Public History Newsletter Spring 2015

Public History Concentration

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On March 13, 2015, current students, faculty, alumni, community members, and ten prospective students converged on Wright State University’s Apollo Room for the 4th Annual Wright State University Public History Graduate Symposium. This year’s theme was *History Through a Prism: Untold Stories*. College of Liberal Arts Dean, Kristin Sobolik, officially kicked off the event with the official welcome. Wright State alumnus, and Emmy-Award-Winning filmmaker, Adam White highlighted one outlet to telling “untold stories” - historical documentaries. Interviewing individuals who lived through and experienced first-hand events in history, like the Tuskegee Airmen or the Women Air Service Pilots (WASPs), is important to shedding new light on history - much like a prism. It is the purpose of Public Historians to make history available to the public and what better way than through gatherings like the Graduate Symposium and documentaries?

*History Through a Prism: Untold Stories* featured a wide range of topics including: Public Archaeology, Edward Keever in the tank corps during The Great War, the AIDS Memorial Quilt, Johnson’s Island, Heidelberg’s Octagon House, the Sells Brother’s Circus, Sachs-Pruden Brewing Company, Dayton’s Hog Bottom neighborhood, and the importance of the Dayton Interurban. Additionally, five students designed and researched posters on the history of Fairborn, desegregation of the Dayton Schools, the importance of oral histories, William King Moorehead and Fort Ancient, and Dayton’s Centre City building. Thank you to all of the student presenters: Jacqueline Heiss, Fayellee Conley, Evan Mason, James McKinnon, Sara Fisher, Susanne Lange, Jessica Sells, Adam Becker, Jonathan Curtis, Leigh McCormick, Kaitlyn Crabtree, Shelby Dixon, Samantha Green, Georgia Evans, and Nina Herzog.

The Public History program would not be as successful as it is without the generous support of its alumni and community partners. Dr. Charles Wash, Executive Director at the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center in Wilberforce, Chris Burton, Executive Director at the Armstrong Air and Space Museum in Wapakoneta, and Steve Lucht, Lead Interpreter at Dayton History graciously served as our moderators. Finally, the 4th Annual Wright State Public History Graduate Symposium would not have been possible without the support from: the WSU College of Liberal Arts Dean’s Office and Department of History, National Aviation Heritage Alliance, Public History Alumni: David Gray, Lorrie Montero & the American Pigeon Museum, Karen Jean Hunt, and Tina Ratcliff, Public History Professionals Student Organization, and the WSU Special Collections & Archives.
I rarely experience what I would call a typical day while working in the division of Culture and the Arts at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. I am a project specialist who deals primarily with our Entertainment Collection. As such, I often get pulled to work on whatever projects come in. It can be quite hectic, but I love constantly being busy. I love that I can spend one day cataloging and spend the next day discussing possible exhibits. Our Entertainment Collection encompasses film, television, radio, circuses, puppetry, theater, and musical theater. I have worked with many of these sub-categories in the past – doing everything from de-tangling marionette puppet strings (more difficult than it looks) to helping dress a mannequin in a Wolverine costume, to re-housing Kermit the Frog.

Though I work closely with a number of people from our division and others, I collaborate the most with our Entertainment History curator, Dwight Blocker Bowers. Not long ago I finished an extensive project to make sure that all of the musical theater costumes, props, and playbills were correctly cataloged. This project assisted the division, but also allowed Dwight and me to determine any gaps in our collection and talk about how they can be filled. It is our hope to have this collection represented on the web shortly with plans to do a full exhibit sometime in the future. Projects like these are always needed, but they have become especially critical to the museum at the moment. It is an exciting time of change and innovation at the National Museum of American History.

The West Wing has been under renovation for some time now and the first floor is finally slated to open this summer. The third floor renovation, which is where Culture and the Arts division will have its exhibitions, is not going to open until 2018. Our division and collections are represented throughout the museum in other exhibitions, but on a much smaller scale than we have been accustomed. It has been especially important for us to make sure that the public has access to our collections in other ways because of the renovation. Last week, I assisted with a MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) film shoot in our collections room that will allow the public to view our comic book collection and have it explained and contextualized for them by experts.

