

# HISTORY news

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences newsletter for the Department of History

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## Welcome to the Spring 2015 Edition of the History Department Newsletter

The 2014-2015 academic year has been, and promises still to be, a productive and exciting year for the History Department. This edition of the Newsletter features reports from faculty, alumni, and students whose research encompasses a wide variety of topics, from the early-modern Atlantic, to modern Tunisia and the Arab world, to Ghanaian nationalism, to the archival legacy of the Indian Residential School system. Read on to find out more about these topics, as well as announcements of upcoming events, and news of student and faculty accomplishments



The 7 Century Old Mosque at Qayrawan, Tunisia, visited last year by Dr Amal Ghazal

### We want to hear from you!

Please send all comments, suggestions, ideas or inquiries to [fassalum@dal.ca](mailto:fassalum@dal.ca)

# Dr. Amal Ghazal on Tunisia After 2011



A view of the sea at Sidi Busai, in Tunis

In 2014, I visited Lebanon, England, Tunisia, Turkey and France. The highlight was my trip to Tunisia, especially its hinterland. My favorite part was a tour of the old Medina in Tunis in the company of a Tunisian resident who is also familiar with my research interests. We aligned the tour to some of my research questions. Having visited the country before the 2011 uprising and shortly afterwards, this trip offered better insights on the implications of any revolutionary process. Tunisians strike me as very politically mature and very protective of their civil rights and labor movements. However, there was some fatigue and anxiety amidst the hope for a better future. The upheaval and instability in neighboring Libya has been weighing heavily on the Tunisian economy and political stability. Tourism has picked up again but at a slower pace than expected. Yet despite all the uncertainty, it was good to hear that the book industry is one of the few flourishing industries after 2011!

Dr. Ghazal also has several forthcoming publications:

"Tensions of Nationalism: Mzabi Student Missions in Tunis and the Politics of Anti-Colonialism," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 47.1(2015)

"Transcending Area Studies: Piecing Together the Cross-Regional Networks of Ibadi Islam," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 34.3. (2014)

"Kamal al-Salibi in Ta'ir `Ala Sindiyyana: Memoirs from Lebanon," Tarif Khalidi et al (eds.), *Kamal Salibi Memorial Volume* (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 2015)



Ville Fantome by Congolese artist Bodys Isek Kingelez (1996)

A new first-year course in the History Department asks how the future is used to shape the present. **The History of the Future: How Visions of the Future Have Shaped History Around the World** explores diverse moments of doubt, desire and dread across global history when oracles, artists, believers and popular leaders projected hopes and fears into near and distant futures. It explores how prophecies of the world's end reordered the world instead, how promises of impending perfection sometimes generated quite opposite results. The course in its entirety is a **6.0 hour credit Writing Course** offered in one single term (Winter 2016), and thus satisfies the writing requirements for a BA degree. It is team taught by four faculty members who will deliver lectures and lead tutorials as well as an 'evidence class'.

# The Omohundro Odyssey



The Omohundro's Dalhousie student volunteers: Conner Coles, Aaron Clarke, Brennan Dempsey, and Daisy Ramsden

From June 12th to 15th of 2014, nearly three hundred people from universities across the world attended the 20th annual meeting of the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture (OIEAHC) here at Dalhousie University and at Saint Mary's University. It was the second largest number of registrants in the history of this conference. The conference was a remarkable success all around. It gave us the opportunity to help put our program on the intellectual map in the field of Atlantic History. Scholars came to present from as far away as Melbourne and Qatar and several of our former students returned to us to participate.

We had a keynote from Jack Greene, the most influential scholar in the field of Atlantic history in the past four decades. We also had a stimulating plenary session on Warfare and the Black Atlantic, an evening reception at the Citadel above the city, an evening of dancing aboard the Tall Ship *Silva* as we toured the harbour, and a guided day long tour of the Acadian heritage site of Grand-Pré.

