The Oregon Encyclopedia (www.oregonencyclopedia.org) is an online resource for students, teachers, researchers, and general information seekers. With over seven hundred entries, it is growing daily. Each of the entries goes through a lengthy editorial process, by which they are checked for style, content, and accuracy. As the Graduate Assistant, I learn both about the history of Oregon and the editorial process.

For the first year of my assistantship, I fact checked entries before they were published. You might think that it’s an easy job, and sometimes it is, but fact checking is something like research backwards. If the author has done his or her job, then I simply take the sources that they have listed and start there. I go over the names, dates, directions, and direct quotes. I also conduct a simple search in the library and internet to make sure that there are not better sources than the ones provided. I check any contradicting data, and notify the editors of any discrepancies or opposing viewpoints. Sometimes the editors have specific information that they want to double check or sometimes the author does not provide sources that are easily accessible. This can complicate matters. Overall, the process has made me even more aware of the importance of sources and evaluating sources in my own research; it has made me a meticulous researcher.

This second year has provided more of an opportunity to engage in the creative process of writing the entries, and seeing the editorial process from that perspective. I still balk at editing, and like many authors procrastinate. However, I know that this will make my writing better, and prepare me for a future of editing and rewriting.

I also have had the opportunity to attend the annual board meeting at Willamette University in Salem where I met some of the board members and witnessed the inner workings of a public history enterprise. I am constantly impressed by the hard work and dedication of the individuals who keep this work and history alive. I couldn’t have asked for a better public history experience.

News for the Gordon Dodds Endowed Fellowship:

Since we sent our last newsletter in January, we have received a number of generous contributions to the Gordon Dodds Endowed Fellowship. We hope you will consider making a gift to this endowment, which will support a graduate fellowship in the field of Pacific Northwest history. To contribute, please visit the Friends of History website (www.pdx.edu/foh) or contact Brian Federico, Senior CLAS Development Officer, at 503-725-5039. Thanks to all who have contributed!
NEW PUBLICATION: REMEMBERING THE POWER OF WORDS

In February 2011, Oregon State University Press published an oral memoir by former Oregon state senator Avel L. Gordly. This book describes her growing up in Portland after World War II and her coming of age as a African American woman in the era of civil rights activism. Gordly, as PSU graduate, is the first black women ever elected to the Oregon state senate. The fuller context and background for this accomplishment is richly described in this memoir. In particular, Gordly’s experiences in educational settings from grade school to grad school, prove decisive in her intellectual and personal development. A very dynamic connection to the African continent, as a student, and later, as an activist, figures prominently throughout her adult years. This highly readable book is the inaugural volume in a new series entitled Women and Politics in the Pacific Northwest, edited by Melody Rose.

This book’s connection to the PSU history department is very direct. Patricia Schechter, associate professor, was deeply involved in the project from its inception. After leading the effort to organize Gordly’s personal papers in 2008-2009, Schechter agreed to record, transcribe, and edit Gordly’s life story into memoir form. Gordly and Schechter have been collaborating for about four years now to bring the memoir and its related projects to fruition. Nor are they finished yet. A travelling exhibit is planned to support the books promotion in the coming year. And the two will continue to develop curricular and community-based learning components based on the Gordly papers (housed in PSU Library). In 2010, Gordly and Schechter team taught a course, guided an oral history collection project focused on the Black United Front, and put on a public feature student research. All told, the publication of Remembering the Power of Words marks a special highlight in an on-going collaboration in the interest of community-based and public history with a focus on the African American experience in Oregon...and beyond.

- Patricia Schechter

Secret Wars and Secret Policies in the Americas, 1842-1929

How and where did Hitler, Franco, Mussolini and Japanese militarists learn the ghastly trades that they unleashed against democratic governments during World War II? How did Latin American governments and U.S. territory come to play a role in Axis subversion?

When I was a freshman in college I was told that these questions were baseless and propaganda lies. What few documents could have provided answers had been burned or lost. I needed twenty years of experience before I could revisit these questions, now with my own knowledge of archives and surviving sources.

