pau Rubiés, *Cosmopolitanism and the Enlightenment*, Cambridge University Press (March 2023)



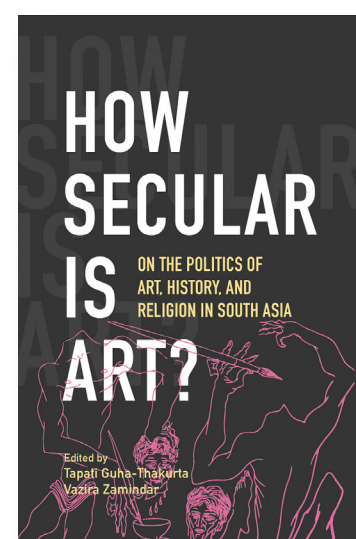
Kerry Smith

Predicting Disasters: Earthquakes, Scientists, and Uncertainty in Modern Japan, University of Chicago Press (April 2024)



Michael P. Steinberg

The Afterlife of Moses: Exile, Democracy, Renewal, Stanford University Press (July 2022)



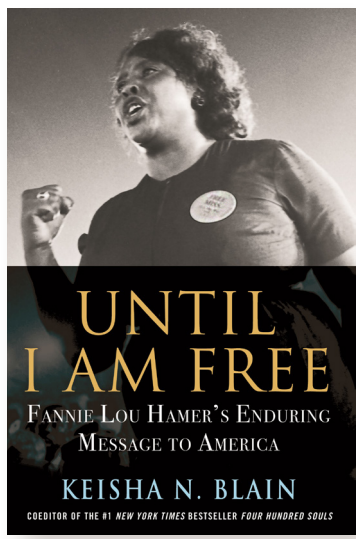
Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar

Co-edited with Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *How Secular is Art? On the Politics of Art, History and Religion in South Asia*, Cambridge University Press (February 2023)



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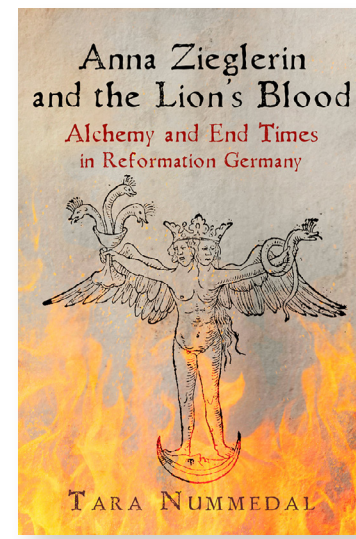
Reprints, Paperback Editions & Translations



Keisha N. Blain

Until I Am Free: Fannie Lou Hamer's Enduring Message to America,

Beacon Press (Paperback, October 2022)



Tara Nummedal

Anna Zieglerin and the Lion's Blood: Alchemy and End Times in Reformation Germany (paperback edition),

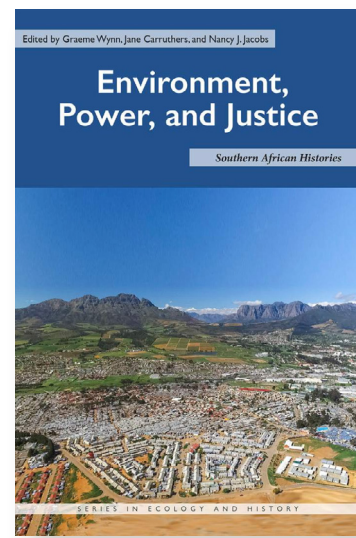
University of Pennsylvania Press (November 2023)



Harold J. Cook

Matters of Exchange: 柯浩德 (Kē Hàodé),

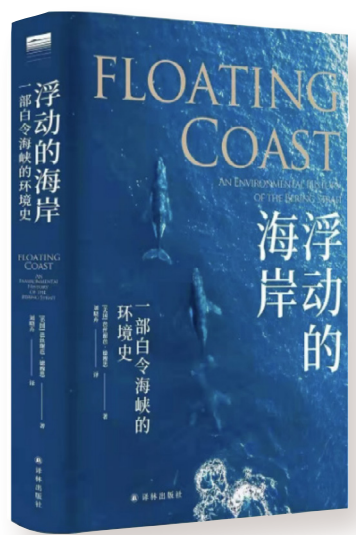
Yale University Press (2022)



Nancy Jacobs

Environment, Power and Injustice: A South African History.

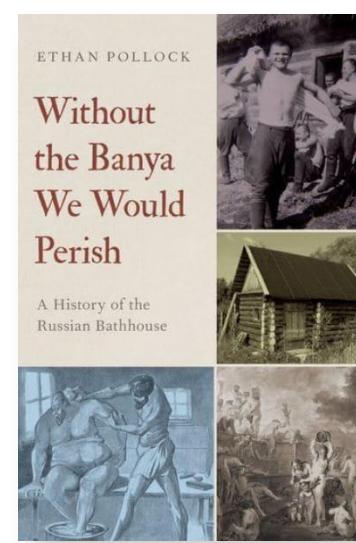
New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. xii +300 pp. (环境、权力与不公：一部南非史 Simplified Chinese translation), Cambridge University Press (April 2022)



Bathsheba Demuth

Fudong de hai'an,

Nanjing: Yilin chubanshe, (2022), Translated by Liu Xiaohui



Ethan Pollock

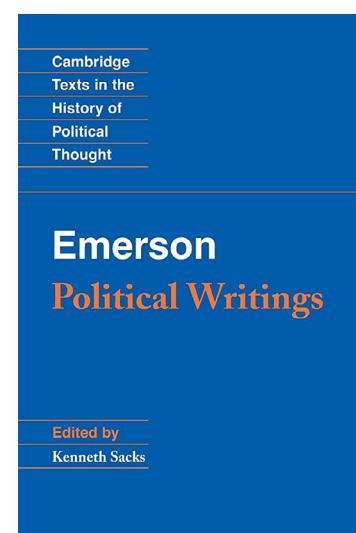
Without the Banya We Would Perish: A History of the Russian Bathhouse, paperback edition, Oxford University Press (2022)



Bathsheba Demuth

Terre-Mer [French edition of Floating Coast],

Payot (September 2023)



Kenneth Sacks

Political Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Turkish translation,

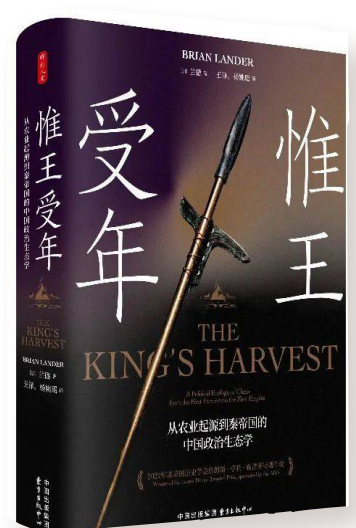
Timas Publishing (2023)



Timothy Harris

Restoration: Charles II and His Kingdoms, 1660-1685 (Chinese edition),

Guangxi Normal University Press (publication date TBA)



Brian Lander

惟王受年 (Chinese rendition of The King's Harvest).

Dongfang chuban zhongxin (June 2023)



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Bicentennial Park of Santiago de Chile
Credit: Adobe Stock

Exploration

ICLAC: Impacts of China in Latin America/Caribbean

Evelyn Hu-Dehart



Evelyn Hu-Dehart delivers a publication presentation in Santiago, Chile, at the auditorium of the Catholic University of Santiago.

In 2023-26, I have the honor of serving as one of five international “senior scholars” for the “Impacts of China on Latin America/Caribbean” research project. Introduced as ICLAC, it is the largest humanities/social science research grant ever awarded by the government of Chile to a group of scholars at three universities in Chile: the Catholic University of Santiago, the University of Chile and the University of Tarapacá.



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EXPLORATION

I am the historian among social scientists and policy experts from the U.S., U.K. and Peru. ICLAC addresses one of the greatest foreign policy and development challenges facing developing nations, namely the rise of China as the main economic partner and concomitant increase in political influence on the agendas of these countries. In just the two decades of the 21st century, Chile has become one of the world's countries most economically dependent on China. Our research seeks to map the extent and nature of Chinese state and private actors in a number of enterprises, including mining, banking, infrastructure and public works construction, private companies, foundations and universities, and to gauge the socio-political and cultural effects that this capital boom has produced in Chilean politics and society. The guiding hypothesis is that the winners and losers of this boom in Chinese capital create visible contradictions in public opinion and domestic politics.

