



Department of History

The OWL



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Inside this Issue:

New Faculty Interview, 1-2

Laurier's Military Centre Goes Online, 3

Faculty Accomplishments, 3

Spotlight on Research, 4-5

History Students' Association Annual Report, 6

Current Faculty List, 7

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Words of Welcome

Better late than never! Welcome to the eleventh issue of *The Owl*, the annual newsletter of the History Department at Wilfrid Laurier University's Waterloo campus. The COVID-19 pandemic delayed publication but we are happy at last to bring the 2019-20 roundup of highlights from the History Department.

Thanks to all who have contacted us in response to previous issues; please keep those letters and e-mails coming in. We especially love to hear from our former students.

Owl Trivia #11: "Many owl species have asymmetrical ears. When located at different heights on the owl's head, their ears are able to pinpoint the location of sounds in multiple dimensions" (<https://www.audubon.org>).

Interview

Dr Barrington Walker is the inaugural Associate Vice President Equity Diversity and Inclusion at Wilfrid Laurier University and a Professor of History. He is a historian of modern Canada and his research interests are Black Canadian History and the Histories of Race, Colonization Immigration and Law. He has three books including *Race on Trial: Black Defendants in Ontario's Criminal Courts, 1858-1958*. *The Owl* sat down with Dr. Walker and asked him to reflect on his first year at Laurier and his vision for the future.

What did you do before coming to Laurier?



BW: Before Coming to Laurier I was a member of the History Department at Queen's University for 18 years.

What originally got you interested in History?



BW: Looking back now I think it was when I read Alex Hailey's *Roots* when I was 11 or 12. It was the first "big book" I had ever read and it opened up the possibilities of thinking about the past in ways that I did not imagine before reading that work (of course we all know now that the book was much more historical fiction than history but its impact upon me remains). History was always my favourite subject in high school. But I didn't really understand the historian's craft until my undergraduate work at York University.

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 *What are your current research interests and what are you working on at the moment?*

BW: I am currently working on a small book titled *Dark Peril: Blackness and Violence in Canada's Urban Landscapes 1993-2012*. My research interests remain the same but I am thinking about doing some Black Canadian political history/biography in the near future.

 *Can you tell us about your role as Associate Vice-President for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion? Thinking about the very important issues of equity, diversity and inclusion, what is your vision for moving Wilfrid Laurier forward as an institution?*

BW: My vision for Laurier is rather straightforward: I would like us to be a university where we foster an inclusive environment for all members of the community and where diversity in the most robust sense of the word and including intellectual diversity is celebrated and foster. We must also be a community in which we recognize the barriers to full inclusion that exist across our community by fostering equity.



Lastly, we must strive for inclusion by ensuring that many voices can sit at the table and shape the future of our university.

For me, the notion of inclusive excellence is not just a catchy phrase but it captures my vision for moving Wilfrid Laurier forward as an institution.

 *Do you have any advice for Faculty, Staff and Students as we grapple with remote instruction in an age of COVID-19?*

These are unprecedented and uncertain times. My advice for faculty students and staff during this difficult time is to extend kindness and compassion to each other. Students need to be mindful of the incredible effort on the part of our faculty and staff in providing a top notch education and services in a largely remote environment. Our faculty and staff need to be mindful of the enormous difficulties facing our students at this time. If we can show each other that understanding we will get to the other side of this. This, I think, is much more important than the technical details and challenges of the remote environment.

Laurier's Military Centre Goes Online

Over the past few years the History Department has hosted a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/LaurierHistoryDepartment/>), managed by **Dr. Amy Milne-Smith** and **Dr. Dana Weiner**, where we provide information of interest aimed especially at our History majors and alumni.

For example, in August and September we posted stories about how the Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies (LCMSDS) has been building an online presence to reach students and a wider audience during the pandemic.

The LCMSDS has developed a Zoom Webinar series, offering

prominent military historians an opportunity to discuss their work online. The series kicked off on September 9 with a talk by the renowned historian Tim Cook, whose book *The Fight for History: 75 Years of Forgetting, Remembering, and Remaking Canada's Second World War* has attracted a lot of attention nationwide. You can see the rest of the schedule here: <http://canadianmilitaryhistory.ca/webinar/>

The Military Centre also continues to present its podcast series, to which our own Dr. Darryl Dee contributed an episode on the 18th century Battle of Malplaquet. You can find the "On War and Society" podcast here: <https://canadianmilitaryhistory.ca/podcast-2/>

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Over the summer, the LCMSDS also published conference papers through the "Canadian Military History Colloquium Web Series," which was created to publish conference papers after an in-person conference had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. The papers, along with discussion responses/comments, can be found here: <https://canadianmilitaryhistory.ca/web-series/>

Congratulations to the LCMSDS for their innovative online programming during this challenging time!

