

*Our monthly e-Bulletin provides quick updates on activities of THEN/HiER and its partners.*

## What's new with THEN/HiER?

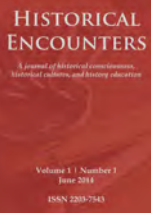
### \* THEN/HiER Anglophone Graduate Student Committee member Lindsay Gibson



Lindsay Gibson and Peter Seixas

successfully defended his doctoral dissertation on June 18, 2014. His supervisory committee included Peter Seixas (supervisor), Penney Clark and Kadriye Ercikan. His dissertation, "Understanding Ethical Judgments in Secondary School History Classes," focuses on history teachers' beliefs about ethical judgments in the discipline of history and history education, the factors that influence their beliefs, and the relationship between teachers' approaches to ethical issues, questions, and judgments and their students' approaches to ethical judgments.

\* **Stéphane Lévesque** is pleased to announce the launch of a new *The Virtual Historian* website. It has a new interface and now includes social media where teachers can tweet their lessons. There are also new lessons in French and others that will be developed shortly in English.



\* **Penney Clark, Jocelyn Létourneau, Stéphane Lévesque, Ruth Sandwell, and Peter Seixas** are Editorial Board members for *Historical Encounters: A Journal of Historical Consciousness, Historical Cultures, and History Education*. The inaugural issue of this peer-reviewed open access journal based at the University of Newcastle, Australia, is now available online.

## Funding Programs

**Visiting Doctoral Student Program** - THEN/HiER awarded two Visiting Doctoral Student Program grants this year:

- Scott Pollock, OISE/UofT, has completed his visit with Penney Clark and Peter Seixas, Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, UBC. He is investigating how historical thinking concepts are being used in the development of Canadian history curricula.
- Jane Griffith, Faculty of Education, York University, is investigating archival materials from residential school newspapers. She will be working with Dwayne Donald, Department of Secondary Education, University of Alberta.

**Graduate Student Projects** - Ryan Hunt, Master's student in Public History at Western University, has been awarded a Graduate Student Projects grant for *Building a Public Digital History Workshop in London's Old East Village*.

**Small Projects Grants** - THEN/HiER has recently awarded the following Small Projects Grants:

- *Teachers' Day at the Berkshire Conference on Women's History* - This event, which took place on May 23 within the context of the Berkshire Conference, had the aim of connecting teachers to current research in women's and gender history.
- *First Story App* - This initiative of the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto will enable Aboriginal youth to create history awareness videos.
- *The Canadian Oral History Reader* (McGill-Queen's University Press) - THEN/HiER helped support the publication of this book, which was co-edited by Kristina Llewellyn, University of Waterloo and Alexander Freund and Nolan Reilly, both of the University of Winnipeg.

## Approaching the Past (ATP) Vancouver



Mountain View Cemetery, J. Evan Kreider

As part of its spring theme, *History of Policing in Vancouver*, the June 4 ATP event “Fallen Police Officers and Firefighters in Mountain View Cemetery” was a tour of the first cemetery in Vancouver with historian John Atkin. Participants heard stories of Vancouver police officers and firefighters who have died in the line of duty and are buried at the cemetery.

## What's new with our partners?

\* **The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC<sup>2</sup>)** has launched a new website in French that has a selection of documents translated from the English site. More will soon be available. Thanks to the Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est in Ottawa and the Ontario Ministry of Education for their advice and financial aid in making this possible.

À propos de TC<sup>2</sup>

Ce que nous faisons



The Museum of Vancouver

\* **The Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness (CSHC)** is very excited that its Historical Thinking Summer Institute, to be held at the Museum of Vancouver and UBC from July 7 to 12, is filled to capacity with 46 participants and 18 more are on a waiting list. The CSHC will be running a 2015 Summer Institute, so look for announcements about this in February and March 2015.

\* **The Multicultural History Society of Ontario (MHSO)** has entered the final year of its digital archive project *Discover Multicultural Ontario*. This digital archive will improve access to the MHSO's primary source resources and assist in the preservation of an archival collection that is central to understanding the history and development of Ontario. Over 1,400 interviews representing 20 different languages have been digitized to date. Read more.



## Graduate Student Committees

Happy Aboriginal History Month! The Anglophone Graduate Student Committee has taken its usual summer holiday from blogging and tweets. Our last blog post on *Teaching the Past* was Rose Fine-Meyer's thoughts about Congress 2014. Be sure to check it out! We are pleased to announce that there will be new additions to our blogging roster next year. Emily Chicorli will give us an inside look into the archival universe in her monthly “Diary of an Archivist” posts. We also look forward to posts from our new blogger Alex Makin, a teacher in Whale Cove, Nunavut, who will be sharing some northern perspectives on history education. We're also super excited about the upcoming 2015 Annual Regional Conference in Ottawa which will be held in conjunction with the Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History's launch of the Franklin Mystery website. Contact Kate Zankowicz.



