

# NEWS



## of the History Department at Boston University

December 2008

### Book by Linda Heywood and John Thornton wins African Studies prize

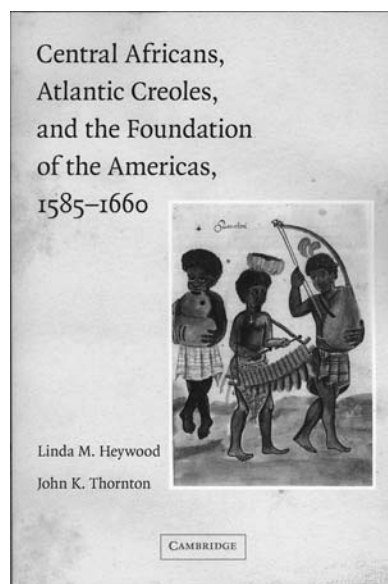
**T**he annual meeting of the African Studies Association, held in Chicago November 13-16, had as its theme "Knowledge of Africa: The Next Fifty Years." It is at this event that the winner of the annual Melville J. Herskovits Award is announced, the most important book award in the field of African Studies. Last year's winner was Barbara Cooper of Rutgers University (PhD from Boston University in 1993).

At the awards ceremony on November 14, the Association revealed that this year's winners were Professors Linda Heywood and John Thornton of Boston University for their jointly authored book, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660* (Cambridge University Press, 2007); a third winner was Professor Parker Shipton of BU's Anthropology Department.

The Heywood-Thornton book narrates the making of a Creole Atlantic world. It tells the story of the formative period of African American culture when Angolans were brought to the New World through the slave trade to Portuguese, English, and Dutch colonies. The authors represent various Angolan kingdoms as culturally diverse and changing and show the attitudes of Europeans to the continental Africans changing as they encountered African political, religious, cultural, and military institutions.

Internecine wars produced captives. Slave trading, initiated by Portuguese pioneers, was taken over by Anglo-Dutch privateers, and then by Dutch and British colonials conducting business with African sellers. The book shows how the export of people who were already Christian and literate made the terms of enslavement differ over time. This multi-lingual research into the cultural, economic, and political factors that produced the Atlantic Creole world pays equal attention to intra-colonial and local African struggles and links specific continental and New World histories and integrates fine detail with a broad thematic vision.

Congratulations to Professors Heywood and Thornton on this significant recognition of their scholarly work.



On November 11 graduate student **Michael McGuire** traveled to Smith College, where he addressed an undergraduate seminar studying the Smith College Relief Unit (one of the non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, his dissertation examines). Entitled "Allies Yet Adversaries: The Smith Unit and Its Organizational Interactions in France," it briefly covered the complementary and competitive relations the Smith Unit had with the French government and several French and American NGOs as the Unit helped reconstruct sixteen devastated villages in the Somme region. After the talk, Michael reports, he fielded students' questions on their research on the Unit, offered advice on how to interpret and "decode" their sources, and suggested how the Unit's work "fit" into the broader contours of the First World War and wartime and postwar Franco-American relations.

Professor **Allison Blakely** presented a paper on "Postcolonial Immigration and Identity Formation in Europe Since 1945: The Russian Variant" at the International Institute of Social History workshop on Postcolonial Immigration, co-sponsored by the Dutch Royal Institute of Anthropology, November 7-8 in Amsterdam. He also presented a paper on "Blacks in Post-Soviet Russia in European Perspective" at

the 40th Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Slaviv Studies, Philadelphia, November 21.

In December visiting faculty member **Samuel Deese** will publish an article in the UK history of science journal *Endeavour*. The title of the article is "A Metaphor at Midlife: 'The Tragedy of the Commons' Turns 40." The metaphor used in Garrett Hardin's influential essay ("The Tragedy of the Commons") led to the idea that human reproduction must be brought under the coercive control of state power; although this concept has been rejected by every government on earth, with the qualified exception of the People's Republic of China, the metaphor itself has become wildly popular in a variety of fields from ecology to property law to the programmatic architecture of the Internet.

Professor **Eugenio Menegon** presented a paper entitled "Ubi Dux, Ibi Curia. Kangxi's Imperial Hunts and the Jesuits as Courtiers" at the international symposium "In the Light and Shadow of an Emperor: Tomás Pereira, SJ (1645-1708), the Kangxi Emperor, and the Jesuit Mission in China" organized by the Technical University of Lisbon and the Orient Foundation in the Portuguese capital on November 10-11. Based on first-hand reports by court Jesuits participating in three large imperial hunting trips and military exercises in Mongolia and Manchuria in 1682-85, this essay is part of Professor Menegon's new research project on aristocratic networking and imperial patronage at the Qing court during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as seen through Chinese, Manchu, and Western sources.

