

UCA History Dept

Alumni Newsletter December 2011

this issue

P.1

Welky's *The Thousand Year Flood*

P.2

Introduction to Sandy Cohen

NEH Summer Institute

Dr. Pauly Writes Coffee Table Book

P.3

Spotlight on: Dr. Chris Craun

Introduction to Dr. Kwame Essien

P.4

Parting Thoughts on 40 years of Teaching, Scholarship, & Service

P.5

Continued...

P.6

Dr. Lorien Foote, 2011 Lincoln Prize

Earning the SURF Grant

Places and Faces



Ken Barnes

Chair, Department of History

Welky's *The Thousand Year Flood*

An engaging, provocative portrayal of disaster

In the early days of 1937, the Ohio River, swollen by heavy winter rains, began rising. And rising. And rising. By the time the waters crested, the Ohio and Mississippi had climbed to record heights.

Nearly four hundred people had died, while a million more had run from their homes.

The deluge caused more than half a billion dollars of damage at a time when the Great Depression still battered the nation.

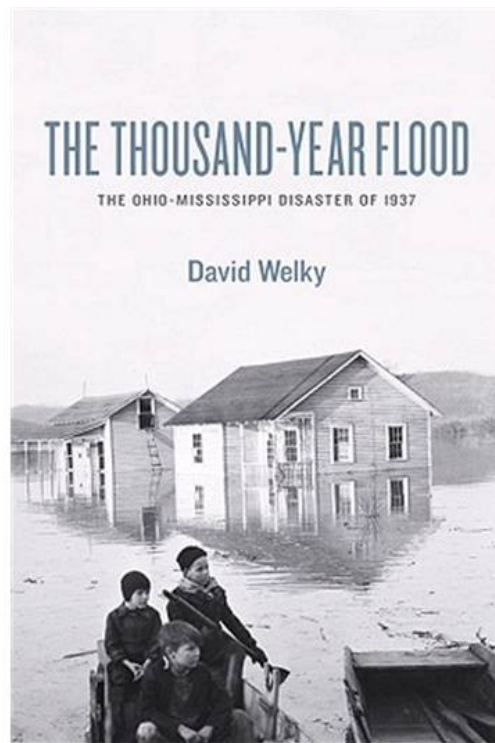
Timed to coincide with the flood's seventy-fifth anniversary, *The Thousand-Year Flood* is the first comprehensive history of one of the most destructive disasters in American history.

David Welky first shows how decades of settlement put Ohio

valley farms and towns at risk and how politicians and planners repeatedly ignored the dangers. Then he tells the gripping story of the river's inexorable rise: residents fled to refugee camps and higher ground, towns imposed martial law, prisoners riot-

ed, Red Cross nurses endured terrifying conditions, and FDR dispatched thousands of relief workers. In a landscape fraught with dangers—from unmoored gas tanks that became floating bombs to powerful

currents of filthy floodwaters that swept away whole towns—people hastily raised sandbag barricades, piled into overloaded rowboats, and marveled at water that stretched as far as the eye could see. In the flood's aftermath, Welky explains, New Deal reformers, utopian dreamers, and hard-pressed locals restructured not only the flood-stricken valleys, but also the nation's relationship with its waterways, changes that continue to affect life along the rivers to this day. A striking narrative of danger and adventure—and the mix of heroism and generosity, greed and pettiness that always accompany disaster—



The Thousand-Year Flood breathes new life into a fascinating yet little-remembered American story. Welky is an Associate Professor and has been with the department since 2002.

Sandy Cohen

Sandy Cohen, our newest instructor, attended Weber State University where she completed her BA in theatre with minors in dance and French. She graduated from the University of Central Arkansas in May with her MA in history. Sandy wrote her thesis "La guerre de sept ans: A New Look at the French and Indian War," which examines the foundations of New France and the elements that led to the loss of Canada as a French colony.



Matkin-Rawn Attends NEH Summer Institute at Harvard

For four weeks this summer, Dr. Story Matkin-Rawn, Assistant Professor with the department since 2008, had the honor of being one of twenty-five fellows at a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Institute for College Teachers at the DuBois Institute. The theme of this event was "African-American Struggles for Freedom and Civil Rights 1865-1965."

Participants came from sociology, history, musicology, literature, education, African American Studies, and American Studies programs across the country. Some were established scholars and teachers of African American history and culture

Others were new professors, developing courses and writing their first books.

Matkin-Rawn humorously described the institute as "a cross between Disneyland (fun) and the Manhattan Project (intense collaboration) for teachers."

