

World History Center Annual Report for Academic Year 2019-2020
For Submission to the Dietrich School Dean's Office
May 27, 2020

Ruth Mostern: Director
Molly Warsh: Associate Director and Head of Educational Outreach
Susan Grunewald: Postdoctoral Fellow



The 2019-2020 academic year has been a year of growth for the World History Center. We expanded all of our signature interdisciplinary initiatives, including multiple digital history projects, publishing ventures, support for student and faculty research, and our educational outreach and teacher training program. We hosted a robust discussion series in the fall and co-sponsored numerous world historical events across campus. [Appendix A](#) is our fall calendar and posters from our sponsored events.

This extensive program of activity took place during a year in which both Center Director Ruth Mostern and Associate Director Molly Warsh were on leave during the fall semester. Then, beginning in March, the Center, along with the rest of the university and the wider world, experienced enormous upheaval due to the COVID pandemic. Additionally, a few months prior to this (in December 2019), the Center experienced its first staff transition in seven years, when our Center Coordinator, David Ruvolo, moved across campus to become the Manager of the Institute for Politics.

With the help of Dietrich School staff, we have used the occasion of David's departure to update our files and processes and to reevaluate the Center's staffing needs. We are

delighted that these discussions resulted in permission to hire a new type of staff person: a Research Associate. The Associate will hold an academic position at the World History Center rather than an administrative one, reflecting the extensive and diverse range of our scholarly and editorial activities. Appendix B is the two memos we wrote explaining and justifying our need for the Research Associate position and detailing the ways in which the Research Associate will further amplify and expand the impact of the Center's work, on campus and beyond. We are grateful for the administration's support for this position.

As we write this report, we are planning an ambitious program of fall activity, which may take the form of in-person events, podcasts, synchronous webinars, calls for publications, or some hybrid modalities. Much of our programming for the 2020-2021 academic year will explore aspects of interconnected human pasts during historic periods of friction and upheaval and will reflect the importance of the Center's mission and our unique strengths during the COVID era. There are conversations that we are uniquely well-positioned to facilitate at this moment in time, particularly once we are joined by the essential new Research Associate. In the meantime, due to the unusual and disruptive circumstances of AY 2019-20, we have surplus in this year's budget, and we are pleased to return unused funds to the dean's office given the challenges the university is facing.

Alignment with the Plan for Pitt

Advancing Educational Excellence

The World History Center does not grant degrees or deliver a curriculum of courses. Therefore, our **goals** relative to the educational mission of the university are to offer co-curricular research opportunities to Pitt undergraduate and graduate students (for pay or for course credit), to develop programs for educators and interested members of the public from beyond the Pitt community, and to support the educational programs of the History Department and other campus partners. Our **efforts to achieve these goals** are listed below, along with **assessments of our progress** based on the number of activities we host, the number of people who engage with those activities, and the impact of program deliverables such as interns' digital atlases, GSA projects, and teacher workshop curricula.

1. Professional Development Workshops sponsored by the Alliance for Learning in World History

In June 2019, the Alliance for Learning in World History, a long-standing project of the World History Center, hosted a very successful one-day professional development workshop for educators from across the country. Focused on the theme of "Hot Topics in World History," we offered participants three keynote sessions from successful university scholar-teachers: Trevor Getz (San Francisco State University), Ruth Mostern (University of Pittsburgh) and Bennett Sherry ([OER Project](#)). Our final list of participants included eight teachers from five states, including two college professors. We were additionally joined by several members of the Pitt community. The attendees were: Johanna Mellis (Ursinus College), Mike Lutz (Cumberland Valley High School), Anne Maltempo (University of Akron), David DiSanti (Freeport Area High School), Anthony Barbano (Baldwin-Whitehall School District), Cynthia Parayil (Raritan Valley Community College), Amy Palo (Cornell School District), Trevor Getz (San Francisco State University) Mari Weibel (University of Pittsburgh), Patrick Manning (University of Pittsburgh, Emeritus), Molly Warsh (University of Pittsburgh), Ruth Mostern (University of Pittsburgh).

We are hosting our second annual professional development workshop in June 2020. Given the pandemic, we will be conducting the workshop virtually via Zoom. This year's topic is "Teaching the Global African Diaspora" and we will again have three presenters (Professors Audra Diptée (Carleton University), Yolanda Covington-Ward (University of Pittsburgh) and Mari Weibel (University of Pittsburgh)). We have designed the program to take advantage of Zoom's strengths and acknowledge its limitations: all presenters will precirculate their materials beforehand and then offer abbreviated talks about their presentations (via screen sharing) on the day of the workshop. We are very pleased by the number of applications that have already come in for this year's workshop: as of the writing of this report (with twelve hours to go before the application period closes) we have received 38 applications: a more than six-fold increase in applications from last year.

The materials we collect (with participants' permission) are available online on a password-protected site where we keep all workshop materials as well as a growing collection of world historical classroom materials, ranging from syllabi to lists of useful websites. The Center receives regular (5-10 per month) requests for access to this material from educators from around the country, a sign of the World History Center's growing reputation as a national leader in world historical research and teaching. Center Associate Director and Head of Educational Outreach Molly Warsh frequently (2-3 times per year) presents on the work of the ALWH at conferences and teacher-training seminars around the country.

2. Digital Atlas Design Internship and Other Postdoc-Directed Initiatives

Under the guidance of our postdoctoral fellow, Susan Grunewald, the Center hosted the third year of the Digital Atlas Design Internship, supporting independent and interdisciplinary undergraduate research in history. Over the course of two semesters, twelve students from multiple majors completed the internship (five in the fall, seven in the spring). Their StoryMap projects are publicly available through our [Atlas Portal](#), where a total of 36 projects are now posted and publicly accessible. We are in the process of developing search tools that permit people to find the projects through a search by map, timeline, or thematic keyword. Five students, from History, Engineering, Urban Studies, and Political Science, are already registered for the fall semester. The Digital Atlas Design Internship is now listed as an approved elective for the GIS Certificate offered through the Geology Department.

Susan Grunewald also completed several other activities that advanced the Center's contribution to Pitt's teaching mission. Stemming from her role as the instructor of the internship, she was invited to give a guest lecture for the Introduction to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) course for Urban Studies, from which she recruited one student for the internship. She gave a guest lecture to the mapping practicum students in Ruth Mostern's Environmental History of the World course (HIST705). She also co-taught three workshops in GIS at the library with Boris Michev, the GIS Liaison Librarian. Susan is now a member of an interdisciplinary GIS group at the university, working with faculty and staff across the university to host an event for GIS Day next November.

