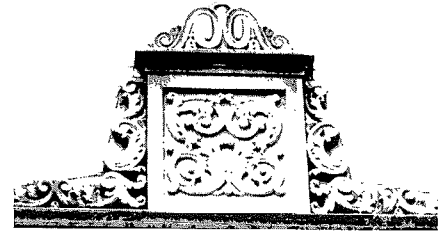
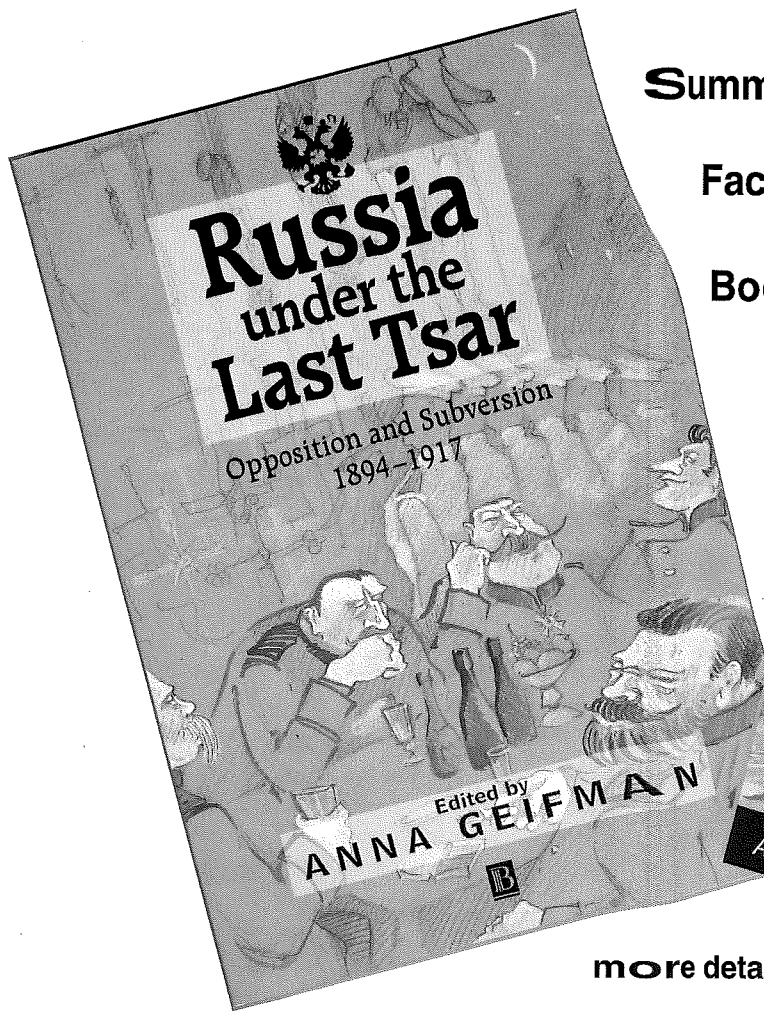


NEWS



of the History Department at Boston University

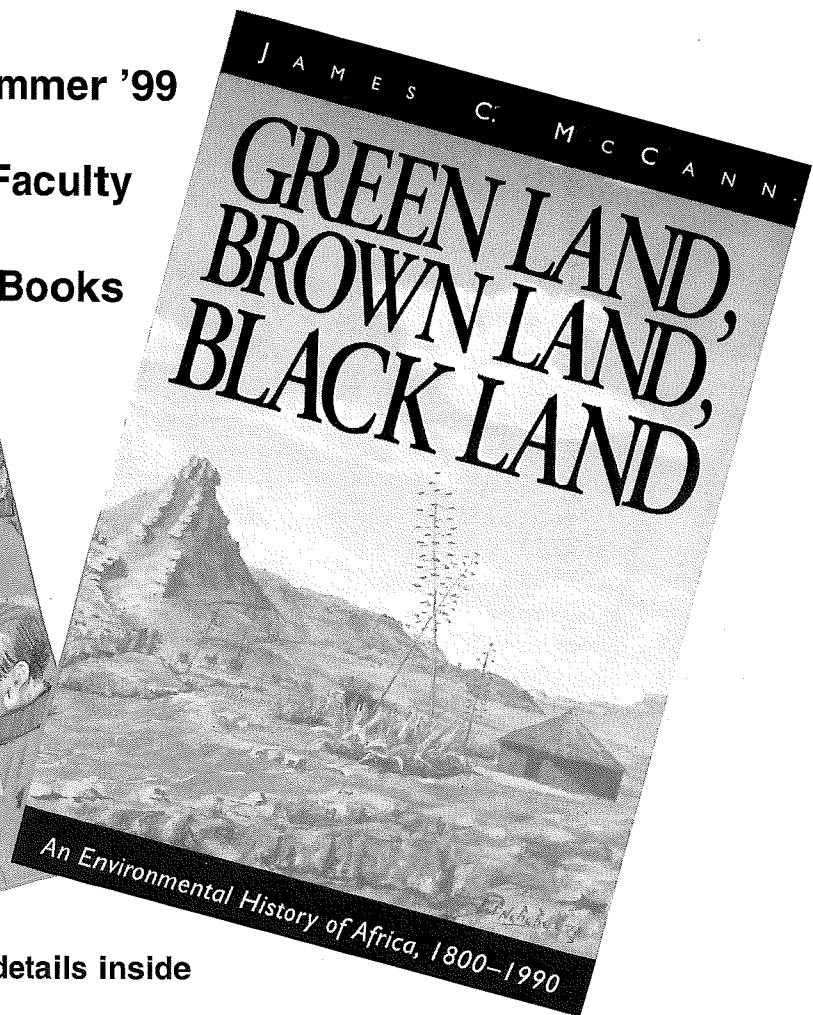
September 1999



Summer '99

Faculty

Books



more details inside

A long, hot—and eventful—summer

OK, perhaps it wasn't an unusually long summer, but it was a hot one, and it was *definitely* an eventful one.

Not long after commencement Professor Richard Fox announced that he had decided to accept an offer from the University of Southern California to join the faculty there, effective January 2000. Professor Fox's departure will be a great loss to the department and to the American Studies Program, but all wish him well in his return to the West Coast.

The major surprise of the summer was the announcement that the university administration had decided that an outside search will be conducted for the next chairman of the History Department—the first time for an “outside” chairman since Sidney Burrell was named to the position in 1966. The search will begin this fall for a successor to Professor William Keylor, now starting the last year of his term. The field will be “open”; that is, applicants from all fields of history may ap-

ply. In accordance with the Faculty Handbook, the department has designated three members of the search committee (James Johnson, Fred Leventhal, and James McCann); the Dean will appoint others from related departments. As in other searches, the finalists will be invited to campus to meet department members and to give presentations on their work.

