

Making History

A Newsletter for Alumni and Friends



The Public History Program
at NC State University

Summer 2011

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

In April 2011, Dr. Judy Kertész and I attended the annual meeting of the National Council on Public History in Pensacola, Florida. Already, the humidity was stifling, so rather than lounge about on the beaches, we actually participated in the conference. At a breakfast meeting, one participant made a statement that has stuck with me: "Public History is how we make people realize that history is still important."

There are, of course, many potential definitions for Public History, but I am struck by the relevance of this definition to our time. In his recently published *Tangled Webs: How False Statements Are Undermining America*, Pulitzer Prize winner James B. Stewart examines a "perjury outbreak" in America's court system, an epidemic that is symptomatic of a broader ethical breakdown that includes our faith in the historical truth. Simply watch MSNBC or Fox News to see how readily politicians and journalists perjure the past by revising history on a whim to fit the argument of the moment.

Public History offers an opportunity, then, to restore faith in history as a reliable source of ethical and moral lessons. As Americans search for moral clarity and leadership, we can offer them their own pasts—national, regional, local, and familial. In the late 16th century, Francis Bacon wrote of *historia* as a knowledge rooted in memory (in contrast to science which is supported by reason, and poetry which is informed by fantasy). As memory keepers, Public Historians (and indeed all of us) face an unprecedented call to activism—to revitalize history.

"THE REAL WAR WILL NEVER GET IN THE BOOKS": THE PUBLIC HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR

The 150th anniversary of the American Civil War provides a unique opportunity to explore the many ways that public and academic historians can work together to engage general audiences at battlefields, historic sites, and museums across the country. On Saturday, March 26, 2011, the History Department hosted a symposium to facilitate discussions among Civil War interpreters, museum curators, and scholars about how to convey integrated narratives of military, social, and political history.

Over one hundred attendees enjoyed panels on "Managing Public Perceptions of Abraham Lincoln," "Beyond the Bone Saw: Reimagining Civil War Medicine," "The Sesquicentennial and Historic Sites: A North Carolina Perspective," "Reclaiming Invisible Pasts: Utilizing the Sesquicentennial to Re-Imagine the Interpretations of the Civil War Era," and "The Not-so-Better Angels of Our Nature: 'De-Sanitizing' Interpretation at Civil War Battlefields and Prison Sites in the Search for a More Usable Past." The keynote address was presented by John Hennessy, chief historian at the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Historic Park. He spoke on "Historians or Memorialists? The Challenge of Public History and the Civil War."

For more information on the conference and to view videos of the presentations, visit [the conference website](#). For a participant's assessment of the conference, visit Kevin Levine's blog on "[Declaring Victory](#)."

THE CLASS OF 2012

This summer, members of the class of 2012 are completing their internships. As you can see by the institutions in which they chose to work, their interests are wide-ranging. If you live near the sites of these internships, please consider meeting and treating a graduate student to dinner.

Anna Abrams will be working with collection as an archival intern at the Historic Columbia (S.C.) Foundation.

Stephanie Barnwell will be processing home movies in the Moving Images Archives at Duke Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Special Collections.

Katherine Ely's internship will be with the summer children's programs at the North Carolina Museum of History.

Erin Glant will be at the Greensboro (N.C.) Historical Museum, working with their military collection.

Emily Hanna will be working with archives at the Interlochen Center for the Arts in Michigan.

Brynn Hoffman will be working in the Military Collection in the North Carolina State Archives.

Marjorie Merod will be in the department of education and programming at the National Museum of American History in Washington D.C.

Jennifer Miller will be interning at Bennett Place in Durham where she will be researching, reinterpreting, and producing an exhibit on the Confederate surrender.

Samantha Rich will be an interpretive guide and working with the curator at the Jamestown/Yorktown Foundation in Virginia.

Cathy Semones will work at the Raleigh City Museum. She will develop educational programs for children's groups.

Allyson Smailly will intern at the Connecticut Historical Society, processing collections and helping to develop the Connecticut History Online website.