In October Professor **Charles Capper** served on America's Media Makers Development and Production Grants Panel of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Professor **Nina Silber** spoke to the Women's History Graduate Program and the campus community at large at Sarah Lawrence College on November 5, addressing the question of research methods and sources in studying men's and women's experiences during the

US Civil War.

In October Professor Emerita **Merle Goldman** participated in a conference at the New School for Social Research in New York on "Intellectuals at Risk." It focused on the state of intellectuals historically and at present in terms of "free inquiry."

Professor **Arianne Chernock** delivered a paper on "Feminism as Perfectibilism in Enlightenment Britain" at the Northeast Conference on British Studies, held at Boston College on November 14.

Professor **Andrew Bacevich** had two newspaper articles published: "The Age of Triumphalism Is Over," *Los Angeles Times* (October 26) and "Evangelical Foreign Policy Is Over," *Boston Globe* (November 6).

In November graduate student **Robyn Metcalfe** presented a paper at The Society for the History of Science and Technology Conference in Lisbon, Portugal. The title of the paper was "The Removal of the Live Cattle Market in Nineteenth Century London" and was part of a session titled "Creating a Liveable City."

A film has been made of the life of **Gabor Boritt** (PhD from Boston University in 1967, now a well-known authority on Abraham Lincoln) beginning with his early days in Hungary. The work is entitled "Budapest to Gettysburg." Boritt is Professor of Civil War Studies and Director of the Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College.

Professor **Simon Payaslian** presented a paper, titled "The Armenian Community in Syria: Between Integration and Assimilation," at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association in Washington, DC, November 23. The paper examines the extent to which the Armenian community in Syria has been integrated into Syrian "nation-statehood," on the one hand, and has maintained a sense of Armenian national identity, on the other. The Armenian community has experienced certain obstacles to integration since Syrian independence, including Arab nationalism and Nasserism in the 1950s and 1960s, a chronic sense of political and economic instability, and Islamic fundamentalism. The growing

emphasis on Arabization and Islamic fundamentalist hostility toward Christians have forced the exodus of Armenians in large numbers, thereby weakening the Armenian community. ♦



Professor Charles Capper, one of the editors of *Modern Intellectual History*, announces the contents of the November issue of the journal:

#### Articles

- Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen, "Leopold von Ranke's Archival Turn: Location and Evidence in Modern Historiography"
- Linda Walsh, "The 'Hard Form' of Sculpture: Marble, Matter and Spirit in European Sculpture from the Enlightenment through Romanticism"
- Gillis J. Harp, "Traditionalist Dissent: The Reorientation of American Conservatism, 1865-1900"
- Trygve Throntveit, "The Will to Behold: Thorstein Veblen's Pragmatic Aesthetics"

#### Essays

- Elizabeth Borgwardt, "Site-Specific: The Fractured Humanity of J. Robert Oppenheimer"
- Devin O. Pendas, "Explaining the Third Reich: Ethics, Beliefs, Interests"
- Anna Vaninskaya, "The Orwell Century and After: Rethinking Reception and Reputation"

#### Review Essays

- John Coffey, "Milton, Locke and the New History of Toleration"
- James A. Harris, "Editing Hume's Treatise"
- Thomas Augst, "Literary Practices and the Social Life of Texts"



**William Leeman** (PhD 2006) had an article published in the September 2008 issue of *New England Quarterly*: “George Bancroft’s Civil War: Slavery, Abraham Lincoln, and the Course of History.” “The article started out,” Bill reports, “as my research paper for Professor Silber’s Civil War course in 2001—about historian George Bancroft’s interpretation of the Civil War and his interaction with Abraham Lincoln—and was extensively revised over the past year and a half. It was a lot of work but I’m really happy with how the article came out.”

