2014 Summer History Research Grants

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

William “Buddy” Avila (M.A.) My sincerest thanks go to the Earl W. Hayter and Alfred F. Young Endowments for their generous support of my research trip in June 2014. This grant allowed me to expand my research on representations of HIV/AIDS in American comic books of the 1980s through a visit to the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum. Part of The Ohio State University’s library system, the items housed by the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum constitute one of the world’s foremost archives for the study of American comic books. The aim of my research trip centered on examining Comics Buyer’s Guide, a now-defunct weekly periodical dedicated to comic book industry news and criticism. Because Comics Buyer’s Guide has not been digitized and indexed, the only technique for searching the periodical is to laboriously move issue-by-issue, page-by-page. In the span of five days, I poured through hundreds of issues of Comics Buyer’s Guide between the years 1983 and 1995. The sources I accumulated as part of this summer’s archival investigation will greatly enhance both my current and future scholarship on the subject of late-20th century American popular culture.

Mat Billings (Ph.D.) The Earl W. Hayter and Alfred F. Young Endowments helped fund my research trip to Dublin, Ireland this summer, where I completed the necessary work for my dissertation. The larger project investigates what “politics” meant to ordinary Irish-Americans during the 1820s and 30s. For comparative context, I needed several weeks abroad to explore what “politics” meant to working-class people in Ireland. Specifically, the Hayter-Young Endowment enabled me to search for answers to this question at the Irish Folklore Collection at the University College Dublin. These archives present scholars with opportunities to explore the rich oral traditions of Ireland, which – despite temporal distance between the 1820s and their collection – suggest some compelling answers to my overall question. The Irish Folklore Collection contains vernacular histories of ordinary Irish people recorded in the 1930s. Many of these accounts were gathered by trained folklorists, while others were the reports of students asked to interview family members and document their stories. I read through dozens of these vernacular histories on the topics of secret societies, popular politics, and the seminal figure in Irish electoral politics—Daniel O’Connell. These accounts suggest that Irish politics of the working classes not only intersected in formal and informal spaces, but they reflected regional distinctions as well. I am exceedingly grateful for the Hayter-Young Endowment in helping to facilitate this work!

Nicole Dressler (Ph.D.) I was honored to receive a grant from the Earl W. Hayter and Alfred F. Young Endowments which allowed me to conduct archival research exploring the eighteenth-century British convict trade. I investigated the extent to which eighteenth-century men and women expressed their moral attitudes towards the trade in legal and public discourses. With funding from the Endowment, I traveled to the Newberry Library and the Richard J. Daley
Library at the University of Illinois at Chicago. From the sources, I have concluded that after the
1750s, moral sentiment expressed towards convicts increased, as a rising number of British
lawmakers and philanthropists called for the trade’s cessation or for better conditions for
convicts as laborers. I am most grateful that the Hayter-Young Endowment afforded me the
opportunity to expand my research.

Wayne Duerkes (M.A.) With the assistance of the Hayter-Young Grant, I was able to travel to
the LaSalle County Courthouse to examine probate records and court files to support my M.A.
research project. The project examines the development of a regional market centered at the
confluence of the Fox and Illinois rivers from 1833 to 1852. By examining the probate records, I
was able to develop an understanding of the types of personal property that individuals
purchased and kept during the time period. The records were detailed enough to demonstrate the
depth of the capital some professions, including carpenters, blacksmiths, and farmers, had to
invest in order to be active in the market. It also showed a much more extensive collection of
household items that might normally be expected in a frontier home. Additionally, the court files
offered insight into many of the legal proceedings during the era. They illustrated the prevalence
of lawsuits that involved financial matters including debt and insolvency. The combination of
these records helps me explore the complexity of the market system in the West during the 1830s
and 1840s. My thanks to the Earl W. Hayter and Alfred F. Young Endowments for making this
research possible.