There was bad news in July, when the department learned that Professor John Gagliardo had suffered a fall in his apartment and, in the course of medical tests, was informed that he has Parkinson's disease. He is on medication for the disease but has concluded that he will not be able to return to teaching this fall.

As has been announced previously, a large number of faculty members will be on leave this academic year, but the department has been able to hire replacements for many of them:

Professor Barbara Diefendorf will be teaching at the Harvard Divinity School during the first semester; her lecture course on the Renaissance and her section of HI 301 will be taught by Elisabeth Wengler, who recently received her PhD from Boston College.

Professor Diana Wylie will be on sabbatical for the full year; Dr. Konrad Tuchscherer will teach her HI 292 in the spring semester.

Among the Americanists away for the year is Professor Nina Silber, who left in July for a year in Prague, where she will teach American history at Charles University. Also on leave for the year is Professor Bruce Schulman, who will be teaching at Tohoku University in Sendai, Japan. Professor Regina Blaszczyk has a fellowship at the Charles Warren Center at Harvard for 1999-2000, and Professor Jill Lepore has been appointed a Junior Humanities Fellow at Boston University for Semester I.

The department has hired three full-time Americanists who will teach many of the courses usually offered by the faculty on leave: Cheryl Boots, who defended her dissertation in American Studies early this summer, will teach Professor Lepore's courses in Semester I and Professor Silber's

Civil War course in the second semester; Lori Kenschaft, a recent PhD in American Studies, will teach Professor Fox's courses; and Thomas Whalen, who earned his PhD from Boston College last year, will teach Professor Schulman's classes. These three instructors will also assist in advising both undergraduate concentrators and graduate students and will be available to sit on qualifying orals and dissertation defense committees.

Once the appointment papers for replacement faculty were completed, the staff turned to the welcoming of two new full-time members: Professor Betty Anderson arrived from California (with gigabytes of images for her Web site) to take up her duties in teaching Middle Eastern and North African history, and Professor Louis Ferleger moved from the University of Massachusetts, Boston, across town to Boston University to become professor of American economic history, as well as executive director of The Historical Society (he will begin teaching in the spring semester, offering a course on U.S. economic history and a section of HI 301). Both of these new department members introduce themselves to our readers on page 3 of this issue of the newsletter.

And finally, appointment papers were also submitted for Professor Ronald Richardson, now at Clark University, who in January 2000 will become associate professor of history and director of the African-American Studies Program at Boston University. He will teach a course in African-American history in the second semester. He is the first faculty member in this field since the departure of Professor Wilson Moses in 1992. ♦

For up-to-date course listings, with assigned classrooms, check the departmental Web site: www.bu.edu/history. Course offerings of newly appointed faculty members are there, and faculty office hours will be posted once classes begin.

James McCann's environmental history published

Heinemann of Portsmouth, N.H., and James Currey Publishers of Oxford have published Professor James McCann's *Green Land, Brown Land, Black Land: An Environmental History of Africa, 1800-1990*, in which McCann argues that far from being pristine and primordial spaces, Africa's landscapes were created by human activity. We are pleased to reprint a section of the Introduction:

Africa's environmental history is written on its landscapes. While the continent's geomorphology—mountains, river valleys, coastlines—changes at a pace imperceptible to human generations, the shades and textures of its soils, forests, vegetation, and human settlement reflect its history in a way more profound and ubiquitous than politics, economics, or even colonial rule. Africa's modern landscapes vary widely: from the asphalt and corrugated iron to the glass and steel of sprawling new cities to rural fields covered increasingly with New World crops (maize, cassava, cocoa); from semiarid savanna woodland to rain forests; from coastal mangrove swamps to highland euphorbia plateaux. Moreover, Africa's patchwork of landscapes continues to change, perhaps at a rate unprecedented in its history, as exotic species and new ideas arrive and join a changing mix of plant, animal, and viral inhabitants.

If Africa's physical landscapes have been a canvas, then nature's palette of colors and textures has been the action of climate, the life cycles of vegetation, and the action of water. These landscapes change not only in a linear fashion over time, but also within the year in the form of seasons. Wet summers and dry winters transform savanna and open woodland from golden to green and river beds from dry or sluggish rivulets to grand waterways or fast-moving torrents.

Like water, fire was a seasonal force,

See McCANN, page 9

Introduction to **NEW FACULTY**



Assistant Professor Betty Anderson

From the *Mayflower* to Jordan

BY BETTY ANDERSON

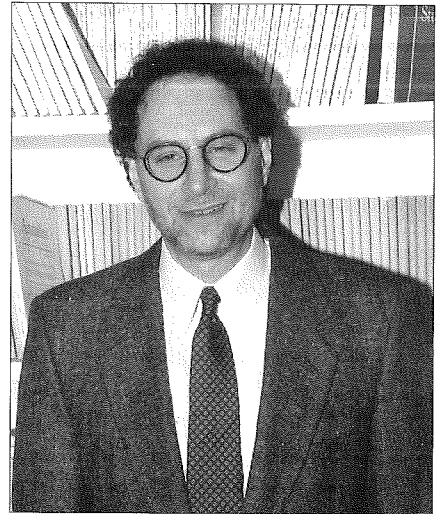
After ten years in Los Angeles, I have now returned home to Massachusetts...and my roots do run very deep in this region. On my mother's side, my grandfather's ancestors came to the area via the *Mayflower*. Family lore also perpetuates the myth of another *Mayflower* connection through my grandmother on my mother's side, but no one as yet has done the research to verify it. From all reports, few of these ancestors left the region for far-flung areas of the country; only in my generation has there been such an exodus. (My father's family is of more recent vintage: Sweden→Ellis Island→Brockton.) While I was growing up, my mother constantly reminded my brothers and sister and me of our "important" place in American history, although we have no idea if

any of our ancestors played an even marginally "important" role in the events of the region. While I failed to share my mother's enthusiasm for family genealogy, I do believe that her love of history entered my subconscious during her many talks.

As for me, I grew up on Cape Cod, spending every summer sailing, swimming, and hanging out with the "summer people." I find it hard to imagine a nicer place to have spent so many years of my life. However, as I headed off to Trinity College in Hartford, the Cape seemed to grow progressively smaller with every summer break, and I dreamed of experiencing greater adventures on the other side of the Canal. After graduation, I first headed to Washington, D.C., to work in Congress and for a couple of non-profit organizations, and then to Los Angeles, to get my Ph.D. at UCLA. As I grew older and wiser over the intervening years, the Cape and the Boston area again started to tug at my heart (to use a bad cliché). Getting off the plane at Logan always made me feel at home, even if "home" now amounted to two weeks every summer and two more weeks over Christmas break.

