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Spring 2003 Volume 14, Issue 1

The National Science Foundation and Environmental History

Keith R. Benson, Program Officer

Through its Science and Technology Studies program (STS), the National Science Foundation (NSF) has been a traditional supporter of research in the history, philosophy, and social studies of science. However, many members of the American Society for Environmental History may not realize that this program has also supported many grants in environmental history. Although I do not have any precise figures, there have been a significant number of Scholar's Awards and Dissertation Improvement grants that have been funded in the past several years. Thus, it might be helpful to provide some information about the STS program to ASEH members.

Environmental History has become one of the more exciting and influential areas of scholarship in recent years, especially as it provides a fertile connection among scholars in the traditions of

ASEH Election Results 2003

Congratulations to the following individuals, who were elected by the membership in February of 2003:

VICE PRESIDENT/PRESIDENT ELECT

Stephen Pyne, Arizona State University

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NEW MEMBERS

Sarah S. Elkind, San Diego State University
 Nancy Langston, University of Wisconsin-Madison
 Ted Steinberg, Case Western Reserve University
 Mart A. Stewart, Western Washington University

NOMINATING COMMITTEE NEW MEMBERS

Dianne Glave, Loyola Marymount University John McNeill, Georgetown University

ASEH wishes to thank the following individuals, who are rotating off the Executive Committee, for their years of service:

Susan Flader (Past President)

Mark Harvey

*

John McNeill

Bill Rowley

ASEH also wishes to thank all candidates who stood for election.

history, history of science, and history of technology. Perhaps originally locating itself in history, the field has now come to represent one of the finest examples of interdisciplinary research in the academy. Even more impressive in terms of the STS program, several scholars have recently written successful grant applications making overt connections between the history of technology and environmental history, connections that have attracted rave comments from external reviewers and NSF Advisory Panels.

As a result of these new directions, the STS program has identified environmental history as part of a NSF sub-priority area, "Spatial Social Sciences," in its new initiative, "Human and Social Dynamics." While future funding of the initiative (with its sub-priority areas) remains unclear, NSF has responded positively to the role that environmental history may play in it. Thus, scholars in environmental history are encouraged to consider the STS program at NSF as a potential source of support for their research.

The two most common forms of support are the Scholar's Awards, intended for those holding a terminal degree, and Dissertation Improvement Awards, aimed at supporting research leading to the successful completion of the dissertation. Support is also available for postdoctoral fellowships, professional development, and program development (Small Grant for Training and Research). More information about the STS program is available from the website for the National Science Foundation (nsf.gov) or by contacting me at the address listed below. Please do not hesitate to discuss your questions through an email discussion or telephone conversation. National Science Foundation website:

Keith R. Benson STS Program Officer <kbenson@nsf.gov>; 703-292-7283 4201 Wilson Blvd. Suite 995 Arlington, VA 22230



Field trips at the Providence conference included a birding excursion to Sachuest National Wildlife Refuge. For more information on the Providence meeting, see p. 3.

From the President's Desk

Inaugural Address From Incoming President Douglas R. Weiner

Taking over the reins from Carolyn Merchant leaves me with feelings of both elation and anxiety. Elation, because under her amazing leadership, the ASEH has made gigantic strides to enhance and expand our programs, our finances, and, notably, what we permit ourselves to imagine for our society. Anxiety, because Carolyn Merchant has, like Jeffrey Stine before her, set such a high standard of leadership.

Carolyn inspired us to contribute to the society and its programs with unprecedented generosity, and shepherded the creation of six named travel grants, a minority nonwhite travel grant, and additional travel grants that have enabled graduate students, low-income, and international scholars more easily to attend and present at our meetings. She has pointed the way to the next stage of the society's evolution, a campaign to create an office of Executive Director, about which I will have more to say.

