Senior Honors Thesis Abstracts

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.upenn.edu/phr

Recommended Citation
() "Senior Honors Thesis Abstracts," Penn History Review: Vol. 29: Iss. 1, Article 7. Available at: https://repository.upenn.edu/phr/vol29/iss1/7

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. https://repository.upenn.edu/phr/vol29/iss1/7
For more information, please contact repository@pobox.upenn.edu.
On the Tails of the Trade: Enslaved Women, Slave Traders, and the Households they Shared
Zarina Iman

Throughout the antebellum period, enslaved women engaged in intimate relationships with white men, some of whom were actually slave traders, upholding the institution that kept them in bondage. While each individual’s experience varied, the origins and subsequent circumstances of these women emerged from white notions of enslaved and black women’s sexuality and the widespread sexual exploitation of enslaved women, particularly through the “fancy trade,” the trade of enslaved women specifically for their sexual labor. As the companions of slave traders, these women dealt intimately with the quintessential facets of the slave trade firsthand, living and even working around slave pens, auctions, and more. Though these women often resented the slave trade, they were likely compelled by two realities – that they lacked the agency to reject traders’ advances and a relationship could result in some stability and power. Indeed, for many women, it did, as these women’s partners gave them access to expanded resources and enabled them to build lives without fearing sale.

Eden Vance

This thesis examines the impact of the Second Boer War on the United Kingdom. Focusing mostly on policy and parliamentary inquiry, the piece explores how British military
shortcomings during the war led to a major reorganization of the military and a dramatic expansion of the social safety net. Additionally, the thesis touches upon how the war caused the government to begin more systematically collecting data and led to private-sector efforts to improve the physical condition of the British public.


*Summer T. Thomas*

This thesis explores the social and operational expansion of the Nassau County Police Department on Long Island, New York from the years 1954 to 1971, illustrating the different articulated goals of the department during transitions such as police professionalization, the War on Crime, desegregation, and the Civil Rights Movement. It shows how the Department accumulated social and economic capital in Nassau County, especially during the 1960s, and earned its reputation as an essential institution during and after the Civil Rights Movement. This thesis also provides some social history of Black suburbanization and the how Black Nassau County residents understood and expressed their desires for political, social, and economic enfranchisement within the boundaries of suburban space during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s.

**Covenant in Crisis: Orthodox Reactions to Slavery in Antebellum America, 1848-1861**

*Samuel Strickberger*

This thesis provides an intellectual history of Orthodox reactions to slavery in the antebellum United States. It situ-
ates the Orthodox discourse within a dynamic mid-nineteenth century, including Judaism’s schism in Europe, Jewish migration to the United States, and the Protestant American religious debates about slavery. This paper highlights a key but underexamined moment in the development of American and post-Enlightenment Jewish thought.

**A Friendship Betrayed: The Jonathan Pollard Spy Case and American-Israeli Relations**

*Julie Sohnen*

This thesis explores the mysterious Pollard affair, a tense episode of espionage and diplomatic crisis that transpired during the mid-1980s, toward the tail end of the Cold War. The spying and subsequent capture of Jonathan Pollard, an American Jew, to benefit Israel led to a reckoning in the relationship between the American and Israeli governments, between the American Jewish community and Israel, and between the American Jewish community and the U.S. government. Although Israel and the United States had a close and enduring working relationship at the time, Pollard received a life sentence. He was released on parole in 2015, and his parole restrictions were lifted in 2020, after which he immigrated to Israel. This paper will argue that the greatest damage caused by the lengthy Pollard affair was that which was inflicted upon the American Jewish community’s relationship with Israel. The effects of the scandal on the government-to-government relationship, on the other hand, were not as profound. The espionage episode exacerbated a slowly growing willingness among American Jewry to openly criticize Israeli policies, something that the community had previously been quite reluctant to do. Understanding the ripple effects of the Pollard affair — both within the two governments, as well as among American Jews and Israelis — can shed light on the nature of the long-standing, close, and multifaceted relationship between the two countries.
Not a Question of “Whether or Not,” but “Where” and “How”: Crises of Affordable Housing in Montgomery County, Maryland, 1968-1996
Bianca Serbin

Despite the passing of the 1968 Fair Housing Act and other federal policies which made racial discrimination in housing illegal, residential segregation persisted in more covert ways in the 1970s and beyond. Neighboring the nation’s capital and home to many of its elites, Montgomery County, Maryland, was at the epicenter of debates about the future of fair housing in American suburbs. Housing activists in Montgomery County recognized that in order to expand access to mortgage markets and make housing available to low-income and minority Americans, it was necessary to create affordable housing. A coalition of suburban liberals, led by the local chapter of the League of Women Voters (LWV) and an organization called Suburban Maryland Fair Housing (SMFH), lobbied for, drafted, and passed the moderately priced dwelling unit (MPDU) law, which mandated that affordable housing be developed and dispersed throughout the county. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the destabilizing effects of inflation and government deregulation of federal housing programs hindered the progressive potential of Montgomery County’s affordable housing policy. This thesis traces the social, economic, and political factors that complicated the task of creating affordable housing. Ultimately, this thesis reveals how local liberalism contended with and evolved in response to county- and national-level pressures.