This seminar was the tenth seminar organized by historians Patricia Sullivan and Waldo Martin on teaching civil rights. Participants were given plenty of coffee, good maps, a place to stay in Cambridge, full library privileges at Harvard, the

chance to brainstorm with one another, and access to some of the best scholars in the field.

Almost every day, a

"The best way I can describe the NEH institute is that it was sort of like a cross between Disneyland (fun) and the Manhattan Project (intense collaboration) for teachers."

new "rock star" of Civil Rights scholarship and/or activism led them in discussion.

Eric Foner looked at the roots of civil rights activism during

Reconstruction. Leon Litwack surveyed the Jim Crow era through blues music. Esther Cooper Jackson described her activism with the Southern Negro Youth Congress during the New Deal. Music critic Peter Guralnick played us what he considered to be the essential soul music sound track to the Civil Rights revolution.

Roger Pauly Writes

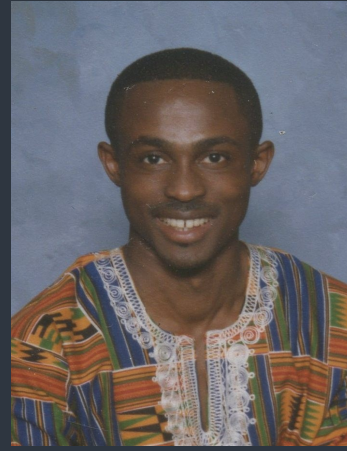
Roger Pauly's *Historical Faulkner County: An Illustrated History* is a casual and sometimes light-hearted look at the county that is home to UCA. It traces local history from Native American life, through the establishment of many local towns, the foundation of institutions of higher learning, the challenges of the Great Depression, and the re-emergence of Conway as a thriving community.

This coffee-table book contains numerous photographs and several illustrations providing a visual feel for



the events it describes. Pauly is an Associate Professor and has been with the department since 2001.

Introducing:



Dr. Kwame Essien

Dr. Kwame Essien was hired as an Assistant Professor for the department this fall. He was born in Tema, Ghana (West-Africa), where he began his academic journey. He graduated from Accra Polytechnic in Ghana in 1990. In 2002, Dr. Essien obtained a B.A. in history at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. In 2005, he earned a Master's degree in African studies at the Center for African Studies at the University

of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and in 2006, he completed course-work in the MA program in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Dr. Essien was awarded a PhD in African and African Diaspora History at the University of Texas at Austin. His dissertation, "African Diaspora in Reverse: The Tabom People in Ghana, 1820s-2009," examines the history of Afro-Brazilian repatriation of returnees, their progeny and their contributions in Ghanaian societies.

In the fall of 2009, Dr. Essien received the Derrick Gondwe Fellowship to teach African, African Diaspora and World History at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania where he further developed his pedagogy. Africa and the African Diaspora in the context of social and cultural issues is his main research interest. He continues to explore the history of Trans-Atlantic communities in West Africa, especially the history of African-Americans, Afro-Brazilians and Afro-Caribbean's in Ghana from the colonial and post-colonial periods. Dr. Essien's family history during the middle passage, especially his great-great grand-uncle, Chief Kweku Andoh (the chief of Elmina from 1884-1898), shaped his interest in comparative slavery, migrations and African diasporas in reverse.

Dr. Essien is the co-author of *Culture and Customs of Sudan* (2009) and has contributed to a number of publications. He has received numerous research grants throughout his career. He was the recipient of the University of Texas, Austin's "2011 Junior Scholar Excellence Award in African Studies."

He is planning a study abroad trip to his home country this summer along with Dr. Matt Harper.

Martha Prescod Norman recalled her days as an organizer in Alabama and explained how she and her SNCC colleagues collected the oral histories for *Hands on the Freedom Plow*. Randall Kennedy led a discussion about his own dad, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, and the often complicated nature of black patriotism.

On the last day of the four-weeks, Bob Moses, one of the architects of Mississippi Freedom Summer, told about his current work using algebra as an organizing tool to build a movement for high-quality public schooling for all children. These were only a tiny sampling of the scholars who taught during the seminar. Matkin-Rawn reported, "One of the most important parts of the institute was what we learned from one another."

Afternoons were often set aside to discuss how

best to teach what they were learning about the African American freedom struggle. Participants shared their favorite teaching strategies and primary source documents, including a vast array of popular culture artifacts-- music, comic strips, films, advertisements, and the like.

Seminar colleagues helped Matkin-Rawn develop a "soundtrack" for her Southern History class this semester. She now has a collection of film clips, comic strips, songs, and documentaries for her next Civil Rights class.