Additionally, she has built on our already warm relationship with the Forest History Society while forging a productive collaboration with the National Council for Public History respecting the 2004 joint conference in Victoria, BC. Our journal, *Environmental History*, has a sharp new look and

American Society for Environmental History

President: Douglas Weiner, *University of Arizona*Vice-President: Stephen Pyne, *Arizona State University*Secretary: Lisa Mighetto, *Historical Research Associates, Inc.*Treasurer: Mark Madison, *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

Executive Committee:

Jacqueline Corn, John Hopkins University
Sarah Elkind, San Diego State University
Nancy Langston, University of Wisconsin - Madison
Linda Lear, George Washington University
James McCann, Boston University
Ted Steinberg, Case Western Reserve University
Mart Stewart, Western Washington University

Ex Officio Past President:

Carolyn Merchant, *University of California - Berkeley* Donald Pisani, *University of Oklahoma* Jeffrey Stine, *Smithsonian Institution*

The American Society for Environmental History seeks understanding of the human experience of the environment from the perspectives of history, liberal arts, and sciences. The Society encourages cross-disciplinary dialogue on every aspect of the present and past relationship of humankind to the natural environment. ASEH maintains a website at <www.aseh.net>. Contact <oosthoek@onetel.com> to discuss including

material on the web page.

Items for the next newsletter should be sent by June 16, 2003 to: Lisa Mighetto, Editor, 119 Pine St., Suite 301, Seattle, WA 98101. E-mail to <mighetto@hrassoc.com>.

Other correspondence should be directed to: American Society for Environmental History, 701 Vickers Ave., Durham, NC 27701-3147. © 2003 American Society for Environmental History.

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expanded contents, and is in good financial health, as is the society as a whole. And Carolyn commissioned from Jan Oosthoek a completely new website design that is as tasteful and exciting as it is user-friendly.

Finally, in her valedictory address "Shades of Darkness: Race and Environmental History" as in her day-to-day leadership Carolyn Merchant epitomized the engaged, dignified, and inclusive tone of leadership that has been a hallmark of our society over the past two decades. As I said, this will be a nearly impossible act to follow.

Even as I am enthused about the prospects of the ASEH itself, I am suffused with a profound and penetrating sense of foreboding and anxiety about the state of the larger academy, the country, and the world (performance anxiety aside!). Reacting to a seemingly irresistible tidal wave of anti-intellectualism, fiscal "downsizing," government pressure, the blandishment (and lash) of grants, and the imposition of corporate values, universities and institutions of learning have given critical ground. They have abandoned their traditional role as a haven for "inconvenient" ideas and for the unbridled play of knowledge-seeking for that of compliant vocational schools preoccupied with TV contracts for the NCAA, the promotion of sneakers, real estate deals, income from royalties on research, and the bottom line.

These developments are being driven by a larger national and international environment, in which there appear to be no compellingly attractive and feasible alternatives to the current nihilistic globalization, regrettably enforced in good measure by our own government. In almost every society, including our own, free speech is under attack and fundamentalisms are spreading. Time horizons are contracting as it becomes increasingly difficult to imagine the world, and one's place in it, ten or twenty, let alone fifty years down the line.

As environmental historians we cannot escape these challenges. We must offer society at-large better frameworks of analysis than those now prevailing, and must insist that the media pay attention to our scholarship and begin to fulfill the educative function incumbent upon it in a democracy. We must reach out and tell our narratives wherever we can gain a hearing.

As an officer, I was of course busy with committee work for a good part of the Providence conference - our biggest yet - but I had the good fortune to attend a magnificent panel that dealt with outreach. One paper overturned the often repeated argument that, in Africa, nomads and farmers were "natural" enemies and therefore "preordained" to mutual violent conflict. In southwestern Niger, explained Lynne Heasley, *cooperation* was the norm, and the infrequent conflicts were the result of egregious violations of that cooperation. Such narratives are critical if we are to challenge the simplistic, essentialist, and at times racist stories that purport to "explain" events on TV, in the newspapers, and in "pop" scholarship. Workshops for high school teachers might be one way to put new narratives in play, and I hope that when the next president, Stephen J. Pyne, writes

ASEH Held Annual Meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, Last Month



At the President's Luncheon, incoming President Douglas Weiner congratulated outgoing President Carolyn Merchant on her two successful years of leadership. Carolyn delivered an address titled "Shades of Darkness: Race and Environmental History."