In those intervening years, my choice of specialization, the Middle East, has taken me much farther away from the Cape than I had ever imagined. While at Trinity, I received a B.A. in history and political science, and by junior year, I knew that I wanted to study for my Ph.D. The problem was that I had no idea which specialization I preferred. Trinity had a strong set of courses in Russian and Soviet history, with professors like Sam Kassow and Jay West at the school, so I initially leaned toward that field. At that point, the Middle East held absolutely no in-

See ANDERSON, page 4



Professor Louis Ferleger

Introduction to an economic historian

BY LOUIS FERLEGER

Since I received my Ph.D. in 1978 much of my work has centered on agricultural development. In my published work I have argued that agricultural development has always depended on technological development. Furthermore, since the beginning of industrialization, that dependence has increased at an accelerating rate and the use of technology has decisively distinguished between different agricultural economies. Starting in the late nineteenth century, access to (and willingness to use) technology has not merely differentiated the agriculture of advanced from backward and colonial societies, it has differentiated development within the agricultural sector.

The application of technology (e.g., an improved cultivator) generally depends upon its prior existence and

In recent years my work has centered on the rate and structure of agricultural development in the post-Reconstruction South.

upon an agricultural worker's ability to purchase it. The obvious economic factors of capital, investment, markets, and transportation play an essential role. But, as Michel Confino has cogently argued for 19th-century Russia, economic considerations alone do not determine the rate and structure of technological change within a given agricultural community. In my work I demonstrate that agriculturists may reject new technology because they view it as fundamentally disruptive to their values and social relations. Thus, the adoption of new agricultural technologies can largely depend on non-economic factors. Education, household relations, politics, and wars, to name a few, often quicken or retard the pace of technical progress. As Simon Kuznets succinctly observed in his 1972 Nobel Memorial Lecture, "If technology is to be employed efficiently and widely, and indeed, if its own progress is to be stimulated by such use, institutional and ideological adjustments must be made to effect the proper use of innovations generated by the advancing stock of human knowledge."

In recent years my work has centered on the rate and structure of agricultural development in the post-Reconstruction South, with special attention to cultural and ideological influences. My work has benefited from the wealth of recent work on southern economic development after the Civil War. The defeat of the Confederacy and the abolition of slavery revolutionized the structure of southern agriculture, without necessarily promoting rapid economic development. Past work on the southern response to defeat and Reconstruction has emphasized many economic aspects of the story. These studies, however, tend to view technology and practical sciences in a manner largely divorced from the cultural system and its institutions. Thus, the insti-

tutional and cultural context of technological change remains little discussed and poorly understood.

My work integrates economic history with cultural, political, and institutional history and, by extension, contributes toward the formulation of a more complete portrait of southern life after Reconstruction. I am interested in the technology that was used (and not used) to carry out production, as well as in the factors that influenced farmers' decisions regarding use of newly developed farm technology. Southern farmers were never rigidly or mindlessly anti-technological; values, customs, habits, traditions, politics, and religious beliefs affected their choices as significantly as the circumstances, conditions, and constraints of agricultural production.

Over the past 20 years I have taught American economic history in an economics department. In my courses I have emphasized the importance of noneconomic factors on the course of economic development in the United States. As a result I have come to realize that my interests and approach are more compatible with approaches common among historians and less compatible with reigning styles of research and teaching among economists. Working in an environment of historians will enhance my own work, and I welcome the opportunity to teach both undergraduate and graduate students in American and agricultural history in the History Department at Boston University. ♦

ANDERSON (cont. from page 3)

terest for me; I even remember rejecting a student's recommendation to take the one Middle East course offered in the history department.

This attitude changed when I spent the spring 1986 semester in London and got to see, up a little bit closer, events coming out of the region. In this short span of time, the U.S. government bombed Libya, bombs went off in Berlin, trashcans were removed from the Champs Elysées for fear of future

attacks, and an El Al plane was set to blow up over central London, all while the Chernobyl cloud floated over the continent. I always think back on that time as my *negative* introduction to the Middle East because I first focused on only those unpleasant events that inevitably blanket the world press. Nevertheless, the issues piqued my interest and I returned to Trinity and immediately enrolled in that one course on the Middle East (taught by the professor who actually specialized in African history), and at the end of the year, I wrote my senior thesis on British policy in Palestine in the 1940s. I now had a field but little conception of some of the obstacles I would eventually encounter, most importantly, the very difficult task of learning Arabic.

From Trinity, I briefly worked for the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* in Washington, D.C., and then went to UCLA for my graduate work. My dissertation analyzes the history of Jordan's political opposition movement, the Jordanian National Movement, by focusing on the ideological principles and political parties guiding it and by investigating its growth amidst the dramatic political, economic, and social changes that took place in Jordan in the 1950s. The changes generated by the spread of education throughout the country in this period, the ideologies expounded upon by the teachers, the increasing process of urbanization, and the simultaneous expansion of the bureaucratic and professional classes changed the social and political bases of the country. Jordan encountered an additional crisis as well, because of the country's peculiar beginnings, as a country created by Britain and ruled by a foreign dynasty. As a result, the rising political forces of the 1950s fought to obtain political power for themselves and, just as importantly, to try and redefine the very status of Jordan's nationhood. This key decade proved to be a pivotal moment for Jordan's political development, and an awareness of this period is essential for understanding the bases of Hashemite royal power and the erratic process of liberalization attempted in the 1990s.

Over the last couple of years, I have also become obsessed with computers, particularly with the proper use of this technology in the classroom. I started by assigning Web pages to my students and have since directed my efforts toward producing pages containing a wide array of maps and photographs specific to Middle East and World History. While this process takes up many more hours than I care to contemplate, it has made me think more visually as I prepare each of my lectures and discussion sections. My ultimate goal in all my classes is to bring a frequently misunderstood region and history to life for the students; computers, maps, and photographs have augmented this process.

As I now sit on the Cape enjoying a long-delayed vacation, I look forward to teaching and working at BU. Of course, I am hoping for some miracle of science which will transport the more civilized Southern California weather to the Boston area... ♦

Anna Geifman edits essays on Russia

July saw the appearance from Blackwell Publishers of *Russia under the Last Tsar: Opposition and Subversion, 1894-1947*, edited by Professor Anna Geifman. The collection discusses the issues, events, and personalities of the two decades preceding the 1917 Russian Revolution, in particular, the motivations and activities of the various political parties operating during the reign of Tsar Nicholas II. Sections of Professor Geifman's Introduction are reprinted below:

If there was anything surprising about Nicholas II's ascension to the throne of the Russian Empire after the death of his father, Alexander III, in 1894, it was a widespread sentiment—a premonition perhaps, discernible from the earliest days of his rule—that the new tsar was not to have a peaceful reign. In fact, while it is not entirely clear when his nickname—"Nicholas the Last"—was first employed to indicate what seemed a groundless belief

in his imminent downfall, the fact that the label stuck was as revealing as it was apposite in its retrospectively appreciated accuracy. Indeed, there must have been something in the outwardly unruffled political situation around the turn of the twentieth century that made this prediction seem a probability. This volume's primary objectives are thus to depict the Russian domestic scene during the reign of the country's last imperial ruler; to analyze the various factors that combined to evolve into an impending crisis that eventually swept away his regime; and to examine the various factions involved in the socio-political conflict—the tsar's numerous adversaries struggling against his loyal (and not so loyal) supporters.