In the last eight years, researching in key archives in Germany, Great Britain, Spain and the U.S., I reconstructed the paper trail revealing the origins of war time cooperation between select Mexican, Argentine, Chilean, Spanish, German, Italian and Japanese right wing groups to be World War I, not World War II. After 1933 fascist dictators gradually inherited and intensified previously existing practices. Hitler’s National-Socialist Germany added a new twist by adding a racist component to subversion and ethnic manipulation.

Key historical events that served as schools for illegal manipulation of ethnic groups proved to be the Russian-Japanese war of 1905, the Mexican Revolution, attacks against the U.S. military complex of WWI between 1914 and 1917, the Peruvian hostility against Chile and Argentina’s desire to engage in an arms race that would allow her to dominate all of South America. Finally, the determination of Spanish dictator Primo de Rivera and Spanish King Alfonso XIII to modernize Spanish armed forces created a German-Spanish-Argentine cooperation already during the 1920s. What happened after 1933 was a continuation of previous practices.

-Friedrich Schuler

American Indian Nations from Termination to Restoration 1953-2006

A word from our Alumni, Roberta Ulrich

The PSU History Department, specifically the late Gordon Dodds, started me on the road that led to the just published American Indian Nations from Termination to Restoration 1953-2006 (University of Nebraska Press). As I was completing my thesis, the circumstances I was writing about kept changing. “What do I do?” I asked Gordon about the new material that kept popping up. “Save it for the book,” he replied. Book? I had never considered writing a book. The result was Empty Nets Indians, Disease, and the Columbia River, published in 1999 by Oregon State University Press as part of a series edited by PSU History Professor Bill Lang.

After that, I felt able to tackle the more complicated subject of termination, the federal policy aimed at ending Indian tribes’ relationship with the federal government. This was a nationwide issue with the largest number of tribes terminated in Oregon with others in California, Nebraska, Utah, Oklahoma, Texas, Wisconsin and South Carolina. As with Empty Nets, I used many interviews with individual Indians to show the human effects of this poorly conceived policy. I also did extensive research in the National Archives, numerous libraries and tribal records. I followed the tragedies of termination through the tribes’ struggles to win restoration of their federal recognition and rebuilding of their societies and economies.

I was an unlikely candidate for graduate school when I approached the late Bernard Burke, then chairman of the History Department, about a master’s degree. I was well into my 50s and had taken my last college course more than 30 years before. His message: try it. Ten years later, 1996, I received the MA in history just after I retired from the Oregonian. Numerous PSU faculty members helped me along the way.

From the chair...

focus on INDIA

This spring, in partnership with the Indian Student Association, Friends of History offers a series of three public lectures on the history of India in the modern period.

Dr. David Campion of Lewis & Clark College will speak on his new research on links between Indian and Irish nationalism in their common struggle against British colonialism. Dr. Ryan Perkins of the University of Pennsylvania will deliver a lecture on his current research on the Muslim population in nineteenth-century India. Our annual endowed lecturer, Dr. Gyan Prakash of Princeton University, will present a talk based on his new book, Mumbai Fables, a cultural history of Mumbai/Bombay in the twentieth century. Entitled “The Superhero on Mumbai Streets,” his talk will examine locally produced comic books to understand perceptions of modernization and corruption in that city. We look forward to seeing you at these events, and we hope to use them to begin a dialog with the Portland community about how we might develop India studies at PSU.

-Thomas Luckett
INDIA LECTURE SERIES
free and open to the public

All events are at 7:00 P.M.

Dr. David Campion
Wednesday
APR 13

SMITH 236
India and Ireland, 1870-1947:
A Study in Comparative Nationalism

Dr. Gyan Prakash
Thursday
MAY 5

LINCOLN 75
The Superhero on Mumbai Streets

Dr. Ryan Perkins
Wednesday
MAY 25

SMITH 296
Partitioning History:
The Creation of an Islamic Public
in Colonial India, c. 1880-1920

For more information, please visit www.pdx.edu/foh

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www.pdx.edu/foh

A gift from your estate will change lives...

We appreciate and thank you for your support.

For information on including the PSU Department of History in your estate plan, please view our Web site or contact Mary Anne Rees, Director of Gift Planning, 503-725-5086 or mrees@pdx.edu. www.pdx.edu/giving/planned