Public History Newsletter Spring 2014

Public History Concentration

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In celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the Public History Program, the third annual Public History Graduate Symposium’s theme was “Legacy: The Future is Our History.” An all-student committee planned the symposium with the help of Dawne Dewey: Sarah Aisenbrey, Adam Becker, Jessica Cromer, Sara Fisher, Kaitlyn Goss, and Rebekkah Mulholland. These students secured George Willeman, the Nitrate Film Vault Manager for the Library of Congress and an alumnus (1988) of the Motion Picture and Film Department at WSU, as the plenary speaker. The symposium featured seven student presenters in three sessions and five student posters which were sponsored by Public History alumni and Public History Professionals. Session One, World War I: Over Here, Over There was moderated by Dr. Paul Lockhart and focused on personalities of World War I in the greater Dayton area. Session Two, Local History: Sense of Place was moderated by Mary Oliver. This session focused on interpreting local history through exhibits, the built environment, and publications. Session Three, Women with Nerve, was moderated by Dr. Nancy Garner. This session focused on two women who made a profound impact – locally, internationally, and globally: Dorothy Stang and Virginia Kettering. The symposium was attended by Public History alumni, the WSU community, and the wider Dayton community; it was sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts Dean’s Office, the Department of History, and the Department of Theatre, Dance, and Motion Pictures.
A typical day for me as a Curator at the National Museum of the United States Air Force has me working on many diverse exhibit projects while keeping up with my primary duty for the accountability for the artifact collection. I am a Curator, a Project Manager for specific exhibits, and our firearms and munitions expert. Some days I attend numerous meetings to coordinate exhibit needs or to update our Data Dictionary that is utilized for cataloging. I am currently involved in the planning for the construction of our new 4th Building project. Our additional building, scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2015, will create 229,000 square feet of additional exhibit space. In addition I am the Project Manager for the Global Reach Gallery that will be housed in the 4th Building. A typical Tuesday for me: attend the Exhibits Coordination meeting where I and my co-project manager report on the Southeast Asia Phase III exhibits and the progress on the 4th Building design, construction, exhibits, and action items. During that meeting I also advise on proper exhibit furniture, lighting, storage, artifact handling, and coordinate artifact movements. Following that is the Collections Committee which makes decisions on all acquisitions and dispositions of excess artifacts and property. In that meeting I advise as a subject matter expert on the collection as whole, though particularly for firearms and munitions. In the afternoon, my co-project manager or I provide updates on the exhibits in the Southeast Asia Gallery as well as the 4th Building to the Director of the museum and Division Chiefs. In between meetings, I am cataloging new accessions, answering research requests internally, from other institutions, and from the public. An atypical day for me, which are frequent, could have me doing a variety of interesting and exciting tasks that are vital to the Museum’s mission. These tasks can range from crawling inside World War II aircraft to inventoriting firearms, assembling bombs to go on exhibit, or working with donors who participated in classified and/or courageous missions. Perhaps the most rewarding of all, meeting our visitors who were witness to the actual events we depict in a particular exhibit, hearing their story, and seeing them emotionally moved by the experience. My public history degree from Wright State University serves as the basis from which I make informed and ethical decisions for the National Museum’s collection for a variety of projects and situations. Just as important, my colleagues who also graduated from the program are tremendous resources for me to utilize for a variety of topics.
Student Awards and Achievements

Sarah Aisenbrey was awarded Outstanding History Department Graduate Student by the College of Liberal Arts.

Seth Marshall received the School of Graduate Studies Excellence Award for Outstanding Graduate Student in the Public History Program.