More than 400 people attended the annual conference in Providence - a record for ASEH. We are very grateful for the efforts of Nancy Jacobs and Karl Jacoby, Local Arrangements Committee, and Ravi Rajan, Program Committee.

"It is ... my hope that conservationists and environmentalists will continue to call on and draw the attention of governments, the civil society, United Nations and other agencies to the importance of this project: to save the lions in the wild for their own sake, for the sake of tourism, and for the children to come."



Nancy Jacobs introduced His Excellency Mwelwa Musambachime, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zambia to the United Nations, who delivered the address at the awards banquet on March 29. His topic was "The Status of the African Lion."

ASEH Travel Grant Recipients, 2003

Congratulations to the following individuals, who received travel grants to the meeting in Providence:

Peter J. Alagona - Donald Hughes Travel Grant Eunice Blavascunas

Laurie Carlson - Morgan and Jeanie Sherwood Grant

Philip Garone - Donald Worster Grant

Dianne Glave - Minority Travel Grant

Linda Ivey - Ellen Swallow Richards Grant

Timo Myllyntaus

Karen Oslund - Morgan and Jeanie Sherwood Grant

Cynthia Watkins Richardson

Lise Sedrez - John D. Wirth Grant

Julie Sze - E. V. and Nancy Melosi Grant

Carla Tengan

Instructions for applying for grants for the 2004 conference in Victoria will appear on ASEH's website this summer (see www.aseh.net) and in the summer issue of *ASEH News*.

ASEH Future Meetings

Next Meeting:

2004. Victoria, B.C., Canada. March 31-April 4, 2004.

Fairmont Empress and Victoria Conference Center. Joint Meeting with the National Council on Public History (NCPH). Local Arrangements Chair, Lorne Hammond, Curator of History, Royal British Columbia Museum, 675 Belleville Street, Victoria, BC V8W 9W2. (250) 387-2486. lhammond@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

Note Location Change:

2005. Houston, TX. [not Knoxville, TN, as initially planned]. March 2005. Local Arrangements Chair, Kathleen A. Brosnan, Department of History, University of Houston, TX 77204. (713) 743-3008.

Hosting Future Conferences

Anyone wishing to submit a proposal to host the annual conference of the ASEH in 2006, 2007, 2008, or 2009, should contact Marty Reuss at martreuss@aol.com or phone him at 703-428-9560. He will be glad to discuss the requirements and to send a copy of the conference guidelines. Marty notes that hosting a conference requires considerable effort and time and requires institutional support. Those interested in proposing to host a conference should evaluate carefully the support available. *Proposals for 2006 are due by August 1, 2003.*

ASEH Prize Winners, 2003

ASEH congratulates the following prize winners, who were awarded plaques and prize money at the annual meeting in Providence:

George Perkins Marsh Prize for Best Book

Conevery Bolton Valencius, *The Health of the Country: How American Settlers Understood Themselves and Their Land* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

Rachel Carson Prize for Best Dissertation

Jacob A. Tropp, "Roots and Rights in the Transkei: Colonialism, Natural Resources, and Social Change, 1880-1940," University of Minnesota, 2002.

Alice Hamilton Prize for Best Article Outside Environmental History

William Boyd, "Making Meat: Science, Technology, and American Poultry Production," *Technology and Culture* 42 (October 2001), pp. 631-664.

Leopold-Hidy Prize for Best Article in Environmental History

John Soluri, "Accounting for Taste: Export Bananas, Mass Markets, and Panama Disease," July 2002.

