

Agricultural History Society Conference

Hosted by Mount Royal University

Banff, Alberta

June 13-15, 2013



The Agricultural History Society (AHS) held its annual conference at the Banff Centre June 13-15, 2013. This was the first meeting of the society outside the United States and it is especially notable for the record attendance, with 208 registrants, including a record number of Canadian participants. Scholars attended from Canada, the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Brazil, Sweden, Columbia, United Kingdom, China, Norway, Finland, Japan, New Zealand, and Australia.

Support from THEN/HiER was critical to facilitate participation by graduate students. The AHS provides every graduate student who presents a paper with a stipend. This year, thirty-nine students presented papers and the grant from THEN/HiER covered the grants for nine students.

The conference brings together historians, sociologists, anthropologists, cultural geographers, and museum professionals who share a scholarly interest in rural and agricultural history in every time period and around the world. The AHS, founded in 1919, publishes *Agricultural History*, the journal of record in the field.

While much of the conference is organized around traditional scholarly papers, the AHS has attempted to include at least one panel on teaching at each conference. This is a natural fit, given that the majority of AHS members are employed at universities and colleges that share an emphasis on teaching. This year there was a session on undergraduate teaching, with presentations on reorganizing the survey course, incorporating public history component to first year courses, and a reflective practice technique to enhance learning.

Three other events were of particular interest. James C. Scott presented the keynote address in which he urged teachers and researchers to pay more attention to the Neolithic Revolution and to do a better job of demonstrating the long term consequences of the development of agriculture. An evening plenary session focused on propaganda films during World War II. Examples from the UK, the Netherlands, and the United States showed the ways in which messages about productivity, cultural unity and pluralism, social class, and technology were

used by the state to achieve war goals. Finally, there was roundtable on the ways in which Michael Pollan's work has shaped public perceptions of food and agriculture and the role of historians in shaping Pollan's work and how to respond to it.

The following students received travel stipends from THEN/HiER to attend the conference. Their names and titles of the papers they presented are listed:

- Andrew McEwen, University of Calgary, "From Pasture to Perdition: The Odyssey of Canadian Animals in the Great War"
- Jason L. Hauser, Mississippi State University, "Harvesting Gold: Agriculture and Mineral Extraction in North Carolina, 1799-1840"
- Andrea Gal, Wilfrid Laurier University, "Alternative Methods of Household Provisioning: Beef Rings in Early Twentieth Century Rural Ontario"
- Jacqueline Mclsaac, University of Guelph, "Rural Culture and the Camera: Documentary Photography on the Farm, 1860-1920"
- Jodey Nurse, University of Guelph, "In Search of 'Bigger Returns than Some of the Wheat Kings of the West': The Rise of the Fur Farming Industry in Canada, 1894 to 1980"
- Brian Rumsey, University of Kansas, "Changing Climates, Changing Meanings: Greenland's Agricultural Awakening Examined"
- Tad E. Brown, University of Georgia, "Mixed Farming, Mixed Messages: Ndama Oxen, Soil Fertility, and Colonial Crop Trials in The Gambia"
- Rachel Kleinschmidt, Iowa State University, "The Young, Unmarried Woman in the Life Cycle of the Rural Woman, 1881-1894"
- Karen Senaga, Mississippi State University, "Marketing Farm-Raised Catfish: Aquaculture, Flavor, and the Environment"