3. Graduate Student Assistantship in Public History

Our Spring 2019 Public History GSA, Bethany Wade (History), and our Summer 2019 GSA, Katie Loney (HAA), completed their deliverables during the Fall 2019 semester.

Bethany's public event, "Buried Spaces of the Dead: A Walking Tour of Downtown Pittsburgh," on September 24, attracted approximately a dozen campus and community participants. This walking tour of downtown Pittsburgh toured Pittsburgh's vanished burial grounds and examined the history of the city through its changing burial practice. Today, Pittsburgh contains several famous cemeteries—the Allegheny and St Mary sites in Lawrenceville and the Homewood in Squirrel Hill. They all date from the mid- to late-nineteenth century. However, before the construction of these suburban cemeteries, the downtown was the location where people lived, died, and were buried. It is these defunct burial grounds that were of interest in her exploration. Her methods talk for Pitt graduate students, "Afterlives of the Dead: An Embodied Approach to Space, Public History and the Taboo," on September 27, attracted many of her peers. Bethany

also completed a website in conjunction with the event:

<https://www.afterlivesofthedead.com/>.

Katie Loney, from the Department of History of Art and Architecture, focused on a set of furnishings produced by New York-based designer Lockwood de Forest and the Ahmedabad Wood Carving Company, which were purchased in the late-nineteenth century by the heiress, philanthropist, and suffragette Mary Garrett for one of her Baltimore estates. With the help of de Forest, she later incorporated these pieces into the Deanery at Bryn Mawr College, where Garrett and her partner M. Carey Thomas (the then president of Bryn Mawr College) lived and worked in the early twentieth century. By reexamining these objects and their position in Orientalist interiors in the context of period photographs, correspondence, inventory reports, and other archival materials, Katie tracked the movement of these furnishings from Ahmedabad, India to Bryn Mawr, PA. A digital exhibition, titled [“‘India in America’: East Indian Furnishings Between Ahmedabad and Bryn Mawr.”](#) visualizes the now non-existent spaces through which these objects moved; their position as objects of skilled craftsmanship, commodities, and exotic luxury furnishings; and the ways in which turn-of-the-century Indians and Americans used them to navigate their identity and social relationships in an increasingly interconnected world.

The exhibition was accompanied by two public events organized by Katie and Nina Bloomfield (PhD Candidate, Bryn Mawr College). In October 2019, they hosted a curatorial conversation in which they discussed Katie’s digital exhibition and Nina’s physical exhibition “‘All-over Design’: Lockwood de Forest between Ahmedabad and Bryn Mawr.” In November 2019, Katie and Nina hosted an object-study session at Bryn Mawr College, where faculty, staff, and students closely examined the Ahmedabad Wood Carving Company’s objects visually and haptically.

Katie reports: “The WHC GSAsip has launched other opportunities for me. Notably, Nina and I have continued to collaborate. For instance, we are writing-up a version of our curatorial conversation for the forthcoming issue of *Contemporaneity: Moving Across/Through Cultures*, which will focus on issues of mobility and exchange. We also intend to propose a panel that examines Aesthetic interiors in relation to their global and/or international associations to the College Art Association for their 2021 or 2022 annual conference. In terms of my own research, the work I did for the GSAsip allowed me to fully conceptualize my dissertation (something that was very nebulous before the GSAsip). Specifically, it will reexamine Orientalist interiors in the United States through the work of the AWCC. In many ways, the chapters will mirror the galleries of my exhibition.”

Our Spring 2020 GSAs are in the process of adapting their projects to the requirements of remote research and fully online dissemination. Lynette Moran (Sociology) is working on a project about religious sites, in Pittsburgh and around the world, that have been desacralized and repurposed. She is working on the connections between Mr. Smalls Theater (Millvale, PA), St. Joseph's Convent (New Orleans, LA), and church ruins of Vrouwekerk in Leiden, Netherlands, which are linked by struggles to manage flooding. The connections between these cities is one that touches on opportunities to consider climate change and environment in local and global contexts and investigate how we understand "the sacred" and how sacred spaces convert in the continued secularization of some places. While the final deliverable is not clear, the themes of the project are environmental degradation and grief, conversion of sacred places, and the transformation of place related to both environment and religion.

Thomas Bair III (Creative Writing) is building a wiki cataloging the global history of relations between humans and the concept of the infinite and the contemporary surge of interest in the infinite in popular culture. This "infinity wiki" will serve as a companion to INFINITUBE, a text-based game developed in Twine that he successfully submitted as his MFA thesis in Spring 2020. The game is now being tested by a community of players in alpha version and submitted to the international Interactive Fiction Competition in September. To promote the game and the wiki, before the COVID-19 outbreak and resultant quarantine, he connected with two Pittsburgh venues, the Deutchtown Music Festival and the Irma Freeman Center for the Imagination, which offered him their space during prime foot traffic hours for free. Both of these events have since been cancelled. Preparing for a fully remote launch, he is creating an app-based version of the game and publication of the infinity wiki on FANDOM.

4. Supporting World History Education in the History Department

The World History Center supports the Teaching World History Credential, which launched in 2019. Several students are currently completing credential requirements, and 2 have acquired the credential.

The Center also piloted a highly successful initiative to support new World History instructors in the History Department. World History is one of the most popular classes in the History Department, and instructors and teaching assistants are often new to the course, which can be an intimidating assignment even for experienced teachers. On August 22, the Center held a syllabus workshop for new World History instructors. Ruth and Molly provided overviews about World History pedagogy, shared their own syllabi, and workshopped syllabi, lectures, and assignments in progress by new instructors. Seven people attended the event. Based on subsequent informal communication with

all of them, we learned that they found it very useful. We intend to repeat the event and expand our support for new world history instructors at Pitt.

5. Mentoring Student Workers

The Center is pleased to offer paid employment for talented undergraduate and graduate students, whose work supports Center initiatives while expanding the skills and capacities of the students in question.

