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# The Historian

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

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## GREETINGS:

### From the Desk of the Chairman

Greetings, and best wishes at the beginning of a new academic year.

Since August 2000 I have been attempting to fill the very capable shoes of Dr. Andrew Dunar as department chair. We all owe much to Dr. Dunar for his very effective handling of duties as chair. He has been very helpful to his successor whenever problems and opportunities have presented themselves.

It has been a very busy and productive year for the faculty and students. But, before outlining those activities, I must report the sad departure of the department's founder and principal mentor, Dr. Frances Roberts. She died in November of 2000. She was an inspiration to all who worked with her. Her values of curiosity, discipline and hard work, her advocacy of high standards of scholarship and her "tough love" of students continue to characterize the department's culture. In her honor, the department is enlisting your support to increase the scholarship fund in her name. Two students this year shared the scholarship, and though the amount involved is significant, the department would like to move the Frances Roberts scholarship to the stage of full funding for two history majors.

On the subject of scholarships, the department for the first time awarded the Junior Heritage Woman's Club

Scholarship. Although the Club's contribution was the dynamic for bringing this scholarship to fruition, the department used a part of a generous gift received from alumnus John Hendricks, founder of the Discovery Channel, to put the fund over the top. Thanks to all involved.

Thanks also to the Bankhead Foundation for its continuing generosity in the department's effort to find permanent funding for our annual History Forum lecture series.

Due to Dr. Bruce Baird's resignation, the department hired Dr. Sheri Marie Shuck (Ph.D, Auburn) to teach its early U.S. classes. Shuck is a specialist in Native American history, and also brings strength in U.S. women's history previously lacking. Already she has impressed colleagues and students alike with her enthusiasm for teaching and her vibrant personality.

Only a few of the faculty's achievements this year can be highlighted here. The University of Nevada Press published a paperback edition of Dunar's oral history of Hoover Dam. In late Spring, Dr. Virginia (Ginny) Martin's revised dissertation was published by Curzon Press. This volume, *Law and Custom in the Steppe: The Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century*, demonstrates the strength in non-western history Martin has brought to the department. She has also introduced a class on Modern China. All faculty members remain

active in research and writing, as well as in related professional activities. Drs. Shields, Severn, Martin and Boucher serve as officers in scholarly organizations, and Dr. Dunar is the editor of the *Journal of the Oral History Association*.

Our students continue to perform well. In the last two years the number of graduates has increased significantly. Of our undergraduates, the record of Shane Bjornlie must be highlighted. He shared top honors as College of Liberal Arts student of the year, and was also the winner of the departmental award. A prized protege of Dr. Gerberding, Bjornlie received a full fellowship for five years from Princeton University to study Late Antique/Early Medieval history with Professor Peter Brown, one of the world's leading authorities. We had three graduate students complete their degrees this year. Donna Castellano wrote an impressive thesis under Dr. Shield's direction. Once again, Dr. John Severn published a volume of student papers from the senior seminar class (HY 490/590).

On the subject of graduates, the next department newsletter will highlight news of our alumni. Please forward information concerning employment, family, travel and whatever else you wish to share with faculty and former friends and colleagues. The faculty is always so pleased to hear about your current interests. You may be interested to note that Dr. Lou

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Williams, who received both her bachelor's and master's degrees here, shared the College of Liberal Arts award for outstanding alumnus in 2000–2001. Now an associate professor at Kansas State University, she was present to receive her award at Honor's Day in April.

Finally, thanks to the efforts of our able administrative assistant Beverley Robinson, you can now consult our web page at [www.uah.edu/colleges/liberal/history/index.html](http://www.uah.edu/colleges/liberal/history/index.html).

### History Forum 2000

On September 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2000, the History Department hosted its annual History Forum lecture series. The theme was "China and the West: Insights into an Evolving Relationship." The first speaker was Dr. John E. Wills, Jr., Professor of History at the University of Southern California. His lecture was entitled "Great Qing and the World." With the aid of slide images, Dr. Wills gave an account of Imperial China's relationships with the outside world during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), particularly during the 18th century, when tradition holds that China needed and wanted nothing from the rest of the world. His main argument was that the ruling Manchus and Chinese elite of Qing China acknowledged foreign achievements when they saw them to be superior and to use them to the advantage of China's imperial rule. This relationship with the outside world would change significantly in the 19th century.

In the second lecture, entitled "China and the World, 1800-1950," Dr. Joanna Waley-Cohen, Associate Professor of History at New York University, sought to debunk several stereotypes about China and have persisted down to the present day.