Amanda Smith will be developing educational programming at the North Carolina State Archives.

Rachel Trent will be working on audio media processing at the North Carolina State Archives.

TRIP TO COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

Thanks to the generosity of department chair Jonathan Ocko, in early April, sixteen first- and second-year museology and archival students traveled to Colonial Williamsburg where they toured facilities and met with professionals.



Archival students meet with Taylor Stoermer, lead historian on CW's American Revolution website. Students also toured the Media Production facilities and CW's Special Collections. →



Drs. Friend and Kertész . . . pilloried!

← Museology students on a furniture tour of the Everard House. Students also toured the DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum and met with a curator of a folk art exhibit.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



From 2006 to 2010, **Bill Alley (1991)** served as manager and curator of the [Pearson Air Museum](#). He now serves as the for [The Flying Walrus](#), a "reliquary for the detritus of the imagination."

Joy Raintree (2001) is park manager at [Redcliffe Plantation State Historic Site](#) in Beech Island, South Carolina. The 369-acre plantation site features two extant slave quarters, stables, and fully furnished 13,000 sq. ft. mansion. Joy began working at Redcliffe as a park interpreter in 2002 and was promoted to manager in 2004. She serves on the Professional Development Committee for the SC Federation of Museums and regularly presents at the yearly conference on topics ranging from curatorial to interpretation to site management. Joy also juggles life with her children: Lily (4 years old), Reid (2), and Wade (1).



Erin Bradford (2005) is the genealogy reference librarian at the [State Library of North Carolina](#).

Kaitlyn Lloyd (2009) is the distance learning coordinator at the [NC Museum of History](#) where she manages the media center and the History-in-a-Box program, which allows students to experience "field trips" to the museum without leaving their classrooms.

We'd like to include you in our next—Where Are They Now? Please help us update our alumni records. Let us know where you have worked, what you are doing now, and how we can find you (if indeed you want to be found!). A brief biographical blurb for future use in *Making History* would be appreciated. Email your information to the [Director of Public History](#). Also visit the department's website for more news about the program, and especially the [alumni section](#) where you can leave information about yourself and connect with other alumni.

NCSU GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

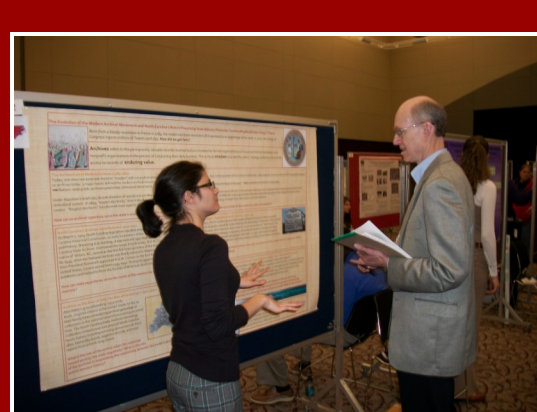
In March 2011, three public history students presented posters at the annual NCSU Graduate Student Research Symposium. The goals of the symposium are to showcase the outstanding quality and diversity of graduate-level research at NC State, in addition to providing students with the opportunity to practice their communication skills with those outside of their discipline. This was the first time that the program has been represented at the symposium, and we are quite honored that one of our presenters—Caroline Muglia—finished in the top five.



← Kendra Erickson produced a poster entitled "Preserving Homes Through Historic Preservation Agreements," based upon her work with the Chapel Hill Preservation Society.



Caroline Muglia presented on "The Evolution of the Modern Archival Movement and North Carolina's Role in Preserving State History." →



← Josh Hager's "Contributing to a Community's Collective Memory Through Archives: Three Practical Approaches" represented his work with Duke University's Special Collections.

Support the Program

Your tax-deductible gift supports public history students in taking trips like the one to Colonial Williamsburg, presenting at and attending conferences, researching, and engaging in projects throughout the state. Click [here to learn more](#).