Dear Friends:

Spring 2015 found the History Department contemplating departures and arrivals. We hosted a symposium in honor of Pieter Judson’s work as a teacher and scholar in his time at Swarthmore College as he finalized his departure from the college. We heard from many of those attending—and from many who wished that they’d been there—that we should consider more of these kinds of events with our alumni, and we agree.

We also heard this spring that the Committee on Educational Planning and the Provost have recommended that the History Department be given a tenure-track position in Middle Eastern history. The wheels are in motion now for a search in the coming academic year for this position, which we consider to be vitally important for the college as a whole as well as for our own department’s curriculum.

More good news for the faculty in the department this year included the promotion of Diego Armus to full professor and the successful completion of a third-year review for Assistant Professor Farid Azfar. This spring also saw the roll-out of the Black Liberation 1969 Digital Archive, a product of Professor Allison Dorsey’s ground-breaking fall course. http://blacklib1969.swarthmore.edu

We had an interesting discussion with faculty and students of David Armitage and Jo Guldi’s provocative History Manifesto this spring, though most of us were sharply critical of the book. We’re looking forward to more discussions along these lines in the future.

Remember to drop us a line via email or on Facebook to let us know how you’re doing!

Timothy J. Burke
Professor of History and Chair
Amy DiPierro ‘15 and Treasure Tinsley ‘15 were awarded The Paul H. Beik and The Robert S. DuPlessis Prizes respectively at this year’s senior reception held on Trotter Lawn during Commencement Weekend. Treasure’s paper, “The Mother Citizen and the Absent Father: Gender Roles and the Family in Early Bolshevik Posters” was researched and written for our senior research seminar, which every major must complete, and which was advised and taught by Professors Marjorie Murphy and Robert Weinberg. Treasure was lauded for “an intellectual nimbleness” that is among the “aspirations of the liberal arts.” Amy’s paper, “Times of Polio: The 1956 Epidemic in Buenos Aires,” continued her work of the senior research seminar and researching in Buenos Aires to become her honors thesis. Advised by Professor Diego Armus, DiPierro impressed our faculty by crafting a narrative around a disease that was not bounded by class or community and incorporated experiences of patients during the epidemic.

Marissa Davis ’08 returned to campus during a trip back east for a wedding to deliver a talk as part of our History with a Future series. You can read about it on page 3. Marissa is currently a Management Consultant with RISE San Diego, an organization dedicated to fostering leadership and civic engagement in urban communities in San Diego.

Farid Azfar finished his third-year review successfully and will enjoy a year sabbatical researching and writing in the UK and the US. He is also presenting a paper at the FEEGI “Agents, Networks, Institutions, and Empires” Conference at Leiden University in the Netherlands.

Tim Burke spoke at the Aydelotte Foundation’s Second Tuesday Social Sciences Café in the spring. Professor Burke’s talk, “The Perils of Imagination: Why Historians Don’t Like Counterfactuals,” can be heard here.

BuYun Chen recently received a grant from the American Council of Learned Societies for a reading workshop, Women at Work: Reconstructing Nügong through Text and Image. In May of 2016, social and cultural historians, along with historians of technology and art historians, will come together “to clarify the historical relationship between gender and labor by engaging with the underlying conditions of knowledge and skill formation.”

Marjorie Murphy wrote about the news that we have been granted a tenure-track Modern Middle East History position that she “would like to thank all of the students who attended all of the lectures in all of the many, many searches and diligently wrote letters for some of our most esteemed colleagues in Middle Eastern history. This has been a long slog and, frankly, I had no hope of success after so many years of disappointment, but somehow the stars aligned and we have the potential of getting yet another stellar historian for this field. Thank you all.”

Professor Robert Weinberg, a presenter at Pieter Judson’s symposium, also discussed the trial of Mendel Beilis at the University of Delaware this year. His book on the subject, Blood Libel in Late Imperial Russia: The Ritual Murder Trial of Mendel Beilis, was published in 2013. •
Recent Events

We cosponsored a number of talks and events this spring, and our faculty participated in a variety of events this spring, including:

**Professor Allison Dorsey** was the speaker at the First United Methodist Church of Media for the Media Fellowship House’s 26th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration in January. You can read about in the *Delco Times*.

