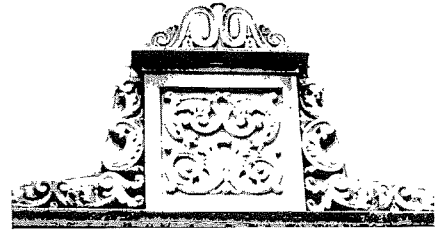
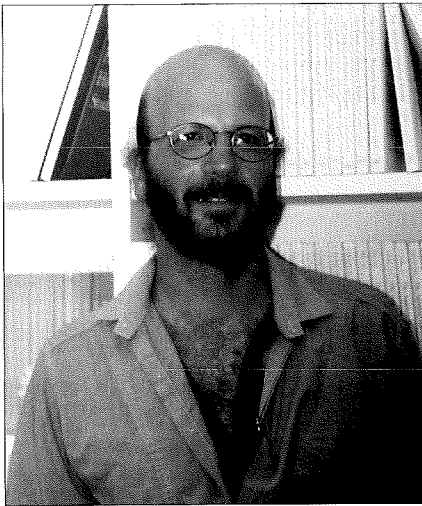


# NEWS



## *of the History Department at Boston University*

September 1998



### **Latin Americanist Mariano Plotkin joins department faculty**

As a result of last spring's search launched jointly by the Department of History and the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture, Mariano Plotkin has been appointed Assistant Professor of History and a Research Associate of the Institute. In the fall semester he will teach "Modern Latin America" (HI 386/886), and in the spring, a new course, "Nationalism, Nation Building, and the Idea of Race: Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, 1850-1930" (HI 387).

Professor Plotkin introduces himself to newsletter readers:

**I** was born and grew up in Argentina, where I graduated both in history at the University of Belgrano and in economics at the University of Buenos Aires. After my graduation I

worked as a teaching assistant at the University of Buenos Aires for one year and then left the country to do graduate work at the University of California, Berkeley. There I received my Ph.D. in history in 1992.

After my Ph.D. I moved to the East Coast and served for three years as a lecturer in the program of History and Literature at Harvard University. In 1995 I had the chance to teach a summer course on Latin American history at Boston University, and in September that year I was appointed an Assistant Professor of History at Colby College, where I taught courses on various aspects of colonial and modern Latin American history. However, my teaching experience at Colby was short, because the same year of my appointment I was awarded a two-year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and therefore I took a leave of absence to devote myself full time to my current book project: a cultural history of psychoanalysis in Argentina.

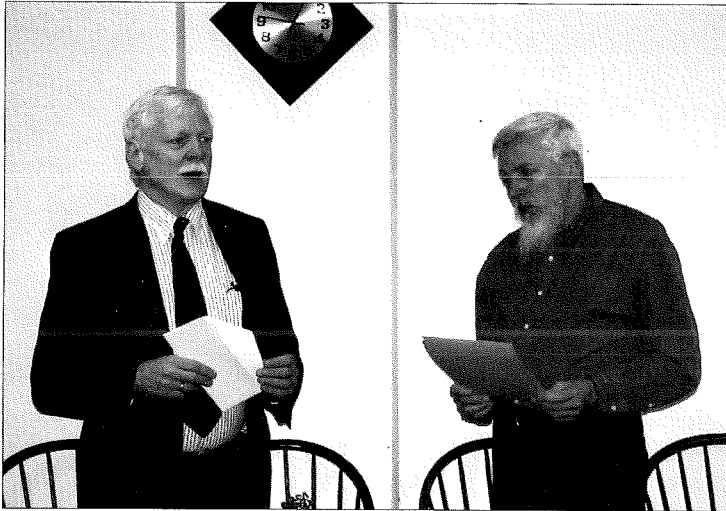
At Boston University I will be affiliated with the History Department and with the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture. At the History Department I will be teaching courses on various aspects of modern Latin American history. This year I will teach a survey course on 19th- and 20th-century Latin America and a comparative course on the links between the development of national identities, the idea of race, and the process of state-building in Argentina, Mexico, and Brazil between the mid-19th century and 1930.

My research interests concentrate on modern Latin American history, particularly Argentine history. I am in-

terested in the areas of intersection between what is traditionally considered political, social, and cultural history. My earlier work (including my first book, which was published in Spanish) focused on the development of a political imagery and mythology around the movement led by Juan Perón. My current work seeks to explain the enormous diffusion that psychoanalysis has had in Argentina during the last thirty years. I am interested not only in the dramatic expansion of the Argentine psychoanalytic community (today it is one of the largest in the world) but also in the deep permeation of psychoanalytic concepts and "way of thinking" into the cultural practices of various sectors of Argentine society. For that purpose I look at political, social, cultural, and economic variables. I am also interested in other topics such as the development of national identities in Latin America. ♦