All the Pope’s Men: Vatican Diplomacy and Espionage in Tudor England, 1534-1570
William Andrew San Pedro

This thesis examines the diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of England and the Holy See from 1534 to 1570. Its novel approach is characterized by both its reevaluation of the traditional motives ascribed to the various popes who
reigned throughout the period by historians up to the present
day and by its focus on studying the period from the perspec-
tive of the Holy See. Although access to primary source mate-
rial was limited, this project ultimately found that the Catholic
approach to dealing with the English Reformation was much
more generous and much less sinister than historians have writ-
ten throughout the past several centuries.

Building the Battle, Losing the War: The Defense Econ-
yomy, Industrial Capitalism, and the Cold War's Fallout in
Alabama’s ‘Model City’
Denali E. Sagner
   Throughout the early twentieth century, Anniston,
Alabama was a stronghold of military-industrial power in the
United States. Due to its beginnings as a planned, industrial city,
Anniston easily attracted formidable capital in the soil pipe, tex-
tile, and chemical industries, sparking economic and infrastruc-
tural development. Concurrently, the establishment of Fort
McClellan and the Anniston Army Depot by the United States
Army fused the manufacturing powers of the region with the
Army’s military conquests. Throughout WWI, WWII, and the
Cold War years, military brigades such as the Women’s Army
Corps, Military Police Corps, and Army Chemical Corps trained
at McClellan, infusing the local economy with capital through
job creation, contracts to local companies, and money spent
off-base. Confounding phenomena of U.S. military deescala-
tion in the late Cold War era, deindustrialization in the Ameri-
can manufacturing sector, and the increasingly technological
orientation of global warmaking rendered much of Anniston’s
economy obsolete by the early 1970s. Despite wide-ranging ac-
tivism from local boosters and politicians, the end of the twen-
tieth century in Anniston would be marked by factory closings
and military downsizing, culminating in the shutting of Fort
McClellan by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission
(BRAC) in 1995. This thesis seeks to follow how the military, private corporations, governing bodies, and everyday Americans in Anniston interacted in a political economy driven by capitalist profit incentives and a military industrialism. It seeks, ultimately, to trace Anniston’s tumultuous history in order to understand the impacts of the military-industrial complex on everyday American life in the twentieth century.

The Legacy of Sectarianism in the Imagination and Self-formation of the Rabbis

Ayelet Rubenstein

Prior to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE, Jewish social organization and ritual leadership in ancient Palestine was defined by sectarianism, in which coherent Jewish groups maintained competing beliefs about theology and practice. The centuries following the destruction saw the rise of the rabbinic movement, which produced extensive literary corpora that occasionally make reference to the rabbis’ sectarian predecessors. This thesis explores the historical nature of the relationship between the rabbis and sects as well as the rabbinic literary construction of the sects and sectarian past. In the first chapter, I argue that the sects largely faded from the Judean landscape before the rabbinic movement emerged, even as Jewish sectarianism lived on in rabbinic memory. The subsequent chapters investigate the evolving rabbinic literary portrayal of the sects. I suggest that the rabbis’ depiction of the sectarian past shifted in response to the rabbis’ growing authority and relationship to emerging Christianity. Seeking to chart a new approach in a world in which they were largely unknown, the early rabbis (c. 70-220 CE) displayed little tolerance for both past and present outsiders and therefore avoided identification with the sects. However, as the rabbinic project grew increasingly established and distinct from competing movements, the later rabbis (c. 220-700 CE) began to link themselves to certain
sects in order to bolster their historical legitimacy. This analysis seeks to capture fundamental aspects of the process of rabbinic identity-formation, shedding light on the self-definition and origination of the movement that remains the basis of Jewish practice to this day.

