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The Study of History: The Senior Honors Theses

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THE STUDY OF HISTORY: THE SENIOR HONORS THESES

The final component of our section on ‘The Study of History’ is the listing of the 2008 senior honors theses. The following abstracts offer a summary of the projects completed this year for the thesis program.

Forgetting the Violence, Remembering a Report: A story of the 1931 Kanpur Riots

Priya Agarwal

This thesis explores the paradox between the events of the Kanpur Riots and the Kanpur Riot Commission Report, written in its aftermath. While the former is regarded as another example of Hindu-Muslim strife in the twentieth century, the latter has become a lionized text in nationalist historiography. This thesis will argue that the significance of the Report is bound up in the Kanpur Riots. The riot participants were the subject and audience of the Report and the authors of the Kanpur Riot Commission Report used them to create a framework for understanding Indian history that continues to be invoked today.

Reading Under the Folds: John Dickinson, Gordon’s *Tacitus*, and the American Revolution

Alex Bregman

The thesis examines the effects that one of the most important radical Whig texts had on one of the leading figures of the American Revolutionary movement. John Dickinson is often overlooked in histories of the American Revolution despite being a strong force from the time of the Stamp Act Congress through the Second Continental Congress, penning many of the resolves that came out of these meetings along with the highly influential *Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer*. This thesis examines Dickinson’s

personal copy of Thomas Gordon's translation of the works of the Roman historian, Tacitus, published with Gordon's *Discourses* on the translation. This radical Whig text was revered by almost all of the American Founders, Dickinson included. Dickinson provided future readers of his copy of the text a unique insight into exactly what he took note of as he read the five volume work. He made no notes in the margins of his copy of the text, but rather folded literally hundreds of pages to mark particular passages throughout the work. Thus, he allowed future readers to literally read along with him. It turns out that almost every fold had a purpose. This thesis analyzes exactly what Dickinson highlighted through his folds and looks at the influence that these highlights had on some of the most crucial moments of his Revolutionary career, including how they very well might have been one of the factors that led to his fateful decision to not sign the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

World's Fairs in Chicago and Barcelona: Spectacle, Memory, and Nationalism

Uri Friedman

Nineteenth-century international exhibitions served as platforms for national competition and self-expression. Though over 4,000 miles apart, both Chicago, Illinois and Barcelona, Spain were animated by "second city" politics and featured a thriving industrial economy in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Yet while Chicagoans swelled with pride about the city they had helped resurrect from the ashes of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, they also displayed patriotism toward an American nation that had overcome the Civil War and was rapidly amassing power. A burgeoning Catalan nationalist movement, on the other hand, contributed to a widening disconnect between the capital of Catalonia and a sputtering Spanish nation. These pivotal differences—along with historical circumstance—have informed the historical interpretation of Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and Barcelona's 1888 Universal Exposition. The ways in which the collective memory of these two world's fairs have diverged shed light on why, today, remembering Chicago's World's Fair has largely become an intellectual exercise while conjuring up memories of Barcelona's Universal Exposition persists as a critical tool for Catalan nationalists wishing to advance their interests and broadcast their nationalism to Spain and/or the global community.

Consolidating the Mexican State: Constitutionalism in the years of Plutarco Elías Calles

Pedro Gerson

This work presents an analysis of the presidency of Plutarco Elías Calles. It views Calles as a man of the Mexican Revolution and as an heir to the values promoted by the Constitution that came as a result of this movement. His respect for the constitution, pushed him to act on his anticlerical beliefs and to unify the Revolutionary movement under one party. Focusing mostly on the reasons and results of his anticlerical policy, we hope to gain insight into Calles' constitutionalism. By understanding Calles' policies, we can understand both the nature of the peculiar separation of Church and State in a very religious country, and the reasons for the formation of a party that would rule Mexico for seventy-two years.

