

THE PRIMARY SOURCE Volume 10, Number 2 Spring 2000

Miranda Emmert, Editor

[History Home Page](#)

To jump to a specific section of the newsletter click on a topic.

[Headnotes](#)

[Student Works in Preservation](#)

[Graduate Notes](#)

[Graduate Student Activities](#)

[New Courses](#)

[Computer Lab Benefits Student](#)

[Phi Alpha Theta](#)

[Undergraduate Notes](#)

[Advisor's Notes](#)

[Undergraduate News](#)

[Undergrad Works in Civil War](#)

[Alumni News](#)

[Local History Interests Purdue](#)

[Faculty Activities](#)

[In Memoriam](#)

[Alumna](#)

[News of the Emeriti](#)

[Department of History Awards](#)

[Recent Graduates](#)

HEADNOTES by Gordon R. Mork

Renewal of a history department, as generations move forward, is a challenging and invigorating activity. Last year Professor Robert McDaniel retired, after more than three decades of teaching the history of the Middle East at Purdue. His retirement, along with the full or partial retirements of other colleagues, left significant gaps in our ranks. The faculty of the department caucused last spring, met in a long planning session, and came up with three priorities for new faculty. First was the Middle East (with emphasis on the Ottoman Empire). Second was South Asia. Third was Twentieth Century Europe. I presented these priorities to the dean, with suitable justifications, and eventually she was able to authorize appointments at the assistant professor level for the first two priorities.

Seeking new assistant professors is an elaborate procedure, and I won't bother you with all the details. Suffice it to say that it is an inclusive process, involving search committees of history faculty, several other Purdue offices on campus, and interviews at the American Historical Association convention and on campus. (This year we also did one long-distance phone interview to Indonesia.)

The procedure culminated in February with six on-campus interviews, three for each position. Our visitors were all well qualified scholar-teachers at the beginning of their careers, trained at the best graduate programs in America and England. Each candidate made a scholarly presentation to faculty and graduate students and gave a lecture to an introductory Purdue class. Each met with graduate students at lunch. Each had interviews one-on-one or in small groups with the history faculty.

What an array of fascinating scholarship! We heard about founding boy scout and girl scout troops during the early twentieth century in places you wouldn't expect them. We learned about wealthy merchants building mansions where they never intended to live. We heard analysis of peasant revolutionaries in non-literate societies, based on unpublished chain letters. And there were other amazing topics as well.

What potential for teaching! Candidates faced our "most fearsome" undergraduate classes (just kidding) with their demonstration lectures. And they all survived.

When the visits were over and the ballots cast, the department came up with a clear consensus for each position. I'm delighted to report that our first choices have both said YES to Purdue. Let me introduce them both to you very briefly.

Cengiz Kirli was born and raised in Turkey. He was an undergraduate at the

Middle East Technical University in Ankara and came to the United States for graduate work. He will be completing the Ph.D. in history this spring at Binghamton University in New York. His research deals with "the worlds of Istanbul coffeehouses" during the period of the Ottoman Empire. His chief sources of information are espionage reports provided to the sultan's government by spies in the coffeehouses. Talk about "behind the scenes" history!! He has had teaching experience both in Turkey and in New York. In his first semester at Purdue, he will be teaching our survey of the Middle East (HIST 245) and an undergraduate seminar on the Ottoman Empire (HIST 495).

Satadru Sen was born in India, but has spent most of his life in the United States. He is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, and completed his Ph.D. at the University of Washington, Seattle, in 1998. His dissertation (and his first book, which is forthcoming from Oxford University Press this year), deals with prison colonies run by the British for Indian convicts. He has had teaching experience at the University of California, Berkeley, at the University of Washington, Seattle, and at a study-abroad center in India run jointly by Emory and the University of Virginia. This fall he will be teaching our "Survey of Global History" (HIST 105) and an undergraduate honors seminar (HIST 492) with the amazing title, "Beef, Biceps and Community: Violence and Nationalism in South Asia." It will deal with India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and make the point that not all nationalists in the area have followed the non-violent philosophy of Ghandi.

