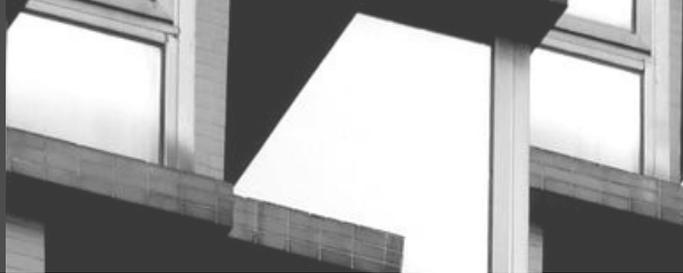


**GSA**

**GERMAN STUDIES  
ASSOCIATION  
NEWSLETTER**

XLVI, NUMBER 2 - SUMMER 2021

**2021**



Welcome to the first ever summer edition of the GSA newsletter! Please note that our preliminary schedule is available on our website. Please check it carefully and let us know about issues as soon as possible and by August 10 at the latest. You will note that we still have many panels that need commentators and moderators, both virtually and in person. Please, please volunteer if something strikes your fancy (and you are not already doing two "jobs"). Changes made after 15 August will not be reflected in the published program. [Online conference registration and meal reservations](https://www.thegsa.org/members/conference) for the 45th annual conference of the GSA in Indianapolis, IN are now open at [www.thegsa.org/members/conference](https://www.thegsa.org/members/conference). Register soon!



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# LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

I am happy to report that the program for the Forty-Fifth Annual German Studies Association conference is coming together quite nicely. The members of the Program Committee have helped shape the conference by spreading the word about our annual meeting last winter; drawing upon their expertise to evaluate panel, seminar, and roundtable proposals; finding the common themes and issues to form panels out of individually submitted proposals; and, finally, sharing the results of their work with the Operations Director Benita Blessing, and the Executive Director Margaret Menninger, and with me, the Program Director. This is a great deal to handle under normal circumstances, but, as we all know, last year's conference shifted to virtual format due to the Covid-19 pandemic and almost half of presenters decided to postpone giving their papers until 2021. We've been pleased that everyone has been understanding that it's been a bit complicated for the Program Committee to combine postponed sessions as well as integrate new proposals for seminars, panels, and roundtables. Before I provide a brief preview of the program, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude to the Program Committee for the work they have done over the last months. Scott Pincikowski, Samuel Frederick, Kathrin Paehler, Julia Torrie, Christopher Koné, Beverly Weber, Carol Hager, Dominic Nyhuis, Sai Bhatawadekar, Julia Roos, Verena Hutter, Michelle Kahn, Adrienne Merritt, Elizabeth Drummond, Richard Langston, and Kevin Amidon have been amazing colleagues to collaborate with and have done an excellent job putting things together for the conference. Thank you.

Working together, it was a treat to gain insight into some of the questions being asked most frequently today in German Studies. While the majority of the session proposals focus on topics from the twentieth- and twenty-first-centuries, it was of great value to read numerous abstracts from our colleagues and friends working in earlier periods. Their proposals gave us previews of exciting emerging research on contagion in the Medieval and Early Modern, Goethe and sexism, as well as critical approaches to material texts and archives. The fascinating proposals that address such diverse areas as Jewish Studies, Game Studies, Asian-American Studies, Legal Studies, the Environmental Humanities, and Comic Studies are truly a testament to the interdisciplinary richness of our field. Likewise, there were a strong number of submissions addressing race, gender, sexuality, ability, indigeneity, as well as colonialism, migration, refugees, and minoritized voices. All of the members of the Association are teachers and mentors, and I am delighted that there have been a growing number of seminars and panels dedicated to pedagogical research and innovative teaching methods over the last few years. I am especially looking forward to the two panels organized by Ela Gezen and Heikki Lempa, one a collaboration and exchange among K-16 educators, and the other a showcase for undergraduate research.