The ideas keep flowing thanks to a blog, a Facebook page, and an email listserv set up by participants. Matkin-Rawn's time with her colleagues in Cambridge was only the start; the real work of the Institute happens as they bring all of the fresh ideas and practices into their classrooms.

Spotlight on: *A Textual Journey through the Pre-Modern World*

A *Textual Journey through the Pre-Modern World* expands on the excellent earlier World History Reader *Voices that shaped the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, produced by Roger Pauly. Chris Craun, Assistant Professor since 2004, edited this new version in partnership with Hayden-McNeil press. Aside from substantial new readings, improved translations, and an updated format, *A Textual Journey* includes historical maps specific to the material in each chapter. It should continue the History Department's tradition of

providing our students with a first-quality selection of primary source materials for use in World History.



Dr. Brodman Retires in December: Parting Thoughts on 40 Years of Teaching, Scholarship, & Service



I first arrived in Conway on a hot August afternoon in 1972, driving a Dodge Dart and towing a U-Haul trailer filled with the residue of my years as a graduate student. While I rarely look back on these days, retirement with the attendant necessity to empty out my office affords an opportunity for some reflection. First of all, I must say that my 79 semesters at UCA have flown by. It is really difficult to comprehend that this has filled almost forty years. I do not feel that old!

UCA has indeed changed. When I arrived, there were ca. 200 faculty and 3-4,000 students. We billed ourselves as “the friendliest college in Arkansas.” At the time, I thought that a bit hokey but there was a closeness and familiarity about the place that no longer exists. Faculty from across the institution knew

“In 1972, I was the oddity: a Roman Catholic from New York State who taught something strange called medieval history.”

each other; we even had an annual faculty dinner in the fall and a lunch in the spring. Things like promotion, tenure, course proposals, curriculum changes and policy issues were dealt with informally, quickly and sometimes with little consultation. One could hope to see the president or provost (although then he was a mere vice-president) even without an appointment. One could even park just a few steps away from the office. On the other hand, we beginning professors taught a five-course load; there were no sabbaticals or load reductions and very little support for either research or travel.

Now, of course, we are a university with a couple of doctoral programs and a division one athletic program. The History Department is approximately twice the size it was in 1972 and total student enrollment has tripled. We have become

much more diverse. In 1972, I was the oddity: a Roman Catholic from New York State who taught something strange called medieval history. Now our curriculum spans the continents and ranges from distant antiquity to the world today. Only a few of our faculty are from Arkansas or the mid-South. In recent years, I have taught students from as far away as Kazakhstan. For more than a decade, my normal teaching load has rarely exceeded three courses a semester. My research has been supported by UCA with four sabbaticals, many course reassignments and several research grants. If decision-making now fol-

lows a serpentine course through an expanding bureaucracy, there is also more opportunity for faculty participation.

How have students changed? As a group, they are much more diverse and there are a lot more of them. At the top, we have been able to attract some very capable students who in recent years have



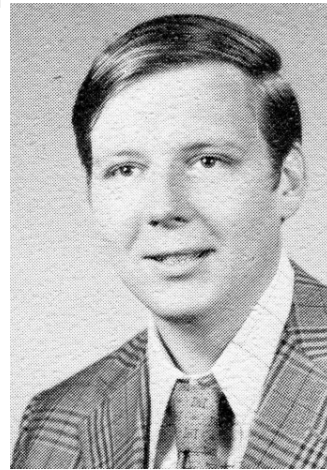
colleagues: Ken Barnes and Carole Carter in the History Department and Steve Lance in the Writing Department. Another, Jimmy Bryant, is Director of the UCA Archives. In the main, we serve the broad range of students who graduate from Arkansas high schools and who seek a university degree. Apart from some modest changes in outward appearance, this group is much the same as it has always been. The biggest change that I have noticed is an outgrowth of the frenzy with which UCA and ALL the other two and four-year institutions in the state have pursued enrollment growth. This, I fear, has greatly outstripped the capacity of Arkansas secondary schools to provide that many even minimally qualified individuals. Of course, to remedy the resulting fall-off in "productivity," the legislature now seeks to intervene in matters beyond its ken by attempting to set curricular and graduation requirements. While I believe that taxpayers deserve value for their investment, public offi-

"Public officials must honestly ask themselves whether they want us to produce educated citizens or just credentialed ones."

cial must honestly ask themselves whether they want us to produce educated citizens or just credentialed ones.

town. But then, I got married and had children; UCA hired my wife Marian to chair the now World Languages Department. Conway grew and UCA changed in ways far beyond the transition from SCA to UCA. Once I finished the trauma of my dissertation in 1974, I discovered that I really liked doing history. At first, UCA was not so keen. Indeed, I was scolded by at least two deans for spending too much time writing. But ca. 1980 UCA's attitude changed. Suddenly research and creativity were no longer concepts