Undergraduate student Owen Knight (History) performed a wide range of critical tasks and errands for the Center during our spring semester staffing gap, working with History Department Administrator Cindy Graf and Social Science Division Administrator Linda Howard to clean and update the Center's website, mailing lists, and other information. He helped to prepare new publicity materials for the Center, and he provided invaluable support preparing for Ruth's trip to Washington, DC to attend the National Humanities Alliance annual meeting and to lobby Congress on behalf of the humanities. Owen is now developing content and stress-testing standards and software for the NEH-funded World Historical Gazetteer in advance of our June launch.

History graduate student Jacob Pomerantz is working closely with Molly to expand and streamline the site where we host our collected world historical teaching materials. He is also helping to organize and facilitate the June 30, 2020 professional development workshop, which promises to be a large virtual gathering. Applications have already tripled those that we received last year for our inaugural professional development workshop, and have come from a tremendous range of scholar-teachers, ranging from middle-school and high school social studies teachers, to graduate students, to professors of history at major American and English research universities.

During June 2020, History graduate student Jim Sauls will develop content for the World Historical Gazetteer, utilizing his advanced research skills and his expert knowledge of the Portuguese language and the history of Brazil.

Engage in Research of Impact

The core mission of the World History Center is to conduct and support research. Our **goal** is to conduct and support research that advances our core mission of "promoting critical research and teaching about human communities in motion and the forces that have shaped our global past and present." Our **efforts to achieve these goals**, listed below, focus on digital publication content and platforms for articles and data, support for research by affiliates and grantees, launching internally and externally funded

initiatives, and sponsoring and co-sponsoring events. We **assess progress** in these areas by tracking the number and dollar value of grants received, the number and impact of projects we support, the extent and impact of publications of articles, software, and data, and the number and attendance at events.

1. Center Personnel and Affiliates

Core Center personnel are highly research-active. They are also sought after as consultants, contributors and board members for high profile world history initiatives and publications worldwide - reflecting their personal stature, and the visibility of the Center as an institution. This report focuses on Center Director Ruth Mostern and Associate Director Molly Warsh's activities that specifically promote the mission of the World History Center. Their comprehensive personal reports are available through the History Department. In addition to the accomplishments listed here, Ruth and Molly have been working tremendously hard to continue to bring their shared vision for the World History Center to fruition in spite of having no dedicated staff support since January.

Director Ruth Mostern participated in a peer-reviewed forum on "Commodity Frontiers and the Transformation of the Global Countryside" for the *Journal of Global History*. She continued to serve as an Expert Contributor for the Seshat Global History Databank and as a member of the dissertation prize committee for the World History Association. She has also joined the editorial board of the *Journal of World History*. In early March, she was invited to speak at the National Humanities Alliance in Washington, DC, and to lobby Pennsylvania's congressional delegation in support of funding for the humanities. The Accolade on PittWire was also posted on the [National Endowment for the Humanities website](#). She is PI or co-PI of two NEH grants and one Pitt Year of Creativity grant, which this report discusses more fully below.

Associate Director Molly Warsh continues to be actively involved in several national world history initiatives, including the Gates Foundation funded "Big History" initiative and the H21 initiative run out of San Francisco State University. She also began a three year term as a member of the Jerry W. Bentley prize committee on the American Historical Association. The Bentley Prize is the organization's premier prize in the field of World History.

Postdoctoral Fellow Susan Grunewald presented her research and the World Historical Gazetteer at a series of conferences and guest lectures in Russia, Germany, and Finland. Her lectures resulted in new collaborations and content for the World Historical Gazetteer, including from former Center affiliate and Pitt DAAD scholar Katja Wezel. Susan has an article under review based on her fall lectures, and a new digital history

project that stems from this work. Pending approval of PI status, she is writing an application for a Digital Humanities Advancement Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to extend this initiative even further. She is also collaborating with Susan Lucas of Urban Studies on a project tracing the history and spatial spread of retirement communities across the United States over the second half of the twentieth century. Finally, she is revising her book manuscript draft, which has received a first round of comments from an editor at the University of Pittsburgh Press. Susan reports that “If anything, I expect the next year to be even more productive after having made a series of contacts within and beyond the University of Pittsburgh, many of which happened because of my participation in the WHG project and my teaching of the Atlas Internship.”

The Center provided affiliation to two members of our network. Recent Pitt History Ph.D. Bennett Sherry spent the 2019-2020 school year on the content development and editorial teams for the World History Project (WHP) and the Big History Project (BHP). Both courses are part of the OER Project: <https://www.oerproject.com>. These are free and open resources intended to support high school teachers in world history and big history. In particular this year, my time has been focused on writing articles and editing videos for the WHP course, the website for which launched this spring semester: <https://whp.oerproject.com/>. This winter they shot and produced a series of videos on the United Kingdom in world history, which will soon be loaded to their website but which are available here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4e9AQVlcJTRP04-DV33s1vFac9wxN9a4>. Bennett writes: “maintaining a research affiliation with the World History Center has been an important asset in this work and in my personal academic research as I continue to keep an eye on the academic market and revise my dissertation. Thanks in no small part to the training and support I have received from the Center, I have been able to extend my contract with the OER project through 2021. My affiliation with the center has also been an asset beyond my research and OER Project work. I have secured a course at the University of Maine at Augusta this coming Fall semester, and on May 27, I will be hosting a teaching world history virtual workshop through the World History Association. As I continue to build an academic-adjacent career in world history and education, I remain incredibly grateful for the support the World History Center has provided me. Maintaining an affiliation with the Center and the University of Pittsburgh has provided resources for my research and teaching. Just as important though, maintaining academic credentials through the Center has been invaluable as I continue to build my network within the academic and world history communities.”

2017-19 Postdoctoral Fellow Ryan Horne remained a Center affiliate this year. This was a productive year for him. He assisted Ruth with creating numerous maps and statistical

charts for her forthcoming print manuscript project, *Tracks of Yu*, a study of human-environmental interactions on the Yellow River. In addition to working on the print publication, Horne also developed extensive digital tools (primarily jupyter notebooks) to support the project, which allow users to query the project's database and generate their own spatial and statistical analysis. This will be used to both supplement the print version of *Tracks of Yu* and serve as the basis for a larger digital initiative that will interface with the World History Gazetteer.

