



Viewed Historically

The e-Newsletter of the Department of History
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In This Issue

A New Academic Year: Prospects and Uncertainties

The 2008–2009 academic year at the University of Missouri began with a bang, as total enrollments, fueled by a record freshman class, climbed, for the first time, over the 30,000 mark. I would like to say it was the excellence of the history department that drew in all these new students, but I'm afraid that we cannot take credit for it. Rather, three factors seem to have been responsible. First, there is a demographic reason: since 1990 was a peak year for births — the natal high point of the generation sometimes called “millennium children,” and sometimes known as the “echo boom” — the offspring of the numerous baby boomers born in the 1950s and 1960s. The second reason was the stellar performance of MU's football team in the 2007 season: its glorious week as number one in the national ranking, its Cotton Bowl victory and final ranking in the top four teams nationwide. Nationally, prominent good sports years for a university generally lead to increased enrollments. Finally, in Illinois and Texas, cutbacks and restrictions on enrollments in each state's respective flagship universities gave students there a reason to consider MU.

Although the history department has not caused this enrollment surge, it has had to deal with its consequences. Thanks to some assistance from the provost's office and the dean of the College of Arts and Science, we have been able to add extra sections of survey courses and expand enrollments in many of our other undergraduate course offerings. As a result, no student had to be turned away from our classes.

This year, the department is seeking to hire a historian of East Asia, a choice that will help us to expand our course offerings, both for undergraduates and graduate students, to deal with an increasingly important

part of the world. The job ads have been posted, the application deadline is past, and the department's search committee is hard at work crafting a list of finalists, who will be invited to campus for interviews. We will keep you informed on the progress of this job search; and, next year, will have a profile of the new colleague, after he or she is hired. If you want the most up-to-date information, you can check at the [department web site](#).

Faculty and students in the history department, like everyone else in America and much of the world to boot, have been watching the crisis in the financial markets over the last couple of months. And, like everyone else, they have been wondering about its ramifications for them, for the University and for the Department of History. Right now, it's hard to say. Missouri's state revenues have held up well in spite of economic difficulties, and the University's budget has remained stable, quite in contrast to a number of other states, including California, New York, Georgia, Maryland, Nevada, Arizona and Florida, where budget cuts and recisions have led to painful cutbacks at public universities. Still, no one can know what the next year will bring, nor how the policies proposed by new chief executives, in both Washington, D.C., and Jefferson City, will affect the situation. (I am writing this on November 3, the day before the elections.) We will just have to see.

One source of funds that public universities have been trying to tap with increasing urgency in recent years is contributions from private donors. The University of Missouri is currently in the closing stages of a billion-dollar fund-raising campaign. This massive display of largesse has, I fear, mostly passed the history department by. There are a few exceptions. Last February, we

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reported on the Percy/Nash Endowment fund that will eventually produce income for an annual lecture series. I am very pleased to announce a new major donation, in the amount of \$75,000 by James G. Baker, to establish the Professor Lewis W. Spitz Faculty Enhancement Fund in History.

This fund was established by a generous gift from James G. Baker, in honor of his undergraduate teacher [Lewis W. Spitz](#). Spitz taught at the University of Missouri from 1953 to 1959; he worked at Stanford University from 1961 to 1993 and was an emeritus there until his death in 1999. He was one of the most eminent American scholars of the age of the Reformation. He published 15 books and over 80 book chapters and articles. His published works include *The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists*, *The Renaissance and Reformation Movements* and *The Protestant Reformation, 1517–1559*.

Lewis Spitz was not just a world-class scholar, he was also an extraordinary teacher, known for his dedication to his students. As he said about his career: “University teaching has enabled me to develop a career that coincides perfectly with my inner needs and goals in life, which have more to do with service than with ambition, more with love of people than with a wish to dominate, more with mind and spirit than with material things.” James Baker took inspiration from this attitude for his entire life, and so has created a faculty enhancement fund in the memory of his inspiring teacher.

The fund will support the scholarship and teaching of one history faculty member, the Lewis W. Spitz Faculty Fellow, for a five-year term. The faculty fellow will be chosen from among the ranks of the tenured history faculty by a competition, with the fellowship awarded to the applicant who has the best record of dedication to scholarship, teaching and service to the department, the college, the campus and the historical profession.

The history department is profoundly thankful to Baker for his donation. Once the fund is established and the first Spitz Faculty Fellow is chosen, it will be announced

on the department’s Web site, and again, in an issue of this newsletter.

Past donors have been very generous in offering scholarships to the history department’s undergraduates; readers of past February issues, (that’s the No. 2 issue of each year) available at the [history department’s Web site](#), will recall accounts of the annual ceremony honoring our undergraduate scholarship recipients. By contrast, our graduate students, whose financial needs also tend to be greater than those of our undergraduates, have not received quite the same level of donor support, so that the department must regularly scramble each year to find ways to fund them. With the support of the Missouri State Historical Society, this annual scramble has gotten just a little bit easier. The feature news section of this issue has an account of the newly created James Goodrich Research Assistantship in Missouri History.

One of the important aspects of intellectual life in the department of history and at MU comes in the form of public lectures by distinguished professors from other universities. Last April, we were unusually pleased to host Professor Ian Kershaw, of the University of Sheffield, the English-language world’s leading historian of Nazi Germany, whose lecture “How and Why Nazi Germany Held Out until the Bitter End” was presented to a standing-room-only crowd at Ellis Auditorium.