While we are preparing for future exhibits, we are also constantly collecting. It is often my job to research potential objects, collections,
or donors who would be a valuable addition to our collections. The same week as our MOOC filming, we hosted a highly publicized donation ceremony for the objects we accepted from the AMC television show, “Mad Men.” I was able to follow this project from the researching of the companies to their donation. Likely, I will also be the one to catalog the objects. I have been very lucky in my job that I get to use almost every aspect of my education from Wright State, both the museum studies courses as well as the archive courses. I continue to grow my knowledge by working with experts in my field on a daily basis. In Washington, DC, the museum studies program is the well-known place to go for your degree. People are quickly learning not to discount a degree from Wright State and I am happy to say that, through the good works of the students, past and present, Wright State is making a name for itself here in the nation’s capitol.

**You saw Sam setting up the display for the “Mad Men” donation ceremony. Now, read the editorial about the actual event! [http://bit.ly/1Bueibp]**

Public History is now a Concentration!

In 1974, the Wright State University Department of History began offering classes on archival studies. Over the years the list of courses offered to students interested in pursuing Public History has continued to grow and now offers classes in both archives and museums, as well as site interpretation and professional development. During this time, Public History remained designated as “Plan-C”. However, a change is in the air.

Beginning with the incoming class in Fall 2015, Public History will be officially offered as a concentration. When applying, students will have the ability to specifically state whether they intend to pursue Public History, the thesis route, course intensive, War & Society, or the Public History/War & Society hybrid now being offered as concentrations through the Masters in Arts in History.
More Than a Mascot:
Native Americans and Popular Culture

The 2015 Museum Interpretation and Exhibits class created and installed the exhibit, “More Than a Mascot: Native Americans in Popular Culture” which opened on April 25, 2015, at Sunwatch Indian Village.

This year’s class includes: Adam Becker, Fayelee Conley, Mitchell Dorsten, Samantha Green, Jacqueline Heiss, Leigh McCormick, Kathleen Walters, Jordan Utterback, and Justin Risner. Each student had different responsibilities to help complete the project. Fayelee Conley served as Project Manager, Samantha Green and Mitchell Dorsten selected artifacts and photographs, Kathleen Walters served as the Media Relations coordinator and maintained the budget, Leigh McCormick coordinated the opening reception, Adam Becker and Justin Risner researched the artifacts and photographs, Jacqueline Heiss served as the Graphics Designer, and Jordan Utterback worked on education. All of this was supervised by the class’s instructor, Lynn Hanson, the Vice-President of Collections and Research at the Boonshoft Museum of Discovery.

This exhibition focuses on portrayals of Native Americans in advertisements, sports, and entertainment in which Native American stereotypes appear through caricatures, cartoons, noble savages, and the universal Indian.

“More Than a Mascot” includes open ended questions that allow visitors to come up with their own thoughts and opinions on how and why Native Americans are depicted in certain ways in popular culture. The way the class did this was through combining modern advertisements, sports logos, and movies that depict Native Americans with actual images and objects used by different tribes. Another main aspect of the exhibition is emphasizing that not all Native Americans fall under the same image or representation. There were and still are many different Native American tribes in North America with their own practices, beliefs, and living styles.

As project manager, Fayelee Conley’s favorite part was meeting with local Native Americans and choosing artifacts to go into the exhibition. Many of the students found it both chal-
lenging and rewarding to make sure that all aspects of the exhibition respect Native American culture through properly presenting this idea. All of the students expressed that they are now more aware of cultural stereotypes in today’s movies, fashion, sports, and products and they hope to pass on this awareness to others through this exhibition.

Written by: Fayelee Conley

What are They up to Now? Alumni Update

Tony Wright (1999) was hired as the City Archives Officer for the city of Grand Rapids, MI.

Casey Huegel (2013) wrote an essay based on his research for a photograph exhibit, and it is going to be published in the Ohio History Journal. The title is “The Wright Brothers’ Early Photography: A Research Note” and will appear in Volume 123 of the journal in March 2016. Casey was recently promoted from Park Guide to Museum Technician at the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical park.