Ryan also worked extensively on his NEH-Mellon funded project, *Aeolian Alexanders*, a digital study of social, political, and economic networks of the ancient Mediterranean. Horne published aspects of his research in the chapter "Mapping Power: Using HGIS and Linked Open Data to Study Ancient Greek Garrison Communities," in the volume *Historical Geography, GIScience and Textual Analysis: Landscapes of Time and Place*, "Beyond Lists: Digital Gazetteers and Digital History" in the journal *The Historian*, and has a forthcoming article, Digital Tools and Ancient Empires: Using Network Analysis and Geographic Information Systems to Study Imperial Networks in Hellenistic Anatolia in the *Journal of World History*. Horne also has a forthcoming chapter, "Digital Approaches to the "Big Ancient Mediterranean"", in the volume *Access and Control in Digital Humanities* and a chapter entitled "BAM: Building a new digital system" in the forthcoming digital publication *Linked Ancient World Data Cookbook* from the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World. In addition to his publications, Ryan was invited to present his research in the panels *(Inter-)Regional Networks in Hellenistic Eurasia* and *The Digital Futures of Ancient Objects: Discussing Next Steps for Collaborative Digital Humanities Projects* at the 2020 Joint Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America and the Society for Classical Studies, the foremost conference for ancient history, classics, and archaeology in North America.

Karl Grossner, the Technical Director of the World Historical Gazetteer, who worked remotely during the first two years of NEH grant funding, has been based in Pittsburgh since December. Prior to the move to remote work, he made extensive use of the World History Center space. He advised Internship students and graduate students working on digital humanities projects while also creating the core infrastructure and content for the World Historical Gazetteer.

Director Emeritus Pat Manning, founder of the World History Center and its director from 2008 to 2015, published three books in 2020: *A History of Humanity* (Cambridge University Press), is a comprehensive theory of social evolution centering on the emergence of language and the construction of social institutions, presented through a narrative of human history from 70,000 years ago to the present. A companion work, *Methods for Human History* (Palgrave Macmillan), now in press, is to be marketed as a

textbook: Part 1 presents concise introductions to 36 interdisciplinary methods for study of human evolution; Part 2 develops a narrative of research and theory in biological, cultural, and social evolution from 1850 to the present. Also published in 2020 was the third edition of *Migration in World History* (Routledge), including an expansion of the appendix on migration theory co-authored with Tiffany Trimmer, plus a new chapter on global migration, 1980–2050, that compares and projects the various sorts of migration, including response to changing environment.

From his vantage point as a founder of the field of World History, reflecting on the twelve year history of the World History Center, Pat comments as follows about the impact of the Center and its stature in the field: “As an institution of research and graduate study, the WHC is parallel to the few other such major institutions. They include the Global History and Culture Centre at the University of Warwick, the Global and European Studies Institute at Leipzig University, the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, and the Global History Center at Capital Normal University in Beijing. In addition, Harvard University has been prominent in global historical studies, but the program’s funding is year-to-year rather than ongoing. Of these, Warwick is strong in cultural history; Leipzig is strong in contemporary global studies and institutional support; IISH is strong in social history; CNU is strong in translation studies; Harvard has provided postdoctoral fellowships. The WHC at Pitt is outstanding in the individual research of its faculty members, in its work in world history of science, in developing the World Historical Gazetteer, in supporting innovative teaching through the Alliance for Learning in World History, in its support for research and teaching by postdocs, and in its initiation and support of three continental organizations of world historians, based in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.”

2. World Historical Gazetteer

The NEH-funded World Historical Gazetteer project comprises two important categories of activity: software development and community building. In July 2019 we released the first public beta version of our web platform (v0.1) at <http://dev.whgazetteer.org>. There have been four subsequent releases, most recently v0.5 on May 19th. Version 1 will be launched in June 2020. Also in July, we hosted our second Advisory Board meeting, where 20 participants from the US, UK, and Netherlands gave valuable feedback on work to date and suggestions looking forward. Over the past year the WHG team has presented our work in conferences, workshops, collaborative meetings, and classroom settings worldwide, including in the US, UK, Netherlands, Italy, France, China and Russia.

Our growing datastore now has over 1.9 million records which include 3 million place name variants. Of these, 62,000 are attestations drawn from historical sources. A

further 60,000 historical records are in hand and queued for accessioning. There are discussions in progress with over a dozen future contributors. Software development effort over the past year has focused on a few key platform capabilities: a versioning system allowing users to manage and update their dataset contributions, refinement of our reconciliation services, and the public application programming interface (API) used for machine access.

We have also spearheaded development of two data format standards used for contributions to our system--Linked Places format for place data and Linked Traces format for annotations. These have been well received in the historical Linked Data community, of which we are an active part.

We are in active communication with the Humanities Center of the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies (KNAW) about hosting the WHG following the end of the grant term this fall and about a partnership between KNAW and the World History Center for sustainable long term development of both content and infrastructure.

3. Journal of World Systems Research

The World History Center holds the managing editorial role for the prestigious open source *Journal of World Systems Research*, currently in its twenty-sixth volume. The Center also originates content for the World Historical Information section of the journal. Two issues came out during the past academic year. Issue 25.2, which came out in September, was a massive undertaking with over a dozen articles to prepare for publication. 26.2 came out in March. We are working with Jackie Smith, the journal editor, on several topics: to identify content for a planned special forum on reparations for slavery, to discuss the transition to a new editor, and to plan for a meeting of specialists to form a rejuvenated World Historical Information board. When the Covid outbreak began, we were beginning to plan for a fall World Historical Information meeting. We hope to resume that work, either in person or remotely. Supporting journal production and communications with authors and the editorial board was a significant commitment for Center Coordinator David Ruvolo, and we look forward to hiring a Research Associate with editorial expertise.

4. Collaborations with Other Centers

The World History Center collaborates with numerous peer Centers across campus, routinely attending and cross-promoting events as well as engaging in more substantial partnerships. The Covid pandemic has interrupted some of this year's plans, but we anticipate pursuing all of them in the future.