An American Ambassador in Berlin: Observing Hitler's Gambles in Foreign Policy, 1933-1937

Kevin P. Glowalla

William Edward Dodd served as United States ambassador to Germany between August 1933 and December 1937. Using archival sources, this thesis examines Dodd's reactions to and analyses of three events in Nazi German history, with reference to how these episodes altered the landscape of international security. These events are the withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference and League of Nations in October 1933, the announcement of conscription in March 1935, and the remilitarization of the Rhineland in March 1936. By focusing on these three critical moments, this thesis traces the evolution of Dodd's perception of the threat Nazi Germany posed to world peace. Dodd's four-and-a-half years of service converted a man once conservatively optimistic about the Hitler regime's future to one deathly afraid of it, convinced that only action by foreign powers could stop Germany's march towards war.

Departing for the Ends of the Earth to do My Humble Part: The Life of William A. Rich, Volunteer Ambulance Driver for the American Field Service, 1942-1945: A Study of War Letters*Alice Hickey*

From the years 1942 to 1945, William A. Rich, a volunteer ambulance driver with the American Field Service, wrote a vast collection of letters home; he served in the Middle East, North Africa, Italy, France, Germany and India. Rich corresponded with his family and girlfriend bi-weekly about his experiences and opinions, resulting in a collection of more than 300 letters. From these letters, supplemented by additional archival sources, a fascinating narrative emerges. Rich's story explains the complexity of life as a non-combatant on the frontlines of a total war. From the fall of Tunis to the horrors of the relief of Belsen Concentration Camp, the letters provide an unmediated perspective on World War Two through the eyes of a twenty-year old.

Pirates of the Mediterranean: Rome, Robbers, and the World of the Late Republic*Nicholas N. Joy*

In 67 B.C., Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, Rome's most successful general, was appointed to a military command of a scale unprecedented in the history of the Roman Republic. His task was to clear the seas of pirates which, ancient sources tell us, infested the Mediterranean and represented a dire threat to the Romans. Relying on a variety of primary and comparative materials, this thesis examines piracy in the Roman world in an attempt to provide a better understanding of the outbreak of piracy that precipitated Pompey's command. Ancient piracy was not a uniform phenomenon. It can be divided into at least two main forms, opportunistic and dedicated piracy, and it did not affect all places and time periods equally. Conditions found during the Late Roman Republic in the Mediterranean in general and the southern coast of Asia Minor, the epicenter of pirate activity, in particular were ideally suited for piracy. These conditions produced pirate activity that took on a scale and form otherwise unattested in antiquity. Pompey's command was the last and most notable example of a Roman policy towards combating piracy that met with only mixed success at best.

Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas: An Examination*Megan B. Kiernan*

The debate over the *Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas* (Monument for the Murdered Jews of Europe) is part of an intense and prolonged German discourse on the memory of the Second World War. The debate over the monument exemplified the cultural and symbolic problems that arose when the city of Berlin was reinstated as the seat of government in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1992. The discussion searched not only for the most appropriate form of monument, but also whether or not a monument was an effective medium of commemoration. Germany's struggle with the *Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas* was tortured, self-reflective, and occasionally paralyzing. Focusing on both its artistic and political representative function, we must ask: For whom was the monument built? What understanding of history does it support? What does that understanding ultimately mean about the extent to which the crimes of the Third Reich have been incorporated into a sense of German national identity?

A Divided North—Philadelphia during the Civil War and Reconstruction*Michael Kind*

A central theme of this thesis is that Reconstruction and the conflicts over racial equality were not only (or even primarily) a Southern event but a national one and the way in which the North grappled with these issues has often been neglected, can be seen as contradictory or hypocritical in many respects, and had profound implications on the meaning of the war and how Americans would remember the war. In short, the Civil War and Reconstruction North was not a monolith.

Using Philadelphia as both a “typical” and especially notable example, I argue that the same debates regarding racial equality and racial justice that swept the South also had resonance in the North. In fact, most of this thesis might be seen as an effort to understand the ways in which events in the North mirrored those in the South during the same period. Considering that the North won and thus largely determined the meaning of the war through its successes and subsequent failures, or loss of nerve, during Reconstruction, makes internal political squabbles crucial to understand for a broader appreciation of the meaning of the war.