On February 9th, **Professor Dorsey’s** Black Liberation 1969 course began presenting their creative projects around campus. Dr. Ibram X. Kendi spoke about the spring of 1969 as the climax of the social movement happening on college campuses across the United States and incorporated the work of the students that is found in the Black Liberation 1969 Archive, researched by **John Gagnon ’17**, **Maria Mejia ’15**, and **Ali Roseberry-Polier ’14** and designed and organized by **Professor Dorsey** and **Nabil Kayshap**. The Student Panel took place on February 10th, as **Alis Anasel ’15**, **Laura Laderman ’15**, **Xavier Lee ’17**, and **Allison Shutles ’15** presented their work to a large and very interested audience in the Scheuer Room. On February 17th, McCabe Library kicked off **Leandre Jackson ’75**’s photo exhibit, *Proof of Black Life*. Finally, on February 26th, Dr. Martha Biondi spoke about how the impact of the Black campus movements in the ’60s and ’70s impacted higher education in the United States. All events were part of the Black History Month celebrations on campus, and, along with **Professor Azfar’s** “Queer Histories of Swarthmore” in April of 2014, contributed to The College’s Sesquicentennial Celebration. You can read more about the events and the course on the archive itself and in this piece by **Ryan Dougherty**.

On February 20, **Professor Azfar**, along with Professor Baki Mani of the English department, brought Professor Sumathi Ramaswamy of Duke University for a lecture, “Laughing at Empire Properly: M.F. Husain’s Images of the Raj.” Professor Ramaswamy is a cultural historian of South Asia and the British empire, and the talk was sponsored by the Tri-College Mellon Group for the Futures of South Asian Studies, the Departments of English, History, and Art, and the Program in Asian Studies.

Also on February 20, Sociology and Anthropology invited Olga Shevchenko, a sociologist of Russian culture, to give a talk on tourist photography and empire in Soviet Russia. The History Department helped sponsor this talk.

March 24 and 25th, the department supported events organized by Swarthmore formerly-known-as Hillel that brought together Jewish activists of SNCC to campus to speak about the Civil Rights movement and lead workshops on organizing.

In April, **Professor Allison Dorsey’s** course, “Africa in America: Gullah/Geechee Life and Culture” enjoyed preparing and eating a meal with professional chef and former restaurant owner Valerie Erwin. Black Studies students in Professor Jamie Thomas’ course, continued on page 4...

---

**Reflections on “History with a Future”**

by Marissa Davis ’08

When I stepped foot into Dr. Allison Dorsey’s "History of African-American People: 1619-1865" course during my freshman year at Swarthmore, I had no idea at the time that the course would change my life.

Before her class, my knowledge of American History specific to the African-American experience was limited to synthesized and sanitized narratives of the efforts of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks. I was a timid student then, and even more so in Dr. Dorsey’s class, at times unsure of my abilities in her class, and was often anxiety-stricken by even the thought of speaking up in her class. Yet, I couldn’t get enough of her courses! It was the first time history came to life for me in a deeply

continued on page 7...
2015-2016 will be a busy one for the department administratively, as we begin looking for a Modern Middle East historian. We also will be hosting the James A. Field lecture, but we are still waiting for final confirmation from the speaker. Please be on the lookout for that information in the fall.

On May 6 and 7, 2016, Professor BuYun Chen will host a reading workshop, Women at Work: Reconstructing Nügong through Text and Image.

"Language and Identity in the African Experience" also participated and Black Studies co-sponsored the event.

On April 20, Professor Armus brought independent filmmaker Wolfgang Bongers to campus to screen Kaffee Morgentau, an experimental documentary that is still a work in progress.