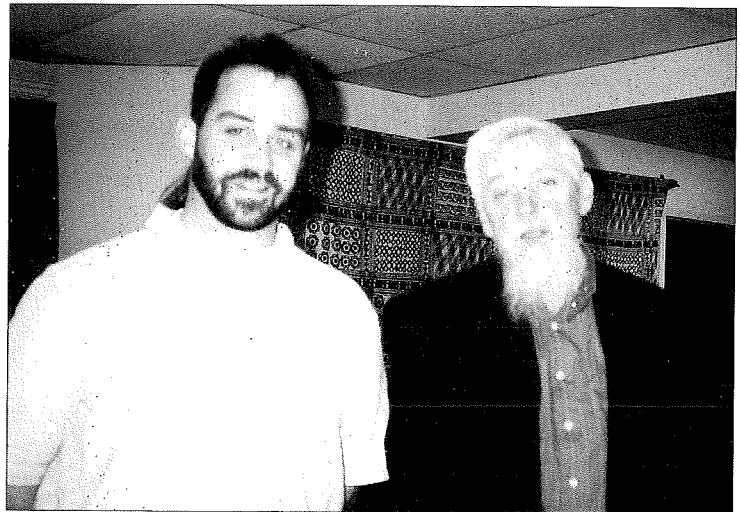
Another academic year begins—this one with the retirement of a long-time faculty member (see page 2), the welcoming of a new one (this page), the matriculation of 15 new graduate students (see next month's issue for information), and most faculty in residence (only Professors Lyne and McCann will be on leave). Also of note: Prof. Leventhal has arranged for Paul Boyer to be the department's Visiting Scholar in November. And both the Institute for Medieval History and the Center for Millennial Studies are now part of Boston University (Prof. Glick is steering the former, and Prof. Landes the latter).

# Retirement of Norman Bennett



*At left, History Department Chairman William Keylor pays tribute to Norman Bennett at a retirement celebration held at the African Studies Center on April 30. Both the center and the department attempted to match their gifts to the retiree's interests: African Studies gave him a bottle of port, and the History Department presented a gift certificate to a wine store. As his wife so wisely said when asked for gift suggestions, "Norman is not a crystal sort of person."*

*At left in the photo, graduate student Tim Walker, who is working on his dissertation with Professor Bennett as his second reader.*



## Tributes to Norman Bennett from colleagues and former students:

**N**orman Bennett's retirement at the end of this academic year is a real benchmark in the history of the African Studies Center and the field of African history. It is fairly easy to reflect upon the event since he remains part of the Center's life as editor of the *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, in the Africa-related book trade, and still serves as my personal consultant on the oenology of southwestern Europe.

As a graduate student I knew Norman Bennett as one of the founders of the field of African history. He cast light on the life of African leaders like Mirambo and detailed for us the intricacies of Arab-European relations in Africa, and especially Zanzibar. He was the first to argue for the importance of African history within our Department of History. He must have fought that battle well since I have never had to. Along the way Norman trained several academic generations of African historians now plying the trade in Africa and around the United States. The Mugar Library has twenty book citations under his name, including classic monographs, edited volumes of primary sources, and collections of essays. I think few in our field can match that level of productivity.

Those who know Norman recognize in him the traits of a consummate, almost stereotypic Yankee: stoicism, hard work, and a skeptical eye. True to this heritage, his labors as a historian revealed to us New England's own links to Africa, held in the archives of the clipper ships of Salem in the Essex Institute and Peabody Museum of Salem. Ambitious young scholars who imagine they are the first to unearth a new, revealing file on this or that will be disappointed, and then impressed, to find on the archival order slips Norman Bennett's name from three decades ago.

Norman and Jeanne Penvenne, both of Yankee extraction (with apologies to French Canada), have on countless occasions shown warm hospitality in their homes in Duxbury and Nantucket to guests from Africa and those who have devoted their professional lives to it. The Penvenne/Bennett hospitality over the years has in no small way accounted for much of our Center's reputation as a warm and open setting for scholarship (and friendship).

It would be harder writing about Norman's retirement if I didn't expect to see him next week, and in coming years, to talk about the journal or the price of Vinho Verde. Nonetheless, I hope Norman will forgive me for using this occasion to mark the passage of time for us all.

*James C. McCann  
Professor of History and  
Director of the African Studies Center,  
Boston University*

I am pleased to reply to your request for a tribute to Professor Norman Bennett on the occasion of his retirement. I believe that I was Norm's first Ph.D. student after he began teaching at BU, which meant that he wasn't much older than I was (I had spent nearly four years in the United States Navy upon my graduation from Dartmouth College before beginning graduate work).

I met Norm in the fall of 1962. I had spent the previous year as a graduate

student in history at the University of New Hampshire and was fortunate enough to land an NDEA Fellowship through the African Studies Program. Since I had a young family then, that fellowship (which had been turned down by their top candidate and thus fell to me) was crucial in my being able to continue my graduate studies. I can remember walking into Norm's office the first time. It was chaotic and (Norm smoked a pipe in those days) he was wreathed in a bluish haze. I can remember thinking that I was in for an experience—exactly what sort I wasn't sure. But Norm, for all of his inexperience, turned out to be a wonderful, empathetic, and supportive teacher. He steered me toward (and through) a dissertation on the early American contacts with South Africa and, in the process of research, through the wonderful old maritime archives in Salem and New Bedford, whose tides and currents he had long since mastered. He, I, and for a while George Brooks used to visit those hallowed places on Saturdays, and I remember those trips with great fondness.

