

SPRING 2008

HISTORY GRAD NOTES
INTELLIGENCER

THIRD ANNUAL JAMES A. RAWLEY
CONFERENCE IN THE HUMANITIES

By Jason A. Heppler and Michelle Tiedje

The History Graduate Students' Association presented the Third Annual James A. Rawley Conference in the Humanities on April 12, 2008, with the theme *Imagining Communities: People, Places, Meanings*. Dr. Joan Jensen, professor emerita of New Mexico State University, delivered the keynote address: "Another Look At Family: Recovering Our Familial Past." Her address embodied the theme of the conference. Using old photos and family stories, Professor Jensen explained her family's history from their origins in Italy to their settlement in America. She called upon historians to recognize the importance of family history, and urged the audience to examine their own familial past.

Both undergraduate and graduate students presented their research at the conference. The presenters included many UNL students, but also included students from the University of North Dakota, the University of Kansas, Northwestern University, the University of Wyoming, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The panels covered a wide variety of topics and timeframes, including *Constructing American Identity and Memory*, *A Community of Consumption: Food and Music in the Twentieth Century*, and *Farms, Fairs, and Physicians: Native American Communities in the Twentieth Century*. Senior members of the UNL faculty commented on the papers, and lively discussions with the audience gave presenters constructive feedback on their scholarship. The panel sessions were followed by a plenary session entitled "Thinking Outside the Ivory Tower: Humanities Careers Outside of Academia." Dr. Charles Braithwaite, Editor of the *Great Plains Quarterly*, Heather Lundine, Editor in Chief/History Editor at the University of Nebraska Press, and Sarah Rodriguez from the University of Nebraska Foundation headed the session and provided a wealth of information regarding careers outside academe.

The conference concluded with the HGSA's presentation of the award for the best graduate student paper. Doctoral student Strother Roberts of Northwestern University, Illinois, received the top award for his paper, "Indians, 'Esquimaux,' and Race: Identity and Community in the Lands West of Hudson's

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Join Us For the
HGSA End of
the Year Party!

Saturday, May 10
5:00 p.m.
at Rob Voss'
House.

All history graduate
students are invited.
Come celebrate your
achievements with food
and friends.

Questions about the
party? E-mail:
HGSA@unlnotes.unl.edu

Remember!

Master's students must
submit a **Memorandum
of Courses** to the Office
of Graduate Studies
PRIOR to completion of
over one-half of the
required coursework.

Contact your advisor
with questions or visit
the website of the Office
of Graduate Studies at:

[http://www.unl.edu/
gradstudies/](http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/)

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Bay in the Eighteenth Century." The runner-up prize went to UNL Ph.D. student Dave Nesheim for his paper, "A Community of Coercion and Compliance: Scientific Agriculture at Lake Andes, South Dakota in the 1920s."

The Rawley Conference was a great success thanks to the effort of both students and faculty, who donated many hours of labor to ensure the success of the event. The History Graduate Students' Association would like to thank the student presenters, as well as those who served as panel chairs. Leslie Working and Nathan Sanders in particular are owed a debt of gratitude for their service as conference co-chairs. HGSA would also like to thank the faculty of the UNL History Department for their time and support, as advisors and panel commentators, with special thanks to Dr. Margaret Jacobs, Dr. Kenneth Winkle, Dr. Jim Le Sueur, and Dr. Doug Seefeldt. Vital support was also received from the Nebraska Humanities Council, the Plains Humanities Alliance, and many departments and offices throughout the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The Rawley Conference allowed many students their first chance to experience presenting at an academic conference, but all presenters gained valuable knowledge and experience. We look forward to the many opportunities next year's Rawley Conference will bring.

MAKING TIME FOR AN ACADEMIC HOME

By Dave Nesheim

Over the past two years, I have had the honor of serving as president of the History Graduate Students Association. Following a long-standing American tradition in executive tenure, I will not seek a third term. Although I could remind you of the many and varied accomplishments of my administration, I will instead share why I feel being an active participant in our graduate education is so valuable. Becoming a professional historian – public, academic or independent – requires much more than simply researching the past. It can be difficult to find time to attend events and activities outside of coursework, but the time spent will pay dividends for years to come.

During the summer of 2003, I took the opportunity to attend two seminars at the Larom Summer Institute at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming. The immediate draw was a seminar taught by Elliot West, whose work *Contested Plains* was then all the rage. I also took a seminar with Louis Warren, who at that time was a relatively unknown historian. While there I met a grad student from Arizona State University, Jay Precht, with whom I became fast friends. Later that fall, I re-established these contacts at the Western History Association Conference in Fort Worth where Jay introduced me to a whole cohort of grad students. Two years later Brian Collier, one of those ASU students, set me up with my first published book review in *The Journal of the West*. The following year I contacted Louis Warren about participating

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in a panel I was putting together for the WHA in St. Louis, and though he was already committed, he put me in touch with Jon Coleman and Jennifer Price who happily served as commentator and chair. Jon Coleman later gave my name to Molly Holz, editor of *Montana: the Magazine of Western History*, who offered me my second published book review.

This spring I presented a paper at the American Society for Environmental History in Boise, Idaho. It was there I met Molly for the first time; we talked for nearly an hour and she bought me a tall, cold beer. Despite arriving at my first ASEH conference as the only UNL representative, I was amazed to find that I kept running into old friends. It was like coming home to a place I'd never been, and that was well worth my time.

TO ALL THE GRADUATE STUDENTS FROM DR. JAMES LE SUEUR:

During the academic year 2007-08, the Graduate Committee made the first substantial revision to the graduate program in over a decade. The department approved our new guidelines, and, as of academic year 2008-09, our new program will be online. The substantial changes include new requirements for 900-level seminars, a dissertation précis and defense, an oral component of the PhD qualifying examinations, etc. I strongly encourage all students still taking coursework and others on their way to writing their dissertation proposal to use these new guidelines. I also encourage you to apply for as many external and internal grants as possible.

Based on the results of our admissions this year, it looks like we are likely to have between 10 and 15 new graduate students entering our program next year. I have also been working with various units at the university to increase our budget for TA positions so we can fund more MA and PhD students in the future.

Finally, the Graduate Committee is also working on developing our joint degree programs. The first such effort involves the College of Law, and we hope to have that JD-MA/JD-PhD program fully operational within the next year. We are also considering another joint degree program with the College of Journalism.

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

Those who have finished or anticipate to finish a program of study in 2007-2008 include:

Ph.D. (name, dissertation title):

Aieta, Nicholas J. "Frontier Settlement and Community Development in Richardson, Burt, and Platte Counties, Nebraska, 1854-1870"

Fulkerson, Randal C. "Reviving the Democracy: William Jennings Bryan's Fight to Save the Democratic Party"

Martin, Nathan "Elizabeth and Sweden: Anglo-Swedish Foreign Relations in the Late Tudor Period"

Rasmussen, Christopher "Lonely Sounds: Popular Recorded Music and American Society, 1949-1979"

M.A. (name, thesis title):

Anderson, Timothy G. "The Apprenticeship of a Poet: John G. Neihardt's First Twenty Years"

Gibson, Jared "Courting the Vice President: Richard B. Cheney and the Battle for Executive Power"

Rasmussen, Svetlana "Searching for Answers, for an Identity, for Cause to Espouse: Ethnic Resurgence in the United States, 1963-1977"

Stauffer, Heather "Disaster Nostalgia: Creating Identity through the Children's Blizzard of January 12, 1888"

Have a great summer!

If you have any news or other items for publication in future Intelligencers, please contact Michelle Tiedje at mtiedje2@bigred.unl.edu. I welcome your comments and suggestions.

