Bill Hartley, a former member of the department passed away last spring, after a lengthy battle with cancer. He was a member of the department for a relatively brief time but was well-known to many of us from his many years in the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History and because of his pioneering work in Latter-day Saint History. He was a good man and an excellent historian, with an always-welcome sense of humor and commonsense perspective. Many of us have fond memories of Bill and will miss him. A few current faculty shared thoughts at his passing. Some are included below.

Bill befriended me while I was in graduate school in Chicago, and we exchanged research notes on the Midwest over the years. He was unfailingly kind to me, and an example of scholarly productivity and objectivity in the field of Mormon history. He presented on a panel I chaired last fall for Utah State History. Already in poor health, he was unsteady on his feet but delivered a fine talk in a clear voice nonetheless. He was an example to me of staying true to his craft despite his infirmities. – Susan Rugh

Bill was a humble, hard-working, generous, and model historian, very professional and helpful to all. Also, as Mormon History Association president he saved the MHA because of his level-headed and parsimonious leadership. – Mark Choate

I can’t remember a time when Bill wasn’t a part of my life, shadowy or otherwise. For decades, beginning in the 1970s, Bill and my father worked together, researching and writing high-class family histories (both the histories and the families) for hire. Several times a year, as a youngster, I would open the front door, recognize the short but stout figure, and yell, “Dad, Brother Hartley’s here.” Those doorstep exchanges introduced me to Bill and I grew to respect, admire, and love him as I came to know his family and hang out with his kids. Bill also gave me my first real history job as an undergraduate at BYU, researching trail accounts. He was invariably humble, messy, disorganized, and full of more ideas than anyone I have known. He worked his way far down the path of becoming an “entrepreneurial historian,” though never quite recognized the dream. His love for history was DNA-deep, but he also preached that historians are purveyors of a trade and he worked like a master craftsman. Bill was also a terrific father and deeply devoted to his wife, Linda. The very salt of the earth. – Richard Kimball

I first met Bill while working as an undergrad research assistant for the Joseph Smith Papers. A lot of the senior historians on staff there never took the time to get to know the RAs, but Bill remembered me after our first meeting, and always said hello and asked how my studies were going when we crossed paths. I know several others in similar circumstances to me that have those same memories of him. – Christopher Jones

Bill was such a genial man. He frequently asked me about my work, knew what classes I was teaching and made useful suggestions. When I started teaching my historical narratives course, he told me about the best writing advice he had ever received—that memorable prose engaged all of the senses. I’ve never forgotten that. – Jenny Pulsipher
I attended BYU from 1967-68, served in a mission in southern Brazil from 1968-70 (there were two missions in Brazil when I received my call), and then returned to finish at BYU from 1970-73. I was a history major from the time I first set foot on campus, with the intention of going to graduate school. It never really crossed my mind to change majors. Perhaps I had insufficient imagination to consider something else. George Addy was my undergraduate mentor. I remember him warning me that if I went into academia, I would have a job that I could never leave at the office: there would always be something that I could never leave at the office: going into academia, I would have a job that I could never leave at the office: a Thing. Hillsdale's conservatism meant that history was emphasized, as were substantial reading and writing. Western Civ took precedence over World Civ.

In 1991, BYU recruited me to return to Provo, where I remained for the rest of my career. For some reason, I was made department chair in 1993, without having received a Continuing Faculty Status. I was chair until 1997, a period when the number of history majors reached 800, and the department expanded significantly to handle a burgeoning number of history 201/202 enrollments. At BYU I have taught The Historian's Craft (History 200), History of World Civilizations to 1500 (History 201), History of Colonial Latin America (History 251), Age of Enlightenment (History 305), History of Spain (History 320), History of Mexico (History 353), History of the Indian in Latin America (History 357), and Senior Seminar (History 490).

It is almost impossible to say what my favorite class was. I always enjoyed teaching History 251 and History 320 because they were the focus of my career. But as the years passed, I also became very fond of the Age of Enlightenment, because it dealt with important ideas that helped shape our world. And perhaps surprisingly I really enjoyed teaching World Civ. Of course, I didn't have a great background in much of what I was teaching, as was the case with Colonial Latin America or Spain, but it was great fun to introduce students, many of whom didn't want to be there, to the achievements of their ancient ancestors.

A favorite memory is a 490 class that produced three award-winning papers. What would I like to forget? Why would a historian want to forget?