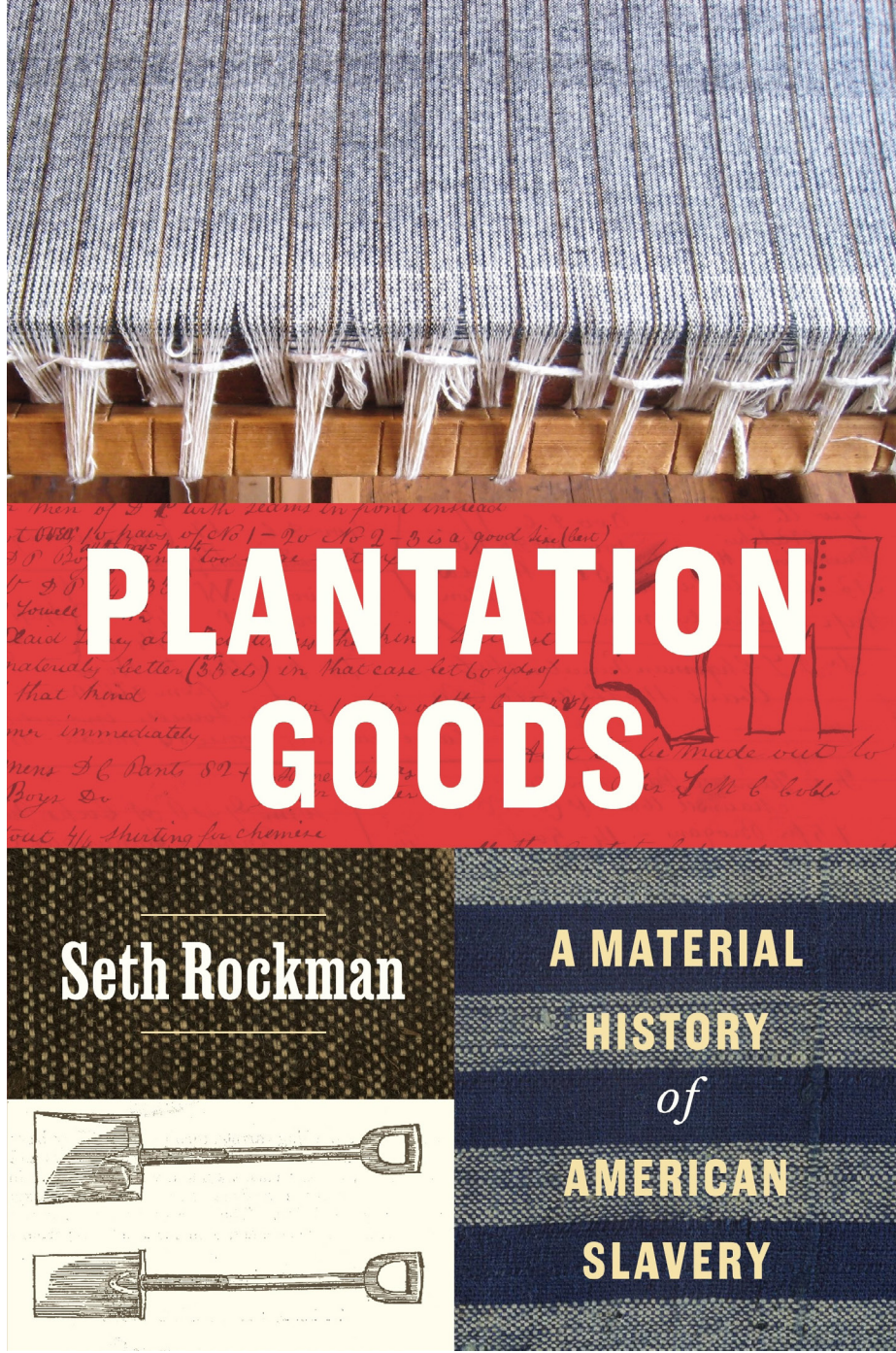
On March 5 this year, the international scholars joined the Chilean research team of faculty and graduate students in Santiago on strategic thinking and planning workshops. The key discussion question is whether China has displaced or replaced the historical economic dominance of the U.S. in the region. On March 6, the international scholars gave public presentations at the Catholic University auditorium, where I spoke on the history of Chinese migration to Chile from the mid-19th century to the present waves of new Chinese immigrants to Chile and all over Latin America and the Caribbean. As international scholars, we joined the Chilean team and invited guests in monthly seminars via Zoom. ICLAC of Chile is leading the way in Latin America to ponder deeply the question of dramatic, fast-changing relations with China.



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Plantation Goods: A Material History of American Slavery

Seth Rockman



My new book *Plantation Goods: A Material History of American Slavery* is very much a Brown book. That is, the questions it asks and the answers it provides reflect my life as a faculty member from the time of the project's conceptualization to its fruition as a published text.

For starters, the book takes up questions first posed by Brown's Slavery and Justice Report, probing New England's entanglements with slavery and its commercial ties with plantation regimes thousands of miles away. But whereas the Slavery and Justice Report's concern was the 18th century transatlantic slave trade, *Plantation Goods* picks up with New England's 19th century industrializing economy

and an emerging manufacturing sector dedicated to making clothing and agricultural tools for enslaved people to wear and use. New England's involvement with slavery deepened even as practices of slave-owning and slave-trading ended in the region. As Southern slaveholders outsourced their production of clothing and tools to northern manufacturers, small communities throughout New England became outposts of slavery's national economy.

The book centers its analysis on those manufactured objects: hats, hoes, shovels, shoes, boots, fabric and even whips. In doing so, *Plantation Goods* uses material culture methodologies to explore how different Americans — enslaved and free, male and female, Black and white — made sense of their worlds through the tension of a loom's warp or the ergonomic qualities of an ax handle. As a new mode of analysis for me, I was the beneficiary of a reading group on Material Worlds at the Joukowsky Institute involving archaeologists, museum curators and one novice historian. I was then able to deepen my engagement with this interdisciplinary scholarship by incorporating it into my teaching, initially in a graduate seminar, Slavery's New Materialisms, and then in a first-year seminar, A Textile History of Atlantic Slavery. In this sense, Brown students and colleagues truly shaped and sharpened the book's analysis.



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Brown provided substantial support for the project, funding research trips to archival repositories in a dozen states and allowing me to hire undergraduate research assistants under the auspices of the Undergraduate Teaching and Research Awards program. Undergraduate and graduate researchers helped me to cull newspaper advertisements for “plantation goods,” to analyze the clothing carried by men and women escaping slavery, and to read thousands of letters between northern businessmen and their southern customers. The collections of the John Hay Library, the John Carter Brown Library and the Rockefeller Library were crucial to the study, as were ongoing conversations at the Ruth J. Simmons Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice.

At the end of the day, however, *Plantation Goods* is a Brown book because — at least as I see it — it is a bit idiosyncratic, a bit idealistic and very much driven by a concern for the world we’ve inherited and for the world we hope to inhabit. Presumably these are familiar traits and dispositions to everyone reading this newsletter.



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Undergraduate Research Spotlight: Naya Lee Chang '24

On July 31, 2007, the 300-ton Peter Green house was moved 450 feet from its original location at 142 Angell St. to its current location at 79 Brown St. The time-lapse video of this astonishing feat inspired me to create a public art project that wonders if parts of the house ever want to go back.



Public art installation outside Peter Green House by Naya Lee Chang '24

preservation, memory and the silliness of self-important homes. I enjoy the challenge of making work that is delightful at first glance but also has layers of meaning to uncover.

Last spring, I reconstructed four of Peter Green House's idiosyncratic columns and positioned them to look like they've peeled off the house and are ambling up the street. Why they're doing that is up to interpretation. Homesick? Curious about the new construction? Need to stretch after standing for so long? I wanted to make a lighthearted piece that is grounded in themes of historic



Naya Lee Chang '24 with her art installation (Credit: Ivery Chen '24)

building or location's past. It's a fitting origin story, then, that my first public art work was for the Department of History (which is also my favorite thing about Brown!).

The columns were temporarily installed on the porch stairs and sidewalk for a week in May, and they now live on the porch and inside the pavilion room. The enthusiastic reactions of history faculty, staff and students to the installation got me hooked on public art, and I've since made more public work in my RISD studio courses. Historical methodology is integral to my site-specific art practice, as I begin each project by going to an archive or library and learning everything I can about a



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Graduate Research Spotlight: Max Chervin Bridge



Kevin Hoskins '12 Ph.D. is a curriculum developer for the Choices Program at Brown University. In August 2023, Hoskins reached out to Ph.D. candidate in history Max Chervin Bridge to gauge their interest in supporting Choices' newest venture: a resource guide on disability history. In this piece, Hoskins and Chervin Bridge explain their roles in producing the guide, and how continuous collaboration between the Department of History and Choices Program has resulted in valuable resources for secondary educators in the U.S. and beyond.

Kevin Hoskins: “I was really looking to draw on Max’s expertise to lead the project to create the guide. I knew what I hoped to create — my original email to Max described the project as a resource guide aimed at secondary ed teachers ‘with some sort of to-be-determined balance between pedagogy, lessons, potential readings and professional development resources’ — but I did not have the expertise to be able to create it. Max really did the rest, with consultation and input from Choices staff. It is this kind of collaboration between Choices and Department of History graduate students — where we can draw on their expertise to create guides, resources and lessons to share with teachers across the country — that we hope to do even more of in the future.”