Of course, there's more to the conference than seminars and panel sessions; we have other events planned, some virtual and some in-person, and some taking place before the conference gets started. In addition to a new member meeting (a virtual meeting the week before the conference), Arts Night (a virtual event on September 28), lunchtime talks (one with next generation scholars and one a conversation with Fatima El-Tayeb), an awards ceremony, a banquet address by Past President Johannes von Moltke, receptions, and network meetings, I would like to draw your attention to a plenary forum that should not be missed. The Program Committee has set aside time when no other panel sessions will take place so all of us can join a special virtual conversation moderated by the GSA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee. In this collaborative, discussion-based session, **"From Intent to Action: Inclusionary Practices for the GSA,"** we will be grappling with urgent questions facing our organization and higher education: Are we welcoming to all the Association's members? Are our governance structures transparent and inclusive? Which forms of public engagement, teaching, service, and scholarship do we consider legitimate, and why?

In closing, it's July, conference and hotel registration are open, and I'm sure that some of you are quite curious about what the 2021 virtual and in-person GSA conference will be like in the fall. We are, too. Not everyone will be able to attend the conference in person this time around for a number of very good reasons. We appreciated your prompt responses to our preference survey and your direct email messages when your plans changed. We are working to create a schedule that, we hope, will work for you wherever in the world you may be in the week of September 28–October 3, 2021. We will be delighted to see you in person again whenever the time is right for you—this year in Indianapolis or at a future conference.

Vance Byrd, Grinnell College  
Program Director

# CONFERENCE INFORMATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

As a reminder, this conference will have both in-person and virtual meetings. In-person panels and roundtables will not be available for virtual participants, but everyone may attend virtual panels and roundtables (see information in the FAQ section on our website). Additionally, we will have both virtual and in-person special events. We are still working on the technical details for filming in person special events, but these will not be available to stream during the conference itself.

Indianapolis no longer has any legal restrictions with respect to mask wearing or distancing. However, we all realize how volatile the situation continues to be. The GSA hopes that all attendees coming to Indiana will be vaccinated by the time they arrive; we will not be requesting proof of vaccination to attend the conference in Indianapolis. We do encourage continued mask wearing for everyone who wishes to do so. We will have masks available and other equipment available. We will keep our [conference website](#) updated.

[Registration for both formats](#) are now available at [www.thegsa.org/members/conference](http://www.thegsa.org/members/conference). You must first register for the conference to be eligible for our special group rate of US \$189.00 per night at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown (\$189 plus fees and taxes/night, max. 4 guests, valid Sept. 27-Oct. 4 2021). You may only reserve a hotel room at the conference rate by using the link you receive *after* registering. Once registered, you will receive a confirmation email from Johns Hopkins University Press with the link to the special hotel reservation page (check your spam filter if you cannot find it). Do not discard or lose this email! It will serve as your receipt and provide access to hotel reservations at the conference rate. After 1 September, prices for all registration categories will increase by \$10 (with the exception of undergraduates). Exhibitor registration will close on 1 September. If you have any technical issues with payments or the website, please email Ursula Sykes at UDS@press.jhu.edu. Benita Blessing (operations@thegsa.org) will be happy to answer all other questions about the conference, but cannot assist with payments or website problems. Register soon!

**Banquets:** Please note that all meals will be meat-free with vegan and gluten-free options. This is a gesture towards developing environmental best practices for the German Studies Association and keeps the banquet prices as low as possible. For assistance with other dietary requirements, please contact Benita Blessing at operations@thegsa.org. Information about our luncheon and banquet speakers can be found below; please note that you must purchase a meal ticket to attend the talks. [Please donate a meal ticket for a graduate student or emerging scholar!](#) You may always go back to the registration site and purchase them!

**Conference Highlights:** Since this year's conference is both virtual and in person, we are organizing some of our events differently. In-person events will not be streamed to virtual attendees.

- **New Member Meeting** (virtual): This will take place the week before the conference, but after the conference website has gone live. Please stay tuned for details!
- **Arts Night** (virtual): Tuesday, 28 September 2:00pm EDT / 20:00 Uhr in Berlin
- **Food for Thought -- Next Generation Scholarship in German Studies** (in person): Friday 1 October at lunchtime
- **Special Forum "From Intent to Action: Inclusionary Practices for the GSA"** (virtual): Friday 1 October at 2:00PM EDT / 20:00 Uhr in Berlin
- **Presidential Address** (Prof. Johannes von Moltke) (in person): Friday 1 October at dinnertime
- **Conversation with Fatima El-Tayeb** (in person): Saturday 2 October at lunchtime

# GRANTS ARE AVAILABLE!

As of June 1 the GSA has funded fifteen scholars' requests for support for the upcoming conference from the Community Fund. The next deadline for applications is Tuesday, Sept. 7th, 11:59pm PDT. You can find more information and application instructions on the [Community Fund page](#).

