Doss v. Bernal: History, Housing, and Social Justice
M.A. Student Luis Fernandez Presents His Research

In the Fall of 2009, I came across a 1943 TIME Magazine article mentioning a housing covenant case in Fullerton involving a Mexican-American family. The case, Doss v. Bernal, offers a paradigm shift with regards to housing covenants, the historiography of which has largely focused on African-Americans’ legal battles against housing segregation. My research has led me to the Orange County Courthouse and the Los Angeles Superior Court Archives where I recovered court records and expanded the case’s importance by finding cases where Doss v. Bernal was used as a legal precedent.

Research inquiries to the Michigan Law Library allowed me to discover that a legal brief for the case Sipes v. Mcghee cited Doss v. Bernal as a persuasive legal precedent. Sipes v. Mcghee becomes a companion case to U.S. Supreme Court Case Shelley v. Kraemer, which found housing covenants between private parties unenforceable. Additionally, I was able to retrieve the March of Time radio broadcast from the Library of Congress, which dramatized the court case over the airwaves. Upon locating the family, the proverbial “Black Box” of untouched sources came to me in form of a photo album where the family had preserved newspaper clippings, photos and letters pertaining to their parents’ legal victory. Since then, my research made the cover story of the O.C. Weekly titled, “Mi Casa Es Mi Casa: How Fullerton Resident Alex Bernal’s 1943 Battle against Housing Discrimination Helped Change the Course of American Civil Rights.” Doss v. Bernal has been featured in exhibitions at the Fullerton Arboretum’s “New Birth of Freedom: Civil War to Civil Rights in California,” The Old Orange County Courthouse’s, “A Class Action: The Grassroots Struggle for School Desegregation in California” and at La Plaza de Cultura y Artes’, “Voces Vivas.” Doss v. Bernal has also been subject of two academic symposia, one at the Fullerton Public Library and most recently, at UCLA.
OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT RESEARCH
CALL FOR PAPERS AND APPLICATIONS

The Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library and Museum and a Consortium of Universities and Colleges from the Southern California area are hosting the first Student Research Conference on Richard Nixon and His Era. The conference will be held at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library on Friday, April 27, 2012. Southern California undergraduate and graduate students in History, Political Science, and other humanities and social sciences disciplines are invited to submit proposals for papers, posters, or other media (film, exhibits, etc.) by February 3, 2012.

Projects may address any topic regarding the social, economic, political, and cultural aspects of Richard Nixon’s presidency and his times, as well as topics addressing Nixon’s pre- and post-presidential careers. They may also reflect on the dilemmas of presenting to the public topics related to Nixon and his era.

All projects should make use of primary materials, and the proposal should indicate the source of the materials that will be used. We especially welcome proposals for projects that will utilize the archival resources of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library.

Below are some suggested subject areas for proposals:

- The challenges of presenting or exhibiting contending perspectives on President Nixon, his administration, and his time
- Conducting and using oral histories of the Nixon presidency and his era
- The “tapes” and other audio-visual resources on the Nixon presidency – what they can and can’t tell us
- Richard Nixon’s electoral campaigns, including his pre-presidential campaigns for the House of Representatives, U.S. Senate, and Governor of California
- Nixon as a wartime president
- President Nixon’s domestic policies
- President Nixon’s foreign policies
- Social movements during the Nixon era, including those of African Americans (civil rights); women; Hispanics; American Indians; and the anti-war protests.
- Watergate: its long-term and short-term causes and consequences
- The rise of conservatism and conservative politics

Proposers will be informed by March 2, 2012, whether or not their proposal has been accepted for presentation at the conference. The deadline for submission of final papers and projects to panel chairs and discussants will be April 6, 2012. All presentations will be held at the Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, 18001 Yorba Linda Blvd., Yorba Linda, CA 92886, from 10am – 7pm, on April 27, 2012.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE EDITORS AND STAFF OF THE 2011 WELEBAETHAN, recently awarded first prize in the Gerald D. Nash History Journal Award competition of Phi Alpha Theta, the History Honor Society, And to the CSUF Theta-Pi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the winner of the 2011 Nels A. Cleven Award for Best Chapter (Division VI).
The Winning Streak Continues!
Sometimes we tend to forget the lessons we’ve already learned in the past. Back in 2004, I was involved in an incident in Iraq which resulted in the amputation of my entire left arm. During the first few weeks of my recovery in the hospital, I was too busy feeling sorry for myself and being bitter about what happened to me. Then I met a fellow amputee who had lost both his arms. His attitude was completely different than mine. He dealt with his situation with so much positive attitude as if nothing was physically wrong with him. In that moment, my condition did not seem as bad as I previously thought. I learned to put things into perspective. I learned how to push through tough times by having the right attitude.

