From Professor David Goss...

Greetings!

As director of public history, I’d like to bring you up-to-date on what’s happening here on the public history front..

First and foremost, Gordon has officially approved a public history minor and concentration! This represents a major step forward for the history department, and indicates that Gordon College is committed to training undergraduate students to enter careers in the area of museum studies and public history.

Our new course *Case Studies in Museum Administration* has twenty students enrolled, two of whom are currently working as interns at Boston area museums. Luke Suttmeier is a curatorial assistant at the Salem Maritime National Historic Site, and Raffi Kiredjian has accepted an internship in the business office of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Students were addressed by Bruce Michaud, CEO and owner of the Salem Witch Museum, who shared his thoughts on marketing a public history site. The class also interviewed almost twenty career professionals concerning the business of operating museums, historic sites and public history attractions.

Two history majors have distinguished themselves this year in public history endeavors. Micah Grant is an archival intern at the home of General George Patton, cataloging collections of the general’s family papers, correspondence and photographs. Jerry Logan, 2007 recipient of the Loring Fellowship, is investigating the New England textile industry’s rise and decline in the 19th and 20th centuries.

I am pleased to announce that my new book, *The Salem Witchcraft Trials*, will be published next year. It is a reference text featuring an overview of the event and its context, as well as interpretive analysis and reproduced documents from the trials themselves.

It is an exciting time to be here!

Best wishes,

David Goss
Since childhood I have wanted to work in the field of history, but I did not necessarily want to teach in a classroom. Working in a museum gives me the opportunity to teach history in a non-traditional setting using collections and exhibits as educational tools. Through Gordon College’s history program, I received an education that trained me as both a historian and a museum professional. I gained experience in analyzing and interpreting history and learned effective museum policies and on-site training through internships at Salem 1630 Pioneer Village and the House of the Seven Gables. This combined education of history and museum studies gave me the training and experience necessary to begin my career in the museum field.
The Stephen Phillips House
by Megan MacNeil ’00

Imagine if five generations of your family never threw away any of their personal belongings. Imagine the vast collection of books, papers, clothing, knickknacks and other miscellany that could fill about 12,000 square feet of space. When I first started working at the Phillips House, a small historic house museum in Salem, Massachusetts in January 2000, the first-ever inventory of the collection was underway. This process involved making a list of every item contained within the 3-story house and carriage house. Eighteen months, two hundred trunks, and 15,000 objects later the inventory was complete. The simple task of helping to create the inventory and discovering the treasures left behind by one family is what sparked my interest to learn more about the field of museum studies.

When I attended Gordon as a history major, no museum studies courses were offered, but the Tufts University Graduate and Professional Studies program offered a museum studies certificate that was the perfect opportunity to learn more about the practical aspects of working in a museum. The program offers classes in collections management, exhibition planning, museum history and theory, as well as collections care and preservation. I learned that museum work can involve jobs that are directly connected to the public or consist of tasks that are done completely behind the scenes. During my time at the Phillips House, I have done a little bit of both.

As a tour guide, I was responsible for taking visitors through the house and bringing the story of the Phillips Family and their domestic staff to life. Putting together the story involved primary research, using the photographs, letters, bills and receipts that the family left behind as well as researching secondary sources to give context to their story and fitting the family within the larger historical events of Salem and the United States.

As the registrar, I am responsible for maintaining the collections, keeping track of loans and insurance policies, opening and closing the house for the tourist season, and a wide variety of other tasks that range from the mundane (vacuuming and dusting) to the exotic (watching 16mm home movie film of the Phillips’ 1931 trip from Cape Town to Cairo). Who knew that I would learn to drive stick on a 1929 Model A Ford or become extremely interested in the life cycle and breeding habits of carpet beetles?

Even though the inventory is complete, work at the Phillips House is ongoing. Different types of collections are being organized, numbered and photographed. The women’s costume collection has just recently been removed from steamer trunks and boxes and re-housed in acid free tissue and textile boxes. The collection contains garments that range from the mundane (vacuuming and dusting) to the exotic (watching 16mm home movie film of the Phillips’ 1931 trip from Cape Town to Cairo). Who knew that I would learn to drive stick on a 1929 Model A Ford or become extremely interested in the life cycle and breeding habits of carpet beetles?

Visit Historic New England’s Phillips House on historic Chestnut Street and find out what life was like in the early 1900’s. The kitchen, pantries, and laundry tell of the bustling activities of the household staff, while the grand public areas display handsome furnishings from five generations of the Phillips family. Opening June 1. Learn more at www.phillipsmuseum.org.

Alumni and Student News:
We would love to hear from you! Please send contributions to: rebecca.lord@gordon.edu.
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