Faculty Accomplishments:

Congratulations to Drs. Neylan and Nighman!

We would like to congratulate Dr. Susan Neylan and Dr. Chris Nighman for their accomplishments in 2019-20.

Dr. Susan Neylan won the Dr. Donald F. Morgenson Award for Sustained Excellence in Teaching. Here is the official announcement:

"(Dr.) Neylan, an associate professor in the Department of History, has taught at Laurier for 20 years. She is being recognized for her commitment to integrating Indigenous content into teaching, engaging students in problem-based learning and engaging community members through public lectures.

'As history is being made all around us, we suddenly find ourselves teaching and learning in different ways,' said Neylan. 'I have no doubt that we'll rise to the challenge over the coming months because of our strong community of gifted instructors and engaged students.'"

Congratulations Susan!

In the Spring of 2020, we learned that **Dr. Chris Nighman** has been promoted to full professor. An expert in medieval and renaissance Europe, Dr. Nighman came to Laurier's History Department in 1997 after completing his Ph.D. in the History Department at the University of Toronto. The

author of a dozen articles in refereed journals and two chapters in academic books, Professor Nighman is also active as a digital humanist, having developed multiple Open Access websites for scholars of medieval Latin texts. His teaching in the History Department has focused primarily on Europe and England in the Middle Ages, the Italian Renaissance, and the history of English law prior to 1714. He has also taught a number of interdisciplinary courses in Laurier's Medieval & Medievalism Studies Program, where he has served for many years as the Program Co-ordinator.

Congratulations, Chris!

Spotlight on Research

Here are a few highlights of History's research accomplishments in 2019-20:

David Smith holds two SSHRC Awards. The first is an Insight Grant that, as Dr. Smith describes, “explores the relationship between classical liberalism and business interests beginning during the eighteenth century. The research examines how liberal thinkers like Adam Smith believed that corporate interests, in particular, manipulated government and markets to their own advantage.”

The second is an Insight Development Grant focusing on smuggling in the 18th century. “Smuggling was big business in eighteenth-century Britain,” says Dr. Smith, “Possibly half of the volume of certain goods like tea, coffee, brandy, chocolate and tobacco were illicitly brought into England. The IDG is creating the first database of smuggling prosecutions during the period to explore criminal organizations, enforcement by (an overwhelmed) Customs, and even commercial frauds. We are using machine-learning software to transcribe original reports of these prosecutions and developing biographies on some of the smugglers themselves.”

Jeff Grischow is the Co-Applicant on a SSHRC Insight Development Grant that wrapped up in the spring of 2020, which looked into stigma and disability in Ghana. He also holds two current SSHRC grants, as a Co-Applicant on a project researching inclusive education in Ghana, and as a Principal Investigator on a project focusing on the history and lived experience of disability rights in Ghana. These projects are

multidisciplinary, with team members from Canada and Ghana. A sample publication from the project is “‘Being heard’: The socio-economic impact of psychiatric care on people diagnosed with mental illness and their caregivers in Ghana,” *International Social Work*, co-authored with Magnus Mfofo-M’Carthy (WLU Faculty of Social work).

Moving forward amidst the restrictions of the pandemic, the team plans to undertake a pilot project in remote videography, producing video vignettes of grassroots stories of disability and COVID-19 using smartphones in Ghana.

Judith Fletcher received a SSHRC Insight Grant for a five year project on “Women and religion in Euripides.” The project will involve a collaboration with the Center for Textile Research at the University of Copenhagen.

Dr. Fletcher also is completing a book, *Classical Greek Tragedy*, which is under contract with Bloomsbury Academic, as part of the Methuen Drama Series, Forms of Drama. It is scheduled for release in 2021.

In addition to her research projects, Dr. Fletcher has accepted a nomination to be Vice President, and then President of the Classical Association of Canada.

Alicia McKenzie is working on a book manuscript that is under contract with the University of Toronto Press. The working title is ‘Recreating Worlds: The Representation of Premodern History in Digital Games’ and it is about the power that digital games have to shape our

perceptions of premodern history and how that can be both good and bad. The book examines the relationship between what players perceive to be authentic in such representations and how game designers try to meet that standard of authenticity (and how their efforts to do so have evolved in the last several years). “It’s not about whether or not these gameworlds are historically accurate, but why designers make the choices they do while designing them, and how that might impact the historical understanding of players,” she explained.

Chris Nighman holds a SSHRC grant for his project *The Chrysostomus Latinus in Iohannem Online (CLIO) Project*: <https://clioproject.net/index.html>.