Max Chervin Bridge: “Leading the project to develop the resource guide was a fulfilling opportunity to create a free, online resource around a set of histories and ideas that are vital to my daily life and my work as a teacher and scholar. My hope is that this guide is valuable not only to secondary educators, but to colleagues and the general public as well.

“Perhaps the most rewarding element of the project was the chance to present resources around disability history, disability studies and the wider scope of disability activism and justice — including anti-ableist pedagogical resources — together in one place. Disability history can sometimes be cordoned off from this larger set of ideas and movements, but my feeling in my teaching and research is that each subset is stronger as part of the whole. This guide is a political document, and I believe that teaching about disability in the past entails political and moral commitments to disability justice in the present.”

[Explore the Choices Program Resource Guide: Disability History and Studies](#)



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Faculty Activities

Tiraana Bains



Tiraana Bains has enjoyed her first year at Brown getting to know colleagues, students and centers on campus. She taught a capstone seminar on the intellectual history of imperialism in the fall and a lecture focused on the global British Empire between the 17th and 21st centuries in the spring. Both classes offered the space to introduce students to original historical research as well as collectively think through the origins of the politics of the present.

In the fall, Bains finalized revisions on an article on British imperialism in Sumatra, which will be forthcoming in the *Journal of British Studies*. She has also been working on a book manuscript titled *Instituting Empire: The Making of a British Imperial State in South Asia, 1750-1800*. She is grateful for the opportunity to share various parts of the book project with audiences at Brown, including at the Medieval and Early Modern History Seminar and the Saxena Center for Contemporary South Asia.

Bains has also begun to slowly gather archival materials for a study of how and why a range of British colonies, settlements and territories across the globe developed divergent political and economic institutions over the *longue durée*.

Omer Bartov



Ogen and Dror, Bartov's twin grandchildren, in January 2024

This has been a particularly busy year for Omer Bartov, and it's not over yet. In August 2023, his new monograph *Genocide, the Holocaust, and Israel-Palestine: First-Person History in Times of Crisis* was published with Bloomsbury Academic. A German translation will be published later this year. In January 2024 a French translation of his book *Tales from the Borderlands: Making and Unmaking the Galician Past* was published, and a Hebrew version is expected next year. Additionally, the edited volume *Voices on War and Genocide* was issued in paperback in 2023, and the edited volume *Israel-Palestine: Lands and People* will come out in paperback in 2024 with a new preface. Currently Bartov is writing a new monograph, *The Broken Promise: A Personal-Political History of Israel and Palestine*, based on almost 70 interviews with Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel as well as German volunteers of the first postwar generation.

Following the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, and in view of the ongoing war in Gaza, Bartov organized a series of talks at the Watson Institute, which will include a total of 19 invited speakers by the end of the spring semester. He has also become heavily engaged in trying to make sense of these events and provide a reasoned analysis to the public, speaking and writing in such outlets as CNN, MSNBC, Democracy Now, Deutsche Welle, NPR, BBC, Aljazeera, France Culture, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Der Spiegel*, *Le Monde*, *The New Statesman*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Haaretz* and others.

Bartov has also been organizing the first conference related to his chair in Holocaust and genocide studies, "Iconographies of the Holocaust: Visual Representations and Migrating Materialities of War and Genocide since 1945," which was held April 18-20, 2024, with more than 20 international scholars, including a scholarly and a public-facing component.

Finally, Bartov was delighted to teach a graduate seminar on human rights in Fall 2023, which included two new graduate Ph.D. students in the program, Jakob Lippert (working with Bartov) and Montagu James (working with Michael Steinberg). The events in the Middle East meant a large student demand for Bartov's Spring 2024 seminar on Israel-Palestine, and he has been blessed with a large and diverse group of highly engaged undergraduates immersed in intense but consistently civil discussions on this fraught topic.



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Keisha N. Blain

During the 2023-24 academic year, Keisha N. Blain published the edited collection *Wake Up America: Black Women on the Future of Democracy* (W.W. Norton, 2024). The book brings together the voices of major progressive Black women politicians, grassroots activists and intellectuals to offer critical insights on how we can create a more equitable political future. Writers include Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, California Senator Laphonza Butler and former Boston mayor Kim Michelle Janey.

Blain also made significant progress on her next book project, *A Global Struggle: How Black Women Led the Fight for Human Rights* (under contract, W.W. Norton). She has plans to finish writing the book this summer.

Most significantly, Blain and her spouse Jay celebrated the accomplishments of their 6-year-old son, who graduated from kindergarten, and their youngest son, who recently turned one.

Holly Case

Holly Case has been on leave this academic year, spending the fall semester on fellowship at the American Academy in Berlin, and the spring at the Institute for the Human Sciences in Vienna. She conducted research in archives and libraries in Vienna, Budapest and Konstanz and gave talks and papers on her current book project (*Tracing Taint*) in Berlin, Cologne, Vienna, Budapest, Cambridge, Maynooth and Basel. She also participated in the third annual Observatory on History Teaching in Europe at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

The week she spent at the Invisible University for Ukraine's winter school in Budapest was especially memorable for the wonderfully intense interactions she had there with the Ukrainian student participants and the program's tireless student and faculty organizers.

In December 2023, she organized a workshop on artificial intelligence titled "Models, Abstraction, Scale" in Berlin featuring participants from various disciplines at Brown as well as scholars, policymakers and industry professionals from Germany and beyond. She also co-organized two workshops — one in December 2023 in Berlin and another in April 2024 in Vienna — on "Cultural Approaches to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe."

Jonathan Conant



Arch from Madinat al-Zahra, the palace-city of Abd al-Rahman III (929-61), emir of Córdoba

This year, Jonathan Conant's research focused on two main projects. The first is a book, *Early Medieval Europe, 300–1100*, which will be the first volume of the Cambridge History of Europe series. The second is a chapter for the Cambridge History of the African Diaspora on the connections across the Sahara, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean that linked the African continent to the early Byzantine world. Conant also presented a couple of papers at conferences, one on the movement of North African saints' cults to early medieval Spain, and the second on the survival of early medieval archives.

Meanwhile, he continues to work away on problems of violence and trauma in the early Middle Ages. Researching and presenting this material took Conant from Providence to the Netherlands, Wales and Spain, where he spent 2023-24 on sabbatical in Barcelona. He also took the time to visit some fascinating archaeological sites, including the spectacular Madinat al-Zahra (pictured), just outside of Córdoba. In Summer 2024, Conant plans to travel to Rome and Vienna, to consult the extraordinary manuscript collections in those two cities.

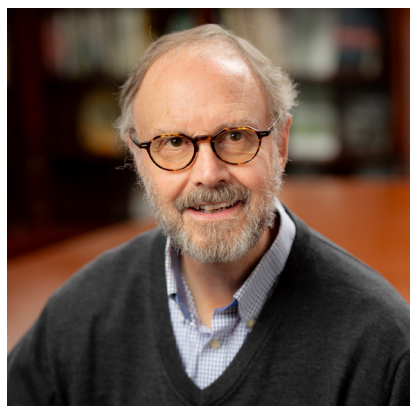
He is very much enjoying the time to research and write but looks forward to interacting more regularly with colleagues and students again in the coming year.



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FACULTY ACTIVITIES

Harold J. (Hal) Cook



While beginning a half-time semi-retirement, Hal Cook continues to be active in writing and supportive of departmental processes and Brown students.

Bathsheba Demuth



Bathsheba Demuth enjoyed being back in the classroom in 2023, teaching new classes on the history of energy in North America and environmental writing. When not teaching, she was mostly in Alaska and Canada doing research on her second book, an environmental history of the Yukon River watershed — trips that included traveling 2,600 miles of the Yukon by boat and a dog sledding venture that was perfect except for the cracked rib.

With colleagues at the Institute at Brown for Environment and Society, Sciences Po in Paris and the University of Connecticut, she is co-editing an interdisciplinary volume on rivers, the result of a two-day workshop at Brown in June.

In August, she taught a field course through the University of Alaska Fairbanks on the Yukon's environmental history, done while canoeing from Eagle to Circle, Alaska. She's looking forward to more time up north this summer, this time with UTRA students, and a new class focused on ecology and sovereignty in the fall.

If you're in France, her first book is now translated under the French title *Terre-Mer*.

Linford Fisher

Linford Fisher enjoyed a return to the classroom this past academic year, teaching courses on the global



Fortress Rock, in Canyon de Chelly, where the Diné hid from the U.S. military during the Civil War

history of colonial America; Native American history; and the Atlantic world. He continued to serve as principal investigator for a tribal collaborative project called Stolen Relations: Recovering Stories of Indigenous Enslavement in the Americas (stolenrelations.org), which will go live in summer 2024. In that capacity, he works with more than a dozen regional Native American nations and this past year mentored more than 40 research assistants.