The book is comprised of a series of original analytical articles by eminent American, West European, and Russian scholars, surveying the range of political forces during the final years of the tsarist regime. It may be of interest to both the educated general reader and academic audiences, as it brings together in a single volume the most recent scholarship on all the major political forces active during the reign of Nicholas II—from the most radical and violent opponents of the regime to its most conservative supporters, and incorporates new discoveries from the wealth of archival materials opened to historical investigation in the course of the few volatile years after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The book thus presents fresh perspectives on the key political issues, pivotal events, and prominent personalities just prior to and after the turn of the twentieth century—one of the most turbulent eras in Russian history. On numerous occasions throughout the volume, the authors' viewpoints challenge the existing scholarly assumptions and conventional interpretations.

* * * * *

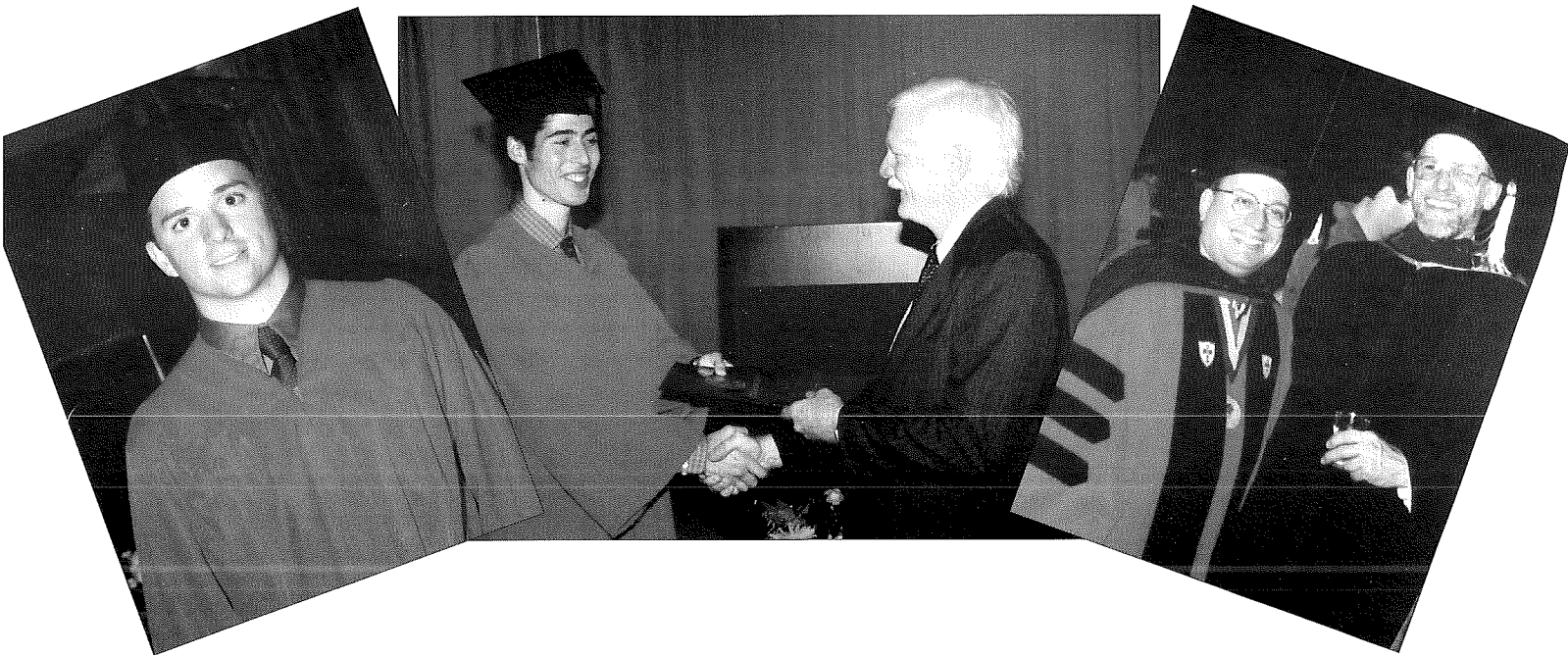
From the plethora of primary sources—diaries, correspondence, and memoirs—one may infer that among the Russian intellectuals who alleged heartfelt compassion for the "oppressed toiling masses" and profound grief for their miserable existence, a

very large (and thus indicative) number knew or at least instinctively sensed that the people were far from appreciating the concern of their self-appointed benefactors. Sources reveal that these champions of the people's cause could not escape the feeling of being entirely alien to the common folk, who were at best indifferent and more often suspicious and hostile to the intelligentsia's efforts and aspirations. An all too obvious illustration of this disparity is the famous "To the People" movement in the summer of 1874, when the revolutionaries' attempted wholesale mobilization of the countryside for the socialist cause turned into a fiasco, once again revealing the entirely apolitical nature of the Russian peasants: instead of following the radicals along the revolutionary path, the villagers mistrusted the educated strangers, attacked them, and turned them over to the police.

It might be argued that the "mad summer" of 1874 was a failure for the revolutionary cause because the radical intellectuals had not yet had a chance to establish a close connection with the masses. Yet nearly two decades later—the period of intense subversive agitation and propaganda, as well as anti-government violence—the peasants were still no more willing to listen to fiery mutinous speeches or enlist as fighters for the cause of the revolution. During a severe famine following a crop failure in 1891, coupled with devastating cholera and typhus epidemics that ravaged European Russia in 1891-2, a significant number of radicals seized the opportunity and sought to set in motion a wave of revolutionary activity by turning the hungry masses against the tsarist regime. Revolutionary circles emerged everywhere in the provinces affected by the famine; their members energetically printed and distributed antigovernment literature and openly agitated for violence against state officials, the police, and the wealthy, blaming them for the misfortunes of the peasants and the poor townsfolk.

Both the authorities and the revolutionaries recognized the famine and epidemics of 1891-2 as the impetus for an

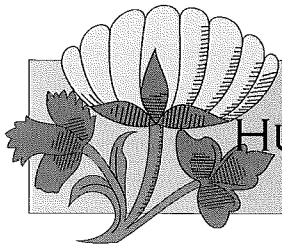
See GEIFMAN, page 11



Commencement 1999

The rain held off until the departmental convocation had concluded on Sunday, May 23, when 68 History concentrators received their diplomas in the Law School Auditorium. Above left: Gregory O'Malley, recipient of this year's Warren O. Ault Prize; center, Chairman William Keylor presents the College Prize for Excellence in History to Daniel Weitz; at right, Angel Amy-Moreno receives congratulations on his PhD from the Graduate School Associate Dean Scott Whitaker. Below left: Anup Sheth with his mother and Professor Merle Goldman, who directed Anup's distinction project. At right: Hayley Jonas, her friend Priscilla, and Professor Diana Wylie. After having read a long study of sharecropping in one of Prof. Wylie's courses, Hayley wrote a research paper based in part on Priscilla's memories of growing up in South Africa as the daughter of a sharecropper.