As for a favorite or funny memory from a department meeting, several things come to mind: Mark Grandstaff offering to write the entire departmental accreditation review if we exempted him from teaching; Another accreditation review incident involved Frank Fox and Lanny Britsch. At the time Lanny was one of the directors of the Kennedy Center. I was department chair and trying to promote some departmental enthusiasm for carrying out the report. Frank, however, in his typically Foxian manner, opined that previous experience had taught him that our efforts on the report would prove meaningless, that whatever changes were going to be made would result from decisions elsewhere. This upset Lanny, who was more idealistic about the endeavor than Frank. As it turned out, however, unbeknownst to Lanny, the decision had already been taken to de-emphasize the independence and role of the Kennedy Center. As the accreditation review proceeded, Lanny came to understand the reality of what was unfolding. He eventually acknowledged in a later meeting that he had come to understand the wisdom of Frank's cynicism. And then there's Karen Carter's faculty meeting "Bingo." What are some changes I've made at BYU? 1.) The cycle of going to faculty meetings, spending time with me, forgetting the number of students I taught. What will I not miss at all? What will I most miss about BYU? The chance to interact with students and colleagues, research funding. The University—BYU has been very good to me. What will I not miss at all? Grading exams and papers, outcomes assessments, and the escalating bureaucratization of CPs reviews.

What am I most looking forward to about retirement? Travel, reading for pleasure, finishing a couple of book projects, spending time with family, and, I hope, aging gracefully. Thank you for all that you've done, Dr. Brown!
Dr. Sarah Reed

Dr. Reed got a BA in German (music minor) from BYU before going on for an MA in German literature here. She then earned a Ph.D in German with a minor in Women's Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Dr. Reed grew up in Mesa, AZ with an older brother and a younger sister. She and her siblings all did exchange student programs in Germany and still have ties to Germany and speak German. Her husband, Matt, is also from Mesa and although they went to the same high school, they didn’t meet until they were both at BYU. Matt was an English major and a fellow bibliophile.

As her undergraduate minor suggests, music is a big hobby for Professor Reed. She primarily plays the violin, piano, and organ. In grad school, she played fiddle in a bluegrass band with some colleagues from her department and had a great time gigging around at Madison dive bars and busking at the farmer’s market. She also enjoys singing with the local shape-note singers and in choirs.

Dr. Reed’s favorite food is Mexican. Her favorite local restaurant is Bombay House. Her favorite movie is M by Fritz Lang, although she’s currently obsessed with the directors George Miller and Taika Waititi. Probably her favorite place she’s been is Berlin, for its mixture of history, culture, and döner kebab.

Reading and being bemused by Kafka short stories in German 202 as a BYU freshman made her want to take more German classes so that she could really get what he was saying. Fortunately, those classes opened up a whole world of German culture and history that distracted her from the ultimately doomed task of understanding Kafka.

At BYU, Dr. Reed will be teaching Scandinavian and German family history and paleography. Her research interests include German-American and Scandinavian-American history and relations and her current book project looks at the representation of Mormons in 19th-century German literature. Germans were fascinated by the American West, and Mormons play a prominent role in their bestselling westerns, often as a warning against the perils of American religious freedom.

Dr. Reed has been surprised that the students really are as great as everyone told her they were and has really enjoyed the wonderful supportive scholarly atmosphere here for both faculty and students. Something challenging about starting her job here has been bringing family history, which has been a hobby of hers since childhood, and Scandinavian studies, which was her secondary field in graduate school, into her professional everyday life. It’s been exciting, but a big change from teaching primarily German language and culture classes at UW-Madison. She is especially looking forward to working with the family history students and the unique environment that BYU provides for the professional rigor and religious imperative associated with genealogy.

Dr. David-James Gonzales

After returning from his mission (to Provo, UT) in 2001, Dr. Gonzales began his collegiate studies at Southwestern Community College in Chula Vista, CA, later transferring and taking a BA in History from the University of California, San Diego in 2011 (summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, & Dept. Honors with Highest Distinction). He earned his MA and Ph.D. degrees in History from USC in 2014 and 2017 respectively. It took him less time to earn the PhD (6 yrs.) than it did to complete his B.A. (10 yrs.)! This was primarily because he worked full-time throughout all but the last year of his undergraduate studies, first in typical student jobs (warehouse clerk and dock worker) and then later as a self-employed mortgage broker/banker.

Professor Gonzales was born in Oxnard, CA, but spent most of his childhood and adolescence in Chula Vista, CA (suburb of San Diego, 10 min. from U.S.-Mex border). He has four sisters (one of whom is his twin) and comes from a long line of educators. His grandmother taught in elementary school, and his grandfather taught drafting and architecture at Glendale Community College. Both parents were bilingual educators who worked with underserved Title I schools in Southern California. His father was an elementary school principal for 25 yrs. With all that background though, he reports having a typical suburban childhood; he loved basketball and baseball and had little interest in academics!

Dr. Gonzales and his wife, Karla, met on their missions. She was raised in Lawndale, CA, has an A.A. and A.S. from San Jacinto Community College, and has been a licensed cosmetologist since 1999. Once their eldest daughter was born in 2002, Karla opted to postpone her educational and professional ambitions to care for their children full-time. The Gonzales family now has four children: Ayiana, a junior at Provo High; Belicia, an eighth-grader at Dixon Middle School; and twins Joaquin and Cadiz, at home with Karla.

