

# PAST AND PRESENT

Newsletter of the CSB/SJU History Department  
Volume 1, Issue 2, February 2020

Take History!  
Make History!



## LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Greetings from the History Department!

We are excited by the successful launch of the Tegeder-Berg Society, the organization that brings together History alums, students, and faculty to promote the study of the past and demonstrate its value for understanding the present and for career development.

Our inaugural event, held this past October at Jax Café in Minneapolis, drew over sixty alums and guests as well as over twenty current students to hear Dr. Ken Jones present on past attempts to remove sitting presidents. After the presentation, attendees had the chance to network. The atmosphere was lively and conversations enthusiastic. A post-event survey revealed great satisfaction, though we will make tweaks to improve the Society's second event.



If you missed it, you can read a summary of Dr. Jones' presentation in this newsletter, as well as watch a recording of it and learn more about the Tegeder-Berg Society by visiting [Tegeder-Berg Society](#).

Our next event will take place on Thursday evening, March 12, at Kieran's Kitchen in Northeast Minneapolis and you will receive a separate email invitation soon. Dr. Derek Larson, a historian of the contemporary US and the environment, will present on the history of Earth Day. For the spring event, we will invite prospective CSB/SJU students and their families. If you know high-school juniors and seniors interested in history or the environment, please encourage them to attend.

I hope to see you all soon.

---Brian Larkin '92

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Robert Mevissen '09  
Visiting Assistant Professor  
SUNY - Old Westbury

**WHY HISTORY?** Even in high school I was interested in history thanks to some fantastic teachers. When I graduated from high school, I spent a few weeks in Germany with my German class. Exploring all these old, historic cities and landmarks made me eager to pursue a degree where I would get to return and research in such places.

History is both a romantic and practical degree. On one hand, pursuing a degree (or even a career) in history means exploring new places, meeting new people, maybe even living in a foreign country for some time. On the other hand, you're learning to think critically, analyze information, research sources, write persuasively, and present findings articulately. These are all eminently important skills that students can apply and use in any career, even if history isn't one's ultimate destination.

[Share your story with us!](#)



## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

### Dr. Elisheva Perelman

Meet Dr. Elisheva Perelman, our resident East Asia expert, social media guru, and recent author! Besides her professional duties, Ellie enjoys horror movies, good puns, and moonlighting as the caretaker for Clio the History Cat and Dio, her brother. She also curates our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages. While announcements for events and jobs are present on each outlet, Twitter updates with events that occurred “on this day” in history daily, while Instagram promotes historical and departmental

memes. Each feed is sure to engage, inform, and entertain various historians and their friends. Consider following us on whatever platform(s) you choose!

She loves history because it is the perfect embodiment of the liberal arts and touches many other fields such as politics, business, marketing, sciences, and so many more. It gives you the ability to learn what it means to be human and what it means to exist in society.

Her academic interests include medical missions in East Asia, Asian history of medicine, Christianity in Asia, Modern Japanese history, gender and labor in Japan, and epidemics. Dr. Perelman’s favorite period to study is Japanese history between the 1880s and 1890s. She is interested in analyzing the process of inventing the Japanese nation, and how the government influenced its citizens to buy into ideas that you cannot see nor touch.

Dr. Perelman recently published her book, *American Evangelists and Tuberculosis in Modern Japan*, with Hong Kong University Press. This book looks at relationships between the Japanese government and foreign evangelical, Protestant, nondenominational organizations in the late 19th and early 20th century with relation to public health in Japan.

~edited by Elise Backer '22 and Betsy Ruckman '23

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## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Madelyn Konsor '20

Maddie Konsor knows “history is worth it!” This Bennie knew she was passionate about History from the start--she has worked in the History Office since her freshman year.

Last summer, Maddie worked at the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML) archives here at Saint John’s! She digitized microfilm and worked as an archival assistant there, but her favorite part was meeting scholars from all over the world who came to our archives.

Maddie recently completed her senior thesis on *Benedictines at White Earth 1879-1929*. She enjoys 20th century US history and her favorite history course was U.S. from WWI to 1960. After graduation, Maddie will begin a Master’s in Law program at Hamline Law School.

She is happy for her time spent in History here. She says, “If history is something that you genuinely enjoy, then it will not only make your time in college a lot more enjoyable, but it will help open doors to new, exciting career paths.” We can’t wait to see where history takes her next!

~edited by Elise Backer '22 and Betsy Ruckman '23

## SUMMARY OF DR JONES' TEGEDER-BERG SOCIETY TALK ON "REMOVING PRESIDENTS"

### Some Examples from History

In our history prior to 2019, Congress gave serious consideration to removing only four presidents. In each case, they were guided by a Constitutional definition of impeachment whose imprecision reflects the experience of the founding fathers. In 18th century British law, any violation of the public trust, from bribery to failing to moor a ship, was an impeachable offense. As a result, conviction rests less on precise legal statutes and more on a sense of whether an official had violated the public trust in a sufficiently serious way that required removal.

Using the three late 20th century examples (Nixon, Reagan, and Clinton), Professor Jones examined a variety of factors shaping the outcome. Noting the accuracy of Alexander Hamilton's prediction that impeachment "will excite pre-existing factions" so that the result "will be regulated more by the comparative strength of the parties," Professor Jones pointed out that (until now) Congress has never attempted to remove a President unless the opposition party controlled both the House and Senate. Nixon came closest to being removed for multiple reasons. Members of Congress were sufficiently committed to the Constitutional balance of powers that there was overwhelming bi-partisan support for initiating an impeachment investigation in the House. For the public, the charges could be presented in simple terms (lying about the cover-up), the evidence was very powerful (tape recordings), and Nixon's popularity was already weakened by lies and a damaged economy. These factors combined to drive Nixon's approval rating down into the low 20% range. In that situation, with a super-majority of the public against the President, leading Republicans told Nixon that more than 2/3rds of the Senate would vote for removal. So he resigned.