Several years later, I was in my final year at Cal State Fullerton. I only had to take a few more classes to earn my History degree. Sadly, I found myself burned out with all the work I had to do. I was working full time in the morning, attending classes in the afternoon, and doing homework all night. My entire weekends were spent reading books and writing papers. Again, I started to feel sorry for myself. Sometimes we tend to forget the lessons we’ve already learned… then out of nowhere, someone brings us back into the right path. One teacher whom I consider a great mentor noticed that some students, including myself, were complaining about the amount of work that was required in his class. He responded in a calm manner: “You guys need to realize what a privilege it is for you to be here sitting in this class, with an opportunity to learn and grow. Some people are getting shot at in a warzone, going hungry in some desert, or dealing with a natural disaster. Those people would give everything to trade places with you right now.” From then on, all the papers, exams, and presentations became a blessing instead of a burden. Nothing else stood between me and my goal. That same teacher handed me my diploma on graduation day.

Mervin Roxas
History, 2011

On October 14, Dr. Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi chaired a panel of CSUF History Masters students who presented their research at the 4th Annual CSU Conference on Middle East Studies held at Cal Poly Pomona.

Johanna Peterson presented a chapter from her Masters thesis entitled "The Syrian-Americans: (Re)Defining Identity during the Mandate Period."

Richard Tabor presented his research entitled "A Rabbi and a Sheikh Walk into a Bar . . .: The Roots of Middle Eastern Stand-up Comedy in the United States."

On a professional note, the students and faculty listened attentively to Dr. Jobbitt. He informed us that da Costa was a trained Marxist economist and the first president of Sao Tome and Principe. Pinto da Costa was in office when the one-party socialist state transformed into a multi-party democratic union. Da Costa spent his career pursuing socioeconomic enhancements for Sao Tome and Principe. He has opportunities to correct the economic, political, and social problems Sao Tome and Principe experienced since the 1980s. The department should plan another installment after Dr. Jobbitt finishes additional research regarding missing funds. Dr. Jobbitt, follow the money!
Bringing the Past to Life: The Center for Oral and Public History

The Center for Oral and Public History was selected as one of the five strategic initiatives adopted by the Cal State Fullerton Philanthropic Foundation Board in 2009. These initiatives are the focus of the Board’s fundraising efforts for the next five years. With the support and assistance of the Philanthropic Foundation Task Force, the Center has developed a fundraising plan that includes a new state of the art archival facility and student collaborative learning space to be located on the 6th floor of Pollak Library South.

This new climate-controlled space will allow COPH to create optimal conditions in which to store its aging audio and video interviews, photographs, and paper documents. The renovated space will house a conference room/gallery where individual students can mount small historical exhibitions as well as serve as a meeting place for history students and researchers when they need access to materials in COPH’s collection. Finally, this renovation project will include a student project room, which will allow for unique collaboration between history majors and graduate students enrolled in oral and public history courses with student interns and researchers working on a particular COPH project. Here, for example, students downloading recent oral histories they conducted will be able to engage in informal learning through casual conversation with students mocking up exhibit panels and completing research.

In addition, COPH will be raising endowment funds to secure permanent funding for staff positions and the equipment needed to keep up with rapidly changing technology. The goal is to raise $8.5 million. With this new fundraising initiative COPH wants to build on its strengths and enhance the services and programs the Center offers history students, the university, and the larger Southern California community.