I contend that the North essentially “lost” Reconstruction first and was “redeemed” in the sense that racist white Democrats, though unable to challenge Republican dominance in Northern politics again for a while, were successful in mobilizing enough force to prevent the most reform minded and egalitarian impulses of the Republican Party from succeeding. The Republican Party’s inability to respond forcefully represented that failure of nerve which translated to quitting on egalitarian reform efforts in the South.

If anything, this thesis can modestly conclude that the Civil War and Reconstruction North was more complicated than is often believed, that pro-Union did not translate to racial egalitarian, and that the North, like the South, had just as much trouble defining freedom, equality, and citizenship.

Free Speech from Holt to Holmes: The English Birth and American Career of the “Classic View”

Joshua Matz

In 1907, the Supreme Court held in *Patterson v. Colorado* that freedom of speech in America consists of little more than the absence of censorship. State governments could justifiably restrain and criminally punish expression that they deemed harmful to the social welfare – and truth was not always a valid defense. Modern Americans, who enjoy the bountiful protections afforded by modern civil libertarianism, may find it hard to imagine that the broadly-phrased First Amendment was originally understood in radically different terms. For most of American history, however, a legal consensus obtained around the belief that ‘freedom of speech and press’ should be interpreted in basic accordance with received English common law. This thesis traces the development of a set of social, political, and legal beliefs about expression that persisted from the colonial era to World War I. Ultimately, it seeks to explain why this ‘classic view’ of speech and press persisted across dramatic transformations in virtually every aspect of American life. Recognizing the crucial role that rights to expression play in structuring so many other aspects of lived experience, this thesis conjures forth and examines some of the ideologies and legal contests that have shaped American history.

Philadelphia's perception and response to the rise of New York City in the early nineteenth century

Charles McCurdy

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, ambitious merchants and internal developers launched the booming eastern seaboard cities of the United States into a heated rivalry. In the midst of unprecedented competition, a swift yet ambiguous shift in the primacy of these urban titans emerged. A demographic and economic explosion propelled New York City into first place among American cities in the 1810s, forcing the citizens of Philadelphia to contemplate seriously both their understanding of themselves and their place in the developing new economy and political order. Before, Philadelphians reached a superior valuation of their city's worth with a nearly comprehensive framework that emphasized the stature of their city as a site for commerce, public affairs and cultural refinement. After belatedly discovering that the growth of New York posed a real threat, Philadelphians separated the spheres of their previously unified conception of their superiority, placing a greater value on those that accentuated Philadelphia's strengths and reenergizing a languished commitment to public works, proactively developing and improving transportation and education to increase commerce, cognizant of the reality that commerce had nurtured their city to its grandeur of 1800, and subsequently drove the gains of their rivals in the following decades.

"Their Nation Dishonored, the Queen Shamed, and Country Undone": Feuding, Factionalism, and Religion in the Chaseabout Raid

Rachel J. Omansky

The mid-sixteenth century witnessed religious and political upheaval across much of Western Europe, particularly in the British Isles. In 1565, a good portion of the Scottish nobility rebelled against their sovereign, Mary, Queen of Scots. The roles played and decisions made by the nobles during this revolt, known as the Chaseabout Raid, provide important insights concerning the converging issues of feuding, factionalism, and religion in Scotland. My reconstructed narrative of the Chaseabout Raid indicates that there were, in fact, no firm factions determined by ideology, but rather shifting allegiances in the midst of conflict, determined by complex and interrelated factors, personalities, and motivations. The primary motivation for the coalitions formed during the Chaseabout Raid was selfish personal ambition—

base desire for individual gain still superseded any proto-nationalistic ideas or purely ideological commitments. Using this incident, I will offer new conclusions regarding the origins of the Scottish kirk and national identity, the rise of the modern notions of loyalty and allegiance, and the construction of the modern Scottish state. With respect to the broader study of history, these conclusions discovered through an empiricist approach may demonstrate the validity of this method for reexamining other riots, rebellions, and revolts across history.

