Hayter Young Grant Reports (Summer 2015)

Hayter-Young Grants ($250) are used to support MA student research or small PhD projects. We awarded two of these grants in summer 2014. Here is how the recipients used their funds:

John Alcalde (Ph.D.), “The Language of Citizenship: Italian Immigrants and English Fluency in the American Courthouse, 1875-1921”

The Earl W. Hayter and Alfred F. Young Endowments helped fund my research at the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, where I studied Municipal Court of Chicago and probate cases. These cases helped me to examine the link between whiteness, English fluency and citizenship. The non-English fluent immigrants were legally white, but their status as non-English speakers created uncertainty over their capacity to be citizens. I explored these connections via the study of Municipal Court of Chicago and probate legal cases where non-English speakers were present. I am using the term non-English speaker in an expansive way, from those people who lacked any kind of English language linguistic skill to those who only “spoke with an accent.” As some cases show, the American legal system was capable of granting some additional protection to non-English speakers because they were perceived as weak and vulnerable, and therefore deemed worthy of special privilege. Non-English speakers were at a clear disadvantage because they received graces granted by sympathetic judges rather than rights guaranteed to citizens. In some cases, unable to communicate directly with the jury or judge or to fully understand the whole legal process, non-English speaking witnesses and parties had to rely on courtroom interpreters, which many times were unable to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate translations. The shortages of courtroom translation were considerable. Misinterpretation and cross-cultural communication was common. My thanks to the Earl W. Hayter and Alfred F. Young Endowments for helping fund this great research opportunity.

Large Grant Reports (Summer 2015)

Large Grants (up to $1,000) support summer research projects for History graduate students. In 2014 we awarded nine of these grants. Here is how the funds supported the recipients’ research:

Scott Abel, (Ph.D.), “Nineteenth-Century Malay Shipping”

With the funding from the NIU History Department’s Large Grant program and the Clark and Arlene Neher Fellowship from the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, I embarked on a research trip in England to find materials for my dissertation about shipping and piracy in the Straits of Malacca and South China Sea during the 19th century. In large part because of planning while still in the United States, I already knew what documents I wanted to find there, which helped save significant time. Although I did not retrieve all the documents listed, I found and examined
many more than I expected because of generous digital camera policies at the British Library and the National Archives of Great Britain. Aside from those two institutions in London, I also visited the London Metropolitan Archives and the Cambridge University Library during my trip this past May. Overall, the research trip was successful in that I acquired more documents than previously expected, but I failed to find sufficient economic and statistical data in order to consider my research completed. I appreciate the assistance rendered by the NIU History Department and the Clark and Arlene Neher Fellowship because it has proven invaluable in obtaining the necessary materials for completing my dissertation. After a few years of collecting information, I am confident that I will quickly wrap up the final stages of research collection this summer.

John Alcalde (Ph.D.), “The Language of Citizenship: Italian Immigrants and English Fluency in the American Courthouse, 1875-1921”

The Large Summer Research Grant allowed me to conduct archival research in the Illinois State Archives in Springfield Illinois. At that archive, I studied Illinois Supreme Court case files that helped explore the link between cultural performance, of which English fluency is a key element, and legal competency. These court cases have reinforced my view that English fluency and cultural performance has been central to constructions of legal competency. Cultural performance, and the English fluency supposedly associated with it, was the representation of a set of moral and cultural principles. Those principles were essential for the proper workings of any legal contract between two or more citizens, as they proved fitness for self-government. These cases present multiple examples of a “legally white” participants in the legal process being suspected because they lacked fluency in English or cultural performance. These examples drawn from the Gilded Age and Progressive Era present two competing tendencies in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era American legal system: nativism and paternalism. These cases help to explore the ways that nativist ideas increasingly clashed with claims to respectability and paternalism in American society. As such, this kind of litigation helps to answer an important analytical question: what was the importance of English fluency and cultural performance in the discourses of legal competency? I am grateful that the Northern Illinois University Department of History Large Grant gave me the opportunity to explore these sources with this generous award.

Christopher W. Anderson (M.A.), “Non-Mormons and Mormons in Illinois, Missouri, and Utah”

Thanks to the generous support of the NIU Department of History Large Grant, I was able to conduct research for two weeks in May and June 2015. My Master’s thesis examines the experiences of non-Mormon individuals who lived within early Mormon communities in Missouri, Illinois, and Utah. The Large Grant funded my research trip to the Missouri State Archives in Jefferson City, Missouri, as well as the Research Center of the Utah State Historical
Society and the J. Willard Marriott Library at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, and the L. Tom Perry Special Collection at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. While there, I examined the manuscript collections of Salt Lake City merchants, Jewish pioneers, military personnel and government officials and found that the Mormon conception of community and inclusivity shifted over time and depended heavily on their perceived security. Perhaps the most exciting piece of evidence was an autobiography written by a Mormon apostate and prominent merchant in Salt Lake City that described the economic motives behind their withdrawal from the church and the consequences of the Latter-day Saint’s general boycott of non-Mormon merchants in 1866. My experience would not have been possible without the Large Grant, and I am deeply thankful for the opportunity.

