

History *NEWSLETTER*

FALL 2025

FROM THE CHAIR

by Douglas W. Dodd

The Fall 2025 newsletter inaugurates a new look for the History Department newsletter. For many years—extending back into the mists of time when the newsletter was still printed on paper and mailed through the U.S. Post Office—we have kept it simple and produced the newsletter using Microsoft Word. Beginning with this issue, we are

employing the talents of graphic designer Maylanie Winton, who has created a new design template for the newsletter. We'll be experimenting with the form in coming issues, streamlining and fine-tuning the newsletter as we go forward.

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DEPARTMENT
OF HISTORY
CSU BAKERSFIELD

FROM OUR DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER ARCHIVES

by Miriam Raub Vivian

In recently cleaning part of my office, I came across a print copy of our department newsletter from Fall (Quarter) 2001. It is just five pages, a reminder how much our newsletter has grown over the past nearly 25 years. There were several columns devoted to features we continue to include in our current newsletters, such as a History Forum write-up; news about Prof. Oliver Rink's new book, *The Empire State*; Alumni and Student News, including (now lecturer) Katy Freeland's national Phi Alpha Theta award; the Nels Andrew Cleven Founder's Day Paper Award; information about our graduate program; my "Writing Corner"; Phi Alpha Theta; and the schedule(s) for the remainder of the academic year.

The newsletter also included something we rarely include anymore: bloopers in student papers and exams.

These all appear to have come from my Western Civilization I course:

"[The Biblical book of] Job is about why bad events occur to good natured people."

"Diaspora was the son of Cyrus the Great."

"Their [the Hebrews'] God was called Yahew."

"Around 1300 BC the Hebrews, led by Moses, migrated from Egypt to Exodus."

"[Re Mesopotamia]: The low-lying flood lands were beseeched by pestilence."

"Tiresome of the attacks, Assyria fought back with avenge ants."



ROCK ART AND ETHNOBOTANY AT TOMO KAHNI STATE HISTORIC PARK

The fall semester History Department field trip visited Tomo Kahni State Historic Park on September 6, 2025. After gathering for an orientation session at the Tehachapi Museum, we drove to the park, located in the hills north of Tehachapi. We were led by Jon Hammond, a writer, photographer, and expert on the indigenous Kawaiisu language and culture; Dr. David Whitley, an archaeologist and ethnographer; and Lori Wear, Interpretive Program Manager for California State Parks' Great Basin District (who made the trip possible). We spent the morning and early afternoon hiking through several archeological sites, learning about the Kawaiisu relationship with their environment, particularly ethnobotany. Jon Hammond showed up food plants, like juniper berries, and plants used for cordage, like stinging nettle. The highlight of

the trip was a large overhanging cave that held several spectacular examples of rock art. Dr. Whitley discussed how the pictographs were made as well as their spiritual significance to Kawaiisu people.



Can We Convey Information More Efficiently? (and still with style, we hope)

We often hear that “we live in an information age.” Indeed, we do, which makes the business of efficient (and effective) writing paramount. We all have a great deal to read, but that is just one reason to write succinctly, with making your point quickly just one of them.

Students may be tempted to add words to an essay to fulfill a word or page requirement, yet such papers are weighed down by their wordiness. Succinctness gives one’s prose a forcefulness impossible when burdened by words that serve no purpose. Succinct prose is forceful prose, prose that moves and pulls the reader along with it. By contrast, a reader can nearly drown or lose the horizon in a sea of verbiage. Thus, to achieve forceful prose, we should write exactly what we mean; don’t risk obscuring the intended meaning by shrouding the point in a cloud of empty or high-flown words. We will leave **that** to the experts: bureaucrats!

One of the greatest writers of the 20th century, George Orwell is often cited for his adage to “never use a long word where a short one will do,” as well as “if it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.” This requires that we consult a thesaurus only rarely; it’s fine to seek alternatives for essential words in composing an essay, but it’s a good rule of thumb to prefer English words whose roots are Germanic rather than Greek or Latin—for example, “he chewed” has more bite, so to speak, than “he masticated.” Just think how potent those Germanic four-letter words are, and you’ll get my point.