As a lecturer Norm was laid back but very organized and professional. He laced his (quite detailed) lectures with nice touches of wit and irony—some of the observations and witticisms of his found their way into my own lectures for years thereafter. It was tough giving lectures on African history in those days and keeping them light and interesting, because there was as yet no adequate text (Oliver & Fage's *Short History of Africa* had not yet been published), and because there was so little material with which to humanize one's lectures. (And a lot of African history can be pretty gloomy anyway.) Consequently Norm's lectures were pretty detailed, yet not (amazingly, I have always thought) at all boring—and certainly not gloomy. If they put anyone to sleep I wasn't aware of it. In that era Norm's classroom style was an appropriate one on which to model one's own, which to a large degree I did at first. I remember him as a demanding yet fair grader. His seminars were intellectually lively, socially laid back, and conducted in a haze of bluish smoke.

Since my graduation (1964) I have kept in touch with him, and with others from that generation. They (the African Studies faculty) were a nice, young, enthusiastic group of people. They, including Norm, were good and sometimes inspired teachers, and over the years they have produced a lot of good scholarship. Yet I think that Norm's greatest contribution to the field was his founding and editorship of the *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, which has become one of the world's premier journals in its field. It is universally respected for the importance and solid scholarship of its articles, and all of that has been Norm's own doing. It was certainly in part because of that particular contribution that Norm was later elected president of the African Studies Association. Most assuredly we are all, as historians, in his debt. (Norm once vetted a grant application of mine in which I described myself as an 'historian.' "No you're not, Alan," the voice from beneath the blue haze intoned, "you're an *aspiring* historian.")

I guess in some ways I still am. But I owe my start, and a lot of what I became, to Norm Bennett, and it pleases me immensely to be able to say so, and to thank him.

*Alan R. Booth  
J. Richard Hamilton/Baker and Hostetter  
Professor of Humanities  
and Professor of History,  
Ohio University*

I first met Norman Bennett when I took his African history course as an undergraduate (I still remember all the terms he wrote on the board—a technique I later incorporated in my own teaching!). During that year he became a mentor who encouraged my interest in Africa. I had never seriously considered graduate school, but when he suggested that I think about it and explained the African Studies Program at BU, it was a turning point in my life. After a year's break, I started graduate school in 1966.

See BENNETT, page 5



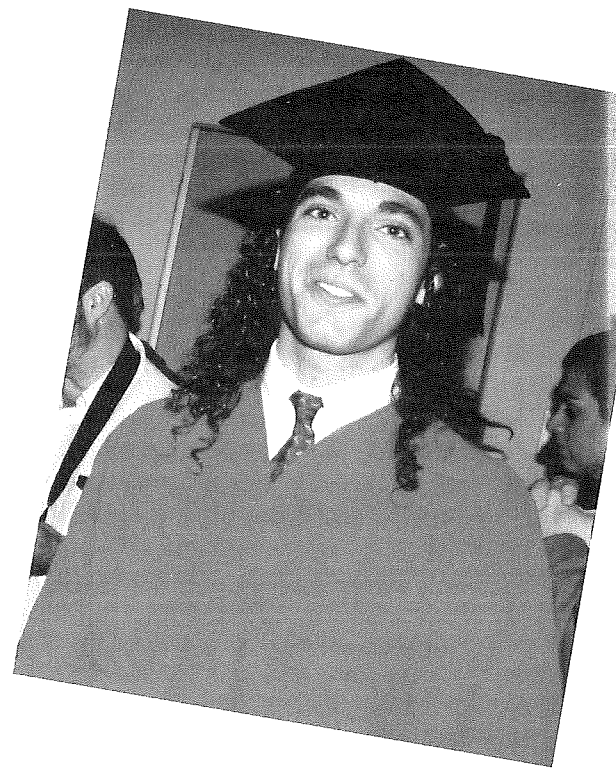
## COMMENCEMENT '1998

*Top left: Professor Jill Lepore, graduate Elizabeth Langell (with her regulation plastic wrap to keep off commencement day's raindrops), and Professor James McCann.*

*Top right: Professor Diana Wylie appears genuinely interested in Chairman William Keylor's remarks, but we're not sure what has inspired his look of apprehension.*

*Bottom left: College Prize for Excellence in History winner Elzbieta Klimowicz and Warren Ault Prize recipient Godfrey Firth.*

*Bottom right: Graduate Rick Massel, History major cum laude and Web guru extraordinaire.*







ΦΑΘ

Professor Thomas Glick (back row, center) presided at the initiation of new members of Phi Alpha Theta on April 30. Listed in alphabetical order, they are: Brian Caouette, Benjamin Champney, Eileen Csakany, Alterra Giontriddo, Nadav Hazan, Richard Massel, Craig Noronha, Jeff Patten, Timothy Pure (president of the organization, second row at the far left in the picture), Danielle Simmons, and Matthew Singer. Absent were Christine de Chaves and Kevin Starikov.

