

## *From the Coordinator....*

“What can I do with a master’s in History?” It’s a question I increasingly hear. In difficult economic times, students more than ever worry about debt and their economic futures. Understandably, they want to know their investment in graduate education will have at least some pay-off. Perhaps they’re also looking for anything I may have to pacify parents or friends who see studying history as a mere indulgence. Thinking about these issues, our department has begun talking about “transferable skills”—the skills our students develop that transfer into other professions, including critical thinking, research, writing, and public speaking. Certainly, transferrable skills are acquired also by our graduate students, who learn to sift through and synthesize huge amounts of information, who learn to respond coolly to rapid fire questions from a professor in a seminar or oral exam, and who learn to approach the world with sharp and critical eyes. I am tempted to tell inquiring students they can do anything with a master’s—and that it will serve them well even if they embark on careers selling ice boxes to Eskimos! I also offer them the traditional answer: that studying history enriches one’s life and that graduate studies in history, despite its pressures, proffers a rare opportunity to ask and contemplate big questions about our world. That’s what you can do with a History M.A.



*On Quemoy Island, August 2014*

## **Explaining Mob Action, Gangster Movies, the Antisuffrage Movement, and more...**

Once again—with the generous support of program alumni—our graduate students presented their work at a number of important scholarly conferences. In the fall, Aaron Psujek presented *Defining the Mob in the Age of the Riot Act* at the Loyola University of Chicago History Graduate Conference in Chicago, Illinois. His classmate Logan Bruce presented *"He Used to Be a Big shot": Class in 1930s Gangster Films*, at the University of Illinois-Chicago’s Windy City Graduate Student History Conference at roughly the same time. Last (continued page 2)



Shawn Hale delivers a paper at the 2014 Illinois History Symposium

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### *Explaining Mob Action (continued)*

Spring, Emily Scarbrough delivered her paper, "Mobilizing the Ballot Battle: Women's Suffrage and Antisuffrage Movements in Illinois," as part of a panel called "The Search for Social and Political Equality between the Sexes," at the 2014 Missouri Conference on History.

In March 2014, History graduate students played a vital role in a conference co-sponsored by EIU and the Illinois State Historical Society. No less than eight current or former graduate students gave papers at the symposium dealing with Copperheads and the Civil War. A number of other students served as facilitators for conference panels. Then, in April Kara Batts and Aaron Psujek presented their research at our annual Indiana State-EIU-UI-Springfield graduate history symposium in Terre Haute, IN. Congratulations and thanks to all.

"HISTORY WILL BE  
KIND TO ME FOR I  
INTEND TO WRITE IT."

### **Mastering Persian....**

— [WINSTON  
CHURCHILL](#)

Since coming to EIU two years ago, Professor Brian Mann has proved an infectiously popular teacher. This past spring, Eastern's resident specialist on the history of Iran and the Middle East did something no Eastern instructor had ever done in a century of higher education at the university: he taught students Persian. Three graduate students, all deeply interested in Iranian culture and history (two writing theses under Professor Mann) were the beneficiaries of his expertise. Week after week, students made steady progress learning a language and alphabet that remains one of the most complex on the globe. By semester's end, both students and instructor seemed pleased by the experience and the "Mann method" for learning Persian. "Working with these three fine students," reflected Mann, "was just plain fun!"



## *Class Notes....*

- **Greg Aydt** (1999), academic advisor at Eastern Illinois University and his wife Jana, who works at Booth Library, welcomed a new baby girl this spring named Katherine.
- **Jeff Corrigan** (2007), who serves as Oral Historian at the State Historical Society of Missouri, and **Nicholas Mariner** (2007), an instructor at the College of Education at the University of South Carolina, will present a panel entitled “The Desegregation of Public Schools: Two Oral History Projects Discussing the Cases of Columbia, MO, and Knoxville, TN,” at the upcoming Oral History Association Meeting in Madison, WI.
- **Richard Hanson**, who teaches high school history in Mt. Zion, IL, is in the final stages of completing his first book entitled “‘Big Steps & Little Steps’: The Story of Thelma Mothershed Wair of the Little Rock Nine.”
- **Kyle Osborn** (2007), who teaches social studies in Villa Grove, has been recognized as the state's Smart/Maher VFW Citizenship Education Teacher Award winner for the high school level.
- **Bill Brooks** (1997) works as Carrier Relations Manager for RacoWireless and splits his time between homes in Portsmouth, NH, and Texas. As part of his job he manages the relationships between RacoWireless and three wireless network carriers, based in Europe: So, he reports “it looks like that EIU European history degree had a practical application after all.”
- **Benjamin Ill** (2010) is now an admissions counsellor for Pacific Oaks College.

## Let Us Know What You're Doing!

Keep us informed of developments in your life. We would be delighted to include your news in our “class notes” section and on our alumni webpage. Also if you know the whereabouts of someone not receiving graduate update, let us know, and we'll add them to our mailing list.



Graduate students Michael Ludwinski (middle left) and Alex Gillespie (right) teamed up with undergraduates Alexander Scalise and Amy Wywialowski to produce an exhibit titled “Seven Score and Ten Years Ago: The Stories and Memories of the Charleston Riot.” The exhibit, created for Dr. Debra Ried’s Public History class was displayed at Dudley House in Charleston and later at Eastern Illinois University’s Booth Library.

## *Meet the New Graduate Students....*

**Kimberly Jones**, from Saint Louis, Missouri, graduated from University of Missouri Saint Louis with degrees in both history and economics. Her historical interests include urban and African American history.

**Margaret Krause**, originally from Shawano, Wisconsin, completed her undergraduate studies at Colorado Women's College in Denver, Colorado (now a part of the University of Denver). She has an MS in Public Service Administration from the University of Evansville. Her historical interests include Irish history and American Indian History. In addition to studying history, Margaret has a strong interest in historical textiles and has supported herself as a weaver/designer for many years.

**Alyssa Peterson**, of Sullivan, Illinois, completed her undergraduate studies at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. Her interests include ancient and Early American history. She is currently working full-time, while taking classes part time, as well as serving in the Illinois Army National Guard. When not studying or working, she enjoys running, mud races, and traveling.

**Collin Chadwick**, from Tucson, Arizona, completed his undergraduate studies in anthropology and Classics at the University of Arizona. His historical interests lie in medieval Western Europe, especially in the British Isles. When not studying, Collin enjoys creative writing, keeping up with the latest archaeological discoveries, and reading ancient literature from around the world.

**Michael Ludwinski** grew up in Champaign, Illinois, and completed his undergraduate studies at EIU. His historical interests center on Medieval and Early Modern Europe, as well as 19th century America.

**Adam Mohebbi**, from Chicagoland, holds a B.A. in History from Eastern Illinois University. Historically, he is interested in postwar Southern Africa and the Middle East, with a heavy focus on Iran. In his free time, Adam enjoys historically themed games, the outdoors, and the slow degradation of his heart due to watching the White Sox!

## *And Congratulations to our Graduates...*

Finally, congratulations and good luck to this year's program graduates: Dan Tomar (Wehrle), Logan Bruce (Hubbard), Justin Wardall (Hubbard), and Nicole Garbrough (Foy), who ended her graduate career at Eastern in fine form by winning the EIU Graduate School's university-wide King-Mertz Award for best non-thesis research/creative activity project. Her winning project, written for Dr. Charlie Foy was entitled "Delaware Valley Allegiances and Identity in the Eighteenth Century."



Graduate Student Award Recipients Celebrating at the History Department's Annual Phi Alpha Theta Dinner, May 2, 2014.