Because of the dynamic, changing nature of our conference plans this year, we are funding in the form of a reimbursement of up to \$1,000 for each applicant to offset the 2021 membership fee and conference registration, as well as travel and accommodation expenses related to the conference, should applicants attend the conference in person. Please note that travel from outside North America may also be offset by application to the [GSA Travel Grants](#) assuming all other options have been exhausted. [We welcome contributions to both funds!](#)

## Special Announcement:

AATG members who are attending the GSA Conference in person in 2021 are eligible to apply for conference support through two AATG grants.

If you are attending the GSA conference and are an AATG member, consider [applying for travel support from the AATG](#). This grant supports **in-person conference attendance and travel** for graduate students, teachers of German with fewer than 5 years of teaching experience, Black, Indigenous, or Persons of Color who teach German.

We welcome applications from any AATG member presenting at the GSA conference here: <https://www.aatg.org/page/2021FocusOnFortbildung>

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# MEET THE GSA:

## VICE PRESIDENT SARA HALL

I am an associate professor in the Department of Germanic Studies at the University of Illinois Chicago, where I direct an undergraduate minor in moving image arts, and have stepped into a wide range of administrative roles including Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research, Interim Director of the School of Literatures, Cultural Studies and Linguistics, and Acting Associate Dean in the Honors College and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. It was my urge to solve problems, help steer the course during times of change, and to bring people together for a common cause that inspired me to run for the position of Vice President of the GSA. My research focuses on Weimar cinema and its afterlives, transnational film markets and the mobility of images of history, and economies of gender and sexuality, and has been published in a number of edited volumes as well as German and film and media studies journals, including the *German Studies Review*. Previously I served the organization on the Executive Board, as chair of the graduate essay award committee, and for two terms on the program committee as a representative for twentieth- and twenty-first century Germanistik. Over the past seven months, I have lent my voice to planning the 2021 conference and to discussions around issues related to the past and future of German Studies brought to the Executive Council by various committees. I have also been collaborating with the Interdisciplinary Networks Co-Chairs to update leadership rosters and develop a best practices document that will serve as a model for ways to increase transparency and inclusivity and support your, the membership's, work as in all the vibrant spaces of the GSA. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with your ideas and initiatives!



## TREASURER THOMAS HAAKENSEN

It was an honor to be selected by our German Studies Association Board to serve from 2020 to 2025 as the Treasurer of this amazing organization. But I have very big shoes to fill! My appointment follows the years of service and dedication of the GSA's previous Treasurer, Gerald Fetz. For those of you who worked with Jerry in the role, you will know that I am sincere when I say that I could never replace the great work he did for so many years on behalf of the GSA. Thanks, Jerry!

As GSA Treasurer, my goal is not only to ensure robust and transparent oversight of our budgetary and financial activities, but also to improve our ability to respond to our members' concerns and suggestions. Among these are the desire to see the GSA be more sustainable and responsible with respect to our environmental impact and to grow our organization's resources for our colleagues and friends in precarious employment and/or difficult financial situations.

When I am not "crunching the numbers" for the GSA or enjoying hikes with my dogs Lilly and Simba along the American River in my hometown of Sacramento, California, I focus on my research and my teaching. Although a proud graduate of Midwestern institutions, Drake University and University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, I am in my eighth year at California College of the Arts in San Francisco. I began as part of the college's administrative team as the Associate Provost and am currently Associate Professor in Humanities and Science, teaching a variety of art history, visual studies, and science studies courses. If you would like to know more about my "day job," feel free to take a look at my recently published book, *Grotesque Visions: The Science of Berlin Dada*.