Here’s a test: see how many words can be eliminated without losing the intended meaning. Be especially alert to empty or inflated phrases, such as “the fact



that,” “in this time period,” and “in the event that.” (A longer—and handy—list appears on in Diana Hacker’s *A Pocket Style Manual*, used in some Historical Writing and Senior Seminar sections: see “wordy sentences”; “redundancies”; and “empty or inflated phrases.”) I find the following phrases particularly useless: “in the area of” (why not say “math” rather than “in the area of math?”); “the fact that” (how about “even though?”); and the popular “as to” (“our understanding as to the word’s meaning” seems excessive compared to “our understanding of the word’s meaning”).

Can you tighten the belt on the following sentences by eliminating excess words?

1. He is a gifted student in the areas of math and science and in the study of English and history.
2. The trees are beautiful, and the mountains are beautiful, despite the fact that we must view them through a curtain of brownish, ugly haze.

3. Ronald is employed at an oil company working as a manager.

4. In the event that the Angels go to the World Series, it is my opinion that they stand a very good chance of repeating their performance of twenty-three years ago.

5. There are a multitude of reasons for students to feel overwhelmed at the present time.

Going forward, let’s pay close attention to the selection of words; proofread with an eye to cutting out those that do nothing to further the meaning of an essay’s statements. Readers will appreciate tight prose, and instructors may well reward writers who couch a paper’s ideas in crisp and forceful sentences.



HISTORY FORUM

FINDING BLACK CALIFORNIA WITH DR. LYNN M HUDSON

On November 10, 2025, students, staff, and faculty filled the Dezember Reading Room to hear Dr. Lynn Hudson share some of her research on California's Black history. As our Fall History Forum scholar, she ventured to CSUB from the University of Illinois, Chicago, where she serves as Professor of U.S. and African American History. Titled "Finding Black California", the talk addressed issues concerning the preservation and erasure of the state's African American past in both academic and public narratives.

Through three case studies, she led the audience on a chronological journey covering the state's vast geography to unveil an incredibly diverse array of figures who "shaped every part of the social, economic, political, and natural landscape" of the Golden State. The presentation began with the story of Mary Ellen Pleasant, a leading figure in the Underground Railroad who arrived in San Francisco in the 1850s from Nantucket. Locating the West in typically nationally-focused histories of the abolitionist movement, the speaker illuminated Pleasant's role in San Francisco's network of vigilance committees that sheltered enslaved people to avoid their recapture. The boarding houses run by Pleasant, according to Hudson, are among the many "unconventional" sites of Black Californian history. Roughly fifty years later and hundreds of miles South, the establishment of Allensworth in 1908 placed the state on the map as part of a national trend of all-Black townships popping up in the early twentieth century. What made Allensworth unique in some aspects, was the central role that Black women played in its development, as nurses, teachers, shopkeepers, and key figures in discussions about local politics. Importantly, Dr. Hudson shed light on the continued need for funding to safeguard Allensworth as a public history site (and state park), as she noted the dire statistic that only one percent of national parks address the history of Black women. The third focal point of the talk brought

us to Pasadena—the hometown of our speaker—with the opening of the Brookside Pool in 1914. Situating the facility within the state's long history of both Jim Crow and the Black Freedom Struggle, the speaker noted that Brookside was one of the state's first public swimming pools and relatedly, Pasadena was one of the first cities in the country to be sued over its racially segregated public facilities. Edna Griffin and Ruby McKnight Williams were among the group of local activists who successfully fought to desegregate Brookside, which remained opened until 1947.

The presentation ended in a rich Q&A segment, which highlighted the voices of department majors, faculty outside the department, and community members. Her most recent book, titled *West of Jim Crow: The Fight Against California's Color Line* (2020), was assigned reading in Dr. Garcha's graduate fall seminar, "Readings in African American History", and students in the department's upper-division "California History" course read portions of the book as well. While the presentation spanned beyond the book's focus, student attendees arrived prepared with poignant questions about Dr. Hudson's research methodologies, successes and tribulations in the archive, as well as genuine inquiries about the current stakes of preserving Black History today. It was a timely and much appreciated event that concluded in a long line of readers eager to have their copies of Dr. Hudson's book signed by the author herself! The Department of History deeply thanks Dr. Hudson for her time and wonderful conversation, and looks forward to staying in touch! Please consider attending our Spring 2026 forum, which will take place on Thursday March 12 at 5:30pm in the Dezember Reading Room. In this final forum for the academic year, we will be visited by Dr. Elizabeth O'Brien, author of *Surgery and Salvation: The Roots of Reproductive Injustice in Mexico, 1770-1940* (2023). She will be joining us from UCLA. We look forward to seeing you there!