Mission Statement:

The Center for Oral and Public History (COPH) - a component of the Department of History and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at California State University, Fullerton - embraces a two-fold mission. First, COPH collects and preserves the stories of distinctive individuals and diverse communities whose historical experiences have shaped the collective memory of Southern California, defined national and transnational identities, and reflected life in an era of globalization. Second, COPH undertakes and provides support services for public history projects, particularly those designed to share oral histories with students, scholars, and public audiences in Southern California and beyond. Ultimately, COPH seeks to combine the strengths of oral history and public history in order to build better connections between Cal State Fullerton and the communities - local, national, and global - to which it is tied.
Faculty Publications, Presentations, and Awards

- Dr. Gayle K. Brunelle attended the Western Society for French History Conference November 10-13, where she presented her paper, “The Sad Tale of Nicolas Papin,” based on her research for her monograph project Tropical Chimeras: France in Guiana, 1604-1665.
- Dr. Amy Essington presented “The Integration of the Pacific Coast League: A Social History of Race on the West Coast” at the Western Historical Association Conference (October 2011). She also published the entries “Rob Carew,” “Larry Doby,” “Josh Gibson,” “Rickey Henderson,” and Kenneth Washington” for Great Lives from History: African Americans. (Salem Press, September 2011).

Alumni Publications


Murder in the Métro

The 1937 murder of Laetitia Toureaux, the first murder ever committed on the Paris Metro, is the subject of a special opening episode of “Les crimes presque parfaits,” a series on the Planete + Justice Channel in France.

The link to the episode is: http://www.programme-tv.net/programme/cultureInfos/c29983-des-crimes-presque-parfaits/3073422-laetitia-toureaux-le-criminal-mysterieux-du-metro/

The documentary, which received a five-star critical rating, features Annette Finley-Croswhite discussing the research she and Gayle K. Brunelle performed for their book Murder in the Metro: Laetitia Toureaux and the Cagoule in 1930s France, as well as images that have never before been published related to the murder. It is worth catching if you are in France now, or will be in January, when it will be aired again several times - of course it will help if you speak French. The director, M. Patrick Schmidt, is now planning another episode focused on the sequel to Murder in the Metro that Brunelle and Finley-Croswhite just finished researching.

“What’s in Poland?”

“You’re going where?” This is the response I often received when I excitedly informed people of my trip to Poland in September. It was often followed by, “What’s in Poland?” I will now attempt to adequately explain what it was I did in Poland.

I had the great honor of being allowed to present during the graduate student session at the Ordines Militares conference in Toruń, Poland. This could not have happened without the assistance of my advisor and the H&SS Dean’s Office, for which I would like to say thank you. The Ordines Militares conference is an international conference dedicated to the study of the military orders. The reason that the conference is held in Toruń is due to the influence of the Teutonic Order in the area. In fact, the city itself was created around a Teutonic castle, the ruins of which are still present. However, aside from the amazing medieval history in Poland, the opportunity to meet the pillars of my field of study was more than I could have hoped for.

There were many moments when I thought to myself, “This is what other people must feel like when they meet a movie star,” as I talked with the scholars whose books and articles I routinely cite in my papers, including the one I presented. I was amazed at how much they seemed to care about my research and the great advice I received from many of them. There was no competition or trying to get the upper hand over other scholars. Everyone was so willing to exchange ideas and even share research. Despite all this, I did feel left out regarding one thing.

I was the only person who attended the conference who was not at least bilingual. Many of the scholars were fluent in three or more languages. This conference definitely showed me the importance of languages in historical study even if only to be able to communicate with other scholars in my field. Next time I attend, I plan on being able to speak fluent enough German that I can understand the papers presented in that language.

I have presented at many conferences, but this was by far my favorite and I believe the one that taught me the most about my field of interest as well as about myself as a scholar. I greatly encourage students in the history program to get out there and present their research at as many conferences as they can and to learn languages. Neither one can hurt you and will enrich not just your academic experience, but your overall quality of life.

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Meet Some of Our Newest Graduates!

Andrew Jones: “After graduating in January I plan on applying for the credential program at CSUF. Probably my favorite history class at CSUF was the History of World War II with Dr. McLain; being able to hear guest speakers discuss their experiences during the war is something I will never forget.”

Jennifer L. Keil: “After graduating I will pursue a graduate degree in American Twentieth Century Studies with a concentration on women and minorities. My favorite class at CSUF was HIST 386B, American Social History 1865-1930. I am a member of both the History Students Association and Phi Alpha Theta.”

Marisa Gilardoni: “After graduation I am going to get my single subject credential in social sciences. My favorite classes were 300A (Historical Thinking) and 300B (Historical Writing) with Dr. Gunther, and Dr. Rast’s class on the western frontier (History 481A, The American West).”

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!