*BENNETT (cont. from page 3)*

The shock began early in my first semester when I was plunged into the African history seminar: not only were the students expected to write papers, we had to critique each other's work. One person led the discussion each week. I'll never forget checking each citation for its accuracy, down to the page of the reference, and not only for my paper, but for the one I was reviewing. All I could think at the time was how long it took to prepare for this seminar. I didn't realize until later how much it taught me about doing research and writing. In fact it gave me the tools for my subsequent academic and professional career.

Having survived the seminar (the second semester seemed mild by comparison), I continued my work towards the Ph.D., always with the encouragement and support of Norman Bennett. He was the person who helped me get an article published and who suggested I teach a section of Western Civ for the experience (on my first job interview for an African history position, I was asked, "Can you teach Western Civ?"). Through the years he has been a mentor and friend, as he has to so many others, and although there are many great scholars in the History Department

and at the African Studies Center, neither place will be the same without Norman Bennett.

*Eunice Charles  
Senior Africa Analyst,  
Department of the Army*

**P**rofessor Norman Bennett's retirement from the History Department at Boston University is an important milestone in that Department's life and the occasion has produced many pleasant memories for me as a former student. When I reviewed events of the years 1959-1963, when I was studying in the Department as well as in the African Studies Program (the ASC came later), I rediscovered how I owe Norman Bennett a considerable debt of gratitude. I knew that our relationship would be a good one when Norman sold me my first personal vehicle, a vintage Lambretta scooter which saved me from much claustrophobia and tedium in the M(B)TA. A somewhat lonely, single graduate student like me, only recently arrived from the wilds of Dartmouth College, was grateful for Norman Bennett's home hospitality and for his sharing a precocious knowledge of wines. I was not prescient enough to know that this

might lead to Norman's most recent research project on the history of the Port wine industry. More important for my training was my first African history research seminar with Professor Bennett as the 'trial by fire' mentor, in the spring semester, 1963. My completion of the Ph.D. in June 1963 and departure from Boston University, however, did not signal an end to Norm's helpfulness with my career. In 1964, while I was on active duty in the U.S. Army in Maryland, Norman Bennett called me to say that a job in African history at the University of New Hampshire was being advertised. I applied and, as they say, the rest is History. *Parabéns e felicitações, para Norman Bennett, Professor Jubilado.*

*Douglas L. Wheeler  
Prince Henry the Navigator Professor in  
the Department of History,  
University of New Hampshire*

**W**hen renowned college coaches retire, there often is sadness among alumni because they know it will be tough to recruit top-notch athletes to come to their school since they cannot offer the possibility of playing for the famous but now retired coach.

See BENNETT, page 7

## Maryalice Guilford defends dissertation on Cape Verde

On May 27 Maryalice Guilford successfully defended her dissertation entitled "Rainfed Farmers and Rural Development Policy in Cape Verde, 1950-1992." Her first reader was Professor Sara Berry (now of Johns Hopkins but formerly on the faculty of Boston University), her second was Professor Allan Hoben (of the Anthropology Department), and her third was Professor Timothy Finan (of the University of Arizona). Other committee members were Professors Marilyn Halter and Diana Wylie. We are pleased to reprint the dissertation abstract:

**I**n the second half of the twentieth century, poor and wealthy rainfed farming families on *Fogo* Island in the Republic of Cape Verde practiced a wide range of livelihood strategies in response to changing rural conditions. To date, however, historians have not analyzed strategies other than emigration, or connected farmers' livelihood strategies to patterns of land stratification and changes in development policy. This thesis traces changes in economic and environmental conditions on *Fogo* Island, showing how they have interacted with changes in government

policy to shape people's strategies of production and other income earning activities, as well as patterns of emigration, and investigates the effects of changes in rural development policy on farmers' access to productive inputs and patterns of cultivation and wage employment.

Drawing on archival research, interviews, participant observation in Cape Verde, and oral histories collected on *Fogo* and among Cape Verdean emigrants in the U.S., this study links individuals' behavior to families' incomes, and to changing rural conditions in the Archipelago. It examines stratification in landholding on *Fogo* Island, and argues that access to land has been a significant determinant of farmers' livelihood strategies and economic status. However, land ownership and size of holdings alone do not fully explain levels of family food production and income. Access to other productive inputs is also important, and varies among families independently of access to land. In addition, agricultural and nonagricultural wage employment have been important as supplementary sources of income for the majority of landholding and landless families.

After the end of colonial rule in 1975, the independent government initiated a series of changes in development poli-

cies and programs designed to raise rural living standards and permanently improve families' ability to produce food and earn wages. This study describes changes in Cape Verdean rural development policies since independence, and argues that government-sponsored agricultural extension services and rural employment schemes contributed significantly to improving farmers' production strategies and raising levels of income.