FINDING BLACK CALIFORNIA

This talk will consider the ways in which California's Black history has been both remembered and erased in scholarly and public discourses. Why has the state's rich Black past often remained invisible? Where does Black history "live" today? The talk will touch on the deep roots of the Black freedom struggle as well as those of white supremacy.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10
5:30PM-7:00PM

DECEMBER READING ROOM
WALTER STIERN LIBRARY



Dr. Lynn M. Hudson
Professor, Department of History,
University of Illinois Chicago

Co-Sponsors:

*This event is co-sponsored by the
CSUB Department of History, the ASI
Instructionally Related Activities Program,
and the Walter W. Stiern Library.*

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



STUDENT NEWS

Anhar Alomaisi has been selected to participate in the Grimm Family Center for Agricultural Business (GFCAB) Student Research Scholars Program (2025-26). With financial support from the Grimm Center, Anhar will conduct a series of oral history interviews with Yemeni individuals who engaged in agricultural labor in Kern County, particularly emphasizing those who labored during the 1960s to the 2010s. In addition to conducting interviews, she will do archival research to reveal more about the migration patterns and lives of Yemeni migrant agricultural laborers in Kern County. Her efforts to build an oral history archive to be housed at Stiern Library will also make Yemeni history accessible to future scholars. Anhar will present her work at a Student Symposium on April 10, 2026. Anhar will work with Dr. Kate Mulry to complete her research project and to prepare for the spring symposium. Congratulations, Anhar!

Atlas Tillery has been selected to participate in the Grimm Family Center for Agricultural Business (GFCAB) Student Research Scholars Program (2025-26). With financial support from the Grimm Center, Atlas will research how men and women discussed the connections between food and mental health in early modern England and the English empire. His project, "An Herbal for Melancholy: Mental Health and Domestic Medicine in the 17th Century English Atlantic World" will use manuscript materials held at the Huntington Library, including recipe books written by women. Atlas will present his work at a Student Symposium on April 10, 2026. Atlas will work with Dr. Kate Mulry to complete his research project and to prepare for the spring symposium. Congratulations, Atlas!



History Club

This History Club at CSUB had an eventful semester! On September 25, the Club met for the first time in the Fall of 2025 for Game Night. A few weeks later, officers kept the momentum going with a California History Trivia Night on October 9, hosted by Ricardo Goné. Keeping in the spirit of the fall, the club screened *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925) on October 23 and followed up that event with a book sale on November 6. The History Club closed an active semester with a successful game night on November 20.

Skateboarding Club

The Skateboarding Club met at Beach Park in Bakersfield on October 4 for one of its largest meetups it has ever hosted! The club held a raffle with lucky winners taking home wheels, a board, and other merch thanks to the donations from local sponsor Impact Skate Shop.

CAREER PANEL

On November 19, 2025, the History Department hosted a career panel featuring program alums and a current student. Panelists discussed the paths that led to their careers here at California State University, Bakersfield. The panel featured Bailey Freckleton, SHRM-CP, Assistant to the Vice President of People & Culture and Human Resources Strategic Initiatives Coordinator at CSUB; Emily L. Kopp, MLIS, Sr. Assistant Librarian, Walter W. Stiern Library, CSUB; Christopher Livingston, MA, MLIS, Director, Historical Research Center, CSUB; and Shaina Lumasac, Former Student Assistant, Accessibility Center, CSUB. The panelists responded to planned prompts for the first 45 minutes before taking audience questions for the remainder of the event. The panel was part of a biannual series, organized by Dr. John Chen and Dr. Kate Mulry. Stay tuned for an upcoming spring event.

FACULTY NEWS



Dr. Moisés Acuña-Gurrola (Dr. Mo) contributed to *American Yawp* with his short piece on the history of Hispanic school desegregation cases, "Ethnic Mexican School Desegregation since 1945." The article quickly analyzes the build-up to the landmark 1970 case, *Cisneros v. Corpus Christi Independent School District*, which recognized systemic discrimination against ethnic Mexican students in Texas.