CLIO seeks to provide Open Access texts for four Latin translations of John Chrysostom's 88 Greek homilies on the Gospel of John (mid-12th, mid-15th, early 17th and early 18th centuries), as well as the first critical edition of the Greek text from the early 18th century. The earliest of these translations was never printed, and survives in just a handful of manuscript copies. The project has been funded by a 2016 SSHRC Insight Development Grant, a 2017 WLU Category B Equipment Grant, and a 2019 SSHRC Insight Grant. Dr. Nighman expects to finish it early next Summer. The CLIO Project has employed 9 student RAs, including 3 Laurier undergrads, two PhD students from the Tri-U program at UW and UG, and four Masters students at Laurier, U. Guelph, U. Toronto, and U. Alberta.

Spotlight on Research (cont'd)

Faculty publications

Here are some **Faculty publications** from the History Department in 2019-20:

Darryl Dee:

(2020) "The Survival of France: Logistics and Strategy in the 1709 Flanders Campaign," *The Journal of Military History* 84, 1021-1050.

Judith Fletcher:

(2020) "Lemnian Infamy and Masculine Glory in Apollonius' Argonautica," in *Fame and Celebrity in the Hellenistic World*, R. Faber (ed.) Toronto: U of T Press, 135-155.

(2019) "Representing Peace in Classical Antiquity," in *A Cultural History of Peace: 800BC to 500 AD*, S. Ager (ed.), London: Bloomsbury Press, 89-105.

Jeff Grischow:

(2020) "Being heard: The socio-economic impact of psychiatric care on people diagnosed with mental illness and their caregivers in Ghana," *International Social Work*, with Magnus Mfoafo-M'Carthy.

(2020) "Cloak of Invisibility: A Literature Review of Physical Disability in Ghana," *SAGE Open*, 10(1), with Magnus Mfoafo-M'Carthy and Nicole Stocco.

David Monod:

(2020) *Vaudeville and the Making of Modern Entertainment, 1890-1925* (University of North Carolina Press).

Darren Mulloy

(2020) *Enemies of the State: The Radical Right in America from FDR to Trump* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, revised paperback edition).

Chris Nighman:

(2019) "Revising John of Wales' role in creating the Manipulus florum," in *New perspectives on Thomas of Ireland's Manipulus florum: Proceedings of the colloquium*, 16-17 May 2014, in J. Hamesse, M.J. Muñoz & C.L. Nighman (eds.), *PIMS Papers in Mediaeval Studies*, 32, Toronto: PIMS Publications, 17-30. Dr. Nighman also co-edited this collection.

(2019) "Walter Bower's reception of the Manipulus florum in composing the Scotichronicon," *The Innes Review* 70.1: 55-64.

David Smith:

(2019) *Sir Edward Coke and the Reformation of the Laws Religion, Politics and Jurisprudence, 1578-1616* (Cambridge University Press).

(2020) "The Mid-Victorian Reform of Britain's Company Laws and the Moral Economy of Fair Competition," *Enterprise & Society*, July: 1-37.

Digital Humanities in the Department

The History Department has many Faculty members who are active in the digital humanities.

Darryl Dee has a new podcast, "Great Battles in History," available on several podcasting platforms including Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/oBxMQus5l03bSooKe4HWQ5>

Jeff Grischow and Magnus Mfoafo-M'Carthy (Social Work, WLU) developed a website containing oral histories and lived experiences of disability in Ghana: www.ghanadisability.com

Amy Milne-Smith has produced an interactive website, Mapping Ripper's Whitechapel, connected to her research on Jack the Ripper: <http://whitechapel.wludh.ca/index.html>

David Monod has created an open access, searchable database connected to his project on Vaudeville: <http://vaudevilleamerica.org/>

Chris Nighman has a new website connected to his project on John Chrysostom's 88 homilies on the Gospel of John: <https://clioproject.net/>, as well as several more digital humanities projects that you can access here: <https://www.chrisnighman.com/research-projects>

The History Students' Association (HSA) Annual Report

Report from the President of the HSA for 2019/20, Stephanie Plante:

The end of the 2019-2020 academic year marks five years in which I have been involved with the HSA, with this past year as president. While my time with the club has come to an end, I am honoured to have had this opportunity and am pleased to be leaving the club in the very capable hands of Nicholas Morrison.

This year kicked off in its usual fashion, with the recruitment of incoming students and the election of new year representatives at our general Meet and Greet.