Evan Mason (2015) began work as an Aviation Interpreter at the National Aviation Hall of Fame, operated by Dayton History, and is based at the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

Jessica Sells (2015) started work as an Assistant Registrar at the Ohio History Connection.

Steve Hussman (1989) was recently named the Director of Special Collections at the University of Arizona, University Libraries.

Victoria Penno (2014) accepted a position as the Collections Assistant at Dayton History.

Adam Becker (2015) will begin an internship with CareSource in May 2015.

Kyle Yoho (2014) started work as the Educational Director at the Castle in Marietta, OH.

Karis Raeburn (2014), archivist at the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother Provincial Office in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, was named the 2015 recipient of the Midwest Archives Conference Emeritus Scholarship for first-time meeting attendees.

Jenifer Baker (2015) is the new Deputy Archivist for the Warren County Records Center and Archives.

Rise, Shine and Give! To Public History

One of the amazing things about our alumni and community partners is the continued support of the Public History Concentration. By giving to Public History, you are able to help support scholarships and projects for our students and help Public History continue to thrive! If you are interested in giving, please go to the Foundation website, link provided here https://www.wright.edu/php-bin/advancement/giving/give.php?site=ADV&action=get_designations&cat_id=5 and make sure to designate Public History Fund. Thank you for all of your continued support!
Congratulations to the 2015 Award Recipients

**Phi Alpha Theta**, National History Honor Society

2015 Inductees: Mitchell Dorsten, Samantha Green, Kathleen Walters, and Heather Webb

**Carl Becker Memorial Scholarship**, awarded to a continuing student pursuing Public History at Wright State University.

2015 Award Winner: Justin Risner

**ARMA Scholarship**, presented to student interested in Records Management.

2015 Award Winner: Nina Herzog

**Graduate Assistantships**, Department of History:

Shelby Dixon, Samantha Green, Jacqueline Heiss, James McKinnon

**Graduate Assistantships**, Robert & Elaine Stein Galleries:

Fayelee Conley

**Society of Ohio Archivists**, student scholarship to the annual meeting. This award was given to only two students in Ohio, and they are WSU Public History students:

Shelby Dixon, Nina Herzog

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**EXTRA!**

**EXTRA!**

**READ ALL ABOUT IT!!**

All Public History Newsletters are now available on CORE Scholar! We have all the issues from 2007 to present uploaded. See how far we’ve come and how our alumni and students continue to excel! Be on the lookout for more content on CORE Scholar in the coming year.

[http://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/public_history_comm/](http://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/public_history_comm/)
A Special Thank you to John Armstrong!

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a member of the Public History graduate adjunct faculty and a staff member in Special Collections and Archives here at Wright State. John Armstrong will be leaving WSU the end of May after 14 years of service. John retired from the United States Air Force in 1997, having achieved the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He already possessed an MS in Counseling from Creighton University and a BS in Education from Ohio University, but decided to add an MA in History/Public History from WSU in 2001. John began working as a professional archivist in Special Collections and Archives that same year. During his years at WSU, John also taught Introduction to Archives and Manuscripts, Advanced Archives, and Archival Records Technology. John has been a tremendous asset to the archives’ team and to Public History at WSU. He and his wife Susan plan to travel more and I am sure John will be out on the golf course as much as possible. Please join me in thanking John and wishing him well in the years ahead.

-Dawne
Spring 2015 Field Study: Lexington, Kentucky

After traveling to Columbus last semester, the Public History Field Study class went to Lexington, Kentucky. Fortunately for the trip’s participants, the March weather afforded a beautiful and sunny weekend. In total, the Field Study focused on the methods and presentation of three different historic sites: the Mary Todd Lincoln House, the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, and the Kentucky Horse Park.