Elizabeth Mancke, John Reid, Jerry Bannister, Paddy Riley, Peter Twohig, Jonathan Fowler, Catherine Cottreau-Robins and I invested more total hours as an organizing committee than I could ever count, including one epic full length day and a breakfast the next morning in October of 2013 in which we tried to whittle down

the near record number of applicants into a coherent conference program. Several of our other colleagues offered critically important aid and counsel as we planned the conference, especially Jack Crowley, Marian Binkley, Krista Kesselring, Shirley Tillotson, Afua Cooper and Ruth Bleasdale. We pulled together for this event and I think it stands as one of our finest moments as a Halifax scholarly community in recent years.

In early 2010, Jerry Bannister--in a moment he modestly claims not to remember--said offhand over a beer, "Wouldn't it be great if we could convince the Omohundro Institute to hold an annual meeting here?" It had never occurred to me and I decided there was no harm in asking.

It seemed like a great way to celebrate our department's strengths in Atlantic History. This would be only the second time that the conference had been held in Canada. In recent years, the conference has been held in places that haven't been hit too hard by the funding crisis in higher education such as the Huntington Library in Los Angeles, The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, the University of Glasgow and the University of Mississippi.

Elizabeth Mancke from the University of New Brunswick stepped in to offer her assistance as an established scholar and as the OIEAHC council representative closest

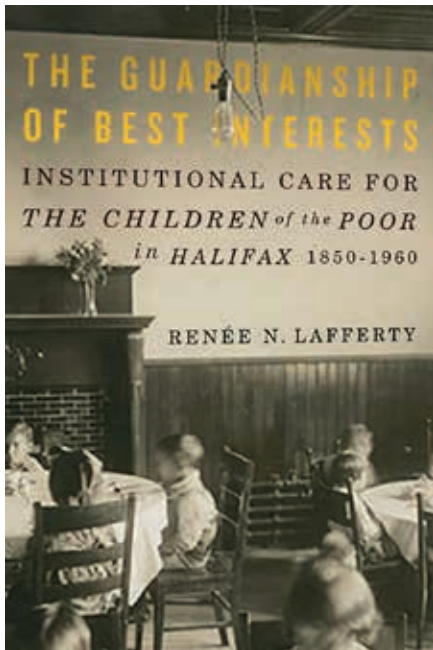
to our community. John Reid alleviated the financial concerns that came with holding a conference without registration fees by offering more than half of what we needed for funding if we agreed to make it a joint conference with Saint Mary's University. John took over the organization at Saint Mary's and his herculean labours helped ensure a successful conference.

We built it and they came. Never underestimate the drawing power of this delightful city we live in and the strength of the intellectual community here. We not only met our registration goals but, as a near record number of applications and then registrations began to pour in, we faced the threat of financial difficulties yet again. How would we feed all these people? We seized on the idea of charging for excursions and we had more last minute financial help from Saint Mary's, the Dalhousie President's Office, Black Canadian Studies and several other entities at Dalhousie University to fill the gaps. We managed to feed all the guests in attendance (including an enormous full breakfast), provide free alcohol at a reception at the Citadel, pay for the conference sites and keep the cost of the excursions down, providing a memorable, fun and intellectually stimulating conference overall.

Destination Halifax saw fit to make me Ambassador to Halifax for hosting the event and they awarded me with a crystal bowl. I have yet to decide what exactly to do with it. I want to thank all of my colleagues and all of our volunteers once more for helping me make this such an exceptional event.

The past two years have been dizzying. I was proud to see not only the culmination of the planning for this conference but also the publication of my first book *Slavery and the Enlightenment in the British Atlantic, 1750-1807* in the summer of 2013, a tenured and permanent position at Dalhousie and the successful theses defenses of three more of my MA students with one more on the horizon. I've turned my attention now to a new set of challenges as the graduate coordinator. It's been stimulating so far. We have a particularly impressive crop of new MA students, including three of our OIEAHC volunteers and two of them are now working on organizing the annual graduate conference. It's promising to be one of the largest in several years.