Phi Alpha Theta Inductees: Casey Huegel, Marcus Manchester, Seth Marshall, Kyle Yoho

Graduate Assistantships: Adam Becker, Jordan Countryman, Sara Fisher, Evan Mason, Jessica Sells

Continuing Student Scholarships: Bemba Diarra, Zachary Moore
“William Preston Mayfield: Life through the Lens,” mounted by the 2014 Historical Interpretation and Exhibits class, opened on April 11. The exhibit, at Dayton History’s Carillon Park, focuses on the photographs of prominent Dayton photographer William Preston Mayfield. He began working for the Dayton Daily News at the age of 14 and his career lasted for several decades. The photos in the exhibit range from 1910 to the early 1970s and depict aviation, aerial views, people, and businesses in and around Dayton, Ohio. The exhibit also tells the story of cameras during the same time. Dayton History provided the photographs for the exhibit. The objects and cameras were provided by Marvin Christian, an original donor, and Richard Sells. The class consisted of eight members, each with specific jobs: project manager, artifact hunters, label copy writers, graphics, event planner, media relations and budget, and education. Mary Oliver, Director of Collections at Dayton History, taught the class and assisted the students with the exhibit process, from the conception of the idea to the opening.

Evan Mason, the exhibit’s project manager, explained that he found the process extremely rewarding. “My favorite part was selecting photos and objects to tell the story.”

The exhibit will run through January 2015 at Carillon Historical Park, 1000 Carillon Blvd., Dayton, OH 45409.

Susie Lange, Evan Mason, and Joshua Wieser mounting the exhibit.

Left to Right: Georgia Fenton, Kaitlyn Crabtree, Evan Mason, Kyle Pitzer, Mary Oliver, Michael Moss, Susie Lange, Joshua Wieser, Jessica Sells, Sara Fisher

The completed exhibit.
Alumni News

Tanya Zanish-Belcher (’90), Director of Special Collections for Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC, recently edited (with Anke Voss) Perspectives on Women’s Archives (2013), published by the Society of American Archivists: http://saa.archivists.org/store/perspectives-on-womens-archives/3334/.

Brittany (Guerra) Snider (’11) married on March 7 and started a new position as an Archive Technician at a civil engineering firm, EMH&T, in New Albany, OH.

Sarah Aisenbrey (‘14) will start a new position in May as the CLIR Registrar for the Dayton Society of Natural History in Dayton, OH.

Rebekkah Mulholland (‘14) was accepted into doctoral programs at the University of Memphis (where she was offered a Teaching Assistantship in the History Department), Howard University, and the University of Louisville.

Victoria Penno (’14) started a new position as a Part-time Processing Archivist at the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, OH.

Noel Rihm (‘13) started a new position as a Collections Assistant at the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, OH.

Sarah Deffinger (’14) will start a new position in May in the Local History and Genealogy Department at the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

Leona Sargent (’12) started a new position as Exhibit Coordinator for the Troy-Hayner Cultural Center in Troy, Ohio. She is also a contractor for the Garst Museum in Greenville, Ohio.

Public History Professionals

The new student organization, Public History Professionals, was a great success for its first year. The organization serves as a means of introducing Public Historians to their professions, whether they are in museums, archives, or other similar institutions. Also, Public History Professionals aims to enhance the education of its members by providing opportunities for service in the field, as well as membership in professional organizations and participation in professional activities. Students went on field trips to Clark County Historical Society, Carriage Hill Farm, the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center, Woodland Cemetery, and the Mound Science and Energy Museum. They also participated in professional resume workshops. This year’s officers were: Sarah Aisenbrey, President; Marcus Manchester, Vice President; Jessica Cromer, Treasurer; Kyle Pitzer, Secretary; and Kaitlyn Goss, Social Chair.
The mission of the Public History program at Wright State University is to prepare professionals who are well-grounded in knowledge of historical content, professional training, and hands-on experience.

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http://www.wright.edu/cola/Dept/hst/pubhst/index.html

Doing Public History the “Wright” Way since 1974.

CONGRATULATIONS SPRING 2014 GRADUATES!

Sarah Aisenbrey  
Jessica Cromer  
Sarah Deffinger  
Kaitlyn Goss  
Caroline Ibbotson  
Seth Marshall  
Heather Miller  
Rebekkah Mulholland  
Victoria Penno  
Kyle Pitzer  
Karis Raeburn  
Kyle Yoho