For hobbies Dr. Gonzales enjoys running, hiking, camping, and long road trips. Picking a favorite food is really tough, he says. It’s a toss-up between any kind of Indian goat cheese dish, like Paneer Masala or Saag Paneer, or Mexican chicken mole’. Not surprisingly, Dr. Gonzales is also a big fan of Bombay House.

A favorite movie is My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002), and favorite place, Big Sur, CA. A noteworthy book from undergraduate days is Carey McWilliams, Southern California: An Island on the Land (1946). This book changed the trajectory of his studies! Before this, he thought of history very traditionally and planned on studying early American religious and political history. McWilliams’ booster-busting narrative of Southern California history introduced him to the possibility of analyzing regional race relations as they intersected with the development of cities and economies throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

At BYU Dr. Gonzales’s specialty classes will include U.S.-Mexico Borderlands (currently HIST 363, The Spanish Frontier); Migration, Ethnicity, and Citizenship in U.S. History; Comparative Civil Rights History, and Latinos in the U.S. (HIST 385).

His research centers on examining three intersecting developments in 20thcentury U.S. history: migration, urbanization, and social movements. His current book project analyzes the role of Latina/o civic engagement and politics on the metropolitan development of Orange County, CA throughout the 20th century.

At BYU, Dr. Gonzales has been surprised by how many students have on-campus jobs. Everywhere he looks, students are busy working to keep this campus beautiful and clean, doing it all with big bright smiles. It’s very cool! He’s also really enjoyed students’ genuine interest in and engagement with history, despite majoring in unrelated disciplines. He’s found, as always, time management, a challenging part of his new job and looks forward to mentoring students in exploring their individual research interests.
Dr. Mark Christensen

Mark Christensen earned a BA from BYU, a MA from the University of Utah, and a Ph.D. from Penn State (all in history). Before coming to BYU, he was an Assistant and then Associate Professor of History at Assumption College in Massachusetts (2010-2018).

Dr. Christensen hails from Encinitas, California. His house was a few miles from the beach and he grew up surfing, snorkeling, and scuba diving. He learned how to spearfish and catch a lobster long before learning to drive. These hobbies introduced him to Mexico via Baja California as a boy—which has amazing surfing, snorkeling, and scuba diving. As an undergraduate, he worked at the Orem Fitness Center as a lifeguard and swim instructor then later as the Aquatic Director. This is where he met his wife, Natalie, who was also a lifeguard. Natalie worked as an elementary school teacher for 8 years and is brilliant at childhood literacy. Their family now includes five kids (ages 9, 7, 5, 3, and 1.5).

When not at work, Professor Christensen enjoys playing with his kids, skateboarding, playing guitar, and free diving and scuba diving. When he’s feeling posh, he loves to eat King crab. The other 364 days of the year his favorites include fettuccine alfredo and mole poblano. Favorite books include the Isaac Bell series by Clive Cussler. A favorite place to visit in the U.S. is Singing Beach, Cape Ann, Massachusetts; and overseas, Venice.

A book that had a big impact on Dr. Christensen’s trajectory was Louise Burkhardt’s The Slippery Earth. This book was one of the first to use Aztec (Nahua) texts to reexamine the spiritual conquest of Mexico and begin to expose the role of native culture in influencing evangelization.

Professor Christensen’s specialty classes at BYU include Colonial Latin America and Religion in Colonial Latin America, and his research involves Nahua and Maya ethnohistory in central Mexico and Yucatan, and the translation of Nahua and Maya texts. His various publications explore the colonial experience of Nahua and Mayas to illustrate how they negotiated their everyday religious, economic, and social lives with Spanish colonialism.

Surprises since coming to BYU include amazing support and great colleagues who care about the department and in seeing others succeed. On the negative side, however, he’s found that students here can sometimes act entitled, and unfortunately aren’t immune from cheating. But also on the positive side, Dr. Christensen has really enjoyed the beautiful campus and the library, which is fantastic for his research. We have some unique, really amazing collections. And while Professor Christensen and his wife miss the east coast, the ocean, friends, etc., he’s had issues (like every faculty member!) with Learning Suite, he’s really excited to be a part of a department and a larger university that encourages and supports research.

Book Recommendations

Looking for something to read? These books are recommended by our own faculty!