# Alumni News:

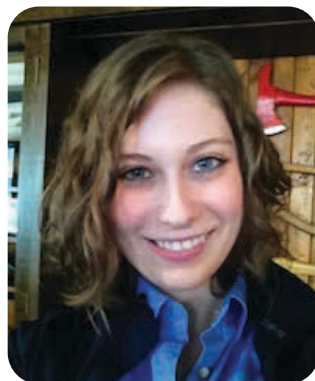


If you are an alumnus of the History Department, share news of your publications, research, or accomplishments with us.

Contact the Chair of the Department at:  
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Renée Lafferty's book based on her 2003 doctoral thesis won the Canadian Historical Association's Clio Prize for the Atlantic Region. These annual awards are given for meritorious publications or for exceptional contributions by individuals or organizations to regional history.

Renée N. Lafferty, *The Guardianship of Best Interests. Institutional Care for the Children of the Poor in Halifax, 1850-1960*, McGill-Queen's University Press 2013.



Two recent graduates from the BA History program, **Hillary MacKinlay** and **Brennan Dempsey**, have been recognized by historical organizations for their research and writing. On the nomination of Dr. Krista Kesselring, Hillary and Brennan won the undergraduate essay contest offered by the North American Conference on British Studies, for which only eight prizes are given every year. Additionally, Hillary won the prestigious David Alexander Prize for 2014, for her essay titled, "On the Far Side of the World? The Whaling Journal of Thomas Colton Creighton, 1843-46." This prize is awarded annually by the journal *Acadiensis* for the best essay on Atlantic Canada by a student at any university.

# Archives of Truth and Reconciliation

By former Dal History PhD, Greg Bak



Children in a Residential School (photo credit: trc.ca)

The archive was foreseen at the start. It is written into the very terms of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement as part of the Mandate for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The TRC would “create as complete an historical record as possible of the IRS [Indian Residential School] system and legacy,” and was required “to establish a research centre and ensure the preservation of its archives.” (IRSSA Schedule N)

Where would the archive be located? How would it serve the needs of those harmed by the Indian Residential School system? To answer these questions, the Commissioners of the TRC launched a competitive bidding process. The call for submissions was issued in February 2012.

At the University of Manitoba we had been engaged in developing our bid to become stewards of the records of the TRC since 2009. Our submission described an archive that would be participatory and co-curatorial, sharing the management of the records with Indigenous communities across Canada, while adhering to the highest international standards for digital archives. When our bid was designated the preferred bid by the TRC by the spring of 2013, we had our work cut out for us.

The TRC archives are almost entirely digital, and include thousands of hours

of video statements by survivors and intergenerational survivors of the Indian Residential School system, in addition to statements by administrators and teachers and millions of digital copies of historic records from government and church archives. Managing these records will require state-of-the-art digital archival systems. It will also require innovative approaches to access systems and technologies. But most importantly, it will require deep collaboration with the Indigenous people, families and communities that were devastated by the Indian Residential School system. The archives of the TRC must be managed as a force for decolonization: decolonization of the archives, of the university and of Canada.

To this end the University of Manitoba has made substantial commitments to establishing and running the National Research Centre on Truth and Reconciliation. A home for the Centre has been found on campus, in historic Chancellor’s Hall on the banks of the Red River. Key staff have been hired, including Ry Moran, who formerly managed the statement gathering process for the TRC and is now director of the Centre. A majority Indigenous Governing Circle has been appointed, with representatives nominated by national First Nations, Inuit

and Métis organizations. The university demonstrated a commitment to truth and reconciliation in 2011 when President Barnard travelled to the TRC’s Atlantic National Event, in Halifax, and delivered an apology for the University of Manitoba’s role in the Indian Residential School system. This commitment has accelerated with the creation of the National Research Centre on Truth and Reconciliation, which has required the hiring of three dedicated, full-time staff (so far – two more are coming soon!) and a half-dozen student positions in addition to material investments in the physical and digital infrastructures necessary to house, run and manage the archives of the TRC. You can learn more about the Centre and its activities by visiting its website (<http://umanitoba.ca/centres/nrcctr/>).