So, the Department of History at Purdue is constantly renewing itself. But, we do not forget our traditions. This summer Professor Emeritus McDaniel plans to be leading a Purdue study tour to Egypt, in cooperation with Professors Gordon Young and Janet Afary. We are looking forward to the best of all worlds, linking the past with the future in many ways.

Student Works in Preservation by Amy Barrett

Amy Barrett, a freshman majoring in Interior Design with a minor in History, is working on a project that involves getting the Varsity Apartments on the National Register for Historic Places. Varsity Apartments are located on State Street across from Von's, between Steve and Barry's and University Bookstore. Right now, the apartments may be in danger of being torn down for extra parking. Walter Scholer designed them in 1928. Walter Scholer designed numerous campus buildings including Cary Quad, Elliott Hall of Music, Mackey Arena, Mechanical Engineering, and Windsor Halls.

Amy was selected as a Dean's Scholar student in the School of Liberal Arts. This program gives students an opportunity to work with a Purdue faculty member on a research project of his or her choosing. Amy is working with Professor Gordon Mork of the Department of History and Professor Kent Schuette of the Landscape Architecture Department. Professor Schuette represents the Wabash Valley Trust for Historic Preservation, of which he is president. Amy's project last fall was to complete a floor plan for the Bishop's House in Lafayette. This plan was used in the tour brochure when the house opened to the public in October. Amy hopes to one day specialize in Historic Preservation.

GRADUATE NOTES by Charles Cutter

If students enter the Graduate Program in History for a variety of reasons, the aim of most is to learn the craft of History and to become professional historians. Our program, therefore, introduces our graduate students to a range of endeavors that serve to promote their skills as historians. This means more than simply mastering the content of various fields of study, though this is certainly important. Other crucial skills include learning to read closely and critically; finding one's "voice" as a writer; moving beyond a simple research topic to frame a historical question upon which to center one's investigations; identifying appropriate evidentiary materials; and presenting one's findings in ways that engage and push forward the historical debate on a given subject.

But what about the classroom? In addition to being a scholar who brings to light new ways of seeing and interpreting the past, an important function of the historian—and one that we in the department take seriously—is to be a teacher of history. And, indeed, most of our graduate students envision the day when they, too, will stand at the lectern, as teachers at colleges or universities. While we have no formal "teacher training" program, Teaching Assistantships in the Department of History provide students with faculty guidance and practical training as teachers of

history. So, in reality, being a teacher of history at the college level begins in graduate school—much sooner than that first teaching job as a freshly minted Ph.D.

The Department of History pursues a policy of graduated responsibility for its Teaching Assistants; a three-tiered system with increasing amounts of autonomy as the learning process goes on. At the beginning level, TAs are assigned to help with large survey courses where their responsibilities are somewhat limited and under the close supervision of the professor. Helping with mundane, but important administrative tasks—taking attendance, keeping the grade books, handing out course materials, etc.—is sometimes a real eye-opener for first-time TAs, many of whom have experienced courses only as students! At this level, TAs also serve as graders, and in this capacity they become skilled at evaluating, commenting on, and grading student papers and exams. This is an especially important phase of teacher training—to learn to explain why a particular assignment or exam is of poor or high quality—and our faculty work with our TAs to establish a set expectations about student performance. Finally, TAs at this and all levels hold regular office hours and meet with students to discuss class materials. We expect TAs to be well prepared, of course, and to be able to explain readings and lectures to inquisitive (or confused) students. To say the least, all this requires time and commitment on the part of our Teaching Assistants.