- John Lewis Gaddis, On Grand Strategy
- Sam Wineburg, Why Learn History (when it is already on your phone)
- Kori Schake, Safe Passage: The Transition from British to American Hegemony
- Lynn Viola, Stalinist Perpetrators on Trial: Scenes from the Great Terror in Soviet Ukraine
- Monica Muñoz Martinez, The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas
- D. Colin Jaundrill, Samurai to Soldier: Remaking Military Service in Nineteenth-Century Japan
- Antoine Acker, Volkswagen in the Amazon: The Tragedy of Global Development in Modern Brazil
- Rachel Devlin, A Girl Stands at the Door: The Generation of Young Women Who Desegregated America’s Schools
- Jieun Baek, North Korea’s Hidden Revolution. How the Information Underground is Transforming a Closed Society
- John Chaffee, The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China: The History of a Maritime Asian Trade Diaspora, 750-1400
- Jonathan Wilson, Angels with Dirty Faces: How Argentinian Soccer Defined a Nation and Changed the Game Forever

2018 Faculty Awards

- Sarah Loose: Frank W. Fox Award for Excellence in Teaching
- Karen Carter: Ted J. Warner Award for Excellence in Citizenship
- Matthew Mason: Thomas G. Alexander Award for Excellence in Scholarship
2018-2019 History Department Valedictorians

August 2018: Berklee Baum

Berklee is a teaching social science major with minors in both history and teaching English as a second language. She grew up in Orem, Utah, and served a mission in Los Angeles, California. Berklee has always had a passion for learning about history and culture. During her education at BYU, she participated in a social work internship in Italy and was able to do historical research in Germany, Poland, and Austria. She was a member of Phi Alpha Theta History Honors Society, which gave her opportunities to present her research at multiple historical conferences. She also worked for two years as a teaching assistant for several professors in the BYU history department. These professors inspired and encouraged her to continue her education in history. This past year, Berklee interned as a high school history and geography teacher in Lehi, Utah, where she will continue as a full-time teacher this fall. She has plans to apply for a history master's program in the UK, where she will focus on studying Cold War politics in Europe.

April 2019: Emma Chapman

Emma is a history major with an editing minor from Provo, Utah. She participated in the McNeil Center for Early American Studies Undergraduate Research Workshop in Philadelphia and was the recipient of a mentored research grant to research in Massachusetts about women in early America. During her time at BYU, she worked as a research assistant for Drs. Jenny Hale Pulipher and David-James Gonzales and as a teaching assistant for Dr. Sarah Loose. She is planning to pursue a Ph.D. in history at the University of California, Davis this fall.

Faculty Publications

BYU History faculty published a variety of articles, book chapters, and edited volumes last year, but the mainstay of our profession remains the monograph. Congratulations to each of these professors. Their new books represent years of work!

Jenny Hale Pulipher

Swindler Sachem: The Nipmuc Indian Who Sold His Birthright, Dropped Out of Harvard, and Conned the King of England

Jenny Hale Pulipher’s biography of John Wompas offers a window on seventeenth-century New England and the Atlantic world from the unusual perspective of an American Indian who, even though he may not have been what he claimed, was certainly out of the ordinary. Drawing on documentary and anthropological sources as well as consultations with Native people, Pulipher shows how Wompas turned the opportunities and hardships of economic, cultural, religious, and political forces in the emerging English empire to the benefit of himself and his kin.

Shawn Miller

The Street is Ours: Community, the Car, and the Nature of Public Space in Rio de Janeiro

Rio de Janeiro’s streets have long been characterized as exuberant and exotic places for social commerce, political expression, and the production and dissemination of culture. The Street is Ours argues that the automobile, by literally occupying much of the street’s space, significantly transformed the public commons. Shawn Miller’s environmental approach surveys the costs and failures of this spatial transformation and demonstrates how Rio’s citizens have resisted the automobile’s intrusions and, in some cases, even reversed the long trend of closing the street against its potential utilities.

Grant Madsen

Sovereign Soldiers: How the U.S. Military Transformed the Global Economy After World War II

Grant Madsen tells the story of how military officials assumed an unfamiliar and often untold policymaking role after WW II. Seeking to avoid the harsh punishments given after World War I, military leaders believed they had to rebuild and rehabilitate their former enemies. Although they knew economic recovery would be critical in their effort, none was schooled in economics. They managed to rebuild not only their former enemies but the entire western economy during the early Cold War. Sovereign Soldiers thus traces the circulation of economic ideas around the globe and back to the United States, with the American military at the helm.

Brenden W. Rensink

Native but Foreign: Indigenous Immigrants and Refugees in the North American Borderlands

Brenden Rensink presents an innovative comparison of indigenous peoples who traversed North American borders in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The resulting history questions how opposing national borders affect and react differently to Native identity and offers new insights into what it has meant to be “indigenous” or an “immigrant” Rensink’s findings counter the idea that the East was the core of that dictated policy to the western periphery. On the contrary, Rensink employs experiences of the Yaquis, Crees, and Chippewas to depict Arizona and Montana as an active and mercurial blend of local political, economic, and social interests pushing back against and even reshaping broader federal policy.
Internships

Women's Studies in London

Dr. Paul Kerry serves as the honorary secretary to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict (APPG PSVI) and in 2018 was also a visiting fellow in Women, Peace, and Security at the London School of Economics and through these capacities helped BYU interns in London who are a part of BYU’s new Global Women's Studies Program to understand both academic theory and governmental practice in these critical areas. Interns have attended APPG meetings, including the one pictured here with Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Sister Sharon Eubank, first counselor in the general presidency of the Relief Society and director of LDS Charities.