Finally, the dissertation argues that emigration, long represented in the historical literature as the principal source of livelihood for poor and landless families in Cape Verde, has not always served to alleviate rural poverty in the island republic. It has not always been the poor and landless who immigrate, but often members of families with access to land and middle/upper levels of income. Both emigration and the remittances which emigrants send back to Cape Verde have increased inequalities in family incomes. Development policies formulated by the PAIGC/PAICV government, and implemented through rural extension and other public programs, have done more than emigrants' remittances to improve farming practices and standards of living for low-income families on *Fogo*. ♦



Professor Sara Berry, Maryalice Guilford, and Professor Timothy Finan after Maryalice's dissertation defense.

### Fall Course Update

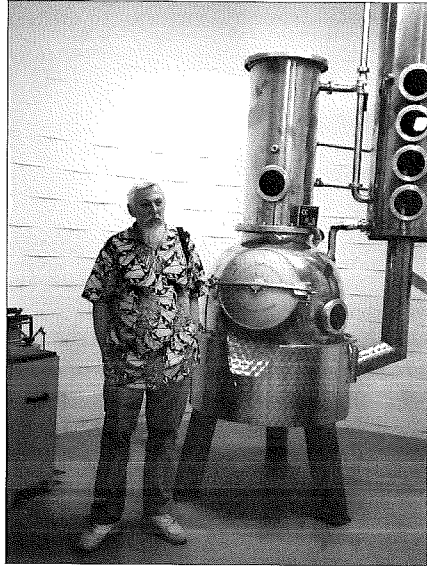
- HI 386/886 ("Modern Latin America") has been added to the class schedule. New faculty member Mariano Plotkin will teach this course Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1-2 p.m.
- Professor David Fromkin will offer a new course, HI 591 ("Great Powers in the Middle East"), Monday 2-5 p.m., which will center on how the Middle East's new and old states and current contested frontiers were a result of European rivalries in the region between 1798 and 1922.
- HI 763, Professor Richard Fox's seminar for Ph.D. students only, will examine William and Henry James as thinkers and writers and will treat the traditions of interpretation that followed their deaths. The twists and turns of those traditions from the 1910s to the 1990s—shifts in each man's reputation and in the critical approaches to studying their work—provide an excellent vantage point on the trajectory of 20th-century American intellectual life.

Today we know that graduate students will no longer be coming to BU to study with Norman Robert Bennett because he has retired. But those of us who know Norman are confident that he will not also retire from the other important activities in which he has excelled during his long and distinguished career.

I had the pleasure—well, maybe it was not always a pleasure back then—and the honor—and looking back, I know it certainly was an honor—to work with Norman in several capacities from 1975 through 1985 at Boston University. Norman was my graduate student advisor during studies which culminated in a Ph.D. in 1985; my supervisor for my two years as an Assistant to the Editor on the *International Journal of African Historical Studies* (or “Hysterical Stories” as we used to facetiously call some of the articles submitted for publication); and my mentor when I was a Teaching Fellow for two years in a World History course for BU undergraduates.

Norman was a tough taskmaster with very high standards set for all of his students. He demanded intellectual rigor in our analysis of historical documents, of primary and secondary sources, and of each other’s work in his graduate seminars. He demanded thorough, thoughtful, cogent, and sound analysis in our M.A. or Ph.D. theses; anything less was just not acceptable, and he had no qualms about bluntly telling us so. You see, as he told me at the time, Norman was grooming future historians and university professors and teachers. But what he overlooked—he was “a man of his times” after all—was that he was instilling in all of us the intellectual discipline, analytical rigor, and greatly improved writing and oral presentation skills that would carry us, his students, far in any career which would choose us.

Norman remarried during the time I was with him at BU and he has two fine sons. I have no doubt whatsoever that becoming a father and husband (again) affected Norman in the most positive manner—I believe he became more sen-



Prof. Bennett began his retirement checking out the vineyards of Michigan. He is shown here beside a brandy still at the Chateau Chantal Vineyard Estates near Travers City.

sitive! For example, when the often-postponed date of my Ph.D. oral comprehensive exams finally arrived—and two of the four professors who were on my committee were off on research assignments—Norman pulled the whole exam together in a manner that left me much more at ease than I ever thought possible. The intellectual torture chamber I thought I was entering became an engaging small group discussion about cross-cultural issues and historical questions that I enjoyed! Norman had the same effect in directing the discussion during my defense of my Ph.D. dissertation. His vast knowledge of comparative history—African and European—was brought to the fore as he led the evaluation of my ideas. It was a pleasure to be in that room and hear him speak so eloquently, knowledgeably, and skillfully about my research.

Norman has remained a friend for many years. Whether spending time with him at his Nantucket “retreat” during graduate student days, meeting him over dinner in London as we both passed to and from Africa on research trips, dropping in to have some red wine at his Duxbury home, or just calling to ask his advice, Norman was always glad to hear from his students; he was (and still is) a good listener and a gracious host. He never took himself too seriously and he hoped we did not do so either.