# ELECTIONS

*We are pleased to announce the results of the 2021 elections for three GSA Board positions. All elected members will serve three-year terms (1/1/2022-12/31/2024):*

### **Cultural Studies, Germanistik Member:**

**B. Venkat Mani** (PhD, Stanford University, 2001) is Professor of German and World Literature and past director of the Center for South Asia at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His research focuses on two connected approaches to Migration Studies. The first comprises investigations of literatures of migrants and minorities in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The second constitutes construction of world literature through the concept of Bibliomigrancy. Representative of these two lines of inquiry are his monographs *Cosmopolitical Claims: Turkish German Literatures from Nadolny to Pamuk* (University of Iowa Press, 2007) and *Recoding World Literature: Libraries, Print Culture, and Germany's Pact with Books* (Fordham UP, 2017; winner of the GSA DAAD Prize and the MLA's Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Best Book in German Studies) and more recently, as co-editor, *A Companion to World Literature* (Wiley Blackwell 2020). Mani is part of UW-Madison's "Just Futures" project on Humanities Education for Anti-Racist Literacy (HEAL). Currently, he is a Race, Ethnicity and Indigeneity Fellow at the Institute for Research in the Humanities at UW-Madison working on his book project on refuge and forced migration. Mani is also a member of GSA's first committee on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

### **History Member:**

**Monica Black** (PhD, University of Virginia, 2006) is Associate Professor of History at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Her work focuses on the social and cultural history of Germany in the era of the world wars and in the decades just after WWII. In addition to a number of research articles, essays and a co-edited volume, she has published *A Demon-Haunted Land: Witches, Wonder Doctors, and the Ghosts of the Past in Post-WWII Germany* (Metropolitan / Henry Holt, 2020), and *Death in Berlin: From Weimar to Divided Germany* (Cambridge, 2010), which won the Wiener Library Ernst Fraenkel and the Hans Rosenberg book prizes. She is currently researching two book projects: one on the intersections of history and psychology; the other a wide-ranging cultural history of modern Germany. Black has been a member of the GSA since 2004 and will be chairing this year's Workshop for Emerging Scholars. Black is editor-in-chief of *Central European History* (CEH).

### **Politics, Economics, Society Member:**

**Marie Sumner Lott** (PhD, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, 2008) is an Associate Professor of Music at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia. Lott's research investigates the musical cultures of nineteenth-century Europe with a focus on the composer Johannes Brahms and his contemporaries. She is the author of *The Social Worlds of Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music* (University of Illinois Press, 2015) and numerous articles in edited volumes and peer-reviewed journals. Her 2012 article on Brahms's Op. 51 string quartets, published in the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* (U.K.), won ASCAP's Deems Taylor Award for outstanding writing about concert music. Her current research project focuses on Romantic Medievalism in the music of Brahms and his affiliates; travel to Germany for archival work on this project was supported by a GSU Research Initiation Grant and a Provost's Faculty Fellowship grant. Lott has participated in several GSA meetings as a presenter, panelist, and seminar member.

# GOOD NEWS

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## NEH Awards

Join us in congratulating the following recipients of summer stipends from the National Endowment for the Humanities:

- Chantal Frankenbach (California State University, Sacramento), “Isadora Duncan and the Popularization of Race Hygiene and Eugenics in Pre-War Germany, 1902-1905”
  - Traci O’Brien (Auburn University), “Building Lasting Bridges: German Studies and Engineering”
  - Corey Twitchel (Southern Utah University), “Rewriting Good and Evil”
- 

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# IN MEMORIAM

The GSA extends its condolences to the family and friends of all the scholars mentioned here. Please note that roundtable discussions and celebrations of the lives and works of Katherine Aaslestad and Peter Reill will be held in Indianapolis.

# KATHERINE AASLESTAD (1961-2021)

Katherine Aaslestad was a wonderful parent, family member, and scholar of German and Central European History. She passed away on April 24, 2021 after a long struggle with ovarian cancer. Katherine was an incredibly generous colleague and friend. She was extremely committed to the GSA and other professional organizations as well as her students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

Katherine attended Mary Washington College and received her graduate training at the University of Illinois under the direction of her beloved mentor Paul Schroeder. She earned her PhD in 1997 and for the last twenty-four years she was an essential presence in the History Department at West Virginia University.