Teaching in China

Cameron Helvey is majoring in Teaching Social Science and minoring in Teaching History. He completed his internship at Clifford International School in Guangzhou, China. For his internship, he taught high school history and geography as part of the American Program, a new programmed designed for Chinese students that are planning on attending universities in the United States.

At the Front of the Classroom

Katie had the opportunity to intern as a 7th grade teacher. This is what she wrote about the experience.

When I tell people I teach seventh grade, I often get the same look. I can see in their eyes that they are wondering how crazy I am. They say something to the effect of, “Wow, I don’t know what you do.” I respond, “I work with kids.” They say, “Oh, you work for you?” “Yeah,” I respond. So I stared at him for a couple more seconds, and then I grabbed a binder. I wrote his name on it and then explained we were going to try a new organization technique called a binder – much bigger than pockets!

One of the most memorable things I have taught this year is the historical skill of sourcing. In one of my undergraduate classes I learned that I should not expect 7th graders to be “professional sourcers,” just like I should not expect them to play basketball as well as Michael Jordan. This advice has been helpful, as I have learned that teaching this historical skill is not a walk in the park. Through many lessons and a lot of practice, I felt by the end of the semester that most of my students had a good, basic understanding of sourcing. Once, I was out in the hall with a student who speaks English as a second language. She had struggled on many assignments because of a learning disability and difficulty understanding English. I plopped down next to her in the hallway, and we started discussing her sourcing quiz. It was an excerpt from Dominguez’s journal, one of the first non-Native American people to explore Utah. My goal was for her to realize that his perspective was somewhat skewed because he was not a Native American himself. She could not quite get there. I then had a zap of inspiration and said, “Hailey, who knows more about Mexican culture, me or you?” “I do...” “Exactly!” I exclaimed. “Now, think about Dominguez. What might make him a less reliable source?” She thought for what seemed like forever, then BOOM, she answered, “Hailey, who knows more about Mexican culture, me or you?” “I do...” “Exactly!” I exclaimed. “Now, think about Dominguez. What might make him a less reliable source?” She thought for what seemed like forever, then BOOM, she made the connection! “Well,” she said slowly, “He isn’t a Native American, so he might not understand everything about them and what they believe, just like you don’t understand everything about Mexican culture!” BINGO! I wanted to sprint around the hall yelling in victory. Of course, I did not do that, but those victories feel so good. Seventh graders are not Michael Jordans, but they sure know how to dribble.

It’s one thing to think about teaching, to learn about it, to study about it, to dream about it (yes that happens), but it’s another thing entirely to stand up in front of a classroom that is YOURS, full of students with struggles, hopes, dreams, insecurities, passions, and love. The responsibility to help them learn at high levels can be overwhelming. The days can be long, but I have never done anything more rewarding in my life.
Family History in Austria

As a double major in Family History–Genealogy (with an emphasis on German and Danish) and German Studies and a double minor in Editing and Scandinavian Studies, Charlotte Champenois was absolutely thrilled to have participated in this past semester’s internship and study abroad in Austria as her culminating BYU experience.

Charlotte spent over 126 hours working on genealogical projects, using original records online and in person at the Schwadorf parish church to compile family trees for people with Austrian ancestry. Starting out with just a couple of generations in a family tree, she traced several family lines back to the late 1600s and placed over 200 names into family trees. For Charlotte, it was thrilling to pore over the sometimes gorgeous, other times messy handwriting from so long ago to determine names and dates.

As part of this program, Charlotte traveled to repositories in and near Vienna and ascertained the types of genealogy-related records available there, and then Dr. Roger P. Minert (the program director and her mentor) and Charlotte took the information gathered from her hands-on experience working with the records and this additional research and incorporated it into a book they are co-authoring about how to conduct Austrian family history research.

“Party like its 1870” by Jackie Davis

Jackie Davis and the rest of Dr. de Schweinitz’s U.S. Women’s History and Transnational Women’s Rights History Classes attended a Better Days 2020 event in Salt Lake City.