WHC Director Ruth Mostern and Global Studies Director Michael Goodhart applied jointly for Provost's Year of Creativity funding for an initiative called "Mapping Loss in the Anthropocene" (<https://www.ucis.pitt.edu/global/mapping-loss-anthropocene-0>), which was intended to be a three-workshop series, open to faculty, staff, students, and community members, combining exploration of environmental pasts and futures with training in map making methods. We held the first of three planned events prior to the Covid outbreak. Led by the 3Cs (Counter Cartography Collective) from Durham, North Carolina, it also involved Pitt librarians and Carnegie Museum curators, and attracted a diverse group of sixteen attendees (undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty from both Pitt and CMU), who collectively authored a room-sized map on butcher paper which is now in storage at Global Studies. This workshop emphasized the conceptual project of counter-mapping and the ways in which maps of all kinds can be used in orientation, re-orientation, and de-orientation. Our second and third events, focusing, respectively, on digital mapping and on creative art maps constructed from homemade paper, are deferred indefinitely.

The World History Center has collaborated with the Russian East European and Eurasian Studies Center on an NEH-funded Humanities Engage initiative to develop interdisciplinary curriculum on Water in Central Asia: a series of courses called Water Past (History), Water Present (Political Science) and Water Future (Engineering and Business) that bring humanities content to students from various schools and majors. We have offered all three courses in the series once, and we are now offering them a second time. With several dozen students enrolled in each course, this series has now become a permanent part of the Pitt curriculum and has already reached hundreds of students.

At the time of the Covid outbreak, the World History Center and the Climate and Global Change Center had scheduled a workshop that would have brought together experts on world history and climate science to explore interdisciplinary research endeavors, leading toward a possible NSF Human-Natural Coupled Systems submission focusing on social change and environmental change in medieval East Asia. We hope to hold that workshop in the fall, either remotely or in person, as circumstances permit.

5. Hosted Events, Co-sponsored Events, and Visitors

Jointly sponsored with the History Department's Early Modern Worlds initiative, we invited the eminent historian Merry Wiesner-Hanks (U. Wisconsin Milwaukee, Emerita) to Pitt in late February for a series of events. Dr. Wiesner-Hanks led a lunch discussion focused on the challenges and opportunities of textbook authorship and offered a public

lecture on her own research in (with over 50 attendees, total) and also was a guest of honor and speaker in Molly Warsh's World History class, in which all 80 students had been assigned her most recent world history textbook.

During the Fall 2019 semester, we hosted a luncheon discussion series called "World History in Turbulent Times." This three-event series included an open-ended September 18 kickoff conversation about how insights from world history can help to inform conversations about the contemporary world, an October 14 conversation about New Perspectives on Global Indigeneity (following up on our 2018-19 brownbag series on that topic), an October 28 conversation about Forced Labor and Migration, and a November 13 lunch in Schenley Park, co-sponsored with Global Studies, called Reflections on an Epoch of Loss, which was one iteration of our ongoing explorations of global climate change. Approximately two dozen people attended each of these events.

Postdoctoral Fellow Susan Grunewald hosted a range of digital spatial history events. She organized a GIS Day event at the World History Center this past November, which was attended by a handful of Atlas Internship students as well as some other university staff that use GIS, but the event was small and we are hoping to do something with a larger profile and attendance this next year. The World History Center would naturally be a named sponsor of the event. Susan's weekly "Digital Historian Is In" office hours held in the World History Center, she helped seven Pitt faculty or staff members with digital history research. She also helped one undergraduate research fellow, working for a member of the History and Philosophy of Science Department, with a mapping project and assisted one WHC graduate fellow and two History Department graduate students with GIS projects.

The World History Center hosted the "Europe after Eurocentrism" (fall 2019) and "Creating Europe" (spring 2020 incarnation) working groups discussed common readings as a platform from which to brainstorm the history department's approach to the study of Europe. It identified common intellectual currents at Pitt in this subject area as a means of engaging more concrete, practical questions related to speaker series, curriculum development, and graduate training. Meetings were well attended, averaging around 10-15 people across numerous other departments, including History of Art and Architecture, German, and Political Science, as well as the European Studies Center. Discussions also led directly to a grant proposal to the European Union to fund a speaker series in 2020/21 (currently ongoing, status in light of COVID19 unknown).

Our co-sponsored events included "How to Hide an Empire," a book talk by Daniel Immerwahl hosted by the Humanities Center; a series on Science and Society in Eurasia hosted by REEES; a History Department book symposium by our colleagues

Raja Adal and Pernille Roge; a talk about Yiddish theater and migration, and a series on the past, present and future of socialism, also sponsored by REEES.

6. Fall Minigrants

The World History Center generally distributes travel and research minigrants twice a year: to graduate students in the fall, and to graduate students and faculty in the spring. We suspended our spring grants because we could not fund travel. In the fall, we supported three graduate students, each from a different department.

Krysta Beam (History) presented at the 2019 conference of the Asociación de Historia Económica del Caribe (AHEC, Association for Economic History of the Caribbean) from November 4-9, 2019. Her presentation, “Redemption at Roblealto: Latin America Mission and Child-Saving from the Perspective of Economic History, 1922-1950,” was a presentation drawn from her MA thesis “Rupture and Redemption at Roblealto: A World History of Protestant Child-Saving in Costa Rica, 1932-1970.”

Shelby Brewster (Theater and Performance Studies) took a research trip as part of her dissertation project: *Planetary Praxes: Performing Humanity under Ecological Emergency*. She visited Center for Land Use Interpretation’s main office and exhibit hall and traveled to CLUI’s Desert Research Station, located approximately 130 miles from the CLUI’s offices, in Hinkley, CA.

Kelly Morrison (Political Science) presented her dissertation research at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association (ISA) in Honolulu, Hawaii on March 28, 2019. Her dissertation examines patterns of repression in democratic countries in both historical and modern contexts

Strengthen Communities | Promote Diversity and Inclusion | Embrace the World

These three elements of the Plan for Pitt are at the center of all the activities of the World History Center, and the previous pages of this report are replete with information about the ways that we support these essential goals. Our Public History GSAs and our Alliance for Learning in World History workshops for schoolteachers strengthen communities. Our events about global indigeneity and the history of coerced labor and migration speak to core diversity and inclusion questions, as does the infrastructure for cataloguing suppressed and informal place names in the World Historical Gazetteer.

The mission statement of the World History Center obliges us to “Promote critical research and teaching about human communities in motion and the forces that have shaped our global past and present.” **The WHC is the only entity in the Dietrich School that is devoted entirely to this aspect of the Plan for Pitt.** For instance, the place names indexed in the World Historical Gazetteer span the globe, the keynote speakers for this year’s Alliance workshop have expertise on three continents, our programming around climate change reflects the global character of that crisis, and the travel and research grants we fund include faculty and graduate student research about every continent..

