Wyatt Exploration Program

Flint: The Alien City
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About the Program

Each year, the Wyatt Exploration Program will provide a unique and exciting opportunity for students and faculty to join together in the intellectual exploration of the human past. Organized by the Department of History with financial support from the Wyatt Endowment, the program focuses on the history and culture of a specific place or on a particular historical topic. This theme will change on an annual basis, allowing our explorations to span the history of our country and the world beyond. The department’s Wyatt Fellow, a faculty member who is an expert in the field under exploration, will plan and organize the program. Featuring affiliated course offerings, special extra-curricular events on campus, and a competition to participate in a university-funded student travel expedition, the Wyatt Exploration Program will enrich and deepen our understanding of the world and its history.

The Department of History is thrilled with this unique opportunity for learning and enrichment that the Wyatt Exploration Program will provide at the University of Michigan-Flint. The department’s faculty looks forward to sharing these incredible experiences with our students and hopes that all of you will share in our excitement as we explore the history of the world around us.

Wyatt Travel Expedition

The culmination of each year’s exploration will take place in either the spring or summer semester with a student travel expedition led by our Wyatt Fellow. Selected from our history majors (including TCP and Honors), a group of students will be invited by the History Department to participate in this trip. Since our focus this year is local history, our travel component will entail journeying back to one day in Flint’s past. Selection will be based on several factors, including the student’s academic record and coursework in the field under study.

The primary factor, however, is active participation in that year’s Wyatt Exploration events. You don’t need to have the highest GPA or to have taken courses in the subject under exploration to be selected. Rather, we are looking to assemble a diverse team of students who have demonstrated their enthusiasm and engagement with exploration activities, who are most likely to benefit from the experience. Every history major is truly a potential candidate for selection and we encourage all of our students to participate and apply. Students will complete and submit an application form to be considered for the selection process in winter semester, 2014.
Guest Lecture Series
A central part of the Wyatt Exploration Program is our guest lecture series. During the course of the fall and winter semesters, the program will bring celebrated scholars from around the nation and world to our campus to speak on that year’s theme. This is a great opportunity to meet and learn from acknowledged experts in their field while developing a sense of history as an intellectual community, endeavor, and discipline. For history majors, participation in the guest lecture series is expected of all potential candidates for the travel expedition. Although we understand that students may not be able to attend all of these sessions, please try to attend as many of these events as possible to maximize your potential as a travel expedition participant.

Coursework and Extra-Curricular Activities
A list of affiliated courses will match the subject of exploration for that year. Although primarily history courses, this list may also include courses in other disciplines that complement the theme. Students will have the opportunity to take some of these courses during the academic year. If students have already taken any of these courses in previous years, this will also be recognized in the selection process for the Wyatt Travel Expedition. The exploration program provides a wonderful opportunity for additional depth of instruction and experience for those students who are taking or have taken one or more of these courses. However, history majors are still viable candidates for the travel expedition even if they have not taken any of these affiliated courses and they are encouraged to participate in other on-campus exploration activities instead. In addition to the guest lecture series and formal coursework, the Wyatt Fellow may organize co-curricular activities and discussion sessions devoted to the year’s theme. All students are invited to these activities and participation will be considered in the selection process for the travel expedition.

Wyatt Exploration Passports
To chart student participation in Wyatt events, history majors will receive a Wyatt Exploration Program Passport. Bring this passport to any Wyatt Exploration Program event or activity, and you will receive a stamp that verifies your attendance. Students will then submit this passport along with their travel application, and the number of stamps they have collected will be considered in the selection process for the travel expedition. Be sure to retrieve your passport each year from the history department after the competition is over, as you can continue to use it for the following year. Stamps collected in previous years will be considered in the travel expedition selection process. So, start collecting stamps!

For more information on the Wyatt Exploration Program visit us online at: www.umflint.edu/history/wyatt.htm
A City That No One Knows

On a chilly afternoon in January, I took a group of students to the corner of Kearsley and Saginaw Streets for our first day of class. It seemed like the perfect spot to plunge students into the course. We were surrounded by history. Using street names and compass points as my references, I began a discussion with them of the past and present conditions of the city. They responded with silent, confused faces. Despite the fact that we were standing on the edge of camps, it was clear that, to these students, I was referencing a foreign landscape.