**Lori Shaller** (MA 1989) writes: I wanted to let you know about a resource which is appropriate for both professors and students. I’ve written two teaching units, and have a third in process, for an e-text called *www.worldhistoryforall.sdsu.edu*. It is designed for high school and college level students, and it covers from the beginning of time to today. The e-text is divided up into “Big Eras” and covers social, political, environmental, cultural, and economic topics. Ross Dunn, Professor Emeritus of World History at San Diego State University, conceived of and is the editor of the project, and it’s been done in cooperation with the Center for History in the Schools at UCLA. It follows the National Standards for History. I’ve written a unit called “Living Rooms,” which is an ecological, experiential study of architecture at the start of the nineteenth century, and another unit called “Environmental Change: The Great Acceleration,” which looks at world environmental history from 1900 to 1950. I’m working on a third unit on environmental history from 1950 to 2000. I’ve actually left classroom teaching for now and am working for a Jewish social justice organization called Rabbis for Human Rights and am also writing curriculum and teaching teachers, both in history and in English. I work with Boston’s Actors’ Shakespeare Project, a

professional Shakespeare company (they’re doing *The Merchant of Venice* right now), writing curriculum and teaching in educator institutes.

**Bryan Thrift** (PhD 2005) had an article entitled “Jesse Helms’s Politics of Pious Incitement: Race, Conservatism, and Southern Realignment in the 1950s” published in the November 2008 issue of *The Journal of Southern History*.

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## GRAF award winners announced

The fall winners of Graduate Research Abroad Fellowships (which should really be named the Barbara Diefendorf awards for the faculty member who first had the idea for them) included two students in the History Department: Anne Blaschke (who received a short-term award) and Michael McGuire (winner of a long-term fellowship).

✿ **Anne Blaschke** is researching a dissertation entitled “Manhood, Feminism, and Sports: American Race and Gender Politics at the 1968 Olympic Games” in which she will explore how the Mexico City Olympics both reflected and shaped broader developments within sixties political culture. In particular, the work will analyze the ’68 games as “a high-water mark of gendered racial politics within the African American equality struggle,...as the apotheosis of a specific strain of gendered racial thought—an emphasis on black manhood—and also as a turning point toward feminism for black women US athletes.” For the latter group, the Olympics “marked a critical transition from submission to assertiveness in both sports and US cultural politics.”

Anne will use the award to spend time at the International Olympic Committee archives at the Olympic Studies Centre in Lausanne, Switzer-

land, particularly looking at material from 1960 to 1976, a time span that will reveal continuity or change from one Olympiad to the next.

✿ **Michael McGuire’s** dissertation subject is “Comrades in Arms, Critics in Peace: American Non-governmental Organizations, the Reconstruction of France, and Franco-American Relations, 1914-1929.” Mediated through NGOs, humanitarian aid from the US reconstructed much of France and briefly yet intensely integrated tens of thousands of French and American citizens. Despite the goodwill and work of the NGOs, however, Franco-American relations soon grew strained; Michael’s goal is to learn why such sustained NGO activities failed to improve postwar Franco-American relations.

The fellowship will enable Michael to consult several archives in France, including the Archives de France, those of the Ministry of War, and those of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He hopes these collections will indicate “whether structural cooperation was evolutionary or consistent, whether the French government facilitated or impeded structural cooperation and consolidation under the American Red Cross, whether French officials tried to insure that American NGO members could communicate with French citizens, and what they did to insure that volunteers could not enter and leave at their whim.”

The department congratulates these two students and wishes them well in their research.

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## GRADUATE STUDENT MILESTONE

Andrew Ballou’s dissertation prospectus has been accepted: “Fellowship Reverberations: The Fellowship of Reconciliation and Social Christianity, 1914-1947.” The first reader will be Professor Jon Roberts, and the second will be Professor Bruce Schulman.



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*Items of interest for publication and changes of address should be sent to the editor.*

## Religion faculty member to join History Department

In November the department faculty voted to recommend to the administration that Deeana Klepper, Associate Professor of Religion, also be appointed Associate Professor of History. If approved, the joint appointment will begin January 1, 2009. Since 2004 Professor Klepper has been teaching two courses crosslisted in History and Religion: "Magic, Science, and Religion" and "Topics in Medieval Religious Culture." She has also done directed studies with history students and was first reader for Brenda Gardenour's PhD dissertation last year.

Professor Klepper will introduce herself to newsletter readers in a future issue.

## Commencement 2009: a preliminary announcement

Changes are in store for commencement: The main ceremony at Nickerson Field will take place on Sunday, May 17, at 1 p.m. (rather than the former 11 a.m.). Departmental convocations will be spread over the weekend; History's will be held in the College of General Studies at 4 p.m. on Sunday. More details will follow.