HUMANITIES FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

On May 11 the Boston University Humanities Foundation presented scholarships to twenty students. The History Department was fortunate in having all four of its nominated students receive awards.



Barbara Lauriat (left) won an Alice M. Brennan Humanities Award. She is particularly interested in ancient Roman history and is double-majoring in Classical Studies and History, with the goal of entering law school. She hopes to pursue independent study of ancient Roman legislation dealing with the promotion and/or oppression of religious activities. She was recommended for the Humanities Foundation award by Professor Merle Goldman.

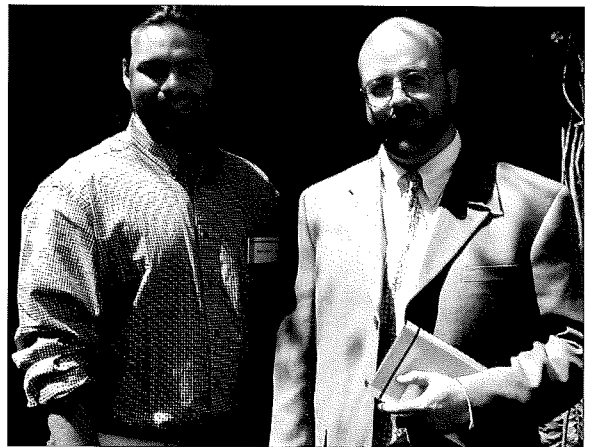
Danielle Lightburn (right) was named winner of a Robert E. Yellin Award. Danielle says she has been hooked on history since junior high. During her freshman year at BU she worked at Boston's Historical Neighborhoods Foundation, and later at the Immigrant City Archive in Lawrence, Mass. Last summer she was research assistant to Professor Jill Lepore and now plans distinction work on the desegregation of Boston's public schools and the busing controversy of the 1970s. Her goal: a PhD in history. Her

recommender for the Humanities Foundation award was Professor Clifford Backman.



Mark Abate (left) is writing a dissertation, under the direction of Professor Clifford Backman, entitled "Roger Bacon and the Rage of Antichrist: The Apocalypse of a Thirteenth-Century Scientist," which will analyze the interface between science and eschatology in medieval Europe through the works of Roger Bacon. Besides writing his dissertation, Mark is engaged in producing for Ashgate Publishing a critical edition, introduction, and English translation of a work by a fourteenth-century Venetian merchant on crusading strategy and for three years has been an adjunct faculty member at the University of New Hampshire, Manchester. Mark won the Edwin S. and Ruth M. White Prize.

Mitchell Allen (right) is writing a dissertation with Professor John Gagliardo on the Kingdom of Great Britain and the German state of Hanover between 1727 and 1760, a period when King George II was sovereign of both states. The dissertation will explore how the king and his ministers in the British Cabinet and the Hanoverian Privy Council regarded the link between the states and tried to make it work. Mitch has pored through immense amounts of material in archives in London and Hanover, with the latter requiring his mastery of eighteenth-century German handwriting. Among other jobs he has held faculty positions at Emerson College. Mitch won an Angela J. and James J. Rallis Memorial Award.



Yusufu Lawi defends dissertation on environmental concerns in northern Tanzania

On May 7 Yusufu Qwaray Lawi successfully defended his dissertation entitled "Local Environmental Perceptions and the Political Economy of Natural Resource Use in Iraqw'ar Da/aw, Northern Tanzania, 1900-1980s." The first reader was Professor James McCann, and the second, Professor Diana Wylie; other members of the committee were Professors Jean Hay, James Pritchett (of the Anthropology Department), and Parker Shipton (also of Anthropology). Lawi is on the faculty of the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. We are pleased to reprint the dissertation abstract:



After Yusufu Lawi's defense: Frederick Kaijaige of the University of Dar es Salaam, Jean Hay, James McCann, Lawi, and Diana Wylie

This dissertation addresses the question of how rural people's environmental perceptions in Tanzania have influenced human interaction with nature in the period from 1900 to the 1980s. It specifically examines the ways in which established ecological ideas influenced local resource management and use during the late 1920s and 1930s, how changing historical circumstances affected both the local ecological ideas and interaction between the population and the environment in the subsequent decades, and how these various factors shaped the local landscape. The dissertation addresses these questions by focusing on Iraqw'ar Da/aw, a settlement on the Mbulu Highlands in northern Tanzania, and analyzes aspects of culture among the Iraqw people, who inhabited this area.

Based on oral and archival sources the dissertation outlines the system of ecological knowledge that was in place among the Iraqw by 1900 and shows how the values emanating from it mediated social interactions and natural resource use in Iraqw'ar Da/aw. Combining pragmatic reasoning and established environmental beliefs and related norms, local ecological knowledge notably influenced people's strategies in crop production, livestock management, and landscape use in general.

Gradual changes constantly occurred in the local knowledge and its applications, but increased colonial state's interventions in rural affairs from late 1930s notably added to the dynamic of this process. Especially after WW II, state-sponsored ideas about 'proper' management and utilization of rural resources increasingly entered the scene through development policies. These essentially urban views not only contradicted local environmental perspectives but also constantly denied the rural people's capacity to manage natural resources in reasonable and sustainable ways. The tendencies remarkably intensified in the post-colonial period, particularly from 1975, following the launching of *Ujamaa Villagization*, a program involving forced resettlement of rural population.

In the long run, however, the encounter between local and external ideas resulted in some changes in the local ecological perspectives and strategies for resource utilization. By mid 1980s the results were manifest in local adoption of new landscape utilization options, production methods, and agricultural technologies. Overall, this study illustrates the dynamism of rural ecological knowledge and its influence on local natural resource use in Tanzania.



This summer saw the addition of a new feature to the departmental Web site (www.bu.edu/history) that should prove useful to undergraduate concentrators, graduate students, and faculty

as well. In the "Department News" section of the site, there is now a link to a calendar of events of interest to the department. Each month of the academic year can be viewed and will include events such as lectures on historical topics, special seminars, and meetings. There will also be more mundane matters, such as the dates when early registration starts and final examinations begin and end. The hope is that as more

people become aware of the calendar, they will turn to it as a handy reference to learn, for instance, when this year's Merle Goldman Lecture will be held or when and where the next department faculty meeting will occur.

In addition, there is a simple form to complete so that anyone can submit relevant items for inclusion in the calendar.

sometimes human induced, sometimes the result of the serendipity of a lightning strike. Fire was thus both a tool and a natural force that transformed landscapes for a few months or over an environmental epoch. In the short term a grass fire removed dried vegetation and allowed new shoots to emerge at first rains. Fire and the ashes of wood and grass changed soil Ph and released phosphorous. Over the long term fire encouraged the spread of fire-resistant tree species and confined other trees to protected areas.