Of course, on May 20th, we brought Professor Pieter Judson back to campus to celebrate his contributions to Swarthmore, as he officially departs for the European University Institute. A number of alumni returned to campus to share their work and how Prof. Judson influenced them, including speakers Joanna Curtis, Ben Goossen, Erik Huneke, Seth Koven, Eli Rubin, Timothy Stewart-Winter, Lauren Stokes, Abigail Swingen, and Tara Zahra. Professors Weinberg and Azfar also spoke at the event. It was fantastic, and we were glad to host Pieter one last time. You can read more about it here. Below are some pictures from the event.

Clockwise from top left: Abigail Swingen; Pieter shares a laugh with Bob Weinberg; Seth Koven prepares notes; Pieter listens attentively; and Lauren Stokes, Erik Huneke, and Eli Rubin answer questions from the attendees.

Photos by Tim Burke
her first year on campus. This honor will provide a network of other young “public problem solvers and civic leaders” to DiPierro and the other 201 recipients who were nominated by the presidents of their colleges and universities.

Carlo Bruno ’17, Brandon Conner ’17, Michael McVerry ’16, and William Meyer ’17 joined a National Security Archive project that is focused on revising documentation related to Venezuela-US relations during the Chavez years. A fellowship, coordinated by Sarah Elichko and Roberto Vargas of McCabe Library and Professor Diego Armus, is helping fund the project.

Amy Singer ’82 wrote in to share that she’s “spending a sabbatical year at the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University. After 25 years of teaching at a huge public university (Tel Aviv) it is a joy to come to a place that rather resembles Swarthmore’s own campus, compact and calm, ideal conditions for research and writing. The project that occupies most of my time these days is an exploration of Ottoman Edirne (previously Byzantine Adrianople), the second Ottoman capital. Curiously, it has been mostly ignored as a subject of historical study (as opposed to the background for eye-catching events).” She arrived here looking to study a group of public kitchens as a continuation of my work on Ottoman charitable foundations and discovered that I would need to write the ‘background’ myself before moving on to this specific study.

I’ll be in Princeton until the end of June, then off to Turkey for a few months of research before returning to Tel Aviv.”

Seth Koven ’78, who also joined us for the Judson symposium as a speaker, recently published The Match Girl and the Heiress, which was reviewed favorably in many places. You can read The Times Higher Education in the UK here. The book tells the story of two idealistic women from disparate backgrounds who join together to try and create an ethical utopia in early twentieth century England.

Nicole Topich ’11 has been busy since graduating. She recently managed a project with Professor Daniel Carpenter at Harvard University entitled, “The Digital Archive of Massachusetts Anti-Slavery and Anti-Segregation Petitions.” Topich, herself, has two recent publications, as well: “Unrolling the Past: The Digital Archive of Massachusetts Anti-Slavery and Anti-Segregation Petitions” and, with Daniel Carpenter, “Patterns of Transformation in Black Petitioning in Massachusetts, 1770-1850,” in *Democracy, Participation and Contestation: Civil Society, Governance and the Future of Liberal Democracy*, published by Routledge in 2014. Back in May, Topich presented at the Women’s History in the Digital World conference and will be presenting, in June, at the joint annual conference of the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the Society of Early Americanists. She plans to continue “to produce similar databases based on Native American, women’s rights, and religious liberties petitions from the state archives.”

Peter Seixas ’69 recently co-edited a collection, New Directions in Assessing Historical Thinking through Routledge.

Ben Schwartz ’06 also recently released a book – his first – entitled Right of Boom: The Aftermath of Nuclear Terrorism, which poses the question of how the U.S. might respond to a nuclear attack that cannot be attributed to a foreign government.


Abigail Owen ’99 is now the Postdoctoral Fellow in World History of Science at the World History Center of the University of Pittsburgh.

Deivid Rojas ’11 shares with us that Taller de Paz, which Rojas started in 2009, came to an end. He moved to Chicago in 2013 and is now the Communications Director for the Fight for 15 campaign, which you can follow here.