The Better Days 2020 event celebrated the upcoming 150th anniversary of Utah being the first place where a woman cast a ballot in the United States, and the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment being passed. It was an amazing experience that highlighted the importance of women in Utah since the first days it was settled, until today. There were numerous activities and presentations that taught me so much about the history of Utah women that I had never known before. I particularly enjoyed the stories that women told about important female figures who lived during the years Utah was settled. Eliza R. Snow, Emmeline B. Wells, and Martha Hughes Cannon were a few of the characters that women portrayed and recited stories from their life. While I have heard of these women and read articles they published, the women who portrayed them highlighted aspects of their life I had never heard of and repeated things they said that are not commonly known. It was wonderful to get a more in-depth look at who these women were.

One aspect of the event that I loved, was the booths where modern-day female-run businesses, women’s groups, and projects/initiatives focused on women, were featured. At each booth, you could learn about an important Utah woman and the contribution they made in the fight for women’s equality. The event also featured several musicians who played songs that highlighted the strength of women and their efforts. I found the music and lyrics very moving and inspirational. My favorite part of the whole evening was when the Utah Constitutional Convention was reenacted by current political leaders in Utah and event coordinators. The reenactment helped me to see how hard these women fought for the right to vote and while I felt annoyed and angry at what some of the politicians said in opposition to women’s suffrage, it moved me to see “Emmeline B. Wells” and other politicians fight for equality for women.

Study Abroad & Field Study

Which study abroad & field study programs happened this year?

Dr. Brian Cannon co-directed a field study, Integrated Natural History of Utah, during Spring term 2019. The class studied the history of human-environment interaction in an interdisciplinary fashion (biology, history, English and recreation management) as they traveled to sites along five river systems in Utah: the Green, the Escalante, the Virgin, the Provo, and the Bear.

This past summer Dr. Mark Choate lead a History Department study abroad program in Central Europe and the Baltic states.

Thanks to Professors Jeff Shumway and Evan Ward, BYU students participated in the Model Organization of American States meeting in Washington D.C. Spring 2019. This year marks the first time that BYU had a team at this conference.

What study abroad & field study programs are coming up this school year?

It's great time for History students to take advantage of BYU's Washington Seminar! The program will be led by Dr. Aaron Skabelund, Fall 2019, and by Dr. Rebecca de Schweinitz, Winter 2020.

Spring 2020, Dr. Rebecca de Schweinitz will oversee the study abroad in Washington DC.

Students will register for History 200 (Historian's Craft) and History 221 (U.S. History Since 1877) both of which count toward General Education and History major/minor requirements. Students who have already completed one or more of those classes can register for History 495R.

Washington D.C. is home to some of the most significant public memorials, museums, libraries, and archives in the world. This study abroad allows to explore American history on the ground, at the sites where it happened; in conversation with artifacts and public representations of that history; and in the archives. The program includes excursions to important historical sites and archives in North Carolina, Virginia, and New York. Students will also participate in the Mormon Historical Association annual conference and Church History tours in upstate New York. Students will develop their research agenda, hone their research and writing skills, and to explore the Washington D.C. area and other Eastern U.S. locations.
Although Dr. Shawn Miller hasn’t yet found the original manuscript, he was able to locate published portions of a 1930s diary of the first official automotive expedition to cross from one American hemisphere to another. Sponsored by the Brazilian government, the expedition’s leaders, rather than rush through to set some kind of record, as was the common practice, took ten years to carefully survey the full route, from Rio de Janeiro to the existing network of highways in northern Mexico.

De Schweinitz, R

Before it was a sci-fi thriller, Midnight Special was a late-night television series. In researching the movement to lower the voting age to eighteen, Dr. Rebecca de Schweinitz found that it first aired in August of 1972 as a gimmick to encourage newly enfranchised youth to vote in the upcoming presidential election. NBC wanted to experiment with late-night programming while youth-vote advocates were looking for ways to use the music and television industry to increase voter registration among young voters. The first episode included performances by John Denver, Mama Cass Elliot, the Everly Brothers, Linda Ronstadt, Harry Miller, S

Dr. Shawn Miller’s research for a book about eighteenth-century French parish scandals has led to many a chuckle while working in the archives. Her favorite line from a court case appeared in a suit against a priest in the village of Mareuil-sur-Ay: “It cannot be imagined that a man of fifty would take a bath with a thirty-year-old schoolmistress, in the presence of a thirty-five-year-old priest, unless he had lost his head.”

Carter, K

Dr. Karen Carter’s research for a book about the complexities of Ciskeian history and nurses’ history. This de Schweinitz, R

Dr. Leslie Hadfield conducts traditional archival research but oral histories also play an important role in her work. In 2018 she held a discussion in Ginsberg, South Africa with retired nurses she had interviewed for her next book. She presented a draft of the manuscript to them and asked for their feedback. During the session, some participants who had not previously been interviewed added their own experiences, and the nurses she had already interviewed reminded her of aspects they felt were important to include. They enjoyed a fruitful discussion about the complexities of Ciskean history and nurses’ history. This “debriefing session” both strengthened Dr. Hadfield’s book and helped these nurses make sense of what happened to them in the past.