Build Foundational Strength

The World History Center achieves the **goal** of building foundational strength across campus through our commitment to collaborative and interdisciplinary activity. We achieve it internally as good stewards of our space, personnel, budget, and record keeping. This year we have successfully overseen a staff transition. After our Coordinator left, we discovered that some of our records were not fully up to date, and we have worked hard to improve them. We have updated our mailing lists, our file structures and our documentation of equipment and processes. We are advertising our new Research Coordinator position widely, and we have already attracted a large and diverse applicant pool.

Significant External Recognition

In addition to the various forms of recognition detailed above, our Director, Ruth Mostern, has signed a contract with Yale University Press for her next book, which will be published around the end of the calendar year, and our Associate Director, Molly Warsh, has received a fellowship at the Huntington Library to support research for her next book.

Major Goals and Strategies

Our present conversations about goals and strategies are focused on how to serve Pitt, Pittsburgh and the world during the Covid era. As we explored during our “Turbulent Times” series this year, world history offers many potential insights about how to navigate global crises. We are in the early stages of planning programming (which may take the form of webinars, online curricula, in person events, or some other modality) on topics related to the pandemic and its wider context. We are exploring how to explain topics such as the history of the human-animal-wildland margin and the effects of its shifts over time; the ways that pandemics and similar ruptures remake civilizations and

their connections; and ways that world historians and archaeologists are making the popular notion of “collapse” more complicated and useful.

All the initiatives, collaborations, and vision instituted by the current leadership team are succeeding. Our first goal is to continue to seek and apply metrics for documenting our successes, to monitor growth according to these metrics, to sustain and expand the new levels of participation in the Center’s activities, and to sustain and expand the budget and staffing that supports our work by seeking internal and external support. In particular, we seek to increase the levels of funding and support for the Alliance of Learning in World History and to improve on the collaboration with the School of Education; and we seek to secure stable institutional funding and staffing to sustain the World Historical Gazetteer project after the conclusion of its grant funding. Moreover, we aim to improve curricular support for intellectual integration with the Department of History and its strategic goals.

Challenges and Concerns

Since the departure of our Coordinator in January, we have struggled to function without a staff person dedicated to the Center. Managing the Center without staff has had a serious effect on Ruth and Molly’s scholarly productivity and work-life balance. Linda Howard and her staff, especially Cindy Graf, have been indispensable, but our reliance on them has been taxing for them as well. It will be hard for the Center to maintain its level of activity and impact without a new team member. We are eagerly looking forward to completing our Research Coordinator hire this summer.

In light of our plans for online and remote programming for the fall, and in light of the global reach of our activities, we regret that the Dean’s Office did not support our requests for hardware and software to support podcasting and other remote events.

The reason we are planning to migrate the World Historical Gazetteer to the Netherlands for long term development and sustainability is because Pitt (like many of its peers) does not have appropriate staff or infrastructure to maintain collaborative digital infrastructure. Neither the Dietrich School, nor the University Library, nor the Center for Research Computing have this in their mission. It is regrettable that this exciting federally-funded project does not have a viable future at Pitt. This concern is not specific to the World History Center or to the WHG initiative. Rather, it is something that deserves further thought at the level of the Provost.

Our historical funding level has been adequate to our level of activity, but it does not allow for expansion or for a sustainability plan for our most ambitious endeavors such

as teacher workshops of the Alliance for Learning in World History or the World Historical Gazetteer. Initiatives like these would require new support from the Dietrich School, another campus partner (the Education School or the University Library, respectively), sustained pursuit of external funding, or assistance in launching and succeeding in a gift campaign to raise an endowment. We understand that these things are unlikely to occur at present.

World History Center

Fall 2019 Schedule of Events and Funding Proposal Deadlines

World History Center (WHC) Open House

Join us for an open house showcasing our accomplishments and learn about what we are doing this year. A light lunch will be served.

- September 30, noon–1:30 p.m.

World History in Turbulent Times

All lunches begin at noon. RSVP to whc@pitt.edu.

- September 18: What Can Activists do with World History?
- October 14: New Perspectives on Global Indigeneity
- October 28: Forced Labor and Migration in World-Historical Perspective
- November 13: Reflections on an Epoch of Loss

History Grads Mid-Semester Coffee Break

All history graduate students are welcome to join us for this informal opportunity to download and network.

- October 28, 3-4 p.m.

WHC Ongoing Activities

WHC is hosting the following meetings of faculty and students who are conducting collaborative research this term.

- Digital Atlas Internship Program—Thursdays from 3–5 p.m.
- Europe Beyond Eurocentrism Working Group—Please contact James Pickett, Department of History, for details

Graduate Student Assistant (GSA) Presentations

Public talks and presentations by our GSAs in Public History

- September 24: Bethany Wade: Walking Tour of Downtown Pittsburgh Burial Grounds, 10 a.m., location TBA
- September 27: Bethany Wade: “Afterlives of the Dead: An Embodied Approach to Space, Public History, and the Taboo,” Department of History Lounge, Noon–1 p.m.
- October 3: Katie Loney: “India in America: East Indian Furnishings between Ahmedabad and Bryn Mawr,” Indian Room, Cathedral of Learning, 5:30 p.m.

Digital World History Office Hours

Drop in to the WHC and meet digital history postdoctoral fellow Susan Grunewald for discussions or questions related to digital social science and digital humanities research. Office hours are from 1–3 p.m.

- September 12, 19, and 26
- October 3, 10, and 17
- November 14 and 28
- December 5

World History Office Hours—The World Historian is In

Interested in incorporating a world historical concept into a class or a piece of writing? Come chat with WHC Director Ruth Mostern.

- October 11, 9:30–11:30 a.m.
- November 15, 9:30–11:30 a.m.

WHC Cosponsored Events

The World History Center is pleased to support the following events hosted by our colleagues on campus. Please visit their websites for more information.

- September 11, “How to Hide an Empire,” Daniel Immerwahr (Northwestern University), Humanities Center
- Multiple dates, “Nuclear Fallout: Science and Society in Eurasia,” REEES Fall Series
- November 11–13, “The Art of Itinerancy: Yiddish Theater and the Performance of Migration,” Debra Caplan (Baruch College, CUNY), Theater Arts

Deadlines for Proposals for WHC Funding

Spring Graduate Student Assistant in Public History—Proposals due October 4

Fall Graduate Student Travel Grants—Proposals due October 18



Please visit the World History Center Web site for updated information about these events.