Dr. Mo was featured in the documentary, *Molina: Hardships, Traditions, and Resilience*, which premiered in October of 2025 and has since received accolades from NBC's Corpus Christi, Texas' news affiliate, KRIS-TV, for raising historical awareness of the city's most economically challenged neighborhood. The documentary is free to watch on the NBC KRIS-6 News YouTube channel.

Dr. Douglas Dodd's review of Gary Griggs, *California Catastrophes: The Natural Disaster History of the Golden State* (University of California Press, 2024) was published in *Environmental History* 30:4 (October 2025).

In October, Dr. Douglas Dodd chaired a panel, "Centuries of Change in California," at the annual meeting of the Western History Association, in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Dr. Kate Mulry's paper has been accepted to the Western Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies conference in February. The theme of the conference is "Eighteenth-Century Collaborations," and she will present her paper, "Women, Science, and Archival Erasures in Seventeenth-Century Jamaica." After submitting mentorship proposals in coordination with history students, Dr. Kate Mulry has been invited to mentor Anhar



Prof. Robert Frakes spent the month of July conducting research on the reception of Papinian's legal works in the later Roman Empire at the Leopold Wenger Institute for Ancient Legal History at the University of Munich. He then visited the archaeological site of Phalasarna (where he participated in excavations in 1988 and 1989) to see the fantastic new discoveries at the Temple of Demeter.

Alomaisi (undergrad) and Atlas Tillery (grad) in the Grimm Family Center for Agricultural Business (GFCAB) Student Research Scholars program during the 2025-26 academic year. She also continues to be a member of the Grimm Center's Council of Affiliated Faculty.

Dr. Sean Wempe presented at UCLA's Eugene Weber European History Colloquium Speaker Series, September 30 - October 2, 2025. His presentation drew from his third monograph project, exploring how German colonial and tropical disease experts contributed to League of Nations and Rockefeller Foundation health initiatives in the 1920s-30s and how their work reflected the complexities of international collaboration even into the Nazi era, showing the disturbing continuity of medical racism amidst "soft diplomacy."

SPRING FIELD TRIP TO MANZANAR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE AND THE HISTORIC EASTERN SIERRA

On Saturday, April 18, the History department will take a day trip to Manzanar National Historic Site in California's Eastern Sierra region.

Manzanar was one of the several camps where persons of Japanese ancestry were forcibly imprisoned during World War II (1942-45). Several years of organizing and activism finally led to the addition of Manzanar National Historic Site to the National Park System. Since its designation in 1994, the National Park Service has preserved, rehabilitated, restored, and reconstructed several buildings, structures, and objects that help tell the Manzanar story. Manzanar NHS is also a member site of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, a global network of museums and historic sites dedicated to connecting past struggles with today's movements for human rights.

Besides touring the excellent on-site visitor center/museum and the reconstructed barracks and other camp buildings, we'll also

visit the Eastern California Museum in Independence, and the Eastern Sierra Interagency Visitor Center at Lone Pine, for opportunities to view Mount Whitney (the highest point in California—and the 48 contiguous United States). We'll explore significant stories and locations in the Eastern Sierra region. These include sites related to the Los Angeles-Owens Valley Aqueduct, silver mining, Hollywood in the Alabama Hills, and transportation and industry on the now-vanished Owens Lake.

If you would like to sign up for this trip, please email our department administrative assistant, Charlotte Ziegler (cziegler@csub.edu), by Monday, April 13, to get your name on the list. Please indicate whether you'd be able to drive—and how many others you could accommodate—or if you will need a ride.

Details about departure time, carpools, etc., will be emailed to participants before April 18. If you have questions, please contact Prof. Dodd (ddodd@csub.edu).



For more information, visit the following sites:

Manzanar National Historic Site: <https://www.nps.gov/manz/index.htm>

International Coalition of Sites of Conscience: <https://www.sitesofconscience.org/en/home/>

Eastern California Museum: <http://www.inyocounty.us/ecmsite/>

CONTACT CHARLOTTE ZIEGLER AT CZIEGLER@CSUB.EDU TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT



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