This spring Fisher published a co-authored collection of Roger Williams' writings and correspondence titled *Reading Roger Williams: Rogue Puritans, Indigenous Nations, and the Founding of America — A Documentary History*. Fisher also gave talks at various conferences and universities, including in Puerto Rico and at Boston College, the University of Connecticut and the Boston Public Library (with three tribal members). He is also wrapping up the final edits on his book manuscript, *Stealing America: Indigenous Slavery and Dispossession in the English Caribbean and the United States* (Liveright / Norton). One of the highlights of this past year was traveling to Canyon de Chelly (pictured), which is a site he writes about in his book.

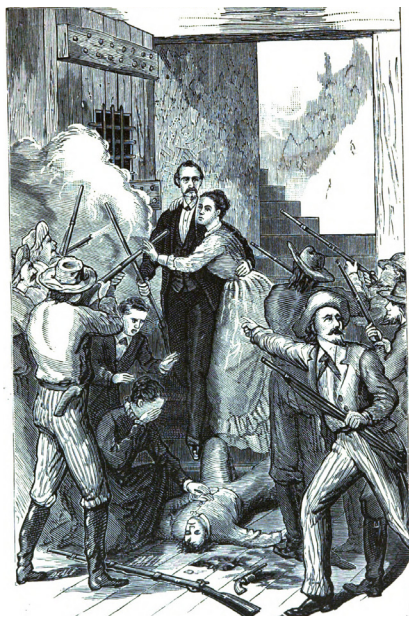
In his free time, Fisher enjoys sailing with his family on Narragansett Bay.



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Christopher Grasso



The Chisolm Massacre,
1877

Christopher Grasso spent his leave year working on a book project, *The Chisolm Massacre: Reconstruction and the Politics of Violence*. It examines the murder of a Congressional candidate, W.W. Chisolm, along with two of his children and two of his friends, by a mob of his political adversaries in Mississippi in 1877. The incident became national news at a turning point in the effort to reconstruct the South after the Civil War. The project is based on a private archive of Chisolm family papers.

Grasso began his leave year in June 2023, reaching into an old trunk (appropriately resembling a treasure chest) and pulling out packets of 19th century letters tied with string. He presented some early chapter drafts to the Cogut Institute seminar in March 2024 and to a roundtable of scholars convened by the University of Virginia Press in April. The project will also be developed by Brown University Digital Publications.

James N. Green

After 20 years at Brown University, James N. Green will be retiring on June 30, 2024. He is looking forward to continuing to research and write books on politics and gender in Brazil, while living with his husband Moshe Sluhovsky in New York, Paris and Israel.

This spring he launched his latest book *Escritos de um viado vermelho (Writings of a Red Faggot)*, a collection of 24 essays about Brazil, published by the country's leading academic press.

He will also remain president of the board of directors of the Washington Brazil Office, a nonpartisan think tank and advocacy organization that promotes progressive policies regarding Brazil and the U.S.

Françoise N. Hamlin

Françoise Hamlin returned to the classroom after her sabbatical and serves as the director of graduate studies in the Department of Africana Studies. In addition, she continues to advise undergraduates and graduate students in two departments, co-chair the Faculty of Color Network that she co-founded in 2015, and work extensively with the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship on the advisory board.

While maintaining her public-facing work — for example, appearing on the *Story in the Public Square*, the multiple Telly Award-winning national PBS TV and SiriusXM Satellite Radio show for a frank discussion about civil rights in America — Hamlin has taken on more responsibilities in professional organizations. She is a founding executive committee member of the Society for Black Military Studies and will serve as the senior editor/editor-in-chief of the new *Journal of Black Military Studies*. Hamlin is also the co-chair for the Southern Association for Women Historians' program committee, planning the 2025 Triennial Conference, and an advisory board member for the Gary L. McDowell Institute, Jepson School of Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond.

In March 2023, Hamlin republished *The Struggle of Struggles*, an out-of-print autobiography by Vera Pigeo, adding annotation, a timeline and an introductory essay. In January 2024, the book was included as one of the top five books on women in the Civil Rights Movement by *The Wall Street Journal*. Most recently, in March 2024, she published a co-edited volume, *From Rights To Lives: The Evolution of the Black Freedom Struggle*, with Vanderbilt University Press under their Black Lives and Liberation Series.



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Tim Harris



Marsh's Library Dublin, Ireland

Tim Harris undertook research at Marsh's Library in Dublin, Ireland, last July through August, under the auspices of a Maddock Research Fellowship. In early July he was on a panel at Durham University, England, with Professor John Morrill of Cambridge University, to discuss Morrill's new edition of *The Letters, Writings, and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford University Press, 2023).

In November 2023 Harris gave a paper at the North American Conference on British Studies in Baltimore titled "Thinking about Empire under the Later Stuarts," which drew on material from his current book project on *The British Revolutions of the 17th Century* (under contract with Oxford University Press). The Chinese edition of his *Restoration: Charles II and His Kingdoms 1660-1685* (Allen Lane/Penguin, 2005) is due to be published later this year by Guangxi Normal University Press (translated by Liao Ping).

He continues to edit the book series *Studies in Early Modern Cultural, Political and Social History* for Boydell Press and serves as president of the American Friends of the Institute of Historical Research, London.

Benjamin Hein



Spring 2023 brought fascinating conversations with colleagues at Brown's Cogut Institute for the Humanities, where Benjamin Hein spent the semester as a faculty fellow. Reading their cutting-edge work — on topics as diverse as Japanese labor migration and medieval English romance — was exciting and thought-provoking. It also helped Hein think through the universal aspects of his own research, which turned out to be quite timely. He was just finishing a new introduction and epilogue to his first book, *The Migrant's Spirit: How Industrial Revolution Came to the German Lands* (coming soon with Oxford University Press).

The summer and fall provided an opportunity to tie up loose ends on other works-in-progress, including an article-length piece about migration and working-class politics in 19th century central Europe. It was also a chance to crawl down a few new rabbit holes, one of which concerned the life and work of the economic historian Fritz Redlich (1892-1979), a German-American émigré best known for his studies on the business of warfare and other forms of "demonic entrepreneurship."

And finally, Hein would like to thank Lukas Rieppel for yet another terrific fall semester co-teaching the History of Capitalism — it was one of the highlights of the year!

Nancy Jacobs



Nancy Jacobs drinking coffee in Berlin

In the second half of the year, Nancy Jacobs held short residencies at the Greenhouse Center for the Environmental Humanities at the University of Stavanger in Norway and the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin. In these wonderful places, she continued work on her book project, *The Global Grey Parrot*. In 2023, she presented papers at those institutions, Princeton University, Maastricht University in the Netherlands and Aalborg University in Denmark.

In 2023, Jacobs began a two-year stint as president of the American Society for Environmental History. She's been heavily involved with its first-ever large-scale fundraising campaign, which has nearly met its goal of \$150,000 after just one year. The money will support travel and research, especially that of junior and underrepresented scholars. The society has been a welcoming community for so many and Jacobs is glad to be helping it secure its future.



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Jacobs's COVID-19-era project to promote journaling by young Black South Africans has finally come to a close. The records have been deposited with the Qualitative Data Repository at the University of Syracuse. They are now available for researchers who apply for permission to use them; in 25 years they will be openly accessible. This project, a collaboration with Lorato Trok of Pretoria, South Africa, was sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Research, the Department of History and Brown Arts Institute. Trok and Jacobs have published an article about the project, "Reaching Out from Lockdown: A Writing Group for Young Black South Africans," in a special issue on "Student Experiences of COVID-19 around the Globe: Insights from the Pandemic Journaling Project" in the journal *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*.

Jennifer Johnson



Jennifer Johnson spent the fall on sabbatical during which time she traveled for research, made progress on her book project *State Building After Empire* and published a book chapter on related research titled "Categorizing the Maghrib: How Census Data, Demography, and Population Studies Facilitated Governance Strategies and Public Messaging in Colonial and Postcolonial North Africa," in *Fertility, Family, and Social Welfare between France and Empire: The Colonial Politics of Population*, eds., Margaret Andersen and Melissa K. Byrnes, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023).

Johnson returned to the classroom in the spring and had the pleasure of teaching the methods course for first-year Ph.D. students (Roots of History, formerly Colloquium) and an undergraduate lecture course on the History of Humanitarianism in Africa.

When she's not researching and teaching, she's trying to keep up with her daughter (1) and son (5), who infuse wonder and fun into her life every day.

Jennifer Lambe



In the second year of her term as director of graduate studies, Lambe continued to master the always evolving bureaucracy of graduate studies while enjoying the opportunity to learn about students' work and interests. On the research front, she spent the year tying up loose ends, including those related to her forthcoming book *The Subject of Revolution: Between Political and Popular Culture in Cuba*.

Brian Lander



Brian Lander on a mountain near the North Korean border where the kingdom of Koguryo was based around 2,000 years ago

Brian Lander went to China for the first time in several years, visiting friends in Wuhan and spending a month traveling around Manchuria, a region whose history he previously knew little about.

Lander co-authored a book titled *State and Local Society in Third Century South China* and articles on the history of deer in China and how early Chinese empires gathered information. He also released the Chinese edition of his book *The King's Harvest* in Beijing.