I met Katherine in February 2003, coincidentally on the day I was granted my PhD. She and I were assigned to the same session at a conference, a happenstance that helped shape the course of my professional career. After the emotional struggles of graduate school, it was a relief to meet a colleague with similar ideas and interests in historical processes, who also promoted a cooperative rather than competitive attitude towards professional life. She was extraordinarily kind and always willing to invest time and energy in making my work better. Her support, like that given to so many students and newly minted PhDs, made me more confident, better able to participate in professional events, and capable of producing more polished research.

Our work overlapped to a very useful degree and she remained a steadfast supporter, intellectual guide, and an inspiration. After that first meeting, Katherine, as she did with so many others, brought me into the German Studies Association, designing intellectually exciting sessions for us from which I learned a tremendous amount. She convinced me that the GSA was an appropriate forum to discuss Swiss republicanism in comparative perspective as well as Hamburg's understanding of civic virtue. She modeled collegiality, good citizenship, and institutional commitment as she took on role after role with the organization, helping build our community of scholars. As she organized panels for her own interests, she also fought to construct quality slates of sessions for the entire long nineteenth century. She repeatedly served on the annual meeting's Program Committee as Session Coordinator for both the Nineteenth Century and Individual Papers, and when not formally in these roles, she was an extremely available resource to those who were serving in that capacity, suggesting presenter, commentator, and moderator names to fill out sessions, or volunteering herself when she could. In addition, she served on the Nominating Committee and also co-chaired the War and Violence network, continuing to work for the entire GSA.

Her paper from that 2003 conference eventually became part of several fascinating articles in addition to her first book project: *Place and Politics: Local Identity, Civic Culture, and German Nationalism in North Germany during the Revolutionary Era* (Brill 2005). This important piece of scholarship makes the case for the significance of Hamburg in understanding Revolutionary Era republicanism, civic virtue and political culture on both a German and European level. The book's focus on Hamburg adds to our understanding of the diversity of German development and paths in the *Sattelzeit*.

After the publication of her first book, Katherine made an explicit turn to the post-Napoleonic period. In "After the Wars: German Central Europe after Napoleonic Conquest, 1815-1848" she was exploring the shift to the post-Napoleonic world in all its fits and starts through the lens of the under-explored German Confederation. As part of a new wave of social-military history, she argued for the centrality of warfare in the development of modern Europe and the role of militarization even in peacetime society. For this book project she won grants from the DAAD, Fulbright, NEH, and the Historisches Kolleg in Munich.

In developing this second project, she also embraced her cooperative professional attitude, working jointly with a variety of colleagues to organize conferences, panels, and ultimately producing co-edited special issues of journals and edited volumes promoting emerging work in the field. We can see the collaborative product in *Revisiting Napoleon's Continental System: Local, Regional, and European Experiences* edited with Johan Joor (Palgrave, 2014) and special issues of *Central European History* with Karen Hagemann (December 2006) and *European History Quarterly* (October 2007) with Hagemann and Judith Miller.

Katherine's first professional love was teaching and it remained so throughout her career. Even at professional conferences she could be heard enthusiastically discussing what went well in her classes that week and semester and what exciting new things she was planning for next semester. She dedicated a tremendous amount of her energy to her students and won multiple well-deserved teaching awards at West Virginia University.

She was beloved and will be missed by family, friends, students, colleagues, and our whole community. Her family's obituary for Katherine can be found [at this webpage](#).

Marc H. Lerner, University of Mississippi



## Sharon Gillerman (1960-2020)

Sharon Gillerman was a scholar of German-Jewish history, gender, and the family, and served on the faculties of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and the University of Southern California's Louchheim School for Judaic Studies for over two decades. Gillerman was the author of *Germans into Jews: Remaking the Jewish Social Body in the Weimar Republic* (Stanford University Press, 2010) and co-editor of *Jewish Masculinities: German Jews, Gender, and History* (Indiana University Press, 2010) along with Paul Lerner and Benjamin Baader. Her work in German and central European Jewish history had become increasingly transnational through her research on the Jewish strongman Siegmund Breitbart, whose life, performances and reception she was analyzing in Central European, Eastern European, and North American contexts through the lenses of masculinity, consumer culture, and postcolonial studies. [Her obituary](#), originally appearing in *Forward*, may be read in the link.