A year later, I was attending a meeting on heritage tourism in Genesee County. The topic was broad – how can we promote Flint as a heritage destination. The discussion that ensued, however, was quite narrow. Flint is, was, and should be the Vehicle City. The discusants were well-meaning and had a number of good ideas of how to promote the Vehicle City. But, as a picture of Flint, the Vehicle City was restrictive, singular, and exclusive. Moreover, it smacked of careless revisionism. Any story of Flint needed to flow into the Vehicle City narrative. Some fit neatly, others, required more interpretive license and even more, were completely dismissed.

I offer these two accounts to underscore why I have chosen “the alien city,” as the theme of my Wyatt Exploration Program. To most of our students, Flint is an alien place. Despite the fact that they spend several hours a week near the heart of city, it remains a foreign place, an exotic place, and unfortunately a place where the imagery of fear and violence clouds our perception of the landscape that surrounds us. Many people, however, do know the history and legacy of Flint. But, as the second example illustrates, it is a singular narrative. Flint is held captive by a story of one history, which led to one present, with few prospects for anything but one future. As a result, Flint truly is an alien city, a foreign place whose history is lost to people who have lived here their entire lives and whose present is as distant as another country.

Our task this year will be to excavate the intricacy and complexity of Flint, Michigan. As we explore the city’s history and culture, we will uncover many pasts and make familiar the unfamiliar. Although the city was associated with the auto industry for decades, a number of other home grown successes have sprouted in Flint such as breweries, cigar manufacturers, woolen mills, grocery store chains, and numerous other forms of commerce. The people who have lived and worked in Flint are equally as diverse. Beginning with the indigenous people who greeted the first white migrants, the region has a reputation for attracting a sundry of newcomers. Once people from New York, Tennessee, Mississippi, Slovakia, and Syria arrived in mid-Michigan they reshaped their new home with traditions and customs from around the globe. Join us as we explore a city marked by diversity, a surprising history and a richness of place.
Spirits with the Spirits at Glenwood Cemetery  
Featuring Redwood Brewing Co.  
Master Brewer Konrad Connor  
As Flint grew from a small town to a modern metropolis, the city developed a substantial and diverse industrial base. In addition to carriages and cars, Flint was home to numerous manufacturers of consumer goods such as clothing, tobacco products, paint, farm products, forest products, and beer. Like most of Flint’s history, the stories of how the manufacturing of these goods have contributed to the culture of Flint have been eclipsed. Join Konrad Connor of the Redwood Brewing Co for a discussion and tasting of Flint’s medal-winning beer. Afterward, guests will be treated to a guided tour of Glenwood Cemetery for a unique look at Flint’s industrial heritage.

Games of the Gilded Age  
During Flint’s Gilded Age, its wealthy and middle-class residents lived in stately homes along tree-lined avenues within walking distance of downtown. Inside these homes, residents spent much of their leisure time assembled in their parlors playing games of all sorts. The games that entertained families indicated the values, popular culture, current events, and literature of the era. In the late nineteenth century, games began to reflect the country’s shift from an agrarian society to a rapidly urbanizing and industrial nation. A rising interest in economics, travel, world’s fairs, leisure, sports, and children’s education led to a variety of games that featured these topics. Join us at the Whaley Historic House Museum to learn about life and leisure during Flint’s Gilded Age.
From Syria to Flint
Dr. Hani Bawardi, Assistant Professor of History, Arab American Studies Program, University of Michigan-Dearborn will be at the Sloan Museum to discuss the staggering importance of the early Arab Michiganders between 1890 and World War II in Arab American history. Dr. Bawardi’s exhibit, From Syria to Michigan, will be on display at the Sloan Museum for three weeks. The exhibit includes pictures, official documents, and letters Ameen Farah received from writers and political leaders, among them Mikhail Naimy, Ameen Rihani, Hajj Amin Al-Husseini and Sultan Al-Atrash. Join us from 5:30 – 6:30 pm for an informal hour featuring Halal food demonstrations followed by a discussion with Dr. Bawardi.