The seasonal metamorphosis of vegetation also draws to it Africa's astonishing menagerie of fauna, lives that depend directly or indirectly on the food value, soil effects, and disease ecology within the vegetative cover. This fauna includes large mammals, both domestic and wild, who feed directly on African grasses, as well as carnivores—feline, canine, and avian—who follow them as their food sources. Finally, another set of less visible predators inhabit Africa's landscapes. Disease organisms—protozoans, viruses, nematodes—bring epidemic and endemic disease to humans and animals. Insects—locusts, tsetse fly, black fly, ticks, and lice—move along with the natural movement of the seasons, vegetation, and temperature, pushing and directing life-forms in subtle ways.

Above all of these factors of environmental change shaping African landscapes have been the labor, tools, and ideas of Africa's human inhabitants. A fundamental leitmotif in this book is the premise that Africa's landscapes are anthropogenic, that is the product of human action. Thus, Africa's landscapes show the cumulative effects of specific human tools: hand hoes, oxplows, axes, machets, and human agents such as domestic livestock, fire, crops. The impact of these factors through most of the period covered in this book, therefore, also depends directly on demography, that is the effects of varying concentrations of human settlement on particular parts of African landscapes.

Snapshot views or images of long-

term changes in Africa's environment depend on two scales: time and space. Africa's forests, soils, and animal populations have changed over time, but their collective effects on landscapes also depend on geographic scale. This book incorporates a number of possible perspectives on environmental change, ranging from a Landsat satellite's space-based camera, to the view from an airliner breaking through cloud cover at 3000 meters; the field of vision from the edge of a farmer's field or a shepherd's perch. Each of these points of observation would capture a different scale but also a different point of view: the shepherd's concern for livestock's safety and food supply, the farmer's preference for an open, cropped field, and an international space agency's overview of land use measured in 100 kilometer square blocks.

There is also a grander scale of economy that has increasingly affected Africa's physical environment over the course of the 1800-1990 period. While the forces which directly shape Africa's landscapes are local, they are increasingly conditioned indirectly by events and choices at a more global scale. That hierarchy of scale extends from the farmer's field to the regional marketplace to the Ministries of Mines, Agriculture, or Finance and to the offices of multilateral agencies in Washington, Rome, or Nairobi. Over the two centuries covered in this book the scale of human capacity to change Africa's environment has changed dramatically as technology and the growth of international commodity markets for coffee, cocoa, wood, and minerals have dominated local economies. In the late twentieth century cocoa merchants in Amsterdam arguably have more control than do local farmers over whether Ghana's region is covered with cocoa forests or fields of maize. The use of concrete for an apartment complex's roof in Kuwait may save a mangrove swamp in Tanzania's Rufigi delta.

This book seeks to explore the process of interaction between the physical world of plants, soils, climate, and animals with human action and response over the period 1800 to 1990. Environ-

A fundamental leitmotif in this book is the premise that Africa's landscapes are anthropogenic, that is the product of human action.

mental history rarely falls neatly into specific dates, nor can a history that encompassed all of Africa rest on a fixed bookend date. The benchmark of 1800 is thus an attempt to incorporate a precolonial past along with the full range of Africa's engagement with the industrial world economy, colonialism, and global economic change in the late twentieth century.

Environmental and landscape history is also, to a large degree, the history of ideas, perceptions, and prescriptions about what historical African cultures and colonial governments felt about how land should look. Their actions on the land reflected deeply rooted aesthetic traditions about natural and inhabited space and the social organization of technology and labor power to transform it.

In the late twentieth century Africa's environment has changed from what Africans and outside observers saw around them in 1800. There are fairly widespread beliefs that degradation rather than merely change has been a dominant theme: the alleged processes include deforestation, erosion, loss of soil fertility, increasing drought, and the loss of biodiversity. Media imagery and accounts of declining natural resources have dominated public perceptions of Africa. How accurate are these assertions of environmental decline? This book will test those arguments and illustrate the processes that shaped Africa's environmental history in the last two centuries of the millennium.

The environmental history of Africa is beginning only recently to take a coherent shape with the publication of a new generation of empirical, field-

sity is especially notable in their arts with 27 different forms of dance, music, painting, sculpture, and architecture. For example, the Naxi have the oldest continuing orchestras in the world (300 years) and play instruments about 1,300 years old. They also boast a pictographic writing system they claim is the origin of contemporary Mandarin. Of course the different customs and belief systems presented an intriguing array. For instance, I learned that among the Bai a couple didn't get married unless there was a pregnancy. The Musuo have a matriarchal society where the men stay only at night with women, then go off to their mother's home; any offspring remain with the mother and take her family name. Tibetans of either gender can marry more than one person at a time—provided they marry all the brothers or sisters in another family, a stipulation which limits the numbers of such marriages. The Yi, a group where 60% enslaved the other 40% until 1959, pair off future marriage partners when they are less than five years old, the only group I encountered where interethnic marriage is virtually impossible.

Of course ethnic tourism is a big deal, and besides nationalities' dance

and musical troupes, there are many artificial and real ethnic villages. I went to many of the latter, including ones specializing in crafts like batik and silversmithing. In one village, when I fell into a ditch of dirty water, my interpreter said I had offended the rooster god (he was serious!). Taking snapshots with a Polaroid camera was a surefire way to get invited into people's homes for tea and chat, as most countryfolk had never seen such a camera. But meeting Chinese tourists from other provinces, I couldn't help noticing how they behaved like U.S. city folks on a Navaho reservation in New Mexico gawking at the "exotic natives." Certain parts of Yunnan have been opened to tourism only since the early 1990s, but the commercialization of local cultures is already evident. This was confirmed by a U.S. anthropologist I met there who had been studying the Naxi for 15 years.

As you might surmise, because of the varied topography, the scenery is awesome: tall, forested, snow-peaked mountains, meadows covered with wild flowers, sparkling lakes, some of the deepest gorges in the world, terraced agricultural fields disappearing into the clouds. Totally breath-taking. My most interesting excursion was traveling in a van 100 kilometers over a dirt

road for six hours high into mountains on the Tibetan plateau. My destination was the remote Shangri-la (yes, there is such a place). I started at 12,000 feet and climbed to 18,000. I cannot begin to describe the inspiring landscape of forests, mountains, lakes, fields, flowers, and stone formations I encountered. Indeed, Shangri-la is a sight to behold! Actually, it is considered the sacred grounds of the Naxi, and people were sacrificing chickens and lighting incense in the woods.