Paul Lerner, University of Southern California

# Richard S. Levy (1940-2021)

After a final battle with cancer, Richard S. Levy passed away in June 2021, bringing to end a long and eventful career. A foundational presence at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he taught history for forty-nine years, Richard touched innumerable lives as teacher, mentor and scholar. As author, editor and translator, he provided one large pivot on which the study of modern antisemitism gained rigor and heft. Alongside his books and articles, he produced nearly two hundred reviews, dozens of translations and helped referee scores of other works. A fitting capstone to these labors came in his final years when, even while battling illness, he was able to contribute seventy-nine biographies to the *Stolperstein* Project in Germany.

While Richard made his scholarly mark as historian of antisemitism, I would venture that class was the greater marker of his identity. He grew up in modest circumstances, in a Cicero, Illinois of sharp elbows and hard knocks, and while the boy eventually left that town, parts of Cicero remained essential to the man. Those rough edges, however sublimated via erudition and refinement, left their mark on Richard's character – above all his aversion to pretension, cant and fashion-wear piety. They also informed his acerbic and playful wit, as well as his lifelong affinities for the disadvantaged and dispossessed of this world.

Richard's sense of class was as complicated as class itself, encompassing both individual aspiration as well as a deeply felt ethic of civic duty. For earlier generations, that sensibility might have found expression in more collective forms of action – it's not hard to imagine some previous iteration of Richard, from thirty years before, as a cigar-chomping labor strategist or negotiator (he was, incidentally, an early and proud voice in UIC's United Faculty union). Yet the times in which he came of age channeled his energies in other directions, as the years following World War II marked a time of unprecedented democratization of American higher education.

And so it happened that Richard entered University of Chicago in 1958 (two years prior to the entry of another student of similar background, Bernie Sanders). I believe his initial aim was to become a European medievalist, but Latin proved a stumbling block. He had some high school German, and that (one can well imagine other reasons as well) inclined him towards German history. This course of study ultimately led him to Yale University, where he apprenticed with Hajo Holborn and Henry Turner. As he sometimes announced in later gatherings, "Leopold von Ranke had Friedrich Meinecke as student, Meinecke had Holborn, and Holborn had Levy." Richard would then go on to name one or more of his graduate students as legatees to this proud tradition – a recitation that never failed to warm the room.

Richard's first major work, *The Downfall of the Anti-Semitic Political Parties in Imperial Germany*, appeared in 1975, at a time when the history of modern antisemitism remained substantially unmapped and Luther-to-Hitler explanations for the Holocaust held considerable sway. *Downfall* presented a thumb-in-the-eye to these simplistic narratives of bland continuity; the book's very title pointed to sharp historical discontinuities that had received as yet relatively little notice. In this sense, Richard's work joined a more general re-examination of the course of German history (the *Sonderweg* debates were soon to begin), offering in the end a more complex and challenging story. Yes, the *antisemitic* mountebanks and demagogues whose turn-of-the-century activism Richard recounted in *Downfall* were, by the eve of World War I, in anguished disarray, having reached the apparent limits of their influence. And yet, as every schoolchild knows, out of this debacle emerged cultural and political legacies soon to enjoy a renewed and horrific vitality.

Richard's contributions to the field broadened and deepened over the coming decades, as attested by the writing, translating, editing and refereeing work catalogued in his [32-page CV](#). His edited works merit special attention, above all the two-volume *Antisemitism: A Historical Encyclopedia of*

*Prejudice and Persecution*, at its time of publication (2005) representing the summa of knowledge on this vast, sprawling topic, and a work that will remain the standard reference for many years to come. It is hard to imagine another scholar who could have assembled such an impressive array of expertise and perspective; behind the scenes, Richard bore the brunt of innumerable logistical and intellectual labors with his usual tenacity, industry and wit.

In the end, I cannot improve upon this assessment from Northwestern's Peter Hayes. In considering the role played by Holborn and Turner in Richard's historical training, Peter spoke of his having gained from them the "thoroughness [that] gave his work such heft and balance. He weighed everything conceivably pertinent, and that helped make his work so convincing. I always finished Richard's essays thinking every stone had been turned and no cliché or convention reflexively accepted."

