



## Gordon Professor's Side Gig: Lead Guitar for Top Civil War Period Band

By Paul Crookston '16

Some students and professors got the chance to glimpse Dr. David Goss's alter ego last October when his 2<sup>nd</sup> South Carolina String Band played a show at St. John's Episcopal Church in Beverly Farms. He plays an 1850s guitar, and each member of the band has an instrument authentic to the period.

The band arose organically in the 1980s out of the culture of Civil War hobbyists participating with the 2<sup>nd</sup> South Carolina Voluntary Infantry unit, which was situated in Salem, Massachusetts. Due to their unflinching historical authenticity, the band grew in popularity. They have performed in feature films and Ken Burns' documentaries, as well as music festivals and concerts like the one last fall.

The musicians have witnessed firsthand that their Civil War hobby goes far beyond historians and reenactments. Ken Burns' momentous documentary on the Civil War combined with the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the war to energize interest, which the group became caught up in.

Banjoist Joe Ewers, a Children's Television Worship artist who worked on the Muppets, had the flexibility to move, so the band relocated to the northernmost hub of Civil War history: Gettysburg.

In Pennsylvania, they looked for another fiddler and found Mike Paul, and the band's exposure grew. "We developed this synergy into working with the Civil War hobby," Goss said.

The Civil War hobby is significant outside of reenactments, and the band members have been happy to find a market for their music. At the time of our interview, the band's *Southern Soldier* CD sat at 33<sup>rd</sup> on Amazon's independent general folk charts. More importantly to them, they have status as historically accurate period musicians, and they have played in Ken Burns' documentaries *Mark Twain* and *Jazz*.



They even appeared on screen as Civil War band members in *Gods and Generals* with Robert Duvall.

Until the 1990s, the band had played modern musical instruments—but as their status rose, they switched to playing on period instruments. "The character of the band began to change, and we started to take a more professional attitude," Goss said.

"We even began to play music festivals, playing with real musicians!" he said with a laugh. One such event was the River Bend Music Festival in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and they also played at the National Portrait Gallery three times.

The band did not start with grandiose plans, and they have not put much into promoting themselves. "Over the years we've had the good fortune of working with some very talented people, and we've gotten to play in some venues we never would've had the chance to be in," Goss said.

# Department News

## Is Greece Calling You?

By Professor David Wick

Looking for a unique course, whatever your favorite era or concentration in history? Want one that lets you see, smell, taste—*experience firsthand*—the flavors and settings of ancient and modern history at the same time? Are you eager for the kind of study that rubs shoulders with the culture and people, both in the sunlight of the modern Mediterranean and in the shadows of the classical past? Do you want a Gordon experience that lets you track the mission of Paul (and walk through Philippi), or ancient Greek history (and climb the oracle's hill at Delphi . . . or that *other* hill at Thermopylae), or the modern urban cultures of southern Europe and the Middle East (and find yourself interviewing someone in a café in Athens or Thessaloniki)? Here's your chance.



Gordon's History Department is recruiting students for HIS 291/491, a special Summer Term 2017 course paralleling ancient Greek/Roman history and modern Greece in the European Union (and the history of the Christian church in both those eras).

Some students are already enrolled, but we need more—and more angles of interest to help build 2017's version of this one-of-a-kind course. For basic info, check with Gordon's Office of Global Education; to find out how to make this course your own unique experience, contact Professor David Wick (david.wick@gordon.edu).

## Immersed in History: The Plimoth Plantation Internship Experience

By Emily White '17



I participated in an internship program at Plimoth Plantation in Plymouth, MA, a preeminent living history museum in New England, highlighting the seventeenth-century Plymouth Colony and the Wampanoag Homestead. The competitive internship program that I was chosen for placed me alongside the museum's educators and prepared me and my fellow interns for jobs in the world of museum education. Seven interns from all over the United States lived and learned together for most of the summer.