As one of many University of Manitoba faculty and staff who worked on the proposal to the TRC, and on the Implementation Committee once our bid was selected by the Commissioners, I have been involved with establishing the TRC archives since my hire by the university in the summer of 2011. Before coming to the University of Manitoba I had been working as a Senior Digital Archivist at Library and Archives Canada. At present I teach in the Department of History, in the Master’s Program in Archival Studies.

# Graduate Student Profile: Mary Owusu

Mary Owusu began her doctoral studies at Dalhousie in fall 2014, under the supervision of Dr. Phil Zachernuk. She is originally from Ghana, and taught History at the University of the Cape Coast for a number of years, during which time she also held Cadbury (2007) and Fulbright (2011-12) fellowships. In 2014, she was awarded a Killiam pre-doctoral fellowship.

Mary spoke to the editor of this newsletter during the annual Department Christmas potluck about her journey to Halifax and her research plans.

## How did your career as an historian begin?

The way I see it... I owe it to my discussions with my grandmother. She was always telling me stories about her people, her past. She told me about the Asante people, about growing up in Kumasi [capital of the former Asante kingdom], and Asante nationalism and history. I followed that up in my Master's, by researching further the stories she told me. Then I realized that I not only wanted to know about my grandmother's stories, I wanted to know about all sorts of other things.

## What brought you to Dalhousie?

The turning point in my intellectual formation came in 2012 when I was asked to teach two courses, on the intellectual history of Ghana and on historiography. I realized in the first course an opportunity to mould the thinking of students and make history meaningful for nation-building. But then I became aware that I lacked the skills to effectively capture and communicate the spirit of the course. After careful research, I concluded that Dalhousie University provides an unmatched environment for my development in the field of African intellectual history. My supervisor, Dr Phil Zachernuk, has made a name as an academic of repute. His seminal book, *Colonial Subjects: an African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas*, explored in new and provocative ways the factors which shaped African intellectuals' efforts, and laid down the broad framework for future research in this area. I also have the opportunity to work with Dr Gary Kynoch and Dr Amal Ghazal, and other leading African scholars.

Another reason I chose Dalhousie is Halifax. From my slavery studies, I knew about Nova Scotia, and that some of the freed slaves had moved from here to Sierra Leone... So that piqued my interest, because I had read so much about Nova Scotia. Not to mention, as a mother of three, Halifax is also a great place to bring up children.

## Describe the project you've chosen for your dissertation.

My project is tentatively entitled "Roads Not Taken: JB Danquah 1895-1965." It is an intellectual biography which I hope to write in the tradition of new African histories being promoted by people like Fred Cooper. Extant accounts of Africa's post colonial history largely focus on the rise of nationalist leaders and their postcolonial crises. Current efforts seek to revisit the colonial past more fully, to appreciate other ideas, or roads, which were not taken, but which might now point the way forward. In Ghana, the political and intellectual careers of JB Danquah have been eclipsed by those of his rival Kwame Nkrumah's ideas... [and] thus remain under-appreciated. This project, without supporting Danquah's politics, proposes a study of his intellectual career and activism in order to have a more complete interrogation of Ghanaian engagement with the experiences of colonialism and postcolonial politics.

# Student News and Profiles

Congratulations to the undergraduate students who were received awards in the 2013-2014 academic year for their writing and academic achievements!

**Carolyn McKinnon** received the George E. Wilson Prize for the most meritorious essay by a first year student.

**Brennan Dempsey** received the Commonwealth History Prize. This award is given to facilitate and encourage the study of Commonwealth or British history, and is awarded annually for the best undergraduate essay on a topic relating to the history of Britain and/or the Commonwealth countries. This prize is funded by a gift from Dr. David Jessop and D. Karen Ostergaard.