An endowed fund has been established at UIC in Richard's name, accessible at the [Online UIC Giving](#) site. Simply enter "Richard S. Levy Endowed Fund in History" in the box marked "Other" and follow from there.

John Abbott, University of Illinois at Chicago



## Jean H. Quataert (1946-2021)

Distinguished Professor of History Jean H. Quataert died on May 25, 2021 in Vestal, NY. An exceptional scholar, educator, and mentor, Quataert's impact on the fields of history, women's and gender studies, and human rights history cannot be overstated. Her first book *Reluctant Feminists* (1979) paved the way for scholars in women's and gender studies in German history and she continued to break new ground throughout her career. She arrived at Binghamton University in 1986 as Director of Women's Studies and retired as Distinguished Professor of History in 2020. Quataert pushed disciplinary boundaries in her teaching and research, most recently engaging with the global history of human rights in *Advocating Dignity* (2010) and *The Routledge History of Human Rights* (co-edited with Lora Wildenthal, 2019). An innovative educator, Quataert created her first course website in 1997 for her modern world history survey course. She mentored countless undergraduate and graduate students as well as junior colleagues at Binghamton University and beyond. In 2017 her PhD students and colleagues gathered to honor her retirement. She continued as co-editor of the *Journal of Women's History* until 2020 and the papers given at her retirement celebration comprise an edited volume.

Colleagues will remember Quataert as a dynamic contributor to GSA meetings, American Historical Association meetings, the Berkshire Conference of Women's Historians, and the regional American-Canadian Conferences in German and European History. Her passion for the study of history and enthusiastic support of colleagues and students will be remembered fondly as a model for us all. We invite you to contribute stories about Jean to our digital visualizations of her network and impact, which we plan to archive at Binghamton University, via this link <https://bit.ly/JQNetwork>. You can read her [full obituary](#) in the Press & Sun Bulletin.

Shelley E. Rose, Cleveland State University

# Peter Reill (1938-2019)

The German Studies Association was saddened to learn of the death of Peter Hanns Reill in the wee hours of the morning on August 19, 2019. We, his family -- Jenna M. Gibbs and Dominique Kirchner Reill -- do not commemorate his death on that day, however. We take time to tell stories, mourn, and make his favorite carbonara recipe on August 18, the last day he lived. August 18, 2019 was a good day. We remember Peter enjoying his Sunday routines with Jenna: sleeping in, reading the newspaper cover-to-cover, and listening to classical music while he tinkered in the kitchen. We recall how excited he was to visit Dominique's apartment so we could pop open a bottle of bubbly to celebrate the arrival of her first reader's report for her next book. In between congratulations, he also took impish joy in teasing her for spoiling her cats. We then went out for a fancy lunch; he really enjoyed nice restaurants. Afterwards the three of us took a short walk on the beach. When Peter and Jenna got home, they spent a leisurely evening in their living room surrounded by his favorite books, talking about their plans for the year to come. The last day of Peter Reill's life was filled with love, surrounded by all the things he cared most about: his family, beauty, music, and books.

Peter was not born to have the life he had; he fought tooth and nail for it. Born in 1938 to immigrant German parents with almost no money but a healthy work ethic, he grew up in a New York City where opportunities were few and WWII-anger against Germany was much. He was always recognized as smart and graduated from Brooklyn Technical High School and then NYU. Like so many his age, he dreamed of being an engineer and building a spaceship that could leave Sputnik's fame in the dust. Instead, he flunked out of that dream and found a deeper passion, for something that became his lifelong vocation: history. His talent in thinking historically was significant enough for his undergraduate professor to travel out to Queens to convince his widowed mother to let her boy go, to let him accept the full fellowship to the graduate program at Northwestern University in faraway Illinois. His talent and hard work were also significant enough that he got his first and most beloved job at UCLA in 1966, before even finishing his dissertation. From there he set out on a path that would produce some of the most important work on the Enlightenment and German eighteenth-century history.