ATTENTION: Awards Submissions for 2003

This year ASEH's prize committees will evaluate submissions (published books and articles and completed dissertations) that appear between November 1, 2002 and October 31, 2003. Please send three copies of each submission by November 7, 2003 to:

Lisa Mighetto
119 Pine Street, Suite 207
Seattle, WA 98101
If you have questions, contact <mighetto@hrassoc.com>



Comments on Best Book Award

Martin Melosi, Chair, George Perkins Marsh Prize Committee

The George Perkins Marsh Prize committee is pleased to recognize *The Health of the Country: How American Settlers Understood Themselves and Their Land* (Basic Books, 2002), written by Conevery Bolton Valencius, as the best book written on environmental history in 2002.

The genesis of the book is found in Conevery Valencius' undergraduate honors thesis completed at Stanford University and in her Allen Nevins Prize-winning dissertation completed at Harvard University. Her commitment to the project and her persistence in crafting such a piece of impressive research are evident in the development of this fine book.

The Health of the Country melds medical, environmental, and cultural developments into a study of the antebellum frontier in what is now present-day Arkansas and Missouri, from 1803 to the Civil War. Valencius is particularly interested in the connections between environment and the human body, between health and place. How nineteenth-century Americans understood their bodies were in ways very different from modern knowledge and perceptions.

As she stated, "What I discovered in the process was a worldview in which people were influenced by their environments in direct and powerful ways, and the exterior world and the human body were not as separate as they are now. Good or bad, harmful or improving, terrain possessed health in the same language and for the same reasons that human beings did. Basic properties applied to self and to surroundings, from the struggle of a volcano to expel foul matter to the strain of a boil to release putrid fluids and the bodily essences called humors."

Those participating in the American migration into the Mississippi Valley drew upon what they believed to be a coherent set of beliefs to make sense of "potentially bewildering environments." However, assessments of terrain could vary or even be self-contradictory. Also, the observations were not unprecedented in American and European cultural experience, but "commonplace and commonly engaged in."

The book was constructed on a wide variety of sources, including newcomers' letters and journals, local newspapers, reports of physicians and scientific observers, adventure stories of hunters and trappers, tall tales of regional humorists, and travel and emigration guides. Valencius explores her engaging topic through eight intriguing chapters: "New Country," "Body," "Places," "Airs," "Waters," "Local Knowledge," "Cultivation," and "Racial Anxiety."

One of the members of the prize committee summed up the unanimous reaction to *The Health of the Country:* "Brilliantly conceived and executed, always beautifully written. Some of the topic sentences are stunning." It is a book that links land and body in environmental history better than anyone before.

Announcements

Call for Papers

Papers are invited for two or more special sessions on the Environmental History of Medieval Europe being organized for the 39th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo during May 6-9, 2004. This will be the third biennial presentation of environmental history at a Kalamazoo congress.

Topics can be from wide range of fields - economic history, rural and urban history, material culture, history of technology, cultural history, archaeology, historical ecology or related fields - exploring interactions between humans and their natural surroundings in medieval Europe and its environs. Papers treating the history of ideas should explore how these affected human activity in the material world of nature or resulted from this experience. After the last such sessions in 2002, audiences and participants expressed a desire for a whole session on medieval woodland management (with some special attention to essential vocabulary in the primary documents) and another on the historical ecology of parasitic diseases (Black Death, malaria, epizootics, etc.). Such suggestions are meant to open, not limit, areas of interest. Final session proposals are due in to the Congress organizers at WMU in mid-September 2003, so papers should be proposed by mid-August 2003, and certainly before the ESEH meeting in early September.

For more information or to propose a paper, contact the session organizer, Richard C. Hoffmann, Department of History, 2140 Vari Hall, York University, 4700 Keele St., Toronto, Ontario M3J 1P3 Canada. E-mail medfish@yorku.ca Fax: 416-736-5836.

Society for the Social History of Medicine 2003 Roy Porter Student Essay Prize Competition

The Society for the Social History of Medicine (SSHM) invites submissions to its 2003 Roy Porter Student Essay Prize Competition. This prize will be awarded to the best original, unpublished essay in the social history of medicine submitted to the competition as judged by the SSHM's assessment panel. It is named in honour of the late Professor Roy Porter, a great teacher and a generous scholar.