The George E. Wilson Memorial Scholarship, given to returning History Major(s) with the highest grades, was jointly awarded to **Lauren Vanderdeen** and **Andrew Seto**.

**Hillary MacKinnon** received the Gilbert F. Jennex History Scholarship for a student finishing third year who demonstrates academic excellence in the study of the Atlantic World.

**Paige Marques** was awarded the Laurel V. King Scholarship for second year students who excel specifically in History.

The Atlantic World Scholarship was awarded to **Henry Howe**. This scholarship was created by Dalhousie History graduate Susan Bugey to encourage excellent senior students focusing on the history of the Atlantic World.

**Elena Cremone** received the University Medal in History. This is awarded to a graduating Honours student with the best undergraduate record.

## Recent Master's Graduates

Congratulations to the following students who successfully defended their MA theses in the past academic year!

CHELSEA HARTLEN

MICHAEL HATTON

CARLA PASS

DAVID MARTIN

MICHAEL MURPHY

CONNER COLES

THOMAS WALSH

Chelsea Hartlen, Michael Hatton, and David Martin, are currently pursuing doctoral studies at, respectively, the University of Guelph, Johns Hopkins University, and Queens University.

### Bowes Scholarship

This year the department was delighted to recognise MA students Rachael Fraser, Christine Harens and Hillary MacKinlay. Endowed by Janeen Bowes (BA '67) the Bowes Scholarship is awarded to the most deserving graduate students working in the fields of Halifax, Nova Scotia or Atlantic History.

# Graduate Student Profiles

The History Department's new MA candidates, who began their studies in September 2014, have won a number of awards and scholarships, and are involved in a wide variety of research projects.



## Katherine Crooks

Katherine is originally from Halifax. She completed her BA at Saint Mary's University in 2014 with Honours in History and a minor in English. Katherine is currently writing her Master's thesis on representations of prostitution in the popular press of late-Victorian London. She hopes to pursue her PhD in England, examining illicit behaviour and morality at Victorian and Edwardian colonial resorts. In 2014, she received a SSHRC Master's scholarship and a Killam Pre-doctoral scholarship. In May 2015, she will present her research at the Northeast Modern Language Association Conference.



## Abigail McInnis

Abigail McInnis is from Halifax, but studied for her undergraduate degree at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Her Honours thesis focused on how the medieval male writer discussed the sanctity of Merovingian female saints. For her master's degree, she is working with Dr. Kesselring, and examining constructions of the early modern female criminal. In her free time, Abigail enjoys playing the guitar and hiking. She hopes to pursue doctoral studies in the UK next year.



## Nick Baker

Nick Baker grew up in Halifax and received his BA honors in History and Early Modern Studies from Dalhousie and the University of King's College. He is particularly interested in Zimbabwe's Liberation War in the region of Matabeleland and the process by which liberation politics altered identities both before and after the official cessation of hostilities between the Rhodesian government and various militant nationalist groups, especially the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). Outside of academic interests, Nick enjoys badminton and watching Tottenham Hotspur defeat other English Premier League teams (Arsenal most of all).



## Colin Elder

Colin completed his B.A. at Algoma University in his home town of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. While there, he worked in the Wishart Library helping in the archives and special collections, and he spent some time working closely with the Shingwauk Residential School Centre's collection. This was an excellent opportunity for him to spend the final year of his undergraduate degree researching the influence of the Church of England in Northern Ontario throughout the nineteenth century. He is continuing to pursue this interest at Dal at the M.A. level under the supervision of Dr. Jerry Bannister. In his spare time, Colin enjoys reading, nature, and travel; he has lived and studied in England as an international exchange student twice, and he has also spent two summers in Spain.



## Brennan Dempsey

Brennan is from Herring Cove, a fishing village/suburb outside of Halifax. Brennan has been interested in history since he can remember, and is extremely excited to pursue his passion professionally. A graduate of Dalhousie, Brennan will be working with Dr. Krista Kesselring, researching family life, religion, and childhood in early modern England. Brennan enjoys reading, competing in games of all kinds, and making people laugh. His essay, titled "The Power of Pictures in John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*" was awarded a 2014 undergraduate essay prize by the North American Conference on British Studies.