We all hope that Norman will continue to teach by writing and publish-

ing. The academic community would be a less enjoyable place if we did not have that voice explaining the complex workings of history in a comprehensive way as he did so well in his book *Africa and Europe* and in other forums as well. So, here’s to you, Norman,—“Cheers!”—congratulations on a BU career well done!

Thomas J. Herlehy  
Deputy Director,  
Agribusiness Partnership Program,  
Citizens’ Network for Foreign Affairs,  
Ukraine

On the 3rd of September 1979 I landed at Logan Airport in Boston. I had obtained a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue graduate studies in African history. Instructors in my local university had suggested Boston University because it had, among others, a good African Studies programme. An immigration officer who was processing my travel documents asked me what I was going to study at Boston University. Upon hearing that it was African history, he remarked in a rather surprised way, “You came all the way from Botswana to study African history? There is more African history in Africa than there is in Boston!” At that point I had doubts whether I had made the right decision.

Little did I know that at Boston University there were Americans who had more knowledge of and had researched and written more about African history than the Africans themselves. Prof. Norman Bennett was one of them. In fact he was among one of the first people to initiate the establishment of an African Studies Center at Boston University.

His research interests were in East African history. He particularly focussed on Tanzania and the island of Zanzibar. His research culminated in the publication of several books on East African history and its coast and on African history in general as well as numerous articles in refereed journals. Some of his major works include *Africa and Europe*, *Mirambo of Tanzania*, and various edited works. The themes of his

works reflect the often unjust, oppressive, and exploitative Arab and European colonial policies on African societies, the responses of African societies to these policies, and the emergence of African nationalism geared to attaining self-determination and eventual independence from European dominance.

Although Prof. Bennett's research focus was East Africa, his research experiences in that area led him to familiarize himself with other areas of Africa, notably Southern, Central, and West Africa, because African experiences and their history of European contacts tended to be similar. Thus, Prof. Bennett easily offered courses in these other areas, courses that attracted a variety of students from Africa, Europe, and North America.

Other contributions of Norman Bennett to African Studies include the establishment of a prestigious African Studies journal, the pride of the African Studies Center—*The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, which publishes contributions from various aspects of African research.

In addition to his research, publications, and teaching, perhaps one of the greatest contributions of Norman Bennett was in the production of graduate students both at M.A. and Ph.D. levels. These students continued the work of advancing African Studies in the respective regions from which they came. Some are lecturers in their local universities, thus passing down the knowledge inherited from Prof. Bennett to many undergraduate and graduate students in both developing and developed countries. This author is one such beneficiary. Others include Drs. J. Ramsay (Botswana), I. Bashir (Nigeria), M. Ndobegang-Mbamndah, (Cameroon), D. Wheeler (U.S.A.), M. Borstelmann (U.S.A.), C. Sartor (U.S.A.), and many others who came before my time.

Although Norman Bennett has over time shifted his research interest to Portuguese history, he continues to have interest in African Studies. His contributions there have had a tremendous impact as his works continue to find use in many African universities offering courses relating to areas he has

researched. Much as the immigration officer at Logan Airport could have had a point in saying "There is more African history in Africa than there is in Boston," those with the interest, art, skill, and technique for writing, analyzing, and advancing the knowledge of African history could be found in the person of Norman Bennett, Professor of African and European History at Boston University.

Part Themba Mgadla  
Chairman, Department of History,  
University of Botswana



**Erik Gilbert**, who received his Ph.D. in 1997 in African history, has been appointed Assistant Professor of History at Arkansas State University.

**Jonathan Reynolds**, on the faculty of Livingstone College in Salisbury, N.C., and another recent Africanist (Ph.D. 1995), has had his first book published: *The Time of Politics (Zamanin Siyasa): Islam and the Politics of Legitimacy in Northern Nigeria 1950-1966*. The publisher is the University Press for West Africa.

In August Professor **Nina Silber**, with James McPherson and Eric Foner, participated in a site evaluation of the Gettysburg National Military Park for the National Park Service and the Organization of American Historians. She has also agreed to write for Oxford University Press a book on "Landmarks of the Civil War," which will be part of Oxford's forthcoming series on "Landmarks in American History."

In mid-June, China expert **Merle Goldman** went to Prague in the Czech Republic, where she spoke on "The Changing Relationship between the Intellectuals and the State" in the post-Mao era. In late June she attended a conference on Confucianism and Human Rights in Beijing, where she spoke on the legacy of Confucianism in the twentieth century. Just before President Clinton's visit to China, she was

referred to in the *New York Times* as one of Clinton's advisors on China. She asserts that she has talked to Sandy Berger, but not to Clinton directly, on China.

Professor **Bruce Schulman's** article, "Slouching Toward the Supply Side: Jimmy Carter and the New American Political Economy," was published in July. It appears in a new collection of essays, *The Carter Presidency: Policy Choices in the Post-New Deal Era*, edited by Gary Fink and Hugh Davis Graham.