In each case, members of Congress applied a section of the Constitution that is relatively ambiguous on what justifies such a drastic action. If we examine the context, causes, and results of each case in detail, what can we learn about how this power to remove a president actually functions? Perhaps this understanding can illuminate the current debate over trying to remove our current President.

## TEGEDER-BERG SOCIETY - Spring Event

Thursday, March 12, 6:00pm, Kieran's Kitchen, Minneapolis

### Earth Day +50: The Legacy of the 1960s-1970s American Environmental Movement

The publication of Rachel Carson's environmental alarm bell *Silent Spring* in 1962 is often credited with launching the modern environmental movement by warning about the impacts of chemical pesticides on natural systems. Eight years later the first Earth Day celebration, held around the nation on April 22, 1970, drew millions of participants and extensive media coverage as citizens demanded action to address the obviously decaying environments around them. In its wake a wide range of new laws protecting environmental quality were passed, including the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Clean Air Act. But within a decade the popular environmental movement had fractured and a backlash against "excess regulation" began to erode its accomplishments. As the 50th anniversary of Earth Day approaches we will look back on the legacy of the environmental movement and its impact on the American environment, considering how this history might inform contemporary debates over how to respond to the challenge of global climate disruption in the 21st century.



[Dr. Derek Larson](#)  
History/Environmental Studies  
CSB/SJU

## FACULTY READING RECOMMENDATIONS



### ***The Coming of the Terror in the French Revolution***

Timothy Tackett (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015)

How could a nation recently founded on the ideals of liberty, toleration, and equality before the law find itself governed by a dictatorship that directed violence against its own people? This question has long fascinated historians. Tackett looks for the answer in letters and diaries written between 1789-1793 by leading actors in the French Revolution. He traces how real but discrete challenges to France's revolution and a politically-divisive atmosphere contributed to political leaders' obsessive fear of a monolithic, organized counter-revolutionary conspiracy. In response to their imagined fear, French political leaders unleashed a government-sponsored campaign of terror against their fellow citizens in the name of national security. Tackett successfully marries his expertise in French political history with insights from the history of emotions to provide a compelling explanation for the Reign of Terror.

~recommended by Dr. Elisabeth Wengler

### ***From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America***

Elizabeth Hinton (Harvard University Press, 2016)

Have you ever wondered why there are approximately 2.3 million people incarcerated in the United States today? If you have, you will enjoy reading historian Elizabeth Hinton. Hinton's detailed exploration of the history of federal policy during the second half of the twentieth century shows how LBJ's "War on Poverty" laid the foundation for subsequent administrations' "War on Crime." Her book provides an important perspective for understanding the tangled historical roots of "mass incarceration" in "the land of the free and the home of the brave."

~recommended by Dr. Jonathan Merritt Nash

### ***Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome***

Arthur M. Eckstein, (University of California, 2009)

This book has reshaped the debate on the origins and character of the Roman Empire, applying modern International Relations theory to Classical history, and offering a thesis that seriously questions the idea that Rome was simply more bellicose than other ancient states and empires; something else was afoot.

~ recommended by Dr. Jason Schlude

## EVENTS

### March:

Tegeder- Berg Society  
Kieran's Kitchen, NE Mpls  
Thursday, March 12, 6pm

### April:

Undergraduate History Conference  
College of Saint Benedict  
Thursday, April 12, 9am

History Banquet  
President's Dining Room, CSB  
Wednesday, April 28, 6pm

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## CLIO'S CORNER



Clio the History Cat remains a source of cuteness and annoyance around the department. Having forced everyone to celebrate her birthday last fall, and subsequently refusing to keep her costume on at the department's Haunted History party, she continues to make her presence known. She was excited to celebrate the New Year, since it was

marked on the calendar as "Clio shots," which she assumed was her own version of case day. One trip to the vet and a few updated rabies and distemper vaccines later, she realized her mistake. Nevertheless, she remains optimistic for the Lunar New Year, since it welcomes the Year of the Rat, which Clio would be all too happy to consume. On her days off, Clio likes to annoy her parents by hiding in the ceiling and fighting and/or playing with her brother, Dio, whose exploits are also often documented on the departmental Instagram.

# MEET OUR SENIOR HISTORY MAJORS



**Matthew Broich, Woodbury, MN**

Thesis Topic: "Slavery by Another Name:  
Apprenticeship in Jamaica, 1834-1838"



**Logan Payne, Cold Spring, MN**

Thesis Topic: "Roman understandings of the East  
through the experiences of Alexander the Great"



**Camero Harris, Long Lake, MN**

Thesis Topic: "Changing definitions of femininity  
through Japan's Takarazuka theater"



**Jacob Roney, New Brighton, MN**

Thesis Topic: "The role of the NFL in the demise of the  
USFL"



**Adam Schwartz, North Mankato, MN**

Thesis Topic: "The role of the Black Panthers in the  
evolving agenda of the NRA"



**Cullen White, Duluth, MN**

Thesis Topic: "The nature of the Ulster Volunteer  
Force in combatting Home Rule"



**Thomas Widmer, New Prague, MN**

Thesis Topic: "The Sale of a Nation: Arab Lives and  
Relations in British Mandated Palestine"