You can “Like” us on Facebook for more regular updates about the Department:

https://www.facebook.com/swathistory

As always, you can find more information on our department website:

http://www.swarthmore.edu/academics/history.xml
Faculty Talks, 2015

June
6/1-30  Diego Armus  Invited professor, Universita degli Studi, Roma Tre  Rome, Italy
6/4-5  Diego Armus  Universita degli Studi, Roma Tre for the *Identitá culinaria: pratiche e rappresentazioni del cibo in Sudamerica* conference  Rome, Italy
6/2-5  Farid Azfar  FEEGI “Agents, Networks, Institutions, and Empires” Conference  Leiden University, the Netherlands

July
7/6-10  BuYun Chen  14th International Conference on the History of Science in East Asia, “The Case of Bingata: Trafficking Textile Art and Technique across the East China Sea”  Paris, France
7/20-25  Allison Dorsey  NEH Summer Seminar: “America’s Reconstruction: The Untold Story”  University of South Carolina Beaufort

August
8/3-7  BuYun Chen  17th World Economic History Congress, “Regulating the Male Official Body in Ming China (1368-1644)”  Kyoto, Japan

September
9/4  Diego Armus  Instituto de Altos Estudios Sociales  Universidad Nacional de San Martin in Buenos Aires, Argentina
9/16-20  Diego Armus  Keynote speaker at the National Conference of Argentine Universities History Departments  Comodoro Rivadavia

October
10/1-3, 29-31  Diego Armus  Graduate seminar  Universidad Nacional de Rosario in Rosario, Argentina
10/8  Diego Armus  National Conference on Science and Social Inclusion, Ministry of Science and Culture  Argentina
fascinating way. It was one of the first classes to challenge me to write and think critically. And above all, it was this course, and all the others that would follow because of it, that opened my eyes to seeing and understanding the manifestations of injustice, rooted in an equally painful and powerful past.

I majored in history, and ultimately did the Honors program, because of that class. I became a student of the African Diaspora, seeking every opportunity to learn of the histories affecting people of African descendant, and as an extension of that, studying the patterns of resilience and resistance in the face of hardship and injustice. I made a decision from that time on that I wanted to dedicate my life to being a part of the solution to challenging systems of inequality and injustice, specifically at the intersection of race and class.

That intention has been the common thread that has connected all of my professional and academic opportunities thus far. My first year out of Swarthmore, I took a job as a paralegal at a civil rights law firm because I wanted to more intimately understand how to challenge systems of injustice within a legal framework, specifically the injustices perpetrated against communities based on issues of gender, class, and race. I accepted a Research Associate position at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation shortly after because I wanted to understand how to develop better policies and programs to improve the quality of life for black communities across the US and around the world. I decided to go to Harvard Kennedy School because I wanted to further develop the skills necessary to work on behalf of these communities. And now, my work as a Management Consultant with an organization committed to fostering civic engagement and leadership in urban communities is one that I hope will allow me to use all of my skills and experiences thus far to build capacity within the kinds of communities I vowed to work on behalf of years ago.

I don’t know what the future holds for me, but I know that my life to date has been shaped by an acknowledgment of the fact that one cannot know where they are going or how to move forward until they take time to understand how things came to be. I learned that first as a History student at Swarthmore and remain forever grateful for that lesson.

Faculty Talks, 2015 (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>October (cont’d)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>BuYun Chen</td>
<td>“Found in Translation” Conference at the World History of Science, 1200-1600, “The Case of Bingata: Trafficking Textile Art and Technique across the East China Sea”</td>
<td>University of Pittsburgh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>Diego Armus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, Argentina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>November</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/5</td>
<td>Diego Armus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Universidad Nacional de Córdoba in Córdoba, Argentina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/17</td>
<td>Diego Armus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Universidad Nacional de Tucumán in San Miguel de Tucumán</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>December</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/2</td>
<td>Timothy Burke</td>
<td>Speaker at a Cinema Studies Colloquium</td>
<td>University of Pennsylvania</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The department is interested in hearing from you!

We are especially in hearing about publications and internship experiences. You can share your story via the newsletter or simply tell us about it via email so that we can post the internship to our website. Email the department: history@swarthmore.edu.

Thank you!