Hodfield, L

Dr. Leslie Hadfield was thrilled to track down and confirm the location of the “Generalsissimo’s Flag” (sujagi; 수자기), taken by American troops in their 1871 attack on Korean coastal fortifications (the second-largest overseas deployment of American troops between the Mexican-American and Spanish-American Wars), and kept in the Naval Academy in Annapolis for more than a century. The Republic of Korea, a treaty ally of the United States, had repeatedly requested the return of its flag but was repeatedly denied due to “naval regulations.” Finally, in 2007, it was agreed to “loan” the flag to Korea. However, it wasn’t entirely clear where the flag ended up as several prominent Korean museums hosted convincing replicas of the original. Professor Larsen finally tracked down and confirmed that the original was housed in the Ganghwa War Museum. After taking many photos of the coastal fortifications where the Americans had attacked in 1871, Dr. Larsen’s camera battery ran out as he reached the War Museum. Still, he was able to take a couple of shots of the sujagi with his phone.

Larsen, K

Dr. Kirk Larsen was thrilled to track down and confirm the location of the “Generalsissimo’s Flag” (sujagi; 수자기), taken by American troops in their 1871 attack on Korean coastal fortifications (the second-largest overseas deployment of American troops between the Mexican-American and Spanish-American Wars), and kept in the Naval Academy in Annapolis for more than a century. The Republic of Korea, a treaty ally of the United States, had repeatedly requested the return of its flag but was repeatedly denied due to “naval regulations.” Finally, in 2007, it was agreed to “loan” the flag to Korea. However, it wasn’t entirely clear where the flag ended up as several prominent Korean museums hosted convincing replicas of the original. Professor Larsen finally tracked down and confirmed that the original was housed in the Ganghwa War Museum. After taking many photos of the coastal fortifications where the Americans had attacked in 1871, Dr. Larsen’s camera battery ran out as he reached the War Museum. Still, he was able to take a couple of shots of the sujagi with his phone.

Harris, A

Dr. Amy Harris is working with a team of student research assistants to reconstruct poor families in 17th and 18th century Britain. They’ve gathered information on thousands of individuals and are analyzing patterns of generational poverty and how kinship worked among the poor. Find out more about their research here: https://kinshipandpoverty.byu.edu. As part of this project, they’ll soon be heading to England where some of their research will be conducted at Bamburgh Castle in Northumberland. Archival research in a castle. Can’t beat that!
Dr. Stewart Anderson visited three archives in southwest Germany last spring, the Diözesanarchiv in Rottenburg, the Erzbischöfliches Archiv (archive in German) in Freiburg, and the Landeskirchliches Archiv in Baden. His favorite anecdote from this trip comes from a box at the Catholic archive in Freiburg about the activities of dangerous religious fringe groups and cults. The priest responsible for observing these groups’ activities in the late 1940s and 1950s liked to describe their adherents and missionaries in colorful (often derogatory) terms. For instance, Seventh-Day Adventists were “obnoxious,” the Jehovah’s Witnesses “hysterical,” and the New Apostolics “donkey-like.” There are very few references to Latter-Day Saints in his folder, but in one passage he explains that the Mormon missionaries in Freiburg are “cheerful to the point of disbelief.” He continues, “I know very little about this strange American religion, but I surmise that Mormons are terrific brewers. Only large amounts of alcohol can explain their incessant happiness.”

Dr. Mary Loose took a month-long research trip to Siena, Italy to research the Archivio di Stato there. One of the fun volumes she went through was a record of dowry payments made for the orphaned girls raised by the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala. The hospital would contract marriages and pay dowries for those girls who wanted to marry. The volume runs from the late 1500s into the 1600s and records the names of the girls and their husbands, as well as where the husbands were from and their professions. Professor Loose learned a lot from these records; one of her surprising finds was that there were several marriages contracted between girls raised by the hospital and orphaned boys raised by the hospital. She also learned that the most common professions of the husbands were shoemakers, weavers, and carpenters. Volumes like this one are helping to give her a better picture of the people who were part of the hospital’s family and daily life.

Dr. Paul Kerry researched Dr. Jeff Shumway spent time researching the Records of Argentine privateer Hipólito Bouchard’s meeting with King Kamehameha in Hawaii in 1818 in the Hawaii State Archives.
390R Classes

The 390R classes are classes that focus on special topics in history that aren’t offered every semester. These classes shouldn’t intimidate you; they should excite you! These classes are one-of-a-kind experiences. Here are a few testimonials about 390R classes that were taught in the last year.