## Kylie Peacock

Originally from Rockwood, Ontario, Kylie completed a BA in History at Dalhousie University in 2013. After taking a year off to work, she applied to do her MA in History at Dalhousie. For her MA, Kylie will be working with Dr. Justin Roberts, and is interested in slave resistance in nineteenth-century Jamaica. Kylie enjoys spending time with friends, baking cupcakes, and running. She is looking forward to competing in the Disneyworld Glass Slipper Challenge (10km race and 21km race) this February.





### Ghazi Jarrar

Ghazi was born and raised in Amman, Jordan. In 2011, he moved to Halifax for a bachelor's degree in history and economics at Dalhousie University. For his MA research project he will be working with Dr. Amal Ghazal, and is looking to explore the Levant's transformation from the late Ottoman period into the post-war era. Specifically, he is hoping to understand how Arab intellectuals made sense of (and were part of shaping) the different landscape that came about with the collapse of the Ottoman order. Ghazi is an avid sea and whitewater kayaker. He completed a 1,200 km sea-kayak expedition in 2011, and is now a certified guide and instructor.



### Hillary MacKinlay

Hillary is originally from Truro, Nova Scotia. She completed her B.A. History (Honours) at King's/Dalhousie University in 2014 with a concentration in the Atlantic World. She will be continuing her work on 19th century Pacific whaling voyages under the supervision of Dr. Jerry Bannister. Her non-academic interests include rowing on the Northwest Arm, watching Stargate SG-1, and playing crib. In 2014, Hillary was awarded a SSHRC Master's scholarship. Her writing has won several essay prizes, from both the North American Conference on British Studies and the *Acadiensis* Journal.



### Mike Smith

Having graduated from the University of King's College and Dalhousie with an Honours degree in history, Michael is continuing his research with Dr. Justin Roberts. His work is mainly focused on eighteenth-century America, particularly concentrating on economics, gender, and labour surrounding the revolutionary period. He has also done work in twentieth-century American history, especially on the United States' role in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Jean-Luc Picard and the Sherlock Holmes of Jeremy Brett are his daily inspirations, but so too is the comedy of Jerry Seinfeld and Larry David. He would dispute liking a good argument, and enjoys reading Iain M. Banks, biking, and Volvo Cars.



### Rachel Fraser

Rachael got her Bachelor of Arts in history at the University of Windsor. Her interest in Canadian and women's history brought her to Dalhousie where she is doing her Master's research on women on the Canadian home front during World War Two. She is particularly interested in how the war affected what kind of food was being prepared by these women in their homes, as well as what kind of food stuffs were being sent overseas to soldiers. In her spare time she likes to cook and practice yoga.



### Christine Harens

Born and raised in Germany, Christine moved to Canada in 2009 and completed her high school education in Cape Breton, before she started her B.A Honours in History with a Subsidiary in Religious Studies at Saint Francis Xavier University. In her Honours Thesis she focused on the migration of Black Loyalists and Black Refugees and how these settler societies altered Nova Scotia. For her M.A she hopes to focus on Black Loyalists and their settlements in Nova Scotia. When she is not researching documents at the archives, Christine enjoys reading Harry Potter and the outdoors, especially going for hikes in Cape Breton, which has become her second home.



### Mitchell Potter

Mitchell is from Hants County Nova Scotia and has lived in Halifax/Antigonish for the last 6 years. He is delighted to have the opportunity to research a topic that sparked his fascination with the past in his childhood: the Mongol empire. Mitchell is studying under the supervision of Dr. Colin Mitchell, and hopes to work with medieval travelogues to study Mongol-Turkic confessional identity during the Chinggisid era. Besides his studies, Mitchell enjoys spending time outside whether it involves fishing, hiking, or simply exercising.

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