The next step in the training process is to assign our more experienced TAs to survey courses that employ the two-lecture/one-discussion section format. Here, teaching responsibilities increase considerably because our Teaching Assistants are placed at the head of two or three small discussion sections comprised of 20-25 students. Working with the professor in charge of the course, TAs learn to devise and carry out strategies for introducing the common readings and eliciting focused, participatory class discussion. This level of training represents a big step forward in becoming a teacher, especially in learning about the dynamics of the classroom.

Finally, after our graduate students have passed their Preliminary Exams for the Ph.D., we give them the opportunity to teach a lower-division survey course of their own, independent of any direct faculty supervision. These experienced TAs decide upon the content and structure of the course—which texts to use, which themes to emphasize, the number and nature of assignments, and so forth. Over the past couple of years, I've been struck by the excellence of our graduate instructors in the classroom, and they have won high praise from students who have taken their courses. I like to think that our department's approach—informal as it may be—has much to do with the success of our graduate instructors. Through coursework and their own research, they've become competent scholars; as beginning and intermediate TAs they've had time to observe and participate in the teaching process; and, at the top level, they put into practice what they've learned about History and teaching, and they gain valuable experience as sole architects of their courses.

As you can see, a Teaching Assistantship in History is no sinecure! Our TAs work hard and help tremendously with the department's teaching mission. At the same time, they "learn by doing" to become good teachers in their own right. We in the Department of History value the energy, skills, and commitment of our Teaching Assistants, whose contributions are vital to our role as teachers of Purdue's undergraduate population.

GRADUATE STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Robert Burg was appointed H-Pol Book Review Editor for a term of two years. H-Pol, short for H-Politics, is one of H-Net's many discussion networks. For more information go to [H-Net](#)

The Graduate History Association of the University of North Carolina in Charlotte accepted Cullen Chandler and Ted Blanton's proposals for inclusion in the 2000 Graduate Forum. This conference gives graduate students from across the country and from all fields of history the opportunity to present research to their peers. The papers that Cullen and Ted submitted are the results of their work in the Fall of 1999 with Professor John Contreni. The conference not only gives them a platform to present their papers; it allows them to meet and interact with their peers, many of whom will be working in fields other than theirs, as well as faculty from UNC-Charlotte and other universities. The Graduate Forum offers two monetary prizes for the best papers. Cullen's paper is entitled "'Adoption' and the Spanish March: Integrating new territory into Carolingian civilization."

Sarah Drake presented a paper at the Missouri Valley History Conference

in Omaha, Nebraska. It is entitled, "The Use of Film in Teaching History in the Secondary School: The Plow That Broke the Plains."

Steven Stofferahn will present a paper, titled "A New People, A New Hope: Alcuin and the Creation of a Monastic Missionary Ideology," at the 75th annual meeting of the Medieval Academy of America at the University of Texas, Austin, on April 13, 2000. The paper grew out of Professor John Contreni's Fall 1998 graduate seminar in early medieval history and culture.

Andrew Thomas along with Charles Ingrao has written "The Consorts of the Habsburg Baroque," in Clarissa Campbell-Orr, ed., *Queenship in Europe, 1660-1815: Power, Gender and Sexuality* (London: Macmillan). It is scheduled to appear in 2001.

New Courses

Rayvon Fouché is teaching a new course, History 331, "Great Figures in History: Civil Rights Leaders."

Sally Hastings is teaching a new course, History 492K, "Seminar in Historical Topics: Korean Civilization."

Computer Lab Benefits Students

The Department of History's computer lab, located in University 331, has recently obtained three new computers, making for a total of six computers. All six computers are Pentium Gateway computers. In addition to the computers, the lab also has a Hewlett Packard flatbed scanner, a Minolta slide scanner and a Hewlett Packard laser jet printer. All computers have web access, as well as up-to-date software. *The computer lab is available to all History undergraduate and graduate students.*



***Photo:-*Graduate student Chris Bauermeister often takes advantage of the History computer lab.**

Phi Alpha Theta

The history honorary, Phi Alpha Theta, had its Book Sale in March.