This exhibit was made possible in part by the Arab American Heritage Council and Sloan/Longway

Wyatt Explorers Banquet
We conclude our year-long exploration of Flint with an extravagant affair from the nineteenth-century – the Victorian Dinner Party. Students selected as Wyatt Explorers will first participate in a unique guided tour of Flint’s historic landscape. Following the tour, students will be received by their host at the Whaley Historic House Museum. As we enter the parlor, we will learn about the etiquette and customs of polite society from historical costumed-interpreters. During dinner, our hosts will continue to interact with guests providing insight in party decorum and the lives of men and women in nineteenth century America.
Affiliated Courses:

HIS 329: Michigan History
HIS 393-02: Presenting the Past
HIS 431: American Urban History
“Re-Thinking the Narrative of Corporate Abandonment: General Motors and the Politics of Metropolitan Capitalism in Flint, Michigan”

Andrew Highsmith, University of Texas at San Antonio
Tuesday, October 22, 2013, 4-6 p.m.
Happenings, UCEN

Andrea Burns, Appalachian State University
Friday, February 21, 2014, 4-6 p.m.
Happenings, UCEN

Andrea A. Burns received her B.A. in History from Michigan State University, and her Ph.D. in History from the University of Minnesota in 2008. She is currently an assistant professor of public history at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. She recently transformed her dissertation into a book, entitled "From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement" (University of Massachusetts Press, 2013). Andrea lived in Flint for over twenty years with her family, and graduated from Powers Catholic High School.

Peter Morris, Hastings, Michigan
Friday, March 14, 2015, 4-6 p.m.
Happenings, UCEN

Peter Morris of Haslett, Michigan, is the award-winning author of *Baseball Fever: Early Baseball in Michigan*, *A Game of Inches: The Stories Behind the Innovations that Shaped the Game*, and five other critically acclaimed books about baseball’s early history. Peter is well-known for his research with the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) Biographical Research Committee. In addition he has won the SABR Henry Chadwick Award and has twice won the Seymour Award.
I am genuinely pleased to host the Wyatt Exploration of 2013-2014. I joined the department of History in 2010 as the Wyatt Professor of U.S. History with a distinct pedagogical and scholarly mission—to lead civic engagement initiatives between the Department and the community. Since that time, I have worked to craft students’ encounters with history that differ from the traditional university experience. Many of my courses reflect this commitment. Whether students are learning about a specific period or content in history, or grappling with some methodology of the discipline, the hallmark of any course is working outside the classroom, alongside community members, to collaborate in the pursuit of the learning about the past.

I have also worked aggressively to connect our students and program with local history and become involved in the civic life of Flint. For the past three years I have served on the Board of Directors of the Whaley Historic House Museum to cement the relationship with our historic neighbor across the street. In addition, I serve on the board of directors of the Flint Cultural Center Corporation and the Sloan/Longway Advisory Committee. All of these experiences have allowed me to link our program with local cultural and historical institutions and work to improve the ways in which history is interpreted for our community. A tangible benefit of these efforts has been the internships available for our students who want to experience the discipline of history in unique ways.

In many ways, the Wyatt Exploration Program provides us with the opportunity to extend those efforts. Like our trips to Poland, Virginia, Japan, and Wales our students will become immersed in the culture and experiences of people who live in the places we study. It is my hope that students will not only come to understand their local surroundings in new ways, but further cement the bonds between the department and the community whose intellectual needs we serve.
The generous bequest of Dr. Dorothea E. Wyatt has made the Wyatt Exploration Program possible. A stalwart supporter of her university and her discipline, Dr. Wyatt made this extraordinary gift to further develop and improve the program in history here at UM-Flint.

A graduate of Stanford University, Dr. Wyatt was one of the original sixteen faculty members of the Flint College of the University of Michigan when it was founded in 1956. She was the first chair of the Department of History and she served as the University’s Counselor to Women, the Secretary to the Governing Faculty, and on countless university, college, and departmental committees throughout her career.

An adored teacher, Dr. Wyatt specialized in American cultural and women’s history. She was an unflagging advocate for the humanities and women’s issues. In 1989, the UM-Flint recognized her dedication to the university and these issues by creating an award in her name for faculty and staff members who work to better the status of women on campus. In 1974, Dr. David M. French spoke of Dr. Wyatt’s uniquely personal contribution to the university, writing, “Her greatness of spirit, her generosity, her sincere interest in students young and old… and the uninhibited way she has always shared her joy in learning and scholarship with those around her have run like a golden thread through the eighteen years since the Flint college was founded.” As a scholar, Dr. Wyatt is primarily known for her biography of Julia S. Tutwiler (1841-1916), an early advocate for women’s rights and educational reform in Alabama.