The first destination was the Mary Todd Lincoln House. Located in a recently rejuvenated part of the city of Lexington, the House has overcome its spatial limitations and has embraced current opportunities to produce a successful historic home. The generation of an effective presentation of a historic home may seem to be a lost art, but the leadership of the Mary Todd Lincoln House has utilized the home’s first-rate docents to create a valuable learning environment. After the tour, the group was given a behind-the-scenes meeting with the Museum’s Director. Here the students listened to the director describe the challenges that the home faced because of its location in a growing section of Lexington and learned of the importance of seeking opportunities that may be hidden within obstacles.

After a daunting ride through the cliffs of the Kentucky River Palisades, the next stop of the Field Study was the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill. Unlike the Mary Todd Lincoln House, the Shaker Village has an abundance of land. While the Mary Todd Lincoln House embraces a more traditional role, the Shaker Village is determined to create a broad ranging set of programs to bring in visitors. After a tour, students were shown some of the newer programs and were able to get a sneak peak at other programs that are planned.

The last day of the Field Study trip was spent at the Kentucky Horse Park. Similar to the Shaker Village, the Kentucky Horse Park has immense plots of land. Although entertainment through horse shows are a major part of the site, the Kentucky Horse Park offers several programs and exhibits that are designed to compel its visitors to gain a greater appreciation of the horse. The greatest push for historical education is at the Park’s International Museum of the Horse. The Museum’s main exhibit chronicles the history of the horse and shows the significance of the developments in the use of horses in the history of man. Like the Shaker Village, the Kentucky Horse Park employs a variety of programs to instruct its visitors.

This similarity highlights an important theme of the Field Study trip. In the field of Public History, historical sites can utilize a wide-ranging
assortment of presentation techniques to educate the public. The Mary Todd Lincoln House adopted a traditional model and discovered it was successful. The Shaker Village and the Kentucky Horse Park utilize a variety of presentation methods and are looking for new ways to grow. Both models can be valid paths in the field of Public History and depend on the unique circumstances of a site.

Written by: Jordan Countryman

Graduating Students’ Capstone Projects, 2014-2015

Jenifer Baker
- Processed archives collected by the Knights of Lithuania and made the information available to researchers interested in its content.

Adam Becker & Jordan Countryman
- Created archives and records retention policy as well as a small museum for The Glen at St. Joseph, a local non-profit organization in Dayton.

Rajib Chaudurhi
- Gained experience with records destruction, records inventory, and updated records as part of the inventory at Sinclair Community College.

Kaitlyn Crabtree & Susanne Lange
- Completed a collections management project that included an artifact storage renovation at The National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center.

Bemba Diarra
- Revised the disaster preparedness and security procedure for Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana.

Georgia Evans & Sara Fisher

Evan Mason
- Annotated Edward Keever’s memoire, Shorty in the Tank Corp.

Leigh McCormick
- Researched and created three stories about the Dayton Interurban. These stories are told from the point of view of the conductors, workers, and passengers detailing what it was like to ride the Interurban.

Michael Moss
- Interviewed and recorded oral histories from individual members of the John Pirelli Lodge, originally the Societa di Mutuo Soccorso Italianana, Dayton, Ohio, on the immigrant experience.

Jessica Sells
- Wrote a free, accessible self-assessment checklist for small museums and historical societies. It is comprised of several sections including: collections management, preservation, core documents, administration, interpretation and programming, and outreach and funding and was completed at Greene County Historical Society.

Jason Swiatkowski
- Selected and implemented an artifact control program to establish physical and intellectual control over the Dayton International Peace Museum’s collections.

Joshua Wieser
The mission of Public History at Wright State University is to prepare professionals who are well-grounded in knowledge of historical content, professional training, and hands-on experience.

Dawne Dewey
Director of Public History

Dr. Carol Herringer
Chair, Department of History

Dr. Kathryn Meyer
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http://liberal-arts.wright.edu/history/programs/graduate/public-history-plan

Congratulations to the May 2015 Graduates!

Jenifer Baker
Adam Becker
Rajib Chaudhuri
Jordan Countryman
Kaitlyn Crabtree
Bemba Diarra
Georgia Evans
Sara Fisher
Susanne Lange
Evan Mason
Leigh McCormick
Michael Moss
Jessica Sells
Jason Swiatkowski
Joshua Wieser