The minute I got there, I was welcomed by the staff and introduced to the other interns. I immediately felt at ease with the people there, feeling that I belonged, just as when doing theatre at Gordon. Here was a group of women who had the same interests in historical figures, events and places. Each day offered a new adventure, which helped us gain experience to further our understanding and careers. We met many talented museum professionals, most notably Richard Pickering, the deputy executive director of the museum, and Chris Messier, a first-person historical interpreter who plays William Brewster.

During the summer we observed presentations and exhibits run by the education programmers at Plimoth. We interns were then assigned to create our own programs. I designed a short interactive play that explains the troubles of 1630 when people from a separate faction infiltrated Plimoth and caused commotion. Working busily with other education interns, our efforts proved a huge success. At the end of the internship we presented our work to a full audience of our families and peers, as well as the Plimoth Plantation administrators.

The internship at Plimoth Plantation has opened other doors for me. This summer I am working for Elizabeth Peterson, the director of the Witch House Museum (Judge Corwin House) in Salem, and for the Pioneer Village Salem 1630! I will be working as a researcher and guide at the house. At the Pioneer Village Salem 1630 I will be a historical interpreter.

## Logos Workshop at Oxford University

Three students—Jennifer Straka '16, Joshua Rawleigh '17, and Nathanael Greene '17—from Ute Possekel's advanced seminar on Syriac manuscripts have been chosen to attend the Logos Workshop on biblical texts, vocation, and the Christian mind at Oxford University this summer.



# Department News

## Sarah Larlee '17 | Experience in the Field

I had the incredible opportunity to work at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) in conjunction with the Maine State Museum. I was working with photo postcards from the early 1900s and was in charge of describing, scanning, and cataloging them. It was incredible to find postcards with writing on them and try to decipher what people were talking about. There were often some very interesting and funny stories on the cards. My job describing the postcards also required using Google Street View, along with the resources at MHPC, to research towns, buildings, and businesses in order to pinpoint where each photograph was taken, from which direction, and when it could be dated to.

Because of my work with the MHPC, I was also able to get a job working for the Skowhegan History House. I handled and scanned circa 1800s newspapers from the local area as well as from Boston. I used a huge tabletop scanner. It was incredible to see what was being talked about during that time period (the Civil War, elections, etc.) and be able to compare them with today's papers.

Last fall I studied abroad in Heidelberg, Germany. While I was abroad I worked in the University of Heidelberg's Archive. I had many different jobs including sorting flyers from the different political groups on campus during the 1960s and 1970s, I also handled research inquiries in both German and English and spent time in the student records from the 1800s. Finally, I was able to do some translation work. I worked on translating a Wikipedia page that the Archive ran about a man named Ernst Krieck who was the first Nazi President of the University of Heidelberg. I was charged with reading the German article and then translating it into English. Now, if you google Ernst Krieck you will find my translation on Wikipedia. I also did independent research for my program center (American Junior Year Abroad). It was an incredible experience to see how an archive works in Germany, and to dabble in many different aspects of an archive: research, photo archives, magazine archives, and translation.



## Dr. Ute Possekkel at the Dorushe Graduate Conference

Adjunct in History Ute Possekkel presented a paper entitled "No Pubs, Picnics, or Parties: Was the School of Nisibis a Monastery or a University?" In the presentation at Brown University, she contended that this sixth-century East Syriac school, located in northern Mesopotamia, was the first Christian "university."

## Katie Gilbert '16: Presentations and Fulbright Award

In April, the U.S. Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board awarded Katie Gilbert '16 a Fulbright U.S. Student Program grant. Katie will study Syriac language and literature and its use in liturgy at the St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute in India. Receiving this award follows a year of outstanding academic achievements. In the fall, Katie presented her History Department honors thesis she wrote as a junior, "Understanding the Person of John Climacus: A Syriac Codex, Ladder Illuminations, & Byzantine Iconography," at the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Byzantine Studies Conference in New York City. In April, she presented another paper, "Ephrem the Syrian's Hymns: Symmetry in Primordial and Eschatological Paradise," at the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Archbishop Jakovos Graduate Student Conference hosted by the Pappas Patristics Institute at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA.