For more information, please contact the World History Center, 3900 Wesley W. Posvar Hall, 412-624-3073, whc@pitt.edu, or visit worldhistory.pitt.edu.



University of
Pittsburgh

World History Center
Dietrich School

TO: Pitt Dietrich School Social Science Division Administrator Linda Howard

FROM: Pitt World History Center Director Ruth Mostern and Associate Director Molly Warsh

RE: Proposed Research Coordinator Staff Position

DATE: February 6, 2020

Background to the Request

In January 2020 the World History Center Coordinator left his job after having held his position for six years. His departure offers the opportunity to rethink the staffing needs of the WHC in the context of a) the centralization of administrative tasks in the Social Science Division, and b) the evolving mission of the WHC.

The current structure of DSAS:SS administration permits the WHC to rely on shared staff for many purposes (e.g. for event logistics and budget management). However, it is mission-critical for the Center to hire a full-time research coordinator, following a model analogous to the UCIS Centers and many other research centers at Pitt and at other universities. In such centers, a director – a full-time faculty person with myriad responsibilities who holds a rotating term position - collaborates closely with a Ph.D.-level staff person who is responsible for conducting and supervising the timely and urgent daily work related to the research, outreach, and educational activity of the Center and for implementing the vision of the director.

Our AY2017-18 and AY2018-19 Annual Reports, attached, reflect what we have accomplished in the last two years with the support of a Center coordinator. As a result of initiatives such as the Alliance for Learning in World History and the World Historical Gazetteer, the World History Center is becoming known as a critical center of world historical research and teaching, as well as a repository of world history-related teaching and research resources available to scholars and educators around the globe. We cannot emphasize strongly enough that most of this work would have been impossible without a coordinator who was dedicated full-time to the success of our ventures.

The World History Center

The mission of the World History Center is to foster collaborative, large-scale, interdisciplinary research about the global past: throughout all departments and schools at Pitt, and in cooperation with colleagues across the United States and abroad. The WHC is committed to a vigorous and multifaceted program of activity that reaches a very wide range of constituencies. All of the activities detailed below require assistance and management by a full-time research coordinator who can develop institutional memory and contribute expertise to the success of our initiatives.

The WHC maintains a robust program of research publication and software development. This includes managing the editorial work of the *Journal of World Systems Research*, hosting a world historical data repository (the Dataverse), maintaining virtual machines on servers of the Center for Research Computing, developing content and infrastructure for the NEH-funded World Historical Gazetteer,

launching a Mellon-funded series of University of Pittsburgh Press publications on the history of science, creating a digital library of world history syllabi and other teaching resources, consulting with world history journals and educational centers worldwide, and maintaining a portal to Pitt student-authored digital atlases of world history.

The WHC advances world history education from K-12 to college and graduate school. The Center governs the Alliance for Learning in World History (ALWH), established in 2012 with grants from the British Council and the Social Science Research Council. The Alliance now hosts yearly professional development workshops for K-12 educators on world historical topics, thanks in part to a seed grant from Columbia University as well as support from nationally and internationally renowned institutions including the National Humanities Center and bgC3, a Gates Foundation-funded education initiative. In addition to the ALWH, the WHC supports undergraduate education at Pitt by hosting the Digital Atlas Design Internship for eight students per semester. We support graduate education by advising the History Department on the granting of their Credential in Teaching World History as well as by offering a Graduate Student Assistantship in Public History. We have also received funding for various projects with a pedagogical component: most recently a Water in Central Eurasia NEH grant in collaboration with the Russia, Eastern Europe and Eurasia Center, and a Provost's Year of Creativity grant for a series of workshops entitled Mapping the Epoch of Loss. We also conduct panels and drop-in hours for new world history instructors.

Finally, the WHC sponsors numerous public-facing activities in support of research at Pitt. We host thematic working groups, offer drop-in hours, conduct luncheons to foster research capacity building and discussion, invite distinguished guests from around the world, curate a physical space for collaboration, meetings and exhibits, and sponsor travel grants and research grants.

A Proposed Position

We propose to hire a research coordinator, an individual with graduate level expertise in world history, who can advance WHC priorities, provide research project management, and hold institutional memory. This position is distinct from the WHC Digital History Postdoctoral Fellow, who is a short-term appointee focusing on their own personal research, not on ongoing WHC initiatives. It is a position for someone who will liaise with DSAS:SS staff without duplicating their efforts. The position of the Research Coordinator is intended to be long-term, as institutional memory is a critical part of what the Coordinator will bring to the job. The individual in this position will establish tasks, deadlines and priorities for our complex and interlocking initiatives and will serve as an expert participant in our events and activities. They will take charge of expert communication with our diverse constituents and collaborators, and they will serve as a writer and editor. This will permit the director and associate director to use the hours that they have available for Center work in the most effective way possible: to oversee and guide Center projects at the mission and vision level, to set programmatic priorities, and to communicate with other DSAS chairs, directors and leadership.

We propose a position that entails roughly:

- 50% time devoted to writing, editing, publication, and communication activities across all platforms (web, print, social media, data/repository, graphical). The research coordinator would need to have excellent writing skills, facility with web publication platforms like Drupal and the library e-publication system, the ability to communicate about server specifications with systems administration staff at the Center for Research Computing, and expertise with the Adobe Creative Suite. Skill in Python would be desirable and would permit the research coordinator to design and build web applications based on WHC content and data.
- 20% time project managing complex and ongoing collaborative and interdisciplinary initiatives. This will entail setting agendas for events, keeping teams to task and to deadline, troubleshooting, grant writing, organizing publicity, communicating with visitors and hosts to ensure that their visits are maximally impactful, mentoring the undergraduate and graduate students who participate in the GSAsip and internship, and managing World History Center travel and research grants.
- 10% time curating and hosting in the World History Center offices: exhibiting art on the walls, presiding at meetings of working groups and other collaborative teams, meeting and greeting drop-ins in our open-door space, and supervising undergraduate research assistants.
- 20% time conducting world history research and helping to set research goals for the Center in collaboration with director and associate director.