Lander gave talks in China, Korea, Japan and even exotic South Carolina, where he learned about a history of water control and rice cultivation that has interesting parallels with South China.



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Steven Lubar



Some of the Little Compton Historical Society's transportation collections

A switch to half-time work has meant more time for Steven Lubar to work on his book on tools. He has enjoyed the opportunity to read in a wider range of topics than usual, as well as to spend some time working with tools as he writes about them. Trying to balance his musings on the nature of technology and some fairly obscure history while keeping a general audience in mind makes this a good project.

Lubar was elected president of the Little Compton Historical Society this year. The society has some ambitious plans, and it has been exciting to apply some of what he has taught in public humanities courses to the real challenges of a small organization. His History Curatorship course is working with the society on an exhibition on local transportation history, and Lubar and his students are getting a chance to understand the joys and constraints of hands-on work with a small museum.

Elias Muhanna



Elias Muhanna outside the Museum of the Future in Dubai

Elias Muhanna spent the past year on sabbatical, making inching progress on a book about the history and future of the Arabic language. His research took him to different parts of the Arabic-speaking world, where he spent time with writers, teachers, translators, filmmakers, app developers, magazine editors, TikTokers, podcasters and typographers.

While on leave, Muhanna has remained involved on campus, serving as director of undergraduate studies in the Department of Comparative Literature and as a member of the Priorities and Planning Committee in the Department of History. He is looking forward to returning to teaching next year.

Jeremy Mumford



This year, Jeremy Mumford finished and submitted a paper on “Children’s Liberation and Sex in 1970s America.”

Rebecca Nedostup



Rebecca Nedostup at the ARK urban rewilding project on Brienoord Island in Rotterdam, Netherlands

In summer 2023, Rebecca Nedostup concluded a term as visiting chair of Taiwan studies at the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies and International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in the Netherlands. She taught a course at both Leiden and Brown on the complex history of Taiwan as seen from its different geographic contexts. Benefitting from the generous institutional vision of the IIAS, she gave formal and informal talks on Chinese refugee labor and Taiwanese performance art, and organized the international workshop “Material Matters in Historical Spaces: Taiwan and Beyond.”

IIAS helped Ph.D. advisee Shih-Yu Juan visit the Netherlands to research scientific instrumentation and knowledge transfer in late 19th century China.



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Meanwhile, Richard Yu-cheng Shih is completing a dissertation on the boat-dwelling communities around China's Lake Tai. He will take up a postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard's Mahindra Humanities Center, while grad alum Yu-chi Chang will begin a tenure-track position at Vassar.

With Juan's help, Nedostup relaunched the Modern Asian History group, bringing together graduate students and postdocs from several departments and institutes. She was also extremely fortunate to work with talented undergrad researchers Dun Jian Chin, Brianna Nee, Audrey Taylor and Adam You, who helped her collect material on social networks of care, some of which she presented at the Cogut Institute's Political Concepts conference. Data Science Fellow Naphat Permpredanun collaborated on a data and generative artificial intelligence literacy exercise that is being trialed in the course China's Socialist Dreams.

Last but not least, Nedostup continued her work as faculty director of the Choices Program.

Tara Nummedal



Tara Nummedal returned from research leave this year and was pleased to step back in the classroom to teach her lecture course on Nature, Knowledge and Power in Early Modern Europe.

In the spring, she presented some of her research on the intersection of mining, magic and money in early modern Europe at Rutgers University and Indiana University in Bloomington, and collaborated with Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) glass professor Rachel Berwick and a group of early career scholars on an experimental two-day workshop on the history of glass, gems and stones in the medieval and early modern world.

Nummedal began a new position this past fall as the faculty director at the Center for Digital Scholarship, where she collaborates with colleagues and students on research projects and publications that take advantage of digital tools and methods. In that capacity she began teaching a seminar, Introduction to Digital Humanities, for graduate students pursuing the new Doctoral Certificate in Digital Humanities or considering digital humanities careers. She also organized a bi-weekly Digital Humanities Salon for sharing works-in-progress and a lecture series on New Directions in Digital Scholarship, featuring three innovative scholars charting the future of digital scholarship: Jessica Marie Johnson, Roopika Risam and Ashlee Bird.

Nummedal also continues her work with University of Virginia Press as the co-editor of the Studies in Early Modern German History book series.

Mark Ocegueda



Mark Ocegueda will be going on leave during the 2024-25 academic year to finish his book manuscript, which is under contract with the University of California Press. Over the summer, he will be a W.M. Keck Foundation Fellow at the Huntington Library, where he will be rounding out some final research for the book project.

Emily Owens



While continuing to share her new(ish) book with the world in conferences and workshops across the country, Emily Owens broke ground on a new project with the help of some truly ambitious students in her new course, The History of American Feminisms, which was supported by the Cogut Institute.

Owens enjoyed supporting history students to develop senior theses in her new role as the director of the department's honors program. Highlights of the year included



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connecting with feminist scholars at Duke’s Feminist Theory Workshop in the spring and welcoming a cadre of organizers and scholars to Brown to think about sex work in the spring, with the support of the Pembroke Center.

Ethan Pollock



Ethan Pollock and his son Zachary with the owner of The Bath House in London, England, where both the English and Russian editions of his book are on display and sale

Given his responsibilities as chair, Ethan Pollock did not have much time to dedicate to scholarship. He tried to keep active by writing book reviews (one of which appeared in the Times Literary Supplement); reading the excellent work of other scholars; and organizing an annual conference on Soviet history at Brown. His book on the Russian bathhouse (*Without the Bania, We Would Perish: A History of the Russian Bathhouse*) can be found in some banya gift shops and a few academic libraries, but very few bookstores. He is horrified that the cosmopolitan, hopeful, open, generous and multifaceted Russia he tried to describe via banya stories has atrophied while a nationalistic, cynical, closed and judgmental Russia has gained strength. The existence of the Russian translation of his book, evidently on shelves in actual bookstores in Russia, feels bittersweet indeed.

Seth Rockman

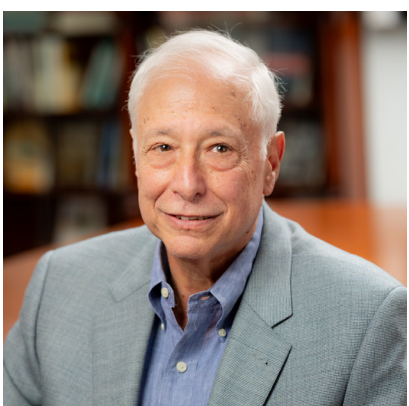


This was Seth Rockman’s 20th year on the faculty. Returning to Providence after spending the previous year in Berlin, Rockman threw himself back into life at Brown, taking up responsibilities as the director of undergraduate studies and launching a new research group on slavery and finance at the Ruth J. Simmons Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. A highlight of the year was the Textile History of Atlantic Slavery first-year seminar, which attracted some truly remarkable undergraduates.

The year witnessed three coordinated journal publications on “the labor history of science”: a focus section in *Isis* issued a programmatic call for new scholarship; a special issue of *History of Science* reviewed the historiographic intersections of labor history and history of science; and a special issue of *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History* modeled fruitful exchanges between scholars studying science as labor from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

Most importantly, Rockman put the finishing touches on *Plantation Goods: A Material History of American Slavery*, which will be published in November 2024 by University of Chicago Press (and is available for pre-order now).

Kenneth Sacks



Kenneth Sacks’s book *Emerson’s Civil Wars: Spirit and Society in the Age of Abolition* will be published in September 2024. He continues to work on a book about Colma, California, with co-author and former Brown colleague Elliott Gorn. Sacks is also exploring a book about a 19th century scandal involving another university.



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Neil Safier



Neil Safier with daughter Luna at Yosemite's Glacier Point overlooking Half Dome and the valley below

With the exception of a quick trip to Ecuador in December, this academic year has skewed largely domestic, driven (among other things) by Neil Safier having taken on the directorship of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies in July. He is very excited to work with colleagues in history and across the University to strengthen the center and better serve undergraduates, graduate students and faculty.

Other highlights of the year were welcoming Jennifer Morgan back to Brown for the William F. Church Lecture in November and convening the “France and the Black Atlantic” workshop in March. Yet another was teaching the first iteration of a new 150-level gateway course titled Curators, Hoarders, and Looters: The Long and Curious History of Collecting, a lecture course that garnered students from a variety of disciplines.

Safier is currently working on a separate history of global Amazonian collections in addition to an ongoing project related to 18th century plantation libraries in the Caribbean and Brazil.

Robert Self



While continuing to draft chapters of his new book *Driven: The Houses, Cars and Children of the Hydrocarbon Middle Class*, Robert Self taught the graduate seminar Writing History in which he worked with fabulous history Ph.D. students on their first article-length research papers. He also enjoyed another rewarding year working with undergraduates in courses on political movements and the welfare state, in the U.S., and advising a senior thesis on the John Birch Society's anti-civil rights politics and another on the decline of women-led midwifery in the early 20th century.