Talking about Peter's publications and professional activities is to talk about him. He loved his work, though he often fretted about how to get it just right. The care he took is obvious to all who have had the good fortune to read his two books, his many edited volumes, and his astounding number of articles. His first monograph, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (1975), was a brilliant investigation of the fertile interplay of historical thinking, scientific ideas, and late Enlightenment culture. It established him as a leading historian of the *Aufklärung*, a reputation he cemented with a string of publications in the 1990s: *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment* (1996), *Visions of Empire: Voyages, Botany, and Representations of Nature* (1996), and *Wissenschaft als kulturelle Praxis, 1750–1900* (1999). In 2001, together with his friend Keith Baker, Peter edited *What's Left of Enlightenment? A Postmodern Question*, which was a seminal attempt to reconcile the supposed opposition of the Enlightenment and postmodernity. Peter's second monograph, *Vitalizing Nature in the Enlightenment* (2005), built on his earlier work but added a new focus on the vitalist impulses of late Enlightenment thinkers. Using, among others, Buffon, Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt, Torbern Olof Bergman, and Lorenz Oken as his guides, he charted fascinating constellations of the unique ways late eighteenth-century thinkers viewed nature, which he described under the heading "Enlightenment Vitalism." In so doing, he challenged the common distinction made between Enlightenment thought and Romantic Naturphilosophie. According to Peter, vitalism was neither Naturphilosophie's predecessor nor was it a manifestation of counter-Enlightenment.

Taken together, Peter's scholarship has fundamentally altered how the Enlightenment is understood. His work is destined to have a lasting impact on eighteenth-century studies and, indeed, on the practice of intellectual history in general. And yet he will be missed in the world of history for another reason, too: he created social space for the exchange of ideas and the support of promising new scholars. Most famous of his initiatives was his twenty-year directorship from 1991 to 2011 of the Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library. At the Clark he hosted numerous innovative conferences and founded fellowship programs and a chamber music series that together have changed the cultural face of his beloved adopted city, Los Angeles. His chairship of the UCLA History Department saw the hiring of some of the department's greatest stars, including Ivan Berend who would grow to become one of Peter's closest friends. His presidency of the International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies coaligned with the 2003 conference held in Los Angeles, where participants were awed by Peter's ability to get the Getty Museum to open its doors only to them and for a movie theater to play the silent film version of *Casanova* with live musical accompaniment. In Germany, Peter had a decades-long collaboration with Rudolf Vierhaus and the entire Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte community in Göttingen, as well as with the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. He also served as one of the earliest presidents of the precursor of the German Studies Association and worked hard throughout his life to bolster the study of all things related to German language and history within the United States and beyond.

It's been two years since his death and the fact that it has taken so long to publish this memorial in the GSA's newsletter doesn't speak to how Peter has been forgotten. It speaks to how truly terrible these last two years have been and how hard it is to admit that he is gone. The only comfort to be had is that his work lives on, with a new edition of his first book just out, some upcoming conference panels dedicated to recognizing his influence in the field (including a roundtable in Indianapolis at the GSA conference), and articles forthcoming on the project to which he dedicated the last years of his life. These are things that would make him proud and we are happy to think of that. We miss him. We love him. And we hope his historical community follows his family's practice of remembering his life more than his death.

Jenna M. Gibbs, Florida International University  
Dominique Kirchner Reill, University of Miami



## Christian Søm (1936-2021)

Christian Søm was a long-time member of the GSA from its "founding generation." He participated in the second annual conference in 1977 (with 50 scholars in attendance) and from then on was a regular participant and committee member until his retirement. His [obituary](#) was written by his colleague in the California State University, Long Beach's Department of Political Science Ron Schmidt, and is reproduced here with permission.

## Jonathan Steinberg (1934-2021)

Jonathan Steinberg wrote on such varied topics as the Tirpitz Plan, the Swiss political system, the Deutsche Bank in World War II, and Fascist Italy's treatment of Jews during the Holocaust. His biography of Otto von Bismarck, in particular, has been read, appreciated, and taught by many members of the GSA. This [obituary](#) by Christopher Clark first appeared on the University of Cambridge website and is used by permission.



## Eric D. Weitz (1953-2021)

The German Studies Association notes with sorrow the passing of [Eric D. Weitz](#). We will include a longer remembrance of his life and work in the fall newsletter.