Dr. Sarah Loose, “Digital History”

By Katrina Goodwin

Professor Loose’s Digital History 390R class helps introduce students to different methodologies and tools used within digital history. The class is structured in week-long units that focus on different tools and technologies, as well as main themes in public history. Each week in lecture after getting familiar with the field and methodologies of digital history, students learn about how to use timeline tools, digital maps, text and image analysis software and other tools to create meaningful digital tools for studying and presenting history. Additionally, students are able to explore and learn about other career options available within public history as well as how to engage general audiences in history. Students are organized into groups for the entire semester to work on the different projects due each week. Students learn how to effectively collaborate on projects and papers as a result of the class. At the end of the semester, each group gets to create a project using one or more of the tools learned throughout the semester. As a student in this course, I really enjoyed learning how to use maps and ArcGIS tools to try to look at land differently. As part of my group’s final project, we were able to use interactive maps, timelines, and links to show the settlement and importance of a town in late eighteenth century Ohio. The class was engaging, challenging, and fun—one of my favorites here at BYU.

Dr. Spencer Fluhman, “LDS Political Engagement: Past, Present, and Future”

By Harper Forsgren

We all entered the class as a group of strangers, with personal reasons for taking interest in a course of this magnitude. I, for one, was searching for a place at BYU where I could have open, honest discourse about challenging themes in the Church. I found that I was in the right place from the very first class discussion, where we discussed Joseph Smith’s political pursuits. I was fascinated by the fact that our pre-discussion readings included very candid excerpts from the Joseph Smith Papers, highlighting many aspects of Joseph Smith’s political desires that aren’t commonly discussed. We, as students, didn’t shy away from these topics, though. Instead, we engaged in honest dialogue about reactions to what we read, what the implications of these actions might be, and what this new information meant for us as students now and might later, beyond BYU’s walls. Our professors enlightened us and encouraged us to take the information we were given and create a new way to view the Church and its politics. This class was a place for differing opinions to be considered and the status quo to be challenged. Along the way, our testimonies were strengthened as we confronted difficult questions head-on. Where we may have begun as strangers, our journey into the details of LDS political history led us to become a family.

Dr. Rebecca de Schweinitz, “Radicals, Revolutionaries, and Middling Rebels: A Transnational History of Women’s Rights”

By Miranda Jessop

Examining a variety of women’s issues in the History 390R class “Radicals, Revolutionaries, and Middling Rebels: A Transnational History of Women’s Rights” reconfigured my own perspective of history. Beginning with the early modern era and extending to the 21st century, we discussed issues of gender and power, nationalism, the intersectionality of race and gender, violence, women’s work, social policies, and the female body. Studying the works of many great feminist writers, including Mary Wollstonecraft, Anna Julia Cooper, Virginia Woolf, Emma Goldman, Betty Friedan, Andre Lorde, and more within their respective historical contexts was absolutely fascinating. I was particularly impressed with Simone de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex, in which she comments on how the “otherness” assigned to women appears to be absolute because it is not connected to any specific historical event or fact, like other historical examples of subjugation. We also explored women’s movements around the world, including those in Egypt, China, Korea, Russia, New Zealand, and Africa in addition to those more familiar to us in the United States and Western Europe. As a result of this class, I am now properly equipped to consider the role of gender in answering historical questions and am committed to doing so throughout my academic and professional career. This class also taught me compassion, courage, and the importance of finding, claiming, and living my own self-fact, which has changed my life.

Civil Rights Seminar

Now in its 8th year, and sometimes listed as a History 390R class, in 2018 Dr. Leslie Hadfield and Dr. Rebecca de Schweinitz again helped team-teach a seminar on the African American Civil Rights movement that included visits to important civil rights sites in Georgia and Alabama, and meetings with former movement participants.

Dr. Mark Choate, “Terrorism and Counterterrorism”

Professor Choate decided to teach this class because terrorism has shaped so much of international history in the twenty-first century. He first developed it after returning in 2011 from serving with the United States Special Operations Command in Afghanistan and updated it after returning in 2017 from serving as the United States Defense Attaché in Sudan. The course approaches theory and practice in terrorism starting with Rousseau’s philosophy of the general will and his idea of “forcing people to be free,” through the anarchists, Marxist-Leninists, Maoists, revolutionary nationalists, and Islamist terrorists, as well as the successes and failures of counterterrorism. Both times he taught it, Dr. Choate had more than 50 students, and it’s now on its way to being one of our regular course offerings, with its own number!
History Dept. Majors

The Numbers

Total BYU Day School Students: 29,909
Total History majors: 410

History Majors
198 Students
48% of the department

Teaching Social Sciences Majors
92 Students
47 declared (12.%) and 45 pre-majors (11%)

Family History Majors:
72 Students
17% of the department

History Teaching Majors:
48 Students
12 declared (3%) and 36 pre-majors (9%)

Thanks to David McMillan for the data. Stats are from Winter 2019.