The Reconstruction Crusade: Rebuilding France’s Catholic Churches after World War I, 1914-1939
Leo M. Gearin

Between 1918 and 1939, France rebuilt the nearly 4,000 Catholic churches of the Western Front that had been destroyed during the First World War. This thesis presents a cultural history of that process. While it examines technical and financial aspects of reconstruction, the thesis is primarily interested in how Catholics understood the cultural significance of church reconstruction through the shifting and porous contexts of war and peace during the interwar years. It considers how church reconstruction operated at multiple levels: material, conceptual, rhetorical, and ritual. In tracing the evolution of reconstruction efforts across the period—from wartime discourses about reconstruction to the final church reconstructions of the late 1930s—this thesis argues for a trajectory of radicalization. It finds that church reconstruction was initially part of a program for pragmatic post-war reconstruction and modest religious revival in France, but later became the centerpiece of a Catholic crusade for social conquest of domestic political opponents. The history of the reconstruction crusade reveals the persistence of wartime mentalities in French Catholic culture of the interwar period. This thesis ultimately presents the post-war reconstruction of Catholic heritage sites as a fraught process and suggests that conflict can paradoxically persist through the reconstruction of religious sites previously implicated in conflict.
Honors Thesis Abstracts

The Law of the Other: Converts and Gentiles in the Eyes of Seventeenth-Century Istanbul Rabbis
Elyakim Engelmann-Suissa

The Jewish communities of seventeenth-century Istanbul comprised coherent societies featuring religious and judicial structures apart from Ottoman administration. Members of these Jewish enclaves typically interacted with members of the surrounding Ottoman society in their everyday lives. Using the available responsa literature, documents comprising anonymous questions to which notable rabbis would issue responses rooted in Jewish law, this paper explores financial, legal, and ethical conflicts between Jews and Muslims, including new Muslims who had converted from Judaism. The paper argues for a conceptualization of Jewish society in the Ottoman world as fluid and open to exchange with neighboring Ottoman and Muslim identities. Furthermore, the paper also argues for the conceptualization of Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire as a network of smaller enclaves with nuanced differenced that maintained interaction with each other, rather than as a singular, monolithic community. The conclusions and conjectures found in the paper, based on this argument, produce material for further research on the relationship between a governing society and a network of communities within the Ottoman Empire and the broader early modern world.

The Role of IMF Austerity Policy in Causing the Jamaican Financial Crisis of the 1990s
Adrian J. Brown

This thesis examines the Jamaican financial crisis which began in the mid-1990s and lasted until approximately the turn of the 21st century. It explores the role of Jamaica's longer-term economic trajectory in causing the crisis – specifically, its relationship with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. After experiencing a balance of payments crisis
in 1977, Jamaica sought financial assistance from the IMF. The policies implemented as part of this assistance program wreaked economic havoc in Jamaica and led the government to implement policies that ultimately resulted in the collapse of Jamaica’s financial sector. Scholars over time have focused on shorter-term causes of the crisis such as insufficient financial regulation, poor macroeconomic policymaking by politicians, and mismanagement of financial institutions. From the examination of newspaper archives, government documents, IMF publications, and secondary sources, it is evident that the financial crisis of the 1990s was driven in large part by the longer-term trajectory of the Jamaican economy. This longer-term period was characterized primarily by the policies implemented by the IMF throughout the late 1970s, the 1980s, and the early 1990s. This thesis finds that the IMF’s policies led to a shift in the focus of the government’s economic policies from earning foreign exchange to accessing foreign exchange. This inappropriate focus ultimately resulted in the liberalization of the foreign exchange regime in 1991, which caused the crisis of the mid-1990s.

Memories of Captivity in the Great East Asian War (1592-1598)

Junyoung Baik

This thesis studies how the piroin, or enslaved Koreans, during the Great East Asian War (1592-1598) remembered and understood their experiences of captivity. It further explores how these findings help us understand Korean society during the late-16th and early 17th centuries as it underwent rapid social change in the aftermath of the devastating war. This is accomplished by exploring the various writings that emerged in the postwar period regarding experiences of the war as well as captivity, and comparing the various normative language and rhetoric within them. A close reading of the Korean royal
court’s interpretation of Neo-Confucianism was compared with experiences of the piroin from both elite and popular perspectives. This thesis adds a new understanding of the Great East Asian War by bringing to light the varied social responses to it, and how these stories of captivity fit into the larger landscape of diverse opinions and perspectives within a dynamic postbellum Korea.

SOUTHERN HARM: THE UDC’S EDUCATIONAL CRUSADE PROMOTING LOST CAUSE IDEOLOGY IN THE PROGRESSIVE ERA SOUTH
Zoey Weisman

In the decades following the American Civil War, descendants of Confederate veterans in the South launched a crusade in American public schools in an effort to promote Lost Cause mythology in the classroom. The Lost Cause interprets the Civil War through a Confederate lens that romanticizes the Old South and venerates the Confederacy. This thesis initially traces the emergence of one of the most influential Confederate heritage groups, the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) from their founding to the early 1920s as they quickly amassed significant social and political influence in the South. It details the UDC’s early campaign to influence textbooks and analyzes how the textbooks evolved. Finally, the thesis discusses how the UDC transitioned from the textbook to the classroom, chronicling how they shaped the classroom and implemented progressive education reforms to improve education while simultaneously promoting Confederate culture in schools. It emphasizes the practical and symbolic influence the UDC held in developing the future generation of white Southerners.