Ben Schmack (M.A.) The Earl W. Hayter and Alfred F. Young Endowments funded a three-
day summer research trip to the Illinois State Archives in Springfield Illinois. Using these funds,
I studied a specific Illinois Supreme Court case file that is central to my current research on the
involvement of Communist activists in the trial of a group of radical coal miners in the southern
Illinois company town of Zeigler during the mid-1920s. This grant allowed me to gain greater
knowledge of the day-to-day happenings of the trial, as well as the specific ethnic backgrounds
of the mostly eastern European miners. The transcript and affidavits contained in the case file
showed that xenophobia played a central factor in the case built by the prosecution and that
mostly contradictory evidence was used to convict eight of the thirteen charged miners. These
findings bolster my argument that Communist activists used the anti-foreigner and anti-worker
sentiment of the Zeigler trial, in conjunction with their connections to the convicted members
of the local and the International Labor Defense, as a rallying cry to keep radical sentiment alive in
the region during the mid-1920s. The Hayter-Young grant helped my research significantly and
I am most grateful the support I received.

Journey Steward (Ph.D.) A generous grant from the Earl W. Hayter and Alfred F. Young
Endowments facilitated my travel to the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College in
Pennsylvania this summer. The library houses the O. Edward Janney Papers, a collection
spanning seventy years (1874-1945) of social reform efforts. Janney founded the National
Vigilance Commission, one of the American organizations that was active in efforts to stop the
“white slave trade.” The collection includes Janney’s own writings, syllabi he developed to
teach courses on morality and sexuality at Swarthmore College and his church, and speeches that
Large Grant Awards
Large Grants (around $1,000) support Ph.D. summer research projects. In 2014 we awarded seven of these grants. Here is how the funds supported the recipients’ research:

Scott Abel (Ph.D.) I conducted research in Singapore over the summer of 2014, where I visited the National Library, the National Archives, and the National University of Singapore. There I found valuable information on piracy, trading, and politics in the Straits of Malacca area, which included both quantitative and qualitative information. The most important material found at the National Library were the Blue Books or Annual Reports of the Straits Settlements, which detailed information on piratical attacks and some information on trade and commerce. The National Archives contained various reports on piracy in the Straits of Malacca and the mission to suppress it. I found information in a series of letters between concerned merchants of Singapore and R. Adm. Owen who gave intelligence and suggestions on how to best defeat the pirates in the area. I found petitions that begged for the suppression of piracy around the Malay Peninsula so that regular trading may resume. Importantly, I found ships’ registries for Singapore starting in the year 1858, which chronicled all the western-style vessels of significant size operating out of the port. People from the various organizations were quite helpful in assisting me find the relevant information. My thanks to the History Department Foundation for the financial support.

Greg Bereiter (Ph.D.) Thanks to a Large Summer Research Grant from the Department of History, I was able to conduct dissertation research at a number of municipal and departmental archives throughout eastern and southern France, in cities such as Dijon, Mâcon, Béziers, Carcassonne, and Toulouse. I examined, transcribed, and photographed an extensive range of primary sources describing the involvement of French clergy in organized religious violence during the Catholic League period of the French Wars of Religion (1562-1629). These sources include manuscript correspondence, city council deliberations, cathedral and collegiate chapter proceedings, legal depositions, and miscellaneous administrative and ecclesiastical records. Funding from the Department of History permitted me to complete the final segment of research for my doctoral dissertation, which investigates the martial practices of extremist Catholic clerics at the height of France’s protracted Wars of Religion. I am sincerely grateful to the Department of History for this generous award.

Mat Billings (Ph.D.) A Large Grant from the History Department enabled me to complete dissertation research in Dublin, Ireland at several archives. There, I considered what “politics” meant to ordinary Irish people during the pre-Famine years. At the National Library, I consulted a vast collection of contemporary newspapers, as well as published and unpublished sources on elections in the 1820s and 30s. At Trinity College Dublin, I examined the state papers of Major Charles Henry Sirr, who recorded and commented on the statements of informants. And at the
National Archives, I explored the State of the Country Papers and the Outrage Papers to see how formal and informal politics changed over time in various counties. Overall, the Large Grant has helped me conclude that the politics of ordinary Irish people reflected not only the influences of Daniel O’Connell – the great “Liberator” of Catholic Emancipation – but regional variations reflective of rival Catholic secret societies as well. Again, I offer the sincerest thanks to the History Department for their funding!