These stereotypes include the contentions that China is isolated from and isolationist in world affairs, that it has been the victim of Western encroachments, that it has been indifferent to Chinese communities overseas, and that it has always considered itself superior to the rest of the world. Her lecture focused on countering these stereotypes through an analysis of three aspects of Chinese-Western relations: Christian missionaries in China; the military, and specifically the West's insistence on underestimating China's military capabilities; and the role of the overseas Chinese in shaping Qing diplomacy.

The final lecture, given by Dr. Perry Link, Professor of Chinese at Princeton University, was entitled "Do Chinese People Want Human Rights?" In it, Dr. Link discussed the public debate concerning Chinese attitudes toward human rights, with its roots in the classical, Confucian tradition. Ultimately, he argued that human rights are pre-cultural, that is, part of what all people have in common regardless of cultural differences. Dr. Link concluded that Eastern and Western ideas of human rights may not have the same formulations, but both are based in a moral understanding of human rights and therefore we can understand the issue and view the future of human rights in China with optimism.

The History Department was able to present History Forum 2000 with the generous support of the Bankhead Foundation, the



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Alabama Humanities Foundation, the Division of Continuing Education, the Honors Program, and the Humanities Center.

### AIAA AWARD

Professors Dunar and Waring received the 2001 History Manuscript Award from the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics for their book *Power to Explore: A History of Marshall Space Flight Center, 1960-1990*. The AIAA presents the award annually for "the best historical manuscript dealing with the science, technology, and/or impact of aeronautics and astronautics on society." The book, published late in 1999 as a volume in the NASA History Series, describes the first three decades of Huntsville's NASA center, and includes chapters on military rocketry programs in Germany and the United States, Apollo-Saturn, Skylab, Space Shuttle, Spacelab, the Space Station, and various scientific and technical projects including the Hubble Space Telescope.

Research for the book began over a decade ago under a contract between UAH and MSFC, and several UAH history department alumni, faculty, and staff provided assistance to the two historians. Professor Johanna Shields served as the principal investigator in the project's early years. Sarah Kidd, Jo Gartrell, Sarah Walker, and Dan Gleason all served as graduate research assistants. Ann Lee and Sarah Kidd each served as the project's administrative assistant, and Beverley Robinson assisted in a variety of ways.

The MSFC History Office website gives access to an online copy of the entire book, and a link to ordering information. The Website address is:

<http://history.msfc.nasa.gov/book/bookcover.html>.

## Discovery and Despair: Dimensions of Dora

The history department was co-sponsor for an exhibit and series of talks on the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp and V-2 rocketry complex in January and February 2001. The exhibit, entitled "Discovery and Despair: Dimensions of Dora," consisted of photographs by Alvin Gilens and artifacts from the Mittelbau-Dora memorial site located near Nordhausen, Germany.

Alvin Gilens, a renowned photographer, has exhibited work around the world. He was the first photographer invited by the museum at Mittelbau-Dora to document the V-2 camp and facilities. In 1995 this exhibition of photographs opened in Nordhausen on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the camp by US army soldiers. The exhibit then toured Europe with stops including the Imperial War Museum in London. At UAH, Gilens and Torsten Hess, chief curator of Mittelbau-Dora memorial site, gave talks on the history of Dora and its meaning today.

To remember Dora's victims and show life and death in "the inner circles of hell," Gilens' compelling black-and-white images revealed the ruins of the underground factory and the slave camp. His photos were metaphors for the amoral rationality and inhumanity of the Nazi regime, and indeed of modern life itself.

The Dora exhibit provided Huntsville with a revised, and historically accurate, interpretation of the construction of the V-2 missile and the leadership of the von Braun team. While many in the community have heard

allegations of the dark side of the V-2, no local forum has discussed openly the human rights violations and use of slave labor by the von Braun team during the construction of the weapon. Locally the story of the V-2 has celebrated technological achievement without reference to cruelty. In contrast, the artifacts, photos, and placards of the exhibit spoke to the untold suffering of the slave workers, and the deliberate inhumanity and willful blindness of the managers, engineers, and guards at Dora. One of the best-attended exhibits ever at UAH, many community visitors, including dozens of high school students, toured the exhibit and left with a new, more somber understanding of Huntsville's high-tech past.



A photo from Dora by Alvin Gilens



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Drawing and Wooden Gag from Dora



Uniform and Clogs from Dora

## Women's Studies Program

This year the Women's Studies Program sponsored the First Annual Women's Studies Essay Contest. Participants submitted essays that addressed women's issues written for any UAH course during this academic year. The three winners presented their papers at the First Women's Studies Colloquium which will be held every year.

The Women's Studies Student Organization (WSSO) re-established its charter at UAH this year. Drs. Sheri Marie Shuck (Assistant Professor of History) and Merrall Price (Assistant Professor of English) are the organization's advisors. In March, WSSO sponsored the "Clothesline Project," a public awareness campaign to prevent domestic violence and crimes against women.