In July, Professor **Thomas Glick** attended the Fifth Congress of the Latin American History of Science Society in Rio de Janeiro, where he delivered a paper on Darwinism in Brazil. In August, he attended a meeting on Luis de Santangel, treasury officer of Ferdinand and Isabella and a financial backer of Columbus, at Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois, where he read a posthumous paper by Valencian historian Vicente Giner Boira, and then delivered a tribute to Giner.

Professor **Robert Schulmann** writes: "Guillaume de Syon [Ph.D. in 1994] and I were able to examine one-half of the literary estate of Einstein's confidant and friend (Michele Besso) over two days in a notary's office in Lausanne in late July. Inevitably—according to the laws of historiographic unfairness and fickle heirs—the part we saw is presumably the less interesting half. Hopes are high to see everything by the end of 1998....In the meantime, Volume 8 of the Collected Papers of Albert Einstein (Correspondence), covering the First World War, has been published."

Professor **Fred Leventhal** delivered a paper on "Eric Knight and Propaganda during the Second World War" at a conference on Anglo-American relations sponsored by the Institute of Contemporary British History in London and chaired a session on the Victorian monarchy at the annual Conference of Anglo-American Historians at the Institute of Historical Research, London. He also served as Faculty Lecturer for a Boston University Alumni College in Great Britain, based in Harrogate, Yorkshire.

Professor **Reggie Blaszczyk** pub-



lished a review essay on Lowell's Museum of American Textile History in the *Journal of American History* (June 1998). She also received a Grant-in-Aid from the Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware, to advance her next project, "The Color Revolution." Stay tuned to learn why the refrigerator was avocado green in the 1970s. Her article, "Reign of the Robots: The Homer Laughlin China Company and Flexible Mass Production," originally published in *Technology & Culture*, has been republished in *The Rise and Fall of Mass Production*, edited by Steven Tolliday.

Professor **Joseph Boskin** has been selected as academic advisor to a film directed by Norman Jewison on humor which will be part of a Showtime cable TV series, "The 20th Century Project...A Moving History." The film will consider comedy as an important form of public discourse. ♦

## WEB SITE UPDATE

The most significant change to the department's Web site during the summer was an updating of faculty information.

In addition there is now a collection of links that might be of interest on the home page of the site; these include several sources for books (the Amazon and the Barnes & Noble online bookstores and Bibliofind, a source for old and rare books); a list of U.S. colleges and universities and of history departments; the American Historical Association and the New England Historical Association; the *American Historical Review*; two newsgroups (H-Net and the diplomatic history discussion group); and several relevant BU links (American Studies and African Studies). Any suggestions for additional links would be welcome.

A technical note: The Boston University Web site has changed its references to individual pages and no longer uses uppercase letters for these links; thus the department's Web address is now [www.bu.edu/history](http://www.bu.edu/history).



## Seek and ye shall find

BY SIMSON L. GARFINKEL

**T**he World Wide Web began life as a search tool, and for many people it's the best research system ever created. The great power of the Web is that any person or any organization can publish anything they want. The great problem of the Web is finding the information *you* want. I use a variety of search engines; the engine I pick depends on what kind of information I'm searching for. But I've also found that sometimes it makes sense to skip search engines entirely and try other services tailored to a particular application.

Yahoo ([www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)) works best if I'm searching for a company by name or category. Yahoo wins because its company index categorizes Web sites, rather than simply noting which words appear on each page. (For example, a search for "General Motors" turns up sites divided into categories such as "Companies: Automotive: Parts: Makes and Models, and Companies: Automotive: Manufacturers.")

If I can't find something with Yahoo, the next stop is HotBot ([www.hotbot.com](http://www.hotbot.com)). The reason: It's very easy to construct a powerful search query without using an arcane search technique. With HotBot, you type a simple search phrase like "Simson Garfinkel's Home Page."

Then you specify whether you want Web pages that contain all the words in your search phrase, any of the words, the exact phrase you typed, or just pages with a matching title. HotBot lets you further restrict your search by time—you can just get pages that have changed within the past two weeks, for example. And you can limit your search to particular Internet domains.

If you click the HotBot button labeled "More Search Options," you can target the search even more precisely by specifying additional words that must (or must not) appear on the pages. There's also more flexibility to specify the range of dates, location on the Internet, and even how far down into each Web site you want to search.

Of the other search engines, Excite

([www.excite.com](http://www.excite.com)), Lycos ([www.lycos.com](http://www.lycos.com)), and InfoSeek ([www.infoseek.com](http://www.infoseek.com)) also have advanced search pages. They are fairly easy to use, but none has HotBot's flexibility. To do an advanced search with AltaVista, you'll need to learn the engine's somewhat obscure search language.

So which search engine is best?