There's really too much to mention in the space allotted here. I could write reams about my visits to temples, pagodas, parks, rivers and lakes, museums, theaters, art galleries and studios, schools, colleges and universities, research institutes, hospitals, farms, factories, restaurants, people's homes, and the like. The interesting people I met in all these and other locations would fill another few chapters. But this brief sketch should suffice to indicate that my Yunnan excursion has been among the most enjoyable of my trips to other countries. I fully intend to return next summer to see all that I missed and renew my friendships. Meanwhile, I have photos for anyone who would like to get a glimpse of the splendor that exists 19 hours from here. ♦



Professor James Johnson with his wife Lydia Moland, and on the right, Professor James McCann, all "working" in Italy for the summer. Prof. Johnson was there teaching in a Boston University summer program, continuing research on his next book, and learning to fry zucchini blossoms. Prof. McCann was working on his project on the history of maize—and sampling homemade Parmesan. In the photo they are in the Euganean Hills, located south of Padua, an area famous for vineyards and for being the home of Petrarch.

Graduate Students Win Fellowships



Stacy Holden has been selected for a Fulbright student award in Morocco during the 1999-2000 academic year to support her research on historic preservation as a colonial policy between 1912 and 1937, the first twenty-five years of the French Protectorate of Morocco. Twenty years after Edward Said published *Orientalism*, it should come as no surprise that Stacy begins with the premise that French colonial administrators romanticized the Arab-Islamic history of Morocco. She intends, however, to look at how the physical implementation of such romanticized conceptions affected the physical and social organization of urban centers. She is focusing her research on the city of Fez because it was, and continues to be, presented by experts and non-experts alike of both French and Moroccan origin as a timeless relic defined by its medieval mosques, palaces, and religious schools. Because Stacy believes that such representations deny the urban dynamism of the city and its residents, she intends to investigate the ways in which freezing urban history might actually act as a force of history unto itself. During her year of research, she will analyze historic preservation in relation to housing patterns of both the elite and non-elite, shifting work opportunities for artisans, and the ways in which poets and other writers incorporated images of the city and its monuments in their works. "Colonial Romance and Moroccan Responses: Historic Preservation in Fez, 1912-1937" is the working title of her dissertation.



Madia Thomson has won a National Security Education Program Graduate International Fellowship to support her research on the social and cultural effects of the trans-Saharan trade and migration on southern Morocco from 1600 to 1830. Specifically she will study the effects of trade in slaves and other commodities and the role of communities with strong ties to sub-Saharan Africa in the development of a Sahelian culture in southern Morocco. Slaves served as agents of cultural diffusion in North Africa, and by studying their incorporation into Moroccan society, she hopes to increase understanding of the historical development of southern Moroccan cultural and social practices. Her goal is to demonstrate that Morocco's African identity stems not only from geographical location but from migration and trade across ecological zones which encouraged the development of community life and intercultural exchange between the Maghrib and the western Sudan.

Madia has obtained access to the private archive of the House of Iligh, the ruling family of the Tazerwalt region, on which she will concentrate her research; personal interviews will also be an important part of her project. She will be living in Rabat during her year of research.



in brief

EVENTS OF NOTE!

Three department members are contributors to a recently published two-volume reference work, *The Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing*. The authors and articles are **Anna Geifman** (Pavel Miliukov, Franco Venturi); **Thomas Glick** (Robert I. Burns, Américo Castro, Comparative History, Feudalism, S. D. Goitein, Pierre Guichard, Ibn Khaldun, E. Lévi-Provençal, Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Robert K. Merton, Ellen Churchill Semple, Islamic Spain, Lynn White, Jr.); **Herbert Mason** (Louis Massignon, Ancient Near East).

Professor **Reggie Blaszczyk** spent the summer in Washington, D.C., where she was a senior fellow at the Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation, Smithsonian Institution. In early July she spent a week as a visiting professor in the Department of History at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, where she taught in an NEH Summer Institute on "Technology and American Society."

From April 30 to May 2 Professor **Diana Wylie** attended the annual NEWSA-CRCSA (Northeast Workshop on Southern Africa-Canadian Research Consortium on Southern Africa) conference held in Burlington, Vt. She served as discussant of a paper by BU History De-

partment graduate student **Peter Alegi** entitled "The South African Soccer League: The Making of a Professional Football Culture in the Post-Sharpeville Era, 1960-66." Her essay "Disease, Diet, and Gender: Late Twentieth Century Perspectives on Empire" appeared in volume 5 of *The Oxford History of the British Empire*. In late August she submitted her manuscript "Starving on a Full Stomach: Hunger and the Triumph of Cultural Racism in Modern South Africa" for publication by the University Press of Virginia. In early August she traveled to Zambia to begin research for a new book tentatively entitled "Kalabo, 1959: Rashomon in Central Africa," to be co-authored with Eugenia Herbert. In November she will serve as guest lecturer on the BU Alumni Travel Program's trip to Kenya, having lived in that East African country in the early 1970s as a Peace Corps Volunteer. From May through June 2000, she will live in Rabat, Morocco, conducting research, funded by the Social Science Research Council, on "French Colonial Policy toward Informal Settlements in Rabat: A Case Study of La Cité de Yacoub al-Mansour, 1947-56." During the 1999-2000 academic year she will be on leave from Boston University and will occupy that time writing her half of the Zambian book and preparing for her Moroccan research, as well as teaching two courses on South African history at Harvard University.

Professor **Merle Goldman** was in China, shortly after NATO's accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, to work on a joint project with members of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences on the role of human rights in U.S.-China relations. There could not have been, she says, a more politically sensitive topic and politically sensitive time to be there. Yet the collaboration went very well and most of the Chinese were anxious to continue the project. What was surprising was how little her collaborators knew about the Serb "ethnic cleansing" of the Albanians. "They have access to CNN and the Internet, yet most of their information came from official Serb sources." Later in the summer Prof. Goldman and her husband Marshall attended a dinner at the Taiwan consulate in Boston at which President Jon Westling and his wife were also

guests. In addition, she attended a working dinner with Madeleine Albright and others dealing with China at the State Department to discuss the status of U.S. relations after Kosovo, the Taiwan president Li Teng-hui's reformulation of Taiwan's relationship with the People's Republic of China, and the demonstrations of the religious sect Falun Gong. In the fall Prof. Goldman will be attending conferences in Russia and Germany as well as in the U.S. on the impact of China's Communist revolution on the country's modern history.

In addition to the other prizes she has received for her book *The Name of War* (including the Bancroft), Professor **Jill Lepore** has won the Berkshire Prize, the prize for the best book by a woman historian. And in August the book was cited for the New England Historical Association's annual Book Award, which will be presented to Prof. Lepore at the organization's 63rd conference at Suffolk University in Boston on October 16.

On May 19 Professor **Nina Silber** led the Civil War Roundtable at Fox Hill Village in Westwood, Mass. She spoke on "Reconstruction and Reconciliation in the Post-Civil War Period." Since the time he moved to Fox Hill Village, Professor Emeritus **Sidney Burrell** has been instrumental in "importing" a number of department faculty to speak to residents.