UAH allows students to minor in Women's Studies by completing 21 semester hours of interdisciplinary courses on women's topics. As part of this program, in Spring 2002 UAH will be offering Women in U.S. History (HY 367), which explores women's roles in American society, their challenges, and achievements from the colonial period to the present.

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Contact Dr. Sheri Marie Shuck for course details at shucks@uah.edu. For further information about the Women's Studies Program, check the UAH Women's Studies web page.

### World History

The UAH history department will be offering a new introductory level, two-part sequence course, entitled "World History." This course is designed to explore comparatively the development of five major world regions (Asia, Africa, the Americas, Europe, and Oceania) and their respective cultures from pre-history to the present. The history department initiated this program to expand students' understanding of worldwide events throughout history and how they impact us today in the age of computer technology, mass communication, and globalization. World History (HY103-104) offers students an alternative to the Western Civ. sequence -- "Origins and Development of the Contemporary World" (HY 101-102) -- while meeting the same academic standards and curriculum requirements as HY 101-102.

In January 2001, the Humanities Center awarded the World History Committee (Virginia Martin, Sheri Marie Shuck, and Stephen Waring) a Library Collection Enhancement Grant, which funded the purchase of world history resources to add to Salmon Library's current holdings. World History (HY 103-104) is scheduled to be taught by Drs. Martin and Shuck starting in the academic year 2002-03.

### Black History Month

Black History Month activities at UAH began with a

lecture on 5 February by Dr. Don Bowyer, UAH Music Department, entitled "A History of Jazz," a program co-sponsored by the Honors Program. From 8 February until 26 February, internationally renowned artist Jimi Claybrooks exhibited some of his works in the University Center Gallery. On 9 February, Freddy Cole [brother of Nat King Cole] offered a workshop and recital at the Huntsville Museum of Art, co-sponsored by the Tennessee Valley Jazz Society. The musical program on 16 February featured Lester Lynch, baritone, in the Roberts Recital Hall. On 20 February, Douglas Turner of Alabama A & M University and WJAB-FM, presented a lecture entitled "Milestones in Jazz," followed by a 27 February lecture by David Person of the Huntsville Times about "Black Composers." The month's activities concluded with the annual Black History Month luncheon keynoted by the Reverend Mrs. Doris Lacey.

### Visiting Scholar

During the week of April 9, 2001, the history department hosted distinguished visiting scholar, Edward Ingram, Professor of Imperial History, Emeritus of Simon Fraser University, Canada. Professor Ingram, who is both founder and editor of the well-respected journal, *International History Review*, now resides in Wellington, New Zealand where in a very active retirement, he is Honorary Research Fellow at Victoria University and edits his journal. Professor Ingram delivered three lectures during his visit and conducted a workshop for faculty on grant writing. His carefully and imaginatively crafted presentations accomplished the Humanities Center goals for the Visiting Scholar Program – they

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exposed UAH students and faculty to the wisdom of a scholar with a lifetime of exemplary achievement in research and writing. Like many distinguished scholars before him, Professor Ingram expressed surprised delight at the energy, activity and collegiality he found in the UAH community.

### Phi Alpha Theta

Phi Alpha Theta had its initiation on March 7, 2001. The ceremony was held at the home of Dr. Philip Boucher. We had three new initiates: Laura Mauldin, Erin Reid, Leslie Lewis, and one transfer of membership for Ann Lawson to our chapter.

### History Tournament

Five years ago the history department took the recommendation of one of its alumni, Penny Wood, and initiated a history contest for local high school students. Since then the contest has grown each year. Other departments joined, and the event became known as UAH Liberal Arts Tournament Day. Art and Art History, Political Science, and Psychology now sponsor competitions concurrent with the history contest, and in April 2001 over 500 students came to the UAH campus to participate.

Participants in the history section of the tournament can take a 75-item multiple choice test in either U.S. or world history, competing for both individual and team awards. On April 19, 2000, eight area high schools (Brewer, Randolph, Catholic, Hazel Green, Grissom, Sparkman, Guntersville, and Bob Jones) fielded teams for the history portion, which included team and individual competition. Bob Jones dominated the U.S. history competition, winning both first and second place team

contests, and won the top seven of the ten individual awards. Randolph finished third in the U.S. contest. In the World history competition, Randolph came in first, Brewer placed second, and Catholic finished third. Students from Brewer, Catholic and Randolph won individual awards. The top three teams and the top ten individuals received plaques furnished through the generosity of the UAH Office of Admissions.