The United Nations Information Organization and the Selling of the United Nations: The Story of the Convergence of International Needs and American National Interest

Ali Peysner

The onset of World War II served as a painful reminder of a reality that surfaced in 1914: the inadequacy of the prevailing international order. The League of Nations was created in 1919 in order to address this issue, but ultimately failed to prevent World War II. Post-war planning efforts were reinitiated as soon as the Americans were brought into the conflict, beginning with the United Nations Declaration of January 1, 1942.

Ultimately spurred by a soft power effort on behalf of the British to garner American support in their fight against the Nazis, the establishment of the Inter-Allied Information Center (IAIC) in New York marked the beginning of what would later transform into an American-led program to sell to their public the concept of United Nations joint initiatives, and later, the United Nations Organization. These efforts were undertaken by the United Nations Information Organization (UNIO), which advocated that American leadership in these joint projects was well within American national interest, while also benefiting the international community as a whole. In the end, a combination of favorable circumstances, as well as better organization, exemplified by UNIO, led to the establishment of the United Nations Organization as we know it today.

Kensington is Burning: A Re-Examination of the Philadelphia Riots of May 1844

Timothy Reilly

During the pre-Famine period of Irish immigration to the United

States (1815-1844), tens of thousands of Irish Catholics settled in the burgeoning industrial city of Philadelphia. The presence of these Irishmen irked a number of “established” Philadelphians, who felt that these newcomers had challenged the city’s Protestant identity. A wave of nativist sentiment pervaded the city, particularly following the Bible controversy of 1842, and culminated in the Riots of May 1844. In their accounts of the riots, historians have often portrayed the Irish in a sympathetic light and have demonized the nativists. However, an extensive analysis of the subject reveals more moral ambiguity than historians have been willing to concede.

This project seeks to provide a balanced assessment of the conflict and of the actors involved in its initiation. Most importantly, it attacks the “myth of victimization” that has characterized Irish immigration histories. Additionally, the religious confrontations between Bishop Kenrick and the Protestant establishment are investigated. Furthermore, a chapter is dedicated to an exploration of the rise of the Native American Party and to the legitimacies and inaccuracies of its rhetoric. Finally, the thesis concludes with a chapter that focuses on the 1844 Riots, exposing the misconduct that was evident on both sides.

The Affair of the State: Intellectuals, the Press, and the Dreyfus Affair

David Rimoch

The Dreyfus Affair was a catalyst for the political differences that dominated 19th century Europe. For the Dreyfusards, the State had to stand as the enforcer of individual rights. Its legitimacy came from a humanitarian tradition dating back to the Declaration of the Rights of Man. The anti-Dreyfusard camp, on the other hand, found its legitimacy in the notion of general interests far and above the individual’s plight for particulars. In this vision the State embodied a higher will concerned with maintaining the integrity and respectability of its institutions. This thesis argues that the only way to fully understand this debate is to situate it within a conflict between modernity and premodernity.

“Nonsense upon Stilts”: The Carter Administration’s Human Rights Policy Toward Chile, 1977-1978

Elizabeth Slavitt

Jimmy Carter ran for President promising to restore the American

people's faith in a government which had recently betrayed them in Vietnam and Watergate. Invoking the idea of human rights, Carter promised to give Americans pride in their country's foreign policies. This thesis tells the story of the Carter Administration's human rights policy toward Chile, where military General Augusto Pinochet had ruled ruthlessly since the United States Government helped stage a coup to put him in place in 1973. Eager to right the wrongs of its predecessors, the Carter Administration was concerned about the dire human rights situation in Chile, but it ultimately failed to persuade Pinochet to make many changes.

This was largely due to the Administration's inability to articulate a clear policy for fulfilling its human rights goals. The American Government was also internally conflicted about the proper approach toward Chile; should the Carter Administration openly condemn Pinochet or engage the brutal ruler in "quiet diplomacy"? Furthermore, Pinochet - ever the conniving leader - responded inconsistently to the variety of tactics the United States used to try to urge or coerce him to change his ways. Though Carter Administration policies did not force Pinochet to respect human rights, American efforts did make it unacceptable for Pinochet to publicly denounce such rights. While this rhetorical shift was symbolically significant, it brought about no substantial changes, and the Chilean people continued to suffer under Pinochet's wrathful rule.