What do I think of my time at UCA? Frankly, when I came here, I had great deal of apprehension about life in a small

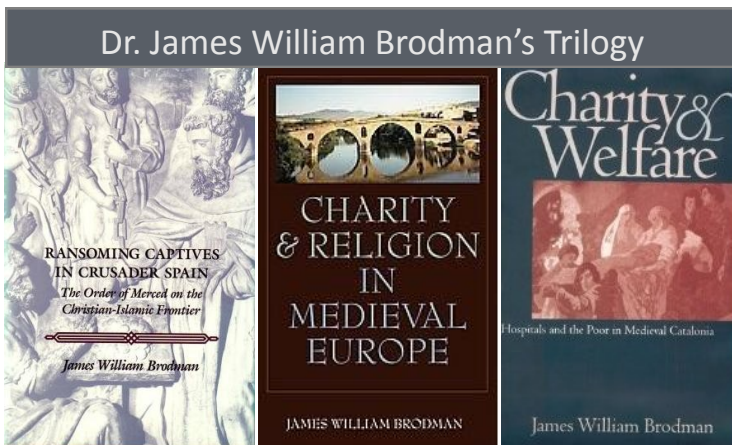


avenues as I wished. One result was the trilogy of books that I produced in the broad area of medieval charity plus a few dozen articles on the arcana of medieval law, religion and institutions. When computers and the internet came along, I busied myself with website development, learned the mysterious language of html, moderated discussion lists until we all tired of them, and even offered tutorials to others on how to use these rapidly

developing electronic resources. When my first book went out-of-print, I put it on the internet where it quickly found an audience it never had as a print title. This led to a Mellon Foundation grant and the development of the LIBRO Project, which for more than a decade

has been serving a worldwide community of scholars, students and just ordinary folks interested in History. Finally, I had the latitude to busy myself with professional and amateur history groups – ranging from several terms as president of the American Academy of Research Historians of Medieval Spain to organizing an oral history project for my local church.

to be scorned. While I never forgot my teaching – indeed, I enjoy doing it now as much or more so than ever --, I was afforded the latitude to explore as many



Dr. Lorien Foote Earns Honorable Mention

Dr. Lorien Foote's book, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs: Manhood, Honor, and Violence in the Union Army* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), was a finalist and Honorable Mention recipient for the 2011 Lincoln Prize, the most prestigious book award for Civil War history. A jury of top scholars selected it from 106 nominations. Foote used new types of evidence, Civil War courts-martial records, to uncover cultural and class conflicts surrounding manhood in the Civil War North. The book makes several unique contributions to Civil War studies. In addition to being one of the first to take gender seriously in a study of military history, the use of previously untapped courts-martial records raised new questions and presented new answers about the experience of Civil War soldiers and about culture and society in the Union.



Foote asserts that the records of men's experience in the army exposed conflict over the attributes, i.e. moral character, honor, gentility, physical prowess, and social status, that were necessary to achieve manhood. Contrary to popular scholarship, Foote discovered honor had not lost potency in northern society before the war and instead, affairs of honor were common. Foote uncovered recognized patterns of speech and behavior used by the men who engaged in conflicts regarding honor. Foote was awarded an Andrew W. Mellow Foundation Fellowship and a grant from the UCA University Research Council for her present project, *Trails of Blood: Escaping the Confederacy*, looking at Union escapees from Confederate prison camps, their journeys and encounters with both white southerners and slaves. Foote is an Associate Professor and has been with the department since 2000.

Choate Earns SURF Grant

In the spring of 2011, Laura Choate, a senior history major, used funds from a SURF grant to examine the history of capital punishment in Arkansas since *Furman v. Georgia* (1972). In *Furman*, the United States Supreme Court ruled that capital punishment was being implemented in an unconstitutional way. In response, states began revising their death penalty statutes. Arkansas was unique in not implementing a mandatory appeal regulation for capital cases. Using three Arkansas capital punishment cases, Laura investigated the state's initial reluctance to implement mandatory appeals as well as their eventual adoption of mandatory appeals in 2001. Grant funding paid for travel expenses to and from the Arkansas Supreme Court library, purchased supplies and books, and allowed Laura to present her research at a regional conference. Laura won the 2011 Ophelia Fisher Award for the paper in April. She is currently enrolled in the MA program and is serving as a graduate assistant for the department.

PLACES & FACES



Dr. Brodman

"Anchors Away!"

Dr. Gordy

"Hello, Calling Pre-History."