Kerry Smith

Kerry Smith enjoyed teaching a new first-year seminar on the History of Tokyo in the fall. The book he has been working on for a very long time, *Predicting Disasters: Earthquakes, Scientists and Uncertainty in Postwar Japan*, was published in February by the University of Pennsylvania Press, in its series on Critical Studies in Risk and Disaster.

He also edited and contributed to a special issue on the 100th anniversary of the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake published in the online journal *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* this past September 1. The special issue brings together eight reflections on the event and its legacies from the perspectives of history, history of art, literary studies and seismology, by scholars with longstanding interests in the disaster. In addition to the introduction, he provided an essay that explores how security forces in Japan in the early 1960s looked to the unrest that followed the 1923 disaster for insights into the challenges they would face in the aftermath of Tokyo's next disastrous earthquake.

Tracy Steffes

This past year saw the publication of Tracy Steffes's book *Structuring Inequality: How Schooling, Housing, and Tax Policies Shaped Metropolitan Development and Education* (University of Chicago Press). She enjoyed diving into two new projects (finally!): a co-written book with philosopher Meira Levinson about the different ways Americans have understood what makes a “good school” over time and a new book project tentatively titled *Education Inc.* on the history of for-profit activity in K-12 schools.

She continues to serve as the chair of the Education Department, teach classes at the intersection of history and education and work with students in both departments.



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Michael Steinberg



Michael Steinberg spent most of his sabbatical year 2023-24 at the Herbert Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, where he presented a draft chapter of his new book *Marcel Proust's Jewish Comedy*. Other lecture venues during the year included Yale University (a conference on Hugo von Hofmannsthal); Bard College Berlin (“The Democratic Unconscious”); the Triangle Wagner Society; the Thomas Mann House, Los Angeles (a conference on Opera and Democracy); and the Goethe Institute of New York (“Democracy and Exile”).

Steinberg’s “The Myth of Laocoön: On the Founding and Refounding of Cities” was published in *Paris: A New Rome* (De Gruyter),” and “The Commendatore Effect” appeared on parterre box in March 2024.

Adam Teller

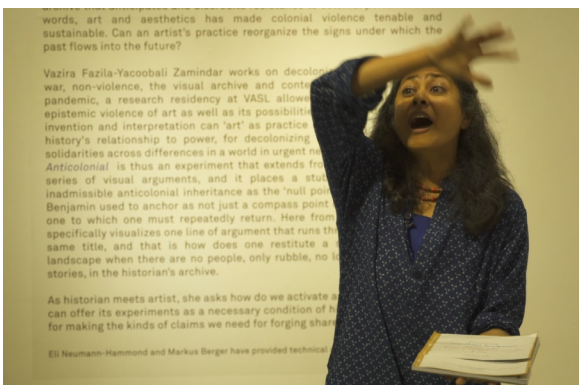


This year Yale University Press accepted for publication Adam Teller’s new project, tentatively titled *Genocidal Regime: A Social History of the Holocaust*, about half of which is now written. More good news came from Poland, where the University of Wrocław will publish a Polish translation of his previous book *Rescue the Surviving Souls: The Great Jewish Refugee Crisis of the 17th Century*. The work is still at a very early stage. Unfortunately, the final publication of the Hebrew translation of that book, which is still in press, has been delayed by the chaos in Israel.

In an exciting development, however, his work has been published for the first time in Spanish: an article on the Jewish suffering during the 1648 Cossack uprising in Ukraine was published in the popular journal of military history, *Desperta Ferro: Historia Moderna*, out of Madrid.

Teller has two academic articles now awaiting publication, the one in an academic journal published in Tel Aviv, the other in a collection of articles on early modern refugees to be issued by Bloomsbury, and earlier in the year, he had the pleasure to present his research at a public lecture at the University of Toronto.

Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar



Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar at an artist talk at Canvas Gallery on June 6, 2023

It’s been an extraordinary year: two collaborative projects that had been hard-hit by the pandemic finally came to publication, and Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar had a solo show and co-curated another. She and the Kolkata-based historian Tapati Guha-Thakurta were able to hold their co-edited book *How Secular is Art? On the Politics of Art, History and Religion in South Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2023) in their hands and assembled some of its contributors and interlocutors for a Book Adda at the Watson Institute in September 2023.

A special issue of the journal *Art Margins* — titled Postcolonialism, Art History and the Global Turn — that Zamindar had been working on with colleagues from RISD and City University of New York finally came out in July 2023. The solo show “Anticolonial,” at a major contemporary art gallery in South Asia (Canvas Gallery, June 6-16, 2023), allowed Zamindar to step out of the book form and show the photography and film-based works she has been making for a monograph-in-progress of the same title.

And, finally, the director of Kunsthalle Taxispalais in Innsbruck Austria invited Zamindar to co-curate a show with her based on a text Zamindar had written, “Borderlanders,” for her sons during the pandemic. The curatorial project took her into studios in Austria and Germany through the summer, and generated some vital conversations on the politics of belonging. When the show opened in Innsbruck — *Ich Bin Anders, Weil Ich Kann Das. Stranger Belongs to Me*, October 26, 2023 through January 28, 2024 — Zamindar was so moved to have one of her sons there, and to share with him this experiment in world-building, even as dark shadows of Gaza had already been cast.



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Undergraduate Program

Reflections from the Director of Undergraduate Studies

Seth Rockman

Director of Undergraduate Studies

Whenever I am asked to name the best thing about being a faculty member at Brown, I invariably answer, “the undergraduates.” For 20 years now, being in the classroom with such smart and curious students has made me smarter, more curious and, frankly, a better historian. Whether working with new college students in first-year seminars or directing the senior theses of our most advanced concentrators, I remain confident that studying history offers undergraduates the indispensable analytical tools for making sense of our world. I have always taken pride in our concentration as both intellectually rigorous and intellectually capacious, offering students substantive knowledge, deployable skills and an appreciation for the complexities of the human condition. It seems fitting that I should now take a term at the helm of our undergraduate program.

Stepping into the position of director of undergraduate studies, I was lucky to inherit a strong program from my predecessor, Holly Case, and to have the support of a judicious cadre of concentration advisors: Tim Harris, Nancy Jacobs, Brian Lander and Jeremy Mumford. Emily Owens had stewarded our honors program with wisdom and compassion. Mary Beth Bryson’s administrative support keeps the program running efficiently. For these reasons, my first year on the job has involved minimal stress and maximal opportunity to engage our concentrators in trying to solve the world’s problems — even when those problems boil down to whether a certain class “satisfies the P requirement.”

But more seriously, our concentrators had the opportunity to interact with a number of leading scholars who passed through our department this year. Under the sponsorship of our Departmental Undergraduate Group (DUG), Professor David Henkin of University of California, Berkeley gave a talk on the surprising history of the seven-day week as



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a cultural artifact. Professor Konstantin Dierks of Indiana University, who earned his doctorate from our department in 1999, returned to speak on Liberian colonization as an element of 19th century American empire building. Professors Daniel Eisenberg and Ellen Rothenberg visited from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago to share their experiences collaborating with historians on an art exhibition exploring the past and future of labor. Many thanks to Janelle Barnett, Toby Berggruen, Owen Blair and Abby Berwick for their work as DUG leaders and for organizing such other events as a screening of Ingmar Bergman's classic *The Seventh Seal* and a pre-finals study session.

During Family Weekend in October, we welcomed back three distinguished alums for an event titled "What Can't You Do with a History Concentration!" Our goal was to showcase the range of careers that our graduates have pursued in recent years, whether in public interest law (as represented by Beth Caldwell '12), finance and consulting (Eddie Uong '21) or public policy (Oriana Shulevitz Rosado '16). Parents who arrived skeptical of their kids' career possibilities left the event fully convinced of the many doors that a history concentration can open.

The 2023-24 academic year was, by most measures, a successful one, even as the events of the world weighed heavily on one and all. Members of the history faculty devoted themselves to supporting students in a time of crisis. The department strove to provide students with opportunities to learn more about the long history of the Israel-Palestine conflict and to think through our own campus's history of student activism and support for constructive dialogue and free expression. None of this was easy (it never is), but it is important to acknowledge this as a central dynamic of the recent months.

In closing, please allow me to offer my warmest congratulations to the Class of 2024 and to their proud families. Graduation provides us the chance to acknowledge our students' many accomplishments and to look forward to reconvening next September for the next chapter of our history together.



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The History Department Undergraduate Group

Janelle Barnett '24, Tobias Berggruen '24, Owen Blair '26 and Abby Berwick '27

This year, the History DUG has embarked on yet another amazing journey with our students, faculty and wider history community from across the University. From panels and talks to movie nights and receptions, we have spent the year fostering connections for our incredible history community, followed always by snacks and absorbing conversations.

To start, we welcomed the new academic year with our celebratory September reception. Under the tiled roof of Peter Green House, we welcomed the Class of 2027 and transfer students, resumed undergraduates and continuing scholars while enjoying the lovely fall day with delicious snacks. Connecting with their peers, professors, mentors and friends, students shared their passion for history and chatted with upperclassmen about their experiences — complete with recommendations, advice and newfound friendships.