Professor **Mariano Plotkin** wrote in late July: "Next week I am traveling (everything paid for) to Rio de Janeiro to deliver two talks, one on political rituals and another on psychoanalysis and politics."

James J. Heslin, director of the New York Historical Society between 1960 and 1982, died on April 30. Dr. Heslin held a doctorate in American history from Boston University. During the time he led the society he established its education department and revamped the library cataloguing procedures to make its collection more accessible to the public.

Earlier this year Oxford University Press published its 24-volume *American National Biography*, which includes entries written by Professor Emeritus **Saul Engelbourg** on James Daniel, Jr., John Stewart Kennedy, Reginald Frances Lewis, and Electus Backus Litchfield.

Michael Paley, one of the department's outstanding student employees from the past, sent word that on May 25 he and his wife Janice became the parents of Jessica Foster Paley.

In mid-July department administrator **James Dutton** attended a week-long se-



Prof. Jill Lepore (with husband Timothy Leek and son Gideon) at the May reception hosted by President Jon Westling to celebrate her winning of the Bancroft Prize.

ries of workshops for CAS "computer specialists." With an active computer support center in place in the College, the goal is to have at least one person in each department trained to assist faculty and staff in computer issues and to be the contact point for passing more difficult problems along to the central CAS group. The morning sessions focused on theory (how computer hardware and software work, how networks function), and the afternoon sessions offered help in troubleshooting (the most-repeated bit of advice was simple: is the computer plugged in?). Then on July 29, in the training room of the Personal Computer Support Center, Dutton conducted a session for the CAS Web Group on designing Web pages.

Professor **Clifford Backman** writes: "I've finished my new book 'The Worlds of Medieval Europe,' which will be in press at Oxford University, with an anticipated fall 2000 publication date. I'm now preparing a paper on 'The Naval Forces of the Crown of Aragon' for a conference on 'Power and Domination: Europe and the Sea in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance' which will be held at Arrabida Monastery outside Lisbon, Portugal, in February 2000. The conference is sponsored by the Fundação Oriente, and the chief organizer is Richard W. Unger of the University of British Columbia....I've also grown a beard." [Editor's note: It must have been the weather; in addition to Prof. Backman, the summer also saw Professors James McCann and Bruce Schulman sporting facial hair of varying shapes and colors.]

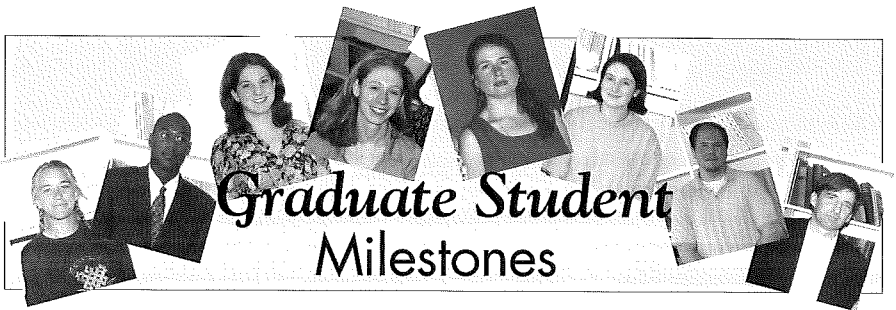
On June 11 Professor **Genzo Yamamoto** gave an invited lecture at the Korea Development Institute School for International Policy and Management in Seoul, Korea, entitled "Prewar Japanese Political Philosophy: Its Implications for East Asian International Relations." During the summer, he also co-organized a panel for the March 2000 National Conference of the Association for Asian Studies entitled "An Active and Diverse Elite: The Modern Aristocracy in Imperial Japan, 1869-1947." ♦

The African Studies Center's
Rodney Seminar Series presents

John Lamphear, Historian at the
University of Texas-Austin, speaking on

"The New England Firearms Trade to Africa
Before 1865"

October 4, 12 noon, Room 416,
270 Bay State Road



The following students passed foreign language examinations in April:

Amy Bosworth: *Latin*

Andrew Donnelly: *Spanish* and *Latin*

These students had research papers accepted for credit:

Amy Bosworth, "Alfred the Great's Missing Monument"

Oyëshiku Carr, "The Great Band: Missionary Belief and the Expression of Americo-Liberian Nationalism, 1841-1861"

Amy Kittelson, "The Middle Way: Asian Thought and William James"

Christina McIntosh, "The African-American Voice in Antebellum America"

Jeffrey Saunders, "Martyrs of Liberty: Creating a New Republican Consciousness"

The following students passed their qualifying oral examinations:

On May 3: Sarah Phillips. Examiners in the major field of American history were Professors Regina Blaszczyk, Jill Lepore, and Bruce Schulman; the examiner in the minor field of African environmental history was Professor James McCann.

On May 4: Stacy Holden. Examiners in the major field of African urban history were Professors James McCann, Nasser Rabbat (of MIT), and Diana Wylie; the examiner in the minor field of

twentieth-century American diplomacy was Professor Robert Dallek.

On May 12: Douglas Kierdorf. Examiners in the field of medieval history were Professors Clifford Backman, Thomas Glick, and Herbert Mason; the examiner in the minor field of early modern European history was Professor Barbara Diefendorf.

Amy Bosworth and Jeffrey Saunders received the MA degree in May.

The following students had the dissertation prospectus approved:

Mark Abate, "Roger Bacon and the Rage of Antichrist: The Apocalypse of a Thirteenth-Century Scientist." First reader: Professor Clifford Backman.

April Burgos, "The Alhambra of Granada in the Fourteenth Century: A Social History of an Islamic Palace-City." First reader: Professor Thomas Glick.

Stacy Holden, "Colonial Romance and Moroccan Responses: Historic Preservation in Fez, 1912-1937." First reader: Professor Diana Wylie.

Gerald Ward, "From Merchant Adventurers to Merchants of Light: The Development of English Oceanic Commerce and New World Colonies and the Making of Bacon's Great Instauration." First reader: Professor Thomas Glick.

In appreciation of Richard Fox

I'm not usually a greedy person but a decade of Richard Fox as a colleague is simply not enough. Richard is leaving BU to take an appointment at the University of Southern California, to begin in January of 2000. In both the American Studies and American History arenas, he has been a luminous presence. Gentle and always lucid, his kindness and encouragement to so many of us, faculty and students alike, will be sorely missed. Unfortunately, academia often has a way of bringing out the pettier side, but Richard is the exception. His generosity of spirit helped to keep us from sinking to such mundane levels.

I used to chide Richard about his habit of hanging up the phone too abruptly for me. And even though it will soon be a long-distance call, I'm still hoping that he will linger on the line to Boston. Best of luck at USC. They are so lucky to have you.

Professor Marilyn Halter

Department of History
Boston University
226 Bay State Road
Boston, MA 02215



In the city of Lijiang, China, a Nexi musician playing an instrument originating a thousand years ago. More on department secretary Al Sargis's trip on page 10.