The competition is open to undergraduate and post-graduate students in full or part-time education. The winner will be awarded £500.00, and his or her entry may also be published in the journal, *Social History of Medicine*.

Further details and entry forms can be down-loaded from the SSHM's website http://www.sshm.org

Alternatively, please contact
David Cantor
Division of Cancer Prevention
National Cancer Institute
Executive Plaza North, Suite 2025
6130 Executive Boulevard
Bethesda MD 20892-7309, U.S.A.
Email: competition@sshm.org

The deadline for entries is December 31, 2003

Member News

Nancy Farm Mannikko has accepted a position as an architectural historian in the Cultural Resources Division of the National Park Service's Midwest Regional Office in Omaha, Nebraska.

Hal Rothman, University of Nevada-Las Vegas, received the 2002 Award of Merit from the Texas Philosophical Society for his book, *LBJ's Texas White House: Our Heart's Home* (Texas A & M Press, 2001).

Daniel Schneider was awarded this year's Derek Price/Rod Webster Prize from the History of Science Society, for his article "Local Knowledge, Environmental Politics and the Founding of Ecology in the United States: Stephen Forbes and The Lake as a Microcosm (1887)," *Isis* 91:681-705 (2000). The prize is in recognition of the outstanding article published in the previous three years of *Isis*, the society's journal...

Position Open

International Environmental History

The Department of History at the University of Kansas seeks to hire an Assistant Professor who specializes in the environmental history of one or more major areas of the world outside the United States and Western Europe in any chronological period. Exceptional candidates at higher ranks may, in some cases, be considered. Starting date: August 18, 2003, January 1, 2004, or thereafter. Availability of the position is contingent on final budgetary approval. Required: Ph.D. completed by August, 2003; ability or demonstrated qualifications to teach survey course on international environmental history: demonstrated research on the history of human interaction with the environment, the history of environmental policy, the history of environmental change, or related topic in international environmental history. *Initial review* of applications will begin on March 12, 2003, and will continue until position is filled. Applicant should submit a current curriculum vitae, letter of application, writing sample, statement of teaching philosophy, course syllabi, and supporting letters from at least three persons. Materials may be faxed or sent as email attachments.

Prof. Donald Worster, Search Committee Chair Department of History The University of Kansas 1445 Jayhawk Blvd Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7574 skennedy@ku.edu 785-864-3569 phone 785-864-5046 fax

For a copy of the position announcement, see the CLA&S website at http://www.clas.ku.edu. For further information about the Department of History, see our website: http://www.clas.ukans.edu/history. EO/AA Employer. University of Kansas History Website: http://www.clas.ukans.edu/history/

Spring 2003

from President page 3

his inaugural column, ASEH outreach will already be an established fact.

Without sacrificing the uniquely intimate, generous and cooperative ethos of our society, we must take our society to the next level of organization. Complex annual conference logistics, including hotel contracts, expanded fund-raising and grant-writing activities, a growing correspondence burden, our desire for continual website updating and enhancement, and the need to organize a proper archive for the society all mandate the creation and appropriate funding of an Executive Director for the society. The Executive Committee has taken the first steps by appointing our Secretary, Lisa Mighetto, Acting Executive Director, which has also involved increasing our contribution to her firm, Historical Research Associates (HRA) for her release time for ASEH duties. As it is, HRA is making a substantial donation in kind of Lisa's time, and we will need to raise our contribution from the current \$7,000 annually to \$10,000, at least in the short term.

I am delighted to inform you that Hal Rothman has agreed to contribute an extremely generous \$1,000 annually for ten years toward supporting the Acting Executive Directorship, and Susan Flader and I have given \$500 this year as well. These contributions, although indispensable, are only a stopgap expedient until we can build a true endowment whose annual yield will generate sufficient revenues for these goals. Accordingly, in the next two years I will be cajoling, imploring, pestering and, hopefully, enthusing and convincing you to give within your means to help the society with this important goal, even as we try to pry funds loose from deeper institutional

pockets.