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Continuing into the fall semester, we hosted amazing events that brought together first years, upperclassmen, alumni, faculty, visiting professors and family. Following a lovely reception in late September, we held a discussion with David Henkin, the Margaret Byrne Professor of History from University of California, Berkeley, where we discussed his recent book on the 19th century emergence of our current devotion to weekly rhythm in the U.S. During Family Weekend, we brought together family, first years and upperclassmen for our charming “What Can’t You Do With a History Concentration!” conversation with three Brown alumni: appellate public defense attorney and adjunct professor Beth Caldwell ’12, immigrants rights advocate Oriana Shulevitz Rosado ’16, and senior business analyst Eddie Uong ’21. Hearing about their diverse pathways from the history concentration, punctuated with delicious pastries and witty remarks, was an amazing experience!

In a spooky twist, late October found us together as the History DUG for a fun-filled viewing of Ingmar Bergman’s classic film *The Seventh Seal*. Snacking on pizza in Peter Green House, we enjoyed our evening watch of the harrowing and poetic 1950s reimagining of medieval life. In December, we hosted a lunchtime conversation with Professor Konstantin Dierks of Indiana University where we followed his impactful and stunning talk: “African Dreams: Histories of Black Emigration in Antebellum America.” Rounding out the fall semester, we held a fun and relaxing study break where we loaded up with pizza to tackle our finals season.

Starting off the second semester, in February we hosted a fun viewing of season one of *The Crown* where we invited peers and prospective history concentrators to come together to watch. In April, we followed the history department’s screening of filmmaker Daniel Eisenberg’s film *Unstable Object II* with a lunchtime event with Eisenberg and co-curator Ellen Rothenberg. Expanding the usual repertoire of events, these two creators discussed their intersections of artistic practice, academic study and global labor politics. Wrapping up in style, we held a wonderful end-of-year reception in May celebrating the accomplishments of our students and the new and old relationships we strengthened over the course of the year.

Overall, this year has been an incredible experience for undergraduates in history and we cannot believe that it is nearing its end. Reminiscing on these special memories, the people we have met, and the history we have learned, we are so proud of everything our community has accomplished. We thank all of the professors and faculty for their support this year, with a special thanks to Professor Seth Rockman for his endless assistance and encouragement.



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Award Recipients

The John Thomas Memorial Award

To the best thesis in the history department

Maru Attwood

The Skidmore Family and Friends Thesis Prize

To the best thesis in Latin American Studies

Deven Kamlani

The Christian Yegen History Thesis Prize

To outstanding honors theses in the history department

Lola Simon

Naya Chang

The Marjorie Harris Weiss Memorial Premium in History

To an outstanding undergraduate student concentrating in history

Katherine Harty

The Gaspee Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution

To the student who presents the best paper written as a class assignment in an American history course

Emma Gardner

The David Herlihy Prize

To the best student in Medieval or Renaissance history (ancient history is included)

Susannah Paine

R. Douglas Cope Memorial Award

To honor Professor R. Douglas Cope's legacy of service

Logan Danker

Herbert and Claiborne Pell Medal for U.S. History

Awarded annually to one student for excellence in U.S. history.

Emma Gardner



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Honors Recipients

Jodie A. Aguirre

“Viva Los Hijos De La Raza: The Experiences of Mexican American Migrant Working Children in the 20th Century”

Advisor: Mark Ocegueda

Maru F. Attwood

“Footpaths and Fences: A Spatial History of Nsikazi, South Africa”

Advisor: Nancy Jacobs

Finn H. Blomquist Eggerling

“Crying in the Archive: A Trans Biography of Joseph Lobdell”

Advisor: Emily Owens

Naya L. Chang

“Rubber Goods: A History of Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Failure in the Early American Republic”

Advisor: Seth Rockman

Greta A. Filor

“Women at the Margins: Midwives and the Medicalization of Childbirth in New York City, 1900-1930”

Advisor: Robert Self

Emma Gardner

“‘Subversion of the American System’: The John Birch Society’s Opposition to the Black Freedom Movement”

Advisor: Robert Self

Katherine A. Harty

“Sheltering Women: Coverture, Debt, and the Law in Post-Emancipation Virginia”

Advisor: Emily Owens

Deven K. Kamlani

“Beneath the Red Sun: Imagining China During the Brazilian Military Dictatorship”

Advisor: James Green

David I. Pinto

“Showing the Unshowable: The Holocaust in French and American Cinema”

Advisor: Omer Bartov

Evan Sherman

“The bonnets rouges and Beyond: Society, Economic Crisis, and Resistance in Early Modern Brittany”

Advisor: Tim Harris

Lola B. Simon

“Save Yoshida: The Long Fight for Academic Freedom and Student Autonomy at Japan’s Oldest Dormitory”

Advisor: Kerry Smith

Samantha K. Walter

“‘The Real Unicorn’: An Investigation into the Conceptions and Cultural Significance of Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros in the British Empire, 1600-1800”

Advisor: Tara Nummedal



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Graduate Program

Reflections from the Director of Graduate Studies

Jennifer Lambe

Director of Graduate Studies

It has been a busy and exciting year in the life of the history Ph.D. program, from events organized by the new “Intellectual Life” officer of the History Graduate Students Association (HGSA) and the inaugural cohort of Writing Fellows (Sarah Christensen and Stacey Murrell) to the usual rhythm of classes, research, teaching, proctorships and more. Meanwhile, supported by prestigious fellowships (including the Fulbright), our students fanned out all over the globe to initiate, continue and conclude their doctoral research. We have been excited to learn about the results of these trips and see students receive external recognition for their efforts, including postdocs, research associateships, visiting professorships and tenure-track jobs at institutions such as Amherst College, Tufts University, Swarthmore College, Brown University, American University in Bulgaria, the University of Valencia and more. The Department of History and the Graduate School continue to offer robust support for professional development in academic and non-academic sectors in light of continued post-COVID-19 disruptions to doctoral studies and professional placement.

This year the department also launched a number of initiatives to support students at each stage of their work within and beyond the program. This fall saw the debut of History Now, a new seminar in our department’s core Ph.D. curriculum. History Now introduces students to the historical discipline — from archival research to historiographical argumentation and dissertation (and book) writing — while engaging foundational debates about agency and structure, objectivity and presentism, and more. The course also provides structured opportunities to build mentoring networks through visits by department faculty, who discuss their research interests, graduate advising and historical practice more broadly. This year, Michael Vorenberg, our new director of graduate advising, oversaw the Practice of History workshop series in its first year, covering such topics as grants and fellowships, preliminary exams, digital and public history, historical



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writing and more, while working to streamline our department's proctorship process and opportunities. Ethan Pollock (Chair) also launched the new History Dissertation Writing Workshop (a two-semester, half-credit course) to create community for and provide feedback to dissertating students. Meanwhile, our History Graduate Writing Fellows provided structured support to students in two courses in the core Ph.D. sequence as well as more informal consultations to all history Ph.D. students.

This year, we welcomed Amy Remensnyder as our new graduate admissions officer, who expertly oversaw doctoral recruitment and admissions. It was a pleasure to work with her to manage the department's admissions activities, including Preview Day, the fall admissions cycle and Visitation Day in the spring, building on the work of our inaugural admissions officer, Cynthia Brokaw. In collaboration with Mary Beth Bryson, Cherrie Guerzon and Julissa Bautista, who provided critical assistance at all stages of this process, we look forward to further strengthening and streamlining our recruitment and admissions procedures in the year to come. I would also like to express my gratitude to the outgoing and incoming HGSA co-presidents (Paul Aste and Augusta da Silveira de Oliveira, and Georga-Kay White and Haley Price, respectively). It has been a pleasure working with them and the other HGSA officers to build a collegial and dynamic graduate community.

In short, it has been a busy, engaged and exciting year for the history doctoral program. Next year, I look forward to working closely with department students, faculty, and staff in thinking about how to best support the diverse and exciting projects and professional goals of our Ph.D. students.



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Accomplishments of Graduate Students in 2023-24

Betsy Archelus

Received the 2023-24 Steinhaus/Zisson Pembroke Center Research Grant

Max Chervin Bridge

Received Institute at Brown for Environment and Society Research Training and Travel Award

Led development of Choices Resource Guide: Disability History and Studies

Published book review for H-Net of Annalisa Berta's *Sea Mammals: The Past and Present Lives of Our Oceans' Cornerstone Species*

Sarah Christensen

Published article, "[Human-animal entanglements in the early medieval European slave trade: re-reading the Raffelstetten customs regulations](#)," in the journal *Early Medieval Europe*

Gave invited talk at the Paul Helmreich Symposium at Wheaton College on April 16, 2024

Kate Elizabeth Creasey

Received Pembroke Seminar Graduate Student Fellowship

Published essay in *The European Review of Books*, "Moscow on the Med: Two Winters in Istanbul"

Presented paper, "Reframing the Coup d'État of 12 September 1980 as an Ongoing

Event: A View from Diyarbakır Prison No. 5 Through the Drawings of Zehra Doğan and Zülfikar Tak" at the seventh annual conference of the Keyman Modern Turkish Studies Program at Northwestern University in May 2024

Arif Erbil

Published a book chapter, "History-Writing, Political Thought, and Personal Discontent: Küfrân-ı Ni'met as a Double-Edged Sword in Lütfi Paşa's *Tevârîh*," in *Osmanlı'da İlm-i Tarih*, edited by Zahit Atçıl, Ercüment Asil and Cemal Atabaş, 225–53. İstanbul: İSAR Yayınları, 2023.

