

# DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN



A NEWSLETTER OF PEOPLE AND EVENTS  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

## Greetings from the Chair

Summer 2020



**Benjamin C. Waterhouse**

*Acting Chair, Department of History*

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Greetings from Chapel Hill and from the UNC History Department! The last several months have been, as we say in this profession, “world historic,” and on behalf of our department, I wish you strength, health, and resolve as we live through an extremely difficult experience. Since March, we in the History Department have working remotely, but our core teaching, research, and service

mission continues. It is a pleasure to share the Spring issue of *The Department Historian*, brought together through the tireless work of History graduate students **Luke Jeske** and **Aubrey Lauersdorf**. It is a particular pleasure to recognize Aubrey, now officially Dr. Lauersdorf, for her years of work on the newsletter as she heads off to a tenure-track assistant professorship at Auburn University.

This issue of the newsletter chronicles recent events and accomplishments of the History Department, both before and since the COVID-19 pandemic. It recounts a special initiative that brought a thought-provoking historical exhibit on the Vietnam War to the halls of the department in February, as well as the fascinating research of several of our talented graduate students. In addition, you can learn more about how the History Department responded to the outbreak of the pandemic and the University’s move to remote and online instruction. Finally, the newsletter spotlights the innovative and exciting work of our Digital History Lab, created and sustained by its graduate student directors, **Emma Rothberg** and the now-graduated **Dr. Gabriel Moss** and **Dr. Garrett Wright**.

As we weather unprecedented challenges in the months ahead—from health and safety to the financial exigencies that affect public institutions like ours—we depend more than ever on the generous support of our friends and alumni. In the last year, private support has enabled us to fund new research opportunities for undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty; send students and faculty to present research at national and international conferences; and maintain our commitment to engaging the general public. Even as we continue the essential work of teaching and writing from our homes, we look forward to resuming our scholarly activities in a brighter future.

Gratefully yours,



**Benjamin C. Waterhouse**  
**Acting Department Chair**

## In The News

During the fall semester 2019, it was business as usual in the History department undergraduate program: top-notch lectures, amazing seminars, a new cohort of Senior Honors thesis students beginning their ambitious research projects, and more. In addition, the faculty had an especially important task to complete... [Read more.](#)



When Acting Chair Professor Benjamin Waterhouse received an email on March 13 from the university announcing the extension of Spring Break and a possible transition to virtual learning for the remainder of the semester, he and the other members of the department's leadership were ready. [Read more.](#)

Pursuing a PhD in history is a demanding, long-term commitment. Faculty support, access to financial resources, and interconnected systems of area studies centers provide the Department's outstanding PhD students with the tools they need to excel.

[Read more.](#)





Students and faculty who want to make interactive maps, create professional websites, or use digital tools in the classroom have a new resource available: the department's Digital History Lab (DHL).

[Read more.](#)

In the early weeks of the Spring 2020 semester, department students, staff, and faculty on the fifth floor of Hamilton Hall stepped into the past. For four weeks the Department of History's corridors provided a temporary home for a traveling exhibition about anti-war protests during the Vietnam Era. [Read more.](#)



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[\*The Department Historian\*](#)

This email is for friends of the UNC Department of History, through the Arts and Sciences Foundation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



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