In this, it is crucial that we do not lose sight of the fact that the society exists for the promotion of intellectual exchange, and not for "growth for growth's sake." You may rest assured that the Executive Committee and I will *always* place scholarship front and center.

Because we have come of age as an academic society we should take our place at the table beside other established academic societies as we jointly seek to grapple with the intellectual and fiscal adversities of the current day. Consequently, I will seek to lead the ASEH into the American Council of Learned Societies.

Finally, we will take every opportunity to strengthen existing ties or create new links with organizations that have common scholarly interests, first and foremost the Forest History Society and the European Society for Environmental History, but also the National Council on Public History, the American Association of Geographers and its Historical Geography Study Group, and a host of others. I can already report that plans are almost ready to launch a new international association of environmental history societies with the ASEH, ESEH and FHS at its nucleus. For an organization barely a quarter century old, we can look back, and ahead, with more than a little bit of pride. As my term of service begins I am honored and humbled both to be a part of such a special organization.

Douglas Weiner ASEH President

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Mail to: Mark Madison, ASEH Treasurer, National Conservation Training Center, Rte. 1, Box 166, Shepherdstown, WV, 25443

Notes from the Field: In the Galapagos

by Melissa Wiedenfeld

The Galapagos Islands evoke an image of pristine wild areas with unique flora and fauna. Not surprisingly, there is more to Galapagos than the image presented in the nature shows. Humans have been part of Galapagos history for centuries, although permanent settlement occurred only in the twentieth century. The islands are largely arid and unsuitable for agriculture, although there is some arable land in what locals call the "parte alta" or highlands. Sources of fresh water are very limited. Santa Cruz, the island with the largest population, has brackish wells; so drinking water comes from rainwater collection or desalinization.

On their own, the islands' resources could support only a small population. Whalers and early sailors exploited the tortoise population for food, but by 1900 that population had declined dramatically. Settlers needed to import a variety of plants and animals to raise and eat. Goats were introduced to several islands with the expectation they would reproduce on their own and allow harvesting at a later date. Dogs came to the islands as companions to man; cats were imported to control the two unintentionally introduced species of rats. Introduced pigs, donkeys, and cattle eventually escaped and became feral. Anis (a New

burrows. Cinchona, a source of quinine, bamboo and blackberries are also out of control.

The scientists at the Charles Darwin Research Station, working with the Galapagos National Park Service, are working to eradicate many of these introduced species. On Marchena introduced fire ants have nearly been eradicated, helping the native ant species recover. There are no longer pigs on Isla Santiago, and it will soon



Author Melissa Wiedenfeld and giant tortoise.



This goat exclosure on Isla Santiago demonstrates the capacity of the Galapagos landscape to recover from the overgrazing of goats.

Only 800 lava gulls a Galapagos endemic species remain.

World tropical cuckoo) were brought in to eat ticks off of the cattle (which they do not do). These introduced animals have caused significant damage to the islands. Goats, cattle, and donkeys strip the landscape of its native flora. Pigs, cats, rats, dogs, and anis destroy native fauna, including tortoise, iguana, and bird eggs, as well as small iguanas and bird nestlings.

Introduced plants in Galapagos pose a serious threat as well. The number of species of introduced plants now outnumbers the native species. Guayaba (guava) threatens the native scalesia and miconia forests, where the endangered Galapagos petrel nests in

be free of goats. The project to eradicate goats off of northern Isabela will start in August.

So why is this important to environmental historians? I think that there are many opportunities for us to use the historical record to provide scientists and the world community with a much needed picture of the Galapagos landscape over time. That picture is not as bleak as this article might suggest - Galapagos retains 97% of its biodiversity. If you'd like to continue a discussion on the environmental history of the Galapagos, feel free to contact me at <mwiedenfeld@fcdarwin.org.ec>.

In this issue ... New President Doug Weiner's Remarks Awards Submissions for 2003



c/o Historical Research Associates, Inc. 119 Pine Street, Suite 207 Seattle, WA 98101