Ian Burns (Ph.D.), “Volunteering in Ireland, 1908-23”

Funds from the Department of History’s Large Grant facilitated my archival research trip in Dublin, Ireland during June 2015. While in Dublin, I conducted dissertation research at number of institutions including the National Library of Ireland, the National Archives of Ireland, as well as the archives of University College Dublin and Trinity College Dublin. This research revealed a wealth of information in the form of memoirs, personal correspondence, circular pamphlets, internal memoranda, as well as miscellaneous ephemera —ranging from commemorative funerary programs to hastily written notes on parading and proper marching technique — all related to paramilitary volunteer associations in Ireland from 1912-1918. These sources form the core of my dissertation chapters on the development of the Irish Volunteers during the Third Home Rule Crisis and First World War, providing a window into the inner workings of this nationalist organization during the period of the Irish Revolution.

Heeyoung Choi (Ph.D.), “Performing Arts and Cultural Interactions Between Ethnic Groups: The Music and Dance of Korean Immigrants in 20th Century Hawai’i”

The Large Grant program provided an opportunity to trace musical nationalism in the Korean diaspora by examining sources on Korean music, both in and out of the Korean peninsula during the early twentieth century. The grant funded my travel and activities in South Korea from May 20 to June 20, 2015. I searched archival resources and secondary sources at the National Gukak Center, the National Assembly Library of the Republic of Korea, the Academy of Korean Studies, among other places. Findings from this trip offered a strong basis to identify primary and secondary sources that confirmed the diversification of the performing arts during the colonial period, including performing repertories, infrastructure of managing artists, and ways to present and appreciate performances. I was also able to find several contemporary studies on Korean music from foreign countries during the colonial era as well. These materials will be used to support the identification, meaning, and transformation of the Korean performing arts during the colonial era. Travel to South Korea also allowed me to establish professional connections with scholars and practitioners, such as the Research Director of the National Gukak
Katrina Chludzinski (Ph.D.), “Anglo-Burman Identities”

Thanks to a Large Grant from the Department of History I was able to conduct dissertation research in Yangon, Myanmar at the Universities Central Library as well as the National Archive. There I examined several newspapers, manuscripts, and governmental correspondence from the first half of the twentieth century searching for discussions of Anglo-Burmans, or people of European and Asian descent. This funding enabled me to add to my previous collection of research concerning the construction of Anglo-Burman ethnic and national identities during colonial and postcolonial Burma. The sources I consulted will contribute to one of my current arguments, that Anglo-Burmans manipulated their identities in hopes of solidifying their safety and security in Burma. During the colonial era, this community tended to identify with their European heritage. However, once it became clear that Burma would gain its independence after WWII, they began to express the need to align with their Asian heritage if they had any hope of surviving culturally as a population. Mainly, they became concerned that unless the government placed safeguards in the new legislation, their small population would be overlooked and perhaps cease to continue as an ethnic community. Therefore, they stressed their Asian identity in order to illustrate to the new Burmese Government that they were truly Burmese, and therefore deserved the government’s protection and cooperation. This opportunity to further my research provided by the Large Summer Research Grant was a privilege and I am very grateful to the Department of History for offering it.

Kevin Luginbill (Ph.D.), “Tariff Reform and British Imperial Politics”

The generous support provided through the Large Grant from the History Department made possible two weeks of exploratory dissertation research at several archives in the United Kingdom. At the Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham I was able to access, transcribe, and photograph the papers and correspondence of the British statesman Joseph Chamberlain, giving particular attention to his work toward initiating and advocating for a set of economic and political reforms meant to federate and unify the British Empire. At the London School of Economics’ archives, I explored the papers of the Tariff Commission, a committee of prominent businessmen established by Chamberlain and designed to conduct research into the state of Britain’s economy and devise policy initiatives he could propose to the country’s electorate. Both archives provided me with an enormous wealth of information about the individuals and groups advocating for imperial reform, the behind-the-scenes political activity, and the popular response to the reform movement that would otherwise have been inaccessible to me, and serves as an invaluable foundation for my future dissertation work. The funds provided
by the Large Summer Research Grant were instrumental in making this successful research trip possible.