Such lectures are, unfortunately, few and far between, because of a lack of a regular source of funding for them. The department is preparing a new initiative, the creation of a biennial Lewis Atherton Memorial Lecture in American history, to honor one of the most distinguished historians to teach at the University. More on the plans for this new series in a future issue.

The “Historical Reflections” section of this issue concerns the department’s biennial ancient history lecture series, the Fordyce Mitchel Memorial lectures. Ian Worthington, professor of ancient Greek history, has put a lot of effort into raising funds for the lectures, inviting distinguished historians and classicists to give them and turning them into a major intellectual event.

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In his short piece, he describes the progress of this lecture series.

We'll see you again with another issue in February; in the meantime, remember you can always visit the department's Web site, <http://history.missouri.edu>, or contact us at history@missouri.edu. We wish our alumni and friends all the best for Thanksgiving, Christmas and the New Year.

Jonathan Sperber
Chair, Department of History

Considering making a donation to the history department? For information on doing so, click on this [link](#). The department chair and the development office of the College of Arts and Science will be pleased to discuss with you any plans you may have to help the Department of History.

James W. Goodrich Research Assistantship in Missouri History at the State Historical Society

For a long time, one of the oddities of the history department at the University of Missouri was its lack of contact with the [State Historical Society of Missouri](#). Not only were they topically connected, but the two were located across the street from one another, the history department's Read Hall on the east side of Hitt Street, and the State Historical Society's wing of Ellis Library on the west side. Yet, as the result of some obscure circumstances, occurring over 50 years ago, the history department and the Historical Society had been on poor terms.

In recent years, both the State Historical Society and the history department have been working on ways to enhance their relationship through cooperative projects. Undergraduate history majors can do an internship at

the State Historical Society; faculty send our majors, particularly those taking their senior seminars, over to the State Historical Society to do historical research in their manuscript and newspaper collections. History faculty work with the State Historical Society in organizing the annual [Missouri History Conference](#).

Now, the State Historical Society has taken a new step forward in its collaboration with the history department through the establishment of the [James W. Goodrich Research Assistantship](#) in Missouri History. This assistantship, named for the late [James Goodrich](#), who was the executive director of the State Historical Society from 1985 to 2004, provides the funds to support one University of Missouri history graduate student, in return for which the student will work on a research initiative of the Historical Society. This collaboration is a true win-win for everyone involved: the Historical Society gets to draw on the knowledge and expertise of the history department; the department receives some additional funds with which it can help more of its graduate students; and the Goodrich Fellow gains important scholarly experience working with historical manuscripts in one of America's pre-eminent state historical societies.

The first Goodrich research assistant is Roger Robinson, a new doctoral student at the University whose scholarly interests are in the history of the early American Republic. He will be working on a major project of the State Historical Society, the publication of an edition of the collected letters and writings of the celebrated 19th-century Missouri artist [George Caleb Bingham](#) (1811–1879).



State Historical Society Director Gary Kremer, Goodrich Research Assistant Roger Robinson and history department Chair Jonathan Sperber, at the State Historical Society, standing in front of *Martial Law or Order No. 11*, one of George Caleb Bingham's most famous paintings.

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Historical Reflections

Fordyce Mitchel Memorial Lecture Series

Many of you will remember Professor Fordyce Mitchel, who taught Greek history in the department and published significantly on fourth-century Greek history and Greek epigraphy until his death in 1986. Some of you may even have taken classes with him. What you may not know is that shortly after his death, his widow, Marguerite, established an endowment fund, to invite a scholar to give an annual lecture on an aspect of Greek history in honor of her husband. That modest beginning metamorphosed in 2000 into the biennial Fordyce Mitchel Memorial Lecture Series. Every two years an established scholar in a particular field of Greek history and society is invited to spend a week as a guest of the history department. She or he gives a series of "Mitchel" lectures on a particular topic, a public lecture and meets with students and interested faculty. The Mitchel lectures themselves are then revised and published as an original and scholarly book. The first books were published by the University of Missouri Press, but now the University of Texas Press is responsible for their publication.

The first lecturer in the Mitchel Series was Mark Golden (Winnipeg) in 2000, who spoke on sport and social status in ancient Greece. The second lecturer (in 2002) was Carol Thomas (Washington), who spoke on finding people in early Greece. In fall 2004, the department scored a real coup with Mogens Herman Hansen (Copenhagen), one of the world's two foremost experts in Athenian political history, whose topic was the demography of the Greek polis. Then in 2006 another coup, when we played host to Stephen Hodkinson (Nottingham), now the most influential scholar on Spartan history, whose topic was "Sparta in Comparative Perspective, Ancient and Modern." Most recently, in 2008, Christopher Pelling, holding the most prestigious Chair in Greek (the Regius Chair at Oxford), spoke on *how Greek historians explained history*. In 2010 we will have Joseph Roisman (Colby College) with us, and the topic of his Mitchel lectures will be Alexander the Great's veterans. The books by the

first three speakers are published, and that of Professor Hodkinson is in the works.

The history department is proud of this series, which honors one of its distinguished former members. We hope you also have fond memories of Mitchel, and if you would like further details about the series, publications, and future speakers please see the department's [Web site](#). Donations to the endowment, in order to improve the series further, are also gratefully accepted!

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As always, we would be pleased to hear from you. Please send news of yourself and your accomplishments, as well as changes of e-mail address and any other such details to the history department's administrator, [Melinda Lockwood](#). Suggestions about new features, possible improvements, and comments on the newsletter more generally can be sent to the history department chair, [Jonathan Sperber](#). You can always check out the history department's Web site <http://history.missouri.edu> and send comments on it, to the departmental Webmaster, Professor [Jeff Pasley](#).