## Thesis Presentations by Elspeth Currie '16 and Paul Stapleton '16



A note from Professor Steve Alter: "We're proud of this year's senior history honors students, who graduate from our program at the rate of two or three annually. Honors involves writing and publicly defending a substantial research project." This year's students and their topics are:

Elspeth Currie (pictured at left): "Querrelling with the Classics: Gender, Cross-dressing, and Classical Reception in England's Pamphlet Debates, 1615–1625." In fall 2017, Elspeth will enter a master's degree program in Women's Studies at Oxford University.

Paul Stapleton (pictured at right): "The Kaiser's Jihad: Germany, Islam, and the Fall of the Ottoman Empire." Next year Paul will teach English in Mississippi through Teach for America, and he hopes to pursue a career in education.

# What Our Alumni Are Doing

## Stephanie '00 and Jonathan Averill '95 | *Professor and Army Chaplain*

Jon ('95) and Stephanie ('00) met at Dr. Arno Kolz's retirement party in 1999, and then not again until 2009.

After Gordon, Jonathan enlisted in the U.S. Army. He spent a number of years in the Reserves, including several deployments, before being called into the ministry. He earned his Master of Divinity degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, received ordination in the Christian Reformed Church, and received a commission in the Army Chaplain Corps. Around the world or home with soldiers, the cultural and historical foundation he gained at Gordon has proven one of his key assets.

Stephanie pursued her Ph.D. in history from the University of New Hampshire immediately after graduating. Gordon's history program prepared her extremely well for her doctoral studies. After finishing her degree, she began teaching at a university in Arizona. Since Army life now has her moving all over the country, she teaches online courses for Southern New Hampshire University's master's program in history.

Jonathan and Stephanie have been married for five years and have a two-year-old daughter, Elsa. They recently moved to Fort Polk, Louisiana, where they plan to embark on a grand tour to try all the local Cajun cuisine.



## David W. Opderbeck '88 | *Professor of Law*



After graduating from Gordon, David went to law school at Seton Hall University Law School in New Jersey and then practiced for more than a decade at a large law firm, McCarter & English, LLP. He earned a second law degree at New York University Law School with a specialty in intellectual property and became a law professor. He is now Professor of Law and Director of the Gibbons Institute of Law, Science & Technology at Seton Hall University Law School. Much of his work these days involves issues relating to technology, cybersecurity and national security. His history background is very helpful here because he often needs to understand the historical context of the Constitution, statutes and case law. For example, he recently wrote a legal brief in the Apple iPhone encryption case that has been in the news, which involves a statute passed by the First Congress and signed into law by President George Washington. In addition to his legal work, he is interested in theology, and is about to complete a Ph.D. in Systematic and Philosophical Theology at the University of Nottingham (U.K.). His dissertation will be published as a book by Wipf and Stock next year. This work involves excavating historical sources such as Augustine and Aquinas—and, of course, the scriptures—on the question of human uniqueness in light of what the natural sciences tell us about human evolution. Finally, he teaches courses as an adjunct professor at Alliance Theological Seminary in Nyack, New York, including a church history course that reminds him very much of the History of

Western Civilization class he took at Gordon, and for which he was a teacher's assistant as an upper level student at Gordon under the late Dr. David Franz. You can see more about his work on his website, [davidopderbeck.com](http://davidopderbeck.com).

## Elissa Rodkey '04 | *Professor of Psychology*

**Alumni Announcement:** *Elissa Rodkey recently received the York University Psychology Graduate Program nomination for the PhD Dissertation Prize 2015 for her Dissertation entitled, "Magda Arnold and the Human Person: A Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century Case Study on the Relationship between Psychology and Religion."*

In addition to pursuing her doctorate, Elissa teaches the History of Psychology at Crandall University in New Brunswick, Canada. In this course, she introduces students to psychology's history, and to the use of historical sources. Attempting to keep students engaged in her 8:30 a.m. class, Elissa draws upon her experience at Gordon in forming creative assignments. For example, the final assignment this semester is for students to participate in a poster session, presenting a poster based on a fictional family's interactions with psychology over the course of four decades.



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