Dr. Wyatt was active in the local community and served a variety of organizations, including the American Association of University Women, the Zonta Club, Delta Kappa Gamma, and the Genesee County Library Board. She retired as a Professor Emeritus in 1975. Shortly before her retirement, Dr. Wyatt wrote:

*What has brought us together as students and faculty in our University of Michigan-Flint College has been an abiding faith in education. We have all been seekers after knowledge: of ourselves, of the world about us, and of the ideas and ideals that have stirred and enriched mankind… For the true object of a college education is not to learn all that one will ever want to know but to acquire the ideas, habits, and methods needed in the continuous process of educating oneself during the years to come.*

The Department of History at the University of Michigan-Flint is proud to be the heir of that spirit and philosophy. We believe that the Wyatt Exploration Program and other opportunities provided by Dr. Wyatt’s generosity will be a fitting testament to the life of this fine teacher, scholar, and advocate.
The 2012-13 Wyatt Exploration examined the history of Wales, a small nation of the United Kingdom that has defiantly clung to its distinct culture and identity. The program began with the story of the Red Dragon of Wales, prophesized by Merlin and embraced as the national emblem and symbol of Welsh perseverance through the ages. After a series of campus and community guest lectures, films and even a performance of Dylan Thomas’s Under Milkwood, a group of twelve history majors was selected for the Wyatt Exploration expedition to Wales led by Dr. John Ellis. The 2013 Wyatt Explorers included Jacob Atkinson, Courtney Booms, Ashley Bower, Jacob Cornea, Catherine Fox, Evan Ghoujeghi, Renee Gonzalez, Elizabeth Henke, Keenan O’Dacre, Casandra Thayer, Justin Wetenhall, and Heather Workman. Dr. Roy Hanashiro joined the expedition along the way. For seventeen days between May 6 and May 22, the Wyatt Explorers journeyed across Wales, visiting the capital city of Cardiff, the sea-side college town of Aberystwyth, and the mountain village of Beddgelert.

At first, Wales earned its reputation for rain and gloom but this did little to dampen the enthusiasm of our brave crew for exploring the many sites of Cardiff. After a walking tour of its medieval streets and Victorian shopping arcades and market, the group visited Cardiff Castle, a massive fortress dating back to the Romans but reconstructed in the nineteenth century as a fantasy castle by the fabulously wealthy Marques of Bute. They pondered the ancient origins of the Welsh people through artifacts at the National Museum of Wales and strolled through the history of work, culture and daily life at St. Fagan’s National History Museum, an outdoor museum that reminded many of Greenfield Village back home. The team explored the region’s cultural heritage in a visit to the nearby village of Laugharne, the home, inspiration and burial place of famous Anglo-Welsh writer Dylan Thomas. Cardiff did not become a large city until coal transformed south Wales into the hub of the industrial revolution during the nineteenth century. Exploring this important industrial heritage, the group took a journey to Bleanavon, a well preserved Victorian iron and coal town recognized as a UNESCO heritage site. There, students were equipped with helmets, lights and emergency oxygen masks before descending into the darkness of Big Pit, a former colliery turned museum. In the company of a former miner, the students got a taste of the hardships and comradery of the miner’s life and labor. South Wales was devastated after the collapse of the coal industry and Cardiff’s docks left derelict. However, the docklands have now been transformed into Cardiff Bay, the fashionable center of Welsh government, cultural life and the site of the new BBC studios. Students enjoyed the shops and sites of Roald Dahl Plaza and toured the Senedd, a remarkable monument to government accountability and transparency made of glass, wood and slate that houses the National Assembly of Wales. The boom and bust story of Cardiff and the surrounding coal fields were familiar enough to our students and left many hopeful that cities in Michigan might experience a similar regeneration.

