

New England Regional World History Association Minutes, Spring 2015

NERWHA met for its 2015 Spring Symposium at Northeastern University on 28 March. With thanks to Heather Streets-Salter, chair of the Department of History and director of Northeastern's World History Center, Dr. Uta G. Poiger, dean of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, the faculty and staff of Northeastern's Department of History, and Ms. Sara Christopher of Salem State University, who served as both the pre-symposium registrar and on-site coordinator on the day of the symposium, the symposium proved to be one of the most successful in recent memory.

Sixty-two registrants were treated to a day-long series of round tables centered on the theme "World History via the Northeastern Passage," which was crafted as a means of honoring Patrick Manning, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of World History at the University of Pittsburgh, for his contributions to world history at Northeastern, where he founded its World History Ph.D. program and World History Center in 1994.

The symposium began with warm welcomes from NERWHA President Michele Louro and Dean Poiger. The following description of what came next is by courtesy of our colleague Cristoph Strobel of UMass at Lowell, who tweeted:

"Pat Manning gave a thought-provoking keynote, titled "Locating Africans on the World Stage: A Problem in World History," which linked his interest in world history historiography and 'black history,' two fields in which Pat has made numerous contributions. His lecture provided a discussion of the development of the two fields, but also addressed the "problem of maturation" that came as "result of the achievements" in the field of world and African diaspora history. Pat also noted the failure by numerous scholars who embraced world historical perspectives to adequately bring sub-Saharan Africa into their narratives.

"There were several consecutive panels that spoke to Pat's dramatic impact on the field of world history. The first was a round-table tribute to and celebration of Pat by several of his former graduate students. "The Legacies and Influence of Pat Manning as Graduate Advisor" featured David Kalivas (Middlesex Community College), who chaired the session, as well as Yinghong Cheng (Delaware State University), Eric Martin (Lewis-Clark State University), and Parker James (Brandeis University). The next panel, chaired by Jeffrey Ravel (MIT), featured a discussion of several recent Ph.Ds as well as graduate students: Burleigh Hendrickson (Boston College), Holger Droessler (Harvard University), Rachel Gillette (Harvard University), and Malcolm Purinton (Northeastern University). This was followed by a round table that provided various reflections on the World History Center and its impact on training teachers at the secondary level. The discussion included Whitney Howarth (Plymouth State University), James Diskant (John D. O'Bryant School of Math and Science) [Jim and Whitney both worked at the center], Angela Lee (Weston High School), Rebecca Vizulis (Dover-Sherborn High School), and Jeremy Greene (Chelmsford High School).

"The final panel, "World History Research Now," was chaired by Gretchen Heefner (Northeastern University). It featured several noted historians: Erez Manela (Harvard University), Prasannan Parthasarathi (Boston College), Govind Sreenivasan (Brandeis

University), and Carolien Stolte (Leiden University). While these historians do not necessarily self-identify as “world historians,” they raised several compelling and important questions that the field of world history should not ignore.”

To Christoph’s excellent summary of the symposium’s main events, this Secretary should add that in a surprise ceremony that was witness to the deep affection that Pat Manning’s former students have for him, five alumni presented Pat with a plaque of appreciation and a bottle of fine wine. As his former students, one after another, emphasized, Pat created at Northeastern a deeply bonded cohort of young scholars whom he emboldened and empowered to strive for excellence. Given that reality, it is fitting that the words of that plaque be entered into the official minutes. We are indebted to David Kalivas who forwarded the inscription (and its wording appears to bear his strong imprint).

The World History Journey Award

Presented on this day, March 28, 2015, for commitment and dedication as professor and mentor to

Patrick Manning

In *Ithaka*, Cavafy beckons us to focus on life as a voyage without concern for final destinations. Pat has always journeyed forward and we honor him with this award to declare our esteem and affection as we wish him continued journeys filled with joy and discovery.

*As you set out for Ithaka
hope the voyage is
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.*

For the enrichment of the soul, a bottle of wine – Orogeny 2012 Pinot Noir Orogeny comes from the Greek words for the birth of mountains. We offer this wine as a symbol that like tectonic shifts that gave birth to the Russian River Valley and gave this wine its name, Pat has been a creative force establishing conditions that gave birth and shape to many careers as a dedicated steward of the world history flame!

David M. Kalivas Eric L. Martin Yinghong Cheng H. Parker James Jeffrey Sommers

Let this Secretary also add that he came away with two notable statements from the various round table discussions that he wishes to memorialize as quotable quotations: “World historians are not world conquerors; they are world travelers.” and “World history is not an ideology.” These are wise words that we should all take to heart.

A brief NERWHA Business Meeting, chaired by Vice-President James Diskant, followed the symposium’s academic sessions. During that meeting, Jim spoke of NERWHA’s relationship with the World History Association (whose new executive director, Kerry Vieira was in the audience) and urged that all NERWHA members join the WHA. He further noted that NERWHA has a new, more-user-friendly website, and solicited items for a forthcoming NERWHA Newsletter. Treasurer David Burzillo reported on the association’s healthy financial state and announced that NERWHA has 32 dues-paying members for 2015. He further noted that NERWHA will be awarding its first annual travel grant for a graduate student who is presenting a paper at the upcoming WHA annual conference in Savannah and that, unique among all WHA affiliates, NERWHA sends an annual contribution to the WHA as a means of showing its support of its parent organization. The NERWHA Secretary announced that the Fall symposium will be held 9-10 October 2015 at Bryant University in Smithfield, Rhode Island (not 16-17 October as originally scheduled and announced). Its theme will be “Genocide in World History,” and already proposals were coming in as a response to the Call for Participants that went out through several media, including H-World.

Following these brief remarks, a symposium survey was handed out, an appeal was made for all of the symposium’s participants to join NERWHA, and a free raffle was held in which books were handed out to 13 winners.

This long day of activities, which had commenced at 8:00 AM, concluded with a reception from 6:00 to 7:30 PM hosted by the Dean’s Office of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities. Tables groaned under generous amounts of fine foods, and wine, beer, and soft drink were available in equally generous amounts. In brief, a good time was had by all who managed to stay the course and remain for the Business Meeting and reception.

Respectfully submitted,

Alfred J. Andrea
NERWHA Secretary