University of Pittsburgh

Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences
Department of History

3702 Wesley W. Posvar Hall
230 South Bouquet Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
412-648-7451
Fax: 412-648-9074
www.history.pitt.edu

TO: Linda Howard, DSAS Division Administrator for Social Sciences
FROM: World History Center Director Ruth Mostern and Associate Director Molly Warsh
RE: Research Associate Support for World History Center Initiatives
DATE: February 23, 2020

This memo reflects discussions at a February 21 meeting between Linda Howard, Ruth Mostern, and Molly Warsh that concerned the World History Center's staffing needs. It adds detail to our February 6 memo, which proposed advertising for a new position of Research Associate rather than replacing our recently departed Research Coordinator with another Admin I staff person. The February 6 memo summarized the WHC's vision and accomplishments and outlined a job description for a Research Associate with an M.A. or Ph.D. in world history or a related field. The present document offers detailed examples of the specific support that the Research Associate could offer for particular initiatives at the WHC.

The World History Center has had success in many areas of collaborative and interdisciplinary research, education, publication, and public outreach, we have successfully competed for numerous grants, and we have garnered high national and international visibility. As we explain below, a Research Associate would permit us to expand the reach and scope of our initiatives about the global and transregional human past. The examples below are not intended to be comprehensive – our 2018 and 2019 Annual Reports are a complete listing of our activities – but are rather intended to suggest a few of the ways that a Research Associate could extend and amplify our successes.

The WHC has numerous initiatives related to Education. We host the Alliance for Learning in World History (ALWH), which launched its first day-long professional development workshop for K-16 teachers from across the country (geared mainly toward high school social studies teachers but welcoming of educators at all levels) in June 2019. We had 10 attendees including teachers from the Pittsburgh area as well as Virginia, Maryland, and New Jersey. We will hold a second professional development workshop this June. Local educators who participated in the workshop were eager for follow-up after the event, but we have not had the personnel to permit that. A Research Associate would have been able to design and schedule the in-service training sessions that the workshop participants requested. Going forward, a Research Associate could also coordinate outreach so that local school districts would understand how the World History Center could support their educational mission. The Research Associate would also manage the WHC's involvement with existing high school partnership programs based at Pitt.

The WHC is a **publisher of a wide range of digital resources.** These include the *Journal of World Systems Research* (a high impact-factor international interdisciplinary journal established in 1995), the World

Historical Gazetteer (a rapidly growing NEH-funded project to catalogue millions of historical place names, with collaborators on four continents), a dataset repository called the World Historical Dataverse, and an archive of student-authored digital atlases that was featured in a research forum at the Smithsonian Museum last year. However, we do not have a managing editor to solicit contributions for any of these projects, move them through publication pipelines, write code to transform heterogeneous data formats into standards-compliant ones, design and maintain publication platforms and user interfaces, coordinate peer-review processes, or liaise with the systems administrators at the Center for Research Computing who maintain our web server capacities.

For instance, we have begun to maintain a repository of world history teaching resources, including materials generated by our professional development workshops and world historical syllabi collected from around the country. In the short term, the Research Associate would manage requests to access for the material that we have collected so far. In time, the Research Associate would build this into a highly visible resource with global reach. The RA would solicit materials via social media and targeted mailings; manage an editorial process for the materials we receive; and write abstracts, metadata, data structures, and interactive search and visualization tools that would align the repository with best practices for peer-reviewed digital scholarly resource collections. In a related initiative, the WHC has been invited to host the large, prestigious and foundational “World History for Us All” web archive of world history K-12 teaching resources. We have had to defer the request because we do not have personnel to assess and migrate the content and to update the web architecture. This would be an ideal project for a Research Associate.

The WHC hosts and participates in numerous events. The WHC has just been approached about the possibility of hosting the Summer 2023 annual meeting of the World History Association, an event that regularly attracts thousands of participants for a large professional organization that has existed since 1982. This solicitation reflects the national reputation of Pitt and the WHC as a leader in world history research and teaching. Hosting this conference would cement Pitt’s position as one of the country’s most prominent world history-focused History programs, with the WHC at the helm. In coordination with the WHA, the Research Associate would play a critical role in making such a prestigious event a success: organizing fieldtrips, planning panels with a local focus, and reaching out to the local community. Indeed, we would be unable to agree to host the conference if we did not have a Research Associate working on it with us.

Moreover, the WHC Director, Associate Director and Postdoctoral Fellow travel regularly to participate in conferences and to collaborate with world historians worldwide. We also fund research and travel grants for Pitt faculty and graduate students throughout the Dietrich School. A Research Associate would make sure that all travelers are prepared to communicate excellent and up-to-date news about the WHC. The Research Associate would also help coordinate the existing partnerships that these travels support. The Research Associate would debrief returning travelers and write reports about them to post on our website and social media. The goal is to ensure that these trips are as impactful as possible at Pitt and throughout the field of world history worldwide. For example, Associate Director Molly Warsh has been approached by the American Historical Association to organize a world history teaching panel at the Pacific Coast AHA conference this coming year and to participate on a high-profile panel on world

history teaching at next year's annual meeting. Director Ruth Mostern will be participating in a series of AHA panels about digital history. A Research Associate at the WHC would coordinate these events, help to identify participants, assist with agenda-setting, and thereby allow us to multiply the number of such events that we could participate in as a team.

The WHC brings in external funding. We currently hold two National Endowment for the Humanities grants as well as Year of Creativity funding from the Provost's office. We have been funded in the past by the NSF and the Mellon Foundation. A Research Associate could identify likely international and national partners for our various initiatives, determine the most likely grant-making entities for each of our areas of activity, keep a calendar of upcoming funding deadlines, and play a major role in the grant writing process. For instance, we believe that the Gilder Lehrman Center and the NEH would be excellent sources of funding for ALWH workshops and other educational initiatives, but we do not presently have the staffing capacity to write the detailed and persuasive applications that such competitive awards would require.

In the interests of brevity, we are limiting our examples to the ones detailed above. We are confident that these explanations help to provide a picture of the sorts of wide-ranging, ambitious and high-visibility initiatives that the World History Center engages in already, and the ways that we can expand our successes if we are able to hire a Research Associate to join our team. We would be eager to meet with any member of the DSAS leadership in order to discuss these ideas further.