Heeyoung Choi (Ph.D.) The Large Grant program provided a unique opportunity for me to trace the influence of performing arts on nationalism and on multi-cultural interactions between immigrants – particularly Korean plantation workers – during early 20th century Hawai`i. The grant funded my travel and activities in Hawai`i for over two weeks in June, where I searched archival resources at the University of Hawaii Library, Center for Korean Studies, Halla Huhm Korean Dance Studio, and the Hawai`i State Archives, among other places. Findings from this trip provided a strong basis to identify primary sources that confirmed the role of performing arts, which solidified national identity and promoted cultural interactions between immigrant workers who were deliberately and structurally separated by their plantation employers. Travel to Hawai`i also allowed establishing connections with scholars and practitioners who provided invaluable support and advice in my research. I will be using the primary data collected from this trip to expand my current thinking of how cultural convergence occurred during this period and plan to merge these findings to develop my dissertation. The opportunity to search and review primary resources that supported my ideas was truly exciting, and I thank the History Department and the Large Grant program for making these studies possible.

Nicole Dressler (Ph.D.) In June 2014, I was honored to receive the Northern Illinois University Department of History Large Grant which allowed me to continue my research investigating runaway indentured servants and convict servants in eighteenth-century America. With funding from the Large Grant, I traveled to five archives in Pennsylvania and Maryland. At these repositories, I examined servitude contracts, personal notebooks, registration records, and judicial documents regarding the selection of servants as well as their working conditions. These records have solidified my view that runaways asserted control over their own bodies, formed common bonds with laborers, and ran away to forge new lives as free people. Therefore, runaway indentured servants and convict servants engaged in activities that not only contributed to colonists’ worries over labor management, but also directly challenged colonial authority and the institutions of coerced labor in the mainland colonies. I am most grateful that the Northern Illinois University Department of History Large Grant afforded me the opportunity to expand my research.

Matt Jagel (Ph.D.) The Large Summer Research Grant offered me an opportunity to augment my dissertation research, already conducted in various archives in Cambodia and the United States. My research focuses on the relations between the United States and Cambodia from the end of the Second World War until the collapse of the Khmer Republic in 1975. The method of examination is to view this relationship through the lens of Son Ngoc Thanh, Prime Minister of
Cambodia under the Japanese, who turned dissident and rebelled against the Norodom Sihanouk government. Over the years, he shifted from anti-French to anti-monarchal in his approach. Initially a feared enemy of the United States with respect to its policies vis-à-vis Cambodia, he eventually began work for the CIA and later returned to the government following the coup of 1970 that brought Lon Nol to power. The George McT. Kahin Collection, located at Cornell University, and the T. D. Allman Collection, located at Harvard included a variety of materials, notably on the late 1960s and early 1970s that have been essential to filling in the existing gaps in my research. In addition to the substantial collection of, for example, materials on the Khmer Serei dissident group located at Cornell, or the firsthand accounts of the 1970 coup that transformed Cambodia located at Harvard, both archives were home to interviews with Son Ngoc Thanh, which have been difficult to come across in other archival endeavors. I am thankful for the opportunity to conduct such meaningful research this past summer.

Journey Steward (Ph.D.) The generous Large Grant Award from the History Department allowed me to conduct one month’s doctoral research in Paris, France this past summer. I conducted most of my research in the Archives Nationales which houses hundreds of files on the “traite des blanches” (“white slave trade”), prostitution, and socialist feminist reform movements that targeted the white slave trade. Files I consulted included those from the Ministère de la Justice, emigration records, Reglementation Française, Papiers d’Identité, and Traités Diplomatiques from the mid-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century. I also found important materials at the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, whose collection included pamphlets from the proceedings in addition to two original popular contemporary novels about the white slave trade. The popular novels are especially exciting as they show what information the French public might have consumed about the traite des blanches. This information is pivotal to my dissertation and I have already begun writing my first chapter, which discusses the ways in which the white slave trade and its attendant social and political panics emerged in France and in the United States.