Caught on the Periphery: Portuguese Neutrality during World War II and Anglo-American Negotiations with Salazar

Melissa Teixeira

On 9 October 1939, shortly after the outbreak of World War II in Europe, António de Oliveira Salazar addressed the National Assembly to declare Portugal's neutrality. Salazar, the stern and fastidious Prime Minister of the *Estado Novo* regime in Portugal from 1932 to 1969, adhered to strict neutrality in order to keep this underdeveloped nation on the periphery of the grueling conflict. But the Açores Islands in the Atlantic and the critical stocks of wolfram made Portugal an immense strategic concern for the Allied Powers. The Anglo-American negotiations with Salazar for the use of facilities on the Açores Islands and a complete embargo on the sale of wolfram to Germany were empowered by the fourteenth-century Luso-Anglo Alliance, which obliged Salazar to concede to Britain's requests. But while the concessions to the Allies were guaranteed in principle, Salazar needlessly protracted the negotiations in an attempt to wield what little power he had over

the insignificant details of the final agreements. While Salazar's tactics were largely ineffective they revealed the extent his post-war anxieties. The outcome of the conflict would decide the status of Portugal's oversea empire and the survival of his regime; thus Salazar had no choice but to maneuver these negotiations in a way that both reinforced his control over the Portuguese Government and his ability to withstand foreign pressures.

Big Brother Boxes: The Fall of Utopia as Seen Through George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four and B.F. Skinner's Walden Two

Ariel Tichnor

While literary utopias are better worlds that exist only in the imagination, America has historically been a place where utopian fantasies have had potential to turn into reality. Yet post-World War Two, utopian literature lost its reputation as a positive force for social change as dystopias, societies with utopian traits carried out to destructive as opposed to reconstructive ends, redefined the meaning of utopia and replaced them in popularity. A case study of mainstream America's popular reception of the utopian *Walden Two* (1948) by B.F. Skinner and the dystopian *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) by George Orwell offers insight into why pessimistic portrayals of the future replaced optimistic blueprints. Since its publication, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has been a bestseller and a part of American culture, while *Walden Two*, a controversial novel at best, was slow to gain popularity and failed to spark a movement towards experimental, communal living as Skinner had hoped. Throughout the early 1950's, both books were popularly viewed as depictees of fascism and communism. Yet increasingly from the late 1950's until the early 1970's, the reactions to *Walden Two* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* no longer reflected the Cold War consensus. As *Nineteen Eighty-Four* became associated with American institutions, *Walden Two* became an increasingly popular alternative to the ever-present dystopian elements that had become embedded in mainstream American life. However, by the early 1980's the *Walden Two* dream in America had died, while *Nineteen Eighty-Four* remained, as it still does, a part of America's cultural lexicon. The comparison between the changing receptions of these novels suggests that for a utopian novel to become an attractive blueprint for alternative living in America, it needs to alter the characteristics it shares with dystopian discourse.

The Silent Partner: How the Ford Motor Company Became an Arsenal of Nazism*Daniel Warsh*

Corporate responsibility is a popular buzzword in the news today, but the concept itself is hardly novel. In response to a barrage of public criticism, the Ford Motor Company commissioned and published a study of its own activities immediately before and during WWII. The study explores the multifaceted and complicated relationship between the American parent company in Dearborn and the German subsidiary in Cologne. The report's findings, however, are largely inconclusive and in some cases, dangerously misleading. This thesis will seek to establish how, with the consent of Dearborn, the German Ford company became an arsenal for Hitler's march on Europe. This thesis will clarify these murky relationships, and picking up where the Ford internal investigation left off, place them within a framework of corporate accountability and complicity. Ford's development as a transnational entity provides a perfect subject of study to embark on such a project. Many of the major themes of post-WWI Europe – economic stagnation, nationalism, coping with the aftermath of a devastating conflict, and eventually, the rise of authoritarian states – are all present in Ford's German story, and their consequences not only resonate within the fields of American, European, and business history but also that of corporate responsibility. The lessons are still relevant.