Although there are a lot of studies on this topic, I suggest you make up a search phrase and try them all out yourself. Different people search for things in different ways; even though one search engine might score highest on some objective test, you might find that engine is not best suited to your needs. I did this test myself, searching for "Simson Garfinkel's Home Page." HotBot and Lycos did the best, both listing my home page first. AltaVista returned my home page as its second highest hit. Neither InfoSeek nor Excite listed my home page.

Web pages aren't the only things I spend my time searching for. For that reason, there are a lot of other search services that I keep in my list of Internet bookmarks.

If I'm looking for the proper title, the publication date, or the author of a book, I'll click over to Amazon.com ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)). I use Amazon even if I don't plan to buy the book—Amazon's search system is the best way I have found to determine which books remain in print. If the book isn't on Amazon, I'll check the Library of Congress's Web site ([www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)), which is a bit more complicated, slower, and available only from 4:35 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Monday through Friday (Eastern time), with shorter hours on the weekends.

If I'm looking for a person's telephone number or address, I usually put down my mouse, pick up the telephone, and dial directory assistance. That's because I've tried all of the Internet white pages and have been uniformly disappointed: They all list information that's either wrong or out-of-date.

I had my Cambridge telephone installed in March. It was available the next day from Bell Atlantic by calling directory assistance. But you still can't find my proper phone number and address on line.

Do a search for Simson Garfinkel using Four11 ([www.four11.com](http://www.four11.com)) and you'll get an address where I haven't lived since 1995. Bigfoot ([www.bigfoot.com](http://www.bigfoot.com)) and InfoSpace ([www.infospace.com](http://www.infospace.com)) list my Seattle phone number, which was disconnected last June. Switchboard ([www.switchboard.com](http://www.switchboard.com)) listed

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a phone that was disconnected in December. What's really embarrassing here is that even Bell Atlantic's BigYellow search engine returns the wrong information for me, because Bell Atlantic sublicenses Four11's database, rather than using its own.

If you are committed to using one of the on-line white pages, here's a tip: Bigfoot is the only service that clearly indicates when each record was updated. If you must use Four11, use it through Yahoo—it's more nicely formatted.

If I want to find where someplace is, I'll click to Maps On Us ([www.mapsonus.com](http://www.mapsonus.com)), which seems to have accurate and up-to-date maps for most areas that I've looked at. Maps On Us lets you record landmarks, plan routes, and even share maps with other people on the system. The service was developed by Lucent Technologies and was recently sold to Switchboard. I hope that Switchboard doesn't let the quality drop.

If I'm looking for a definition to a computer term, I'll click into Mecklermedia's PC Webopaedia ([www.webopaedia.com](http://www.webopaedia.com)). The service gives a brief definition for each word, cross-references to other words, and even links to Web sites on the topic. Webopaedia's home page lists the most popular terms that have been searched for as well as recent additions, which makes it easy to masquerade as one of the computer cognoscenti.

There are lots of other search tools. If I missed your favorite, drop me a line at [plugged-in@simson.net](mailto:plugged-in@simson.net). ♦



The following students passed foreign language examinations in the spring:

Teresitia Antonellis: *Zulu*  
Clifton Chunn: *French*  
Stacy Holden: *Arabic*  
Amy Kittelson: *German*  
Kenneth Mondschein: *Latin*  
Stacy Stein: *German*  
Teli Thayer: *French*

The following students had research papers accepted as part of their degree requirements:

João DeMelo, "The Role of the Catholic Church in Cape Verdean Domestic Affairs, 1462-1991"  
Kenneth Mondschein, "The First Crusade as a Millennial Phenomenon"  
Stacy Holden, "Design and Domination: British Urban Planning in Zanzibar Town, 1918-1930"  
Eileen Csakany, "An Analysis of the My Lai Massacre: Yesterday and Today"

The following students passed qualifying oral examinations:

On April 27: Gerald Ward. Examiners in

the major field of American history were Professors Regina Blaszczyk, Thomas Glick, and Jill Lepore; examiner in the minor field (early modern European history) was Professor Barbara Diefendorf.

On April 28: Kyri Claflin. Examiners in the major field of modern European history were Professors James Johnson, William Keylor, and Fred Leventhal; examiner in the minor field of early modern France was Professor Barbara Diefendorf.

On May 1: Scott Hovey. Examiners in the major field (American history) were Professors Jill Lepore, Bruce Schulman, and Nina Silber; examiner in the minor field of the history of international relations was Professor William Keylor.

These doctoral candidates had their dissertation prospectus approved:

Peter Alegi, "Keep Your Eye on the Ball: A Social History of Soccer in Black, Urban South African Communities, 1886-1956." The first reader is Professor Diana Wylie.

Melissane Parm, "A Freedom to Suit Themselves: Negotiating Indian Identity on Cape Cod, 1757-1834." First reader is Professor Jill Lepore.

Midori Yoshii, "Kennedy's New Frontier in Northeast Asia, 1960-1963: Foreign Policy in a Changing World." First reader is Professor James Thomson.

Eileen Csakany received the M.A. degree in May. ♦