Published a public exhibition, "[Manuscript Migration: The Multiple Lives of the Rubenstein Library's Collections \[Cherished Chapters: Arabic MS045\]](#)," for the Duke University Libraries, North Carolina, 2023-24

Ebru Erginbas

Presented the paper "Distilling A Hot Commodity: Revitalization of Hydrothermal Therapies and Trans-imperial Medical Knowledge Creation in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire" at Healthscapes Workshop, University of Exeter, Exeter, U.K. July 26-27, 2023.

Presented the paper "In between the Old and the New: The Birth of the First Maternity Hospital in the Ottoman Empire" at Middle East Studies Association 57th



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Annual Meeting in Montreal, Canada.
November 2-5, 2023.

Presented the paper “Medicinal Entanglements: Hydrothermal Therapy and Commodification of Groundwaters” at 2024 Business History Conference: Doing Business in the Public Interest in Providence, Rhode Island. March 14-16, 2024.

Luiz Paulo Ferraz

Received the Mellon Centering Race Consortium (Brown, Yale, and Stanford) Teaching Race Fellowship, 2023-2024

Received the Fall 2023 Global Mobility Research Fellowship

Received the American Historical Association Jerry Bentley World History Travel Grant

Montagu James

Published chapter, “Polish Classical Musicians and Composers in the Early Communist Period,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Non-State Actors in East-West Relations* (2024)

Stacey E. Murrell

Published “Unknown: A Concubine by Many Names” in *Portraits of Medieval Europe*

Presented “Sicily and the Kaleidoscope of Mediterranean Concubinage, c.1071-1410 CE” at the Medieval Academy of America in March 2024

Accepted a tenure-track position as an

assistant professor in the Department of History at Amherst College

Augusta (Guta) da Silveira de Oliveira

Presented the paper “‘Operation Dyke’: Lesbians under Attack during the Brazilian Dictatorship” at the 2024 American Historical Association Annual Meeting

Received 2023 Committee on LGBT History Research Support Grant

Received 2023 Pembroke Center Research Development Grant for Graduate Students

Emily Roche

Published article, “No Song for Birds in Flight: The Life and Afterlife of Suicide in the Warsaw Ghetto,” in *Slavic Review*

Published article, “Building Through the Flames: Jewish Architects in Occupied Warsaw,” in *Studia Rossica Posnaniensia* (forthcoming)

Presented at the annual conference of the Society of Architectural Historians conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, April 2024

Lillian Tsay

Received the D. Kim Foundation Dissertation Fellowship

Stephanie Wong

Nominated for James Beard Foundation Media Award

Started position as social sciences writer at the University of Michigan College of Literature, Science and the Arts



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Doctor of Philosophy, 2023-24

René R. Cordero

“Reimagining Political Futures: Student Activism, Youth Politics and the Rise of Anti-Racism in the Dominican Republic, 1930-1978”

Director: Jennifer Lambe

Keegan Cothorn

“Long Shadows Downstream: Disaster, Developmentalism, and Rebuilding Postwar Japan”

Director: Kerry Smith

Stacey Murrell

“The Secret Life of Concubines: Power Consolidation and Motherhood in the Western Mediterranean, c. 900-1520”

Director: Amy Remensnyder

Emily Julia Roche

“The Necessity of Building: The Architects Who Built Modern Poland”

Director: Omer Bartov

Jenny Lhamo Tso Tsundu

“How A Place Moves: Bratsk, 1917-1991”

**Director: Holly Case and
Bathsheba Demuth**

MASTER OF ARTS, 2023-24

Shih-Yu Juan

Jack W. Montgomery

David O. Ogoru

Christopher M. Woods

Isaac S. Mensah



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The Gleason Fund

A generous gift leads to lasting impact for the Department of History

Ruth Kissin Helman '73 was in the first class that followed the “new curriculum” at Brown. She went on to receive a degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy before undertaking a long career as a teacher at the Brearley School in New York City. She remembered her time at Brown fondly, especially the chance to take independent study courses in history. She singled out Abbott “Tom” Gleason as particularly influential in furthering her interests in Russia. Gleason was a professor at Brown from 1968 until he retired in 2005. He chaired the history department, was active at the Watson Institute for International Affairs, and was the author of two books on Russian history, one book on totalitarianism, and a memoir titled *A Liberal Education*. He was also a beloved teacher.

When Helman died in 2019, she left a substantial gift to Brown to set up two things — the Abbott Gleason University Professorship in Russian History and the Abbott Gleason History Department Discretionary Fund. The first holder of the named chair is Ethan Pollock, who was hired as the school’s Russian historian after Gleason retired. Currently the discretionary fund is being used by the department to support a postdoctoral position in the department and to develop relationships with historically Black colleges and universities, in honor of Gleason’s own formative experiences teaching at Tougaloo College in the early 1960s.



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Helman remained in contact with Gleason and his wife Sarah over the years. Sarah Gleason, who still resides in Providence, was pleased to learn about the professorship endowed in Gleason's name and the additional support that Helman's generosity has given to the history department. In a recent conversation, she offered insight into Gleason's life and legacy and the impact of the Gleason Fund at Brown.

Tell us about Tom (Professor Gleason). What was he particularly passionate about? How did his interests evolve as his career progressed?

Sarah Gleason: "Painting for Tom was the road not taken. Beginning in his high school years at St. Alban's, under the mentorship of renowned art teacher Dean Stambaugh, he began to spend long hours in the art studio. He developed a Cezanne-like style, listening to classical music and forgetting all the pressures of life. I have many of Tom's paintings from these years and later, as step by step he became an excellent artist, gradually moving into abstraction. Painting became a mainstay of his life, continuing in summers in Vermont and on the Rhode Island coast. When he developed Parkinson's disease, painting became a lifeline — a creative outlet he could continue as words became more inaccessible. In one of the marvelous short essays he wrote about enduring Parkinson's, he quoted Hiroshige, 'I am an old man, crazy about painting.'

The other great love he developed in his teens was his passion for jazz. He began by visiting jazz clubs in D.C., befriending musicians and gradually building a large record collection (including classical and traditional Celtic music). He seemed able to identify any jazz musician he heard on a record. He developed friendships over jazz, particularly with student friends John Lax and Oren Jacoby.

I marvel at Tom's ability to maintain such friendships while pursuing serious scholarship in Russian and Eastern European history. He worked intensely on his several books and articles, each reflecting a passionate interest at the time he worked on them.

Finally, his connection to each place in his life was hugely important to Tom. He spent his first 12 summers on Spring Farm in Connecticut (purchased by his grandfather in the 1930s) and this remained a spiritual reference point all his life. And our house in Fox Point, where he lived for nearly 50 years, was another canvas on which he could create a visual projection of his life and passions."



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Tell us about Professor Gleason's time at Tougaloo College.

“The summer of 1964, which Tom spent teaching at Tougaloo as part of a Harvard project bringing faculty and graduate students to Mississippi, to help at Tougaloo, was enormously important to him (and is the subject of a chapter in *A Liberal Education*). When he came to Brown, he continued to be active in Brown's Tougaloo Project. I remember hosting Tougaloo students here in Providence — they may have been applying to Brown Medical School, if I remember correctly.”

How does the Gleason Fund commemorate your husband's legacy? How do you hope to see it grow in the future?

“The department's plans are thrilling to me, and would have been to Tom, of course. I know Tom's time at Tougaloo and participation in Freedom Summer led to his lifelong commitment to combat racism in the small ways available to him. So this plan to develop relationships with HBCUs is really big.

The department's current chair, Ethan Pollock, is in fact the perfect person to shape Ruth's donation as Tom would have wished. Ethan and Tom were good friends and both are/were committed to strengthening the field of Russian history. Putin's war on Ukraine has made study in the field very difficult in recent years (particularly for would-be graduate students). Ethan, as was Tom, is especially sympathetic to the needs of graduate students, so graduate student support in this way is great.”

What would it mean to Professor Gleason to know that a professorship has been endowed in his name?

“Tom would have been thrilled by having this chair named in his honor, as it symbolizes his dedication to Brown and to the history department, his deep commitment to the field of Russian history, and the pride he took in mentoring his students throughout his career.”

The Department of History offers its sincere gratitude and thanks to Sarah Gleason for describing the life and legacy of her late husband. We are honored to highlight the immense impact that gifts such as Helman's have on our department, its students and our community as a whole.



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