Throughout the fall semester, we hosted both academic and social events which brought students and faculty together, notably our Meet the Profs event. The annual Remembrance Day ceremony featured Dr. Roger Sarty, who reflected on his experiences prior to coming to Laurier, when he administered the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa, as well as former VP of Student Affairs David McMurray, who carried on his tradition of reading "In Flanders Fields" for the last time.



In March, we hosted one of my personal favourite events, Support Your Local Girl Gang: Woman in History. This roundtable event featured Dr. Eva Plach, Dr. Amy Milne-Smith and Dr. Kandace Bogaert as they discussed their experiences in the field. This intimate event allowed students to ask questions about pursuing the study of history and discuss challenges they may have faced in a male-dominated field of study.

One of our favourite recurring events from the fall semester was a combined movie night and guest lecture, which featured Dr. Leonard Friesen discussing the history and significance of *The Death of Stalin*, followed by a screening of the film.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic put our final event on hold, the Woodstock 1969 dance, and brought the year to an abrupt end. While it seems like the entire world was put on hold and I am left with so many unsaid goodbyes, I am forever thankful for everything Laurier has given me over the years. Not only have I and the other executives gained valuable connections and experience to put into practice, but the support from our faculty has been incredible in these, to use the now worn-out, "unprecedented times." I am so proud of everything the club has been able to accomplish over the years and to all my fellow 2020 graduates, remember that despite everything, you still earned that degree! We may have had to postpone our graduation celebrations, but remember to take a minute and be proud of your accomplishments.

Current Full-Time Faculty

The History Department at Laurier's Waterloo campus currently has 21 tenured professors, including two who are cross-appointed to other departments or programs:

Dr. Gavin Brockett, Associate Professor & Acting Dean of Arts (cross-appointed to Religion & Culture): Middle East & Islamic History, Modern Turkey

Dr. Blaine Chiasson, Associate Professor and Graduate Advisor: Modern China, Sino-Russian relations

Dr. Cynthia Comacchio, Professor: Canadian History; Gender, Family & Class; Health Care

Dr. Adam Crerar, Associate Professor: 20th-Century Canada, Rural Ontario

Dr. Darryl Dee, Associate Professor: Early Modern France, Early Modern Europe

Dr. Judith Fletcher, Professor: Ancient Greece & Rome; Gender, Law & Culture; representations of the Ancient World in modern culture

Dr. Leonard Friesen, Professor: Russia & the Soviet Union, Global Ethics

Dr. Karljürgen Feuerherm, Associate Professor: Ancient Near East, Digital Humanities

Dr. Jeff Grischow, Associate Professor: Africa (especially Ghana), World History, Comparative Development

Dr. Mark Humphries, Associate Professor: Canadian Military History, Epidemics

Dr. Amy Milne-Smith, Associate Professor and History Undergraduate Advisor: 19th-century British Social History, Crime in Victorian England

Dr. David Monod, Professor, Modern American Cultural & Social History

Dr. Darren Mulloy, Professor & Chair of History: Post-1945 U.S. history, Political Extremism

Dr. Susan Neylan, Associate Professor: Canadian Indigenous Peoples, Cultural History

Dr. Chris L. Nighman, Professor & Co-ordinator of Medieval & Medievalism Studies: Medieval & Renaissance Europe, Digital Humanities



The Tri-University Graduate Program in History combines the faculty and resources of three of Canada's premier universities: Laurier, the University of Guelph, and the University of Waterloo.

Since 1994 our program has been educating students in innovative ways while providing them with a solid grounding in traditional historical methods.

The Tri-University program integrates the scholarship and experience of over seventy graduate faculty, making it one of the biggest graduate history programs in the country. Some 130 History graduate students are currently enrolled in the program and each year we accept up to 20 new Doctoral students and 60 new Master's students.

Because of its impressive size and scope and because of student mobility among the three campuses, we are able to provide courses and supervise research in the widest possible range of areas.

For more information, please visit our website: <http://www.triuhistory.ca>

Dr. Eva Plach, Associate Professor: Modern Europe, Poland, Women's History

Dr. Roger Sarty, Professor: Canadian Naval History, Canadian Military History

Dr. David Smith, Associate Professor: Early Modern Britain, Law & Society, Commerce in Europe & the New World

Dr. Kevin Spooner, Associate Professor (cross-appointed to Political Science & North American Studies): 20th-century Canadian Foreign Policy

Dr. Barrington Walker, Associate Vice-President, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion & Professor, Department of History: Black Canadian History and the Histories of Race, Colonization Immigration and Law.

Dr. Dana Weiner, Associate Professor: Pre-1877 US; Women's, Gender & African-American History

Dr. Suzanne Zeller, Professor: Canadian History, Science in Victorian Culture & Society

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