A long bus journey up and down over the hills brought us to the sea side town of Aberystwyth, the home of the National Library of Wales and the University of Aberystwyth. After an initial greeting of hail, wind and rain, Aberystwyth blessed us with sunny skies shining happily over the waves of Cardigan Bay. Dr. Ellis provided a guided tour of his family’s home town, showing its development from a medieval castle, to a center of agriculture/mining/ and maritime activity, to a Victorian spa resort, and finally to the modern intellectual center and college town it is today.
In addition to visits to the university, the National Library, and the eclectic collections of the Cardiganshire Museum, the group took a steam train to Devil’s Bridge, a scenic historical site associated with Welsh legends and English romantics.

Journeying north into the majestic mountains of Snowdonia, the group halted at the statue of Hedd Wyn to pay tribute to the Welsh language poet before continuing on to the slate town of Llanberis where they visited the quarry works and took a train to the misty summit of Mount Snowdon. The group stayed at the old Royal Goat Inn in the small mountain village of Beddgelert, famed as the burial place of Prince Llewelyn’s legendary dog. The following day, we took a rattling steam train to Caernarfon Castle, roaming through the maze of passageways, spiral staircases, high battlements and lofty towers of this UNESCO world heritage site. Bright and clear, our last full day in Wales was spent hiking up Dinas Emrys, the location where Merlin is said to have made his fateful prophecy.

Past gnarled oak and rough stone, shining waterfall and stunning views of mountain and valley, we climbed to the very spot where the Red Dragon of Wales is said to have appeared, thus ending the journey where it all began. Boarding the plane bound for home, the students left with a new appreciation for the history and heritage of Wales and recognition of the struggle and place of small nations in the world.

Based on student comments, here are some miscellaneous highlights of the adventure:

- Having real Welsh cakes from Cardiff Market!
- Trying to pronounce place names and phrases in the Welsh language.
- Enjoying the lilt of the Welsh accent in English.
- Renee’s contribution to the entertainment at the Cardiff Castle banquet.
- Sheep! Sheep! Sheep!
- Cheese and cawl!
- Eating the ears and tail of a roast pig.
- Eating lamb, wearing masks and scaring Dr. Ellis!
- Climbing the hills around Aberystwyth and thinking them mountains.
- Seeing the mountains in Snowdonia and thinking again!
- The smell of coal fires and getting coal dust in your eye (ouch!)
- The grand tea at Pettigrew’s.
- Eating lunch at Dylan Thomas’s table in Brown’s Pub.
- Searching for and finally finding Dylan Thomas’s grave.
- The low ceilings in coal mines and a former coal miner’s grave sense of humor.
- The conversation of Welsh bartenders and the taste of real ale.
- Running around castles with wooden swords, a lot of imagination and no inhibitions.
- Hearing old legends (The Bear and Doll) in new and unexpected ways.
- Sunsets over Cardigan Bay.
- A new appreciation for dry, sunny days.
- Getting completely soaked in the mist on top of Mount Snowdon.
- Feeling like you are in a fairy tale at the top of Dinas Emrys.
2013-14 Wyatt Exploration Schedule

- **Kick-Off Event**
  Friday, September 13, 4:00 p.m.
  Michigan Rooms A-C, UCEN
  *Vintage Base Ball Match at 6:00 p.m.*
  Lumber City BBC vs. Saginaw Old Golds

- **Spirits with the Spirits**
  Friday, October 4, 4:00-7:00 p.m.
  Glenwood Cemetery

- **Wyatt Lecture Series:**
  Andrew Highsmith
  “Re-Thinking the Narrative of Corporate Abandonment: General Motors and the Politics of Metropolitan Capitalism in Flint, Michigan”
  Tuesday, October 22, 4:00 p.m.
  Happenings, UCEN

- **Games of the Gilded Age:**
  19th century game night
  Friday, November 15, 4:00-7:00 p.m.
  Whaley Historic House Museum

- **From Syria to Michigan**
  Thursday, January 23, 5:30-8:00 p.m.
  Sloan Museum

- **Wyatt Lecture Series: Andrea Burns**
  “Transforming Industry into Heritage: The Making and Unmaking of Autoworld”
  Friday, February 21, 4:00 p.m.
  Happenings, UCEN

- **Wyatt Lecture Series: Peter Morris**
  “How Baseball Became America’s National Pastime and Michigan’s Game”
  Friday, March 14, 4:00 p.m.
  Happenings, UCEN

- **Deadline for Wyatt Travel Applications**
  Friday, March 17, 2014, 5:00 p.m.
  260 French Hall