On April 18, 2001, six area high schools (Randolph, Catholic, Hazel Green, Johnson, Grissom, and Bob Jones) entered the history competition. Once again Bob Jones High School scored very well in the U.S. history competition, winning both first and third place team contests, and winning the top seven of the ten individual awards. Randolph finished second in the U.S. contest. Randolph won the World history competition, with Catholic second and Johnson third. Individual winners were from Grissom, Randolph, Johnson and Catholic. For the first time in tournament history, individual winners of the U.S. and World competitions each won a \$500 scholarship to UAH. The top three teams and the top ten individuals received plaques furnished through the generosity of the UAH Office of Admissions.

### **History Forum 2001 The Civil Rights Movement in Alabama**

Over the past year, Professors Lee Williams and Jack D. Ellis have been working with faculty from UAH and Alabama A&M in preparing a fall 2001 series on the Civil Rights Movement in Alabama. This year, the UAH History Forum, with support from the Bankhead Foundation, is joining with other departments and programs on our

campus and at Alabama A&M in sponsoring this series, which is also being made possible in part by funding from the Alabama Humanities Foundation, *The Huntsville Times*, DESE Research, Inc., MEVATEC Corp., and Alabama Representative Laura Hall.

The sessions will be held on Thursday evenings at 7 p.m. (except for the last one of December 4<sup>th</sup>, which will be on Tuesday) and will rotate between UAH (Roberts Recital Hall) and Alabama A&M (the School of Business Multipurpose Room). The following is a schedule of the sessions.

**August 30 Inaugural Lecture-- Taylor Branch**, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63* (1988) and *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-65* (1998). **At UAH.**

**September 6 The Long Night's Journey, 1877-1941--Linda Reed**, University of Houston, author of *Simple Decency and Common Sense: The Southern Conference Movement, 1938-1963* (1991). **At Alabama A&M.**

**September 13 Early Years of the Movement (Part I)--Diane Nash**, student leader, Nashville sit-ins of 1960, Freedom Rides of 1961, and the Selma Right-to-Vote movement, and a founding member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). **At UAH**

**September 20 Early Years of the Movement (Part II)--J. L. Chestnut, Jr.**, attorney and civil rights activist, author of *Black in Selma: The Uncommon Life of J. L. Chestnut Jr.: Politics and Power in a Small American City* (1990). **At Alabama A&M.**

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**September 27 The Montgomery Bus Boycott-- Fred Gray**, attorney for Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr., and author of *Bus Ride to Justice* (1995); **Charles Moore**, Tusculumbia native and celebrated photographer of the civil rights movement; **D'Linell Finley, Sr.**, University of Alabama Department of Political Science. **At UAH.**

**October 11 Trial by Fire and Water: Birmingham, 1963 (Part I)--Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth**, veteran civil rights fighter, pastor of Birmingham's Bethel Baptist Church between 1953 and 1961, and a founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. **At Alabama A&M.**

**October 18 Trial by Fire and Water: Birmingham, 1963 (Part II)--Glenn Eskew**, Georgia State University, author of *But for Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle* (1997); **Horace Huntley**, University of Alabama in Birmingham, author of a forthcoming oral history of the Birmingham movement; **Odessa Woolfolk**, President Emerita of the Board of Directors of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. **At UAH.**

**October 25 Huntsville during the Civil Rights Movement--Sonnie W. Hereford, III**, local physician and activist; **Veronica Pearson**, **Fred Carodine**, and other former Alabama A&M students active in the 1962 sit-ins.

**At Alabama A&M.**

**November 1 "Bloody Lowndes" and the Black Panther Party--John Hulett**, Lowndes County activist during SNCC's local voter registration drive; **Frye Gaillard**, prize-winning journalist, author of

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*The Dream Long Deferred* (1988) and a forthcoming history of the civil rights movement in Alabama. **At UAH.**

**November 8 Selma to Montgomery, 1965-- John Lewis**, U. S. Congressman (Ga., D-5<sup>th</sup>), a native of Troy, Alabama and author of *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (1998), active in the the Freedom Rides and in the events of “Bloody Sunday” at Selma in 1965; **Mary Stanton**, author of *From Selma to Sorrow: the Life and Death of Viola Liuzzo* (1998). **At Alabama A&M.**

**November 15 Turmoil in Tuskegee-- Frank Toland**, Tuskegee University Department of History. **At UAH.**

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**November 29 The Case of Mobile-- Walker LeFlore, Janet Owens LeFlore, and Burton R. LeFlore**, family of the early civil rights leader John LeFlore; **O. B. Purifoy**, member of the Non-Partisan Voters League; **Robert W. Gilliard**, Mobile dentist and NAACP activist; **Joseph Langan**, city commissioner 1953-1969. **At Alabama A&M.**

**December 4 The Civil Rights Movement in Alabama — A Look Back and a Look Ahead-- Aldon Morris**, Northwestern University, author *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (1984). **At Alabama A&M.**