Kate Zankowicz

The Francophone Graduate Student Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Chantal Rivard for her participation on our committee over the past few months. She will be leaving the committee to pursue new projects but you can continue to read her blog posts on a regular basis since she is still involved in history teaching. Summer is the ideal time to discover historical sites and museums in the different regions of Canada. In a post on our blog *Enseigner l'histoire*, I discuss several must-see sites in the Ottawa-Gatineau region. Would you like others to learn more about your part of the country and its historical attractions? If so, please contact me so that you can write about them on our blog! Also, don't miss the article by Raphaël Gani who talks about various ways of using surveys in history classrooms. Happy summer to all! Contact Marie-Hélène Brunet.



Marie-Hélène Brunet

## Research Snapshots

This section of our monthly e-Bulletin highlights our members' research projects.

**Maria Grever**  
Professor of History and Theory  
Director, Center for Historical Culture  
Erasmus University Rotterdam (The Netherlands)



### Encounters with Heritage: Tensions between Familiarity and Strangeness

Seeing 'things as they are,' Carlo Ginzburg has written, requires a balance between coming so close to an object that it seems familiar and moving so far from it that the distance deconstructs any feeling of familiarity. This tension between closeness and distance, between familiarity and strangeness, is what strikes me about the use of what we call 'heritage' as an educational resource for history teaching. Museums often emphasize the proximity pole and promise a complete immersion in the past. They argue that students appreciate historical objects, imaginative sounds and video clips. Walking through multimedia museums would offer them a sensory experience through which they might better understand the evoked past. Indeed, heritage in its public manifestations appeals to direct experiences, emotions and veneration. What does this mean when the use of heritage features prominently in history teaching?

In his famous book *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (1998), David Lowenthal stresses the uncritical and patriotic aims of heritage. Yet in the academic field of heritage studies a dynamic approach to heritage dominates the growing body of research. The research concentrates for instance on critically examining the uses of heritage to construct local and national identities, on the performative character of museums and the darker sides of heritage. Laurajane Smith, Peter Aronsson, Willem Frijhoff and others explain that traces of the past are not just 'found.' Heritage is a constructed medium, a performative action and a process of re-mediation, embedded and mobilized in various cultural contexts. Hence, studying heritage is to understand the shaping of identities and the power of culture. This dynamic view supports the longstanding trend in the Netherlands on developing historical thinking skills in history education. From this viewpoint, the use of heritage can motivate students to question the aims and contexts of objects, monuments and sites.

These critical heritage studies have also influenced the research program Carla van Boxtel and I are now finalizing: *Heritage Education, Plurality of Narratives and Shared Historical Knowledge* (2009-2014). In our research, 'heritage education' points to teaching and learning settings in which material and immaterial traces of the past are used as primary instructional resources to strengthen students' understanding of history. In three research projects involving history teachers and museum educators, 12-18 year-old students, and heritage educational resources, we have investigated existing heritage education practices, in particular regarding the possibility of applying historical thinking concepts such as multiperspectivity and significance. We focused on two sensitive topics: Transatlantic Slave Trade and World War II / Holocaust. Apart from synthesizing theoretical reflections and empirical outcomes, we will formulate benchmarks for the integration of dynamic and professional heritage education in the curriculum of Dutch secondary schools.



P.J. Benoit, Field slaves on the way to work. Voyage à Surinam (1839).

A fascinating concept in this research is historical distance, which I consider as a varying configuration of temporality, spatiality and engagement. *Temporality* refers to synchronic or diachronic approaches to the past. *Spatiality* points to the spatial distance from people to a heritage site where historical events have taken place. *Engagement* implies the degree of affection, moral commitment and identification with the past. The three levels are intertwined and expressed in rhetoric, narrative plotlines and mnemonic bridging techniques, also studied by Eviatar Zerubavel and Pieter de Bruijn. For instance, synchronic approaches might generate a sense of sameness with the past located on a specific site, illustrated by engaging statements such as 'our ancestors in the prehistoric age' who constructed dolmens on the same place where we live now. Diachronic approaches often emphasize continuity and progress, expressed in rise-and-fall-plots, accompanied by stories about pilgrimages, diasporas and the return to the homeland. These and other reflections on historical distance are important for educators. The emphasis on experiencing the proximity of the past that many museums promise to visitors enhances the idea of sameness between past and present. This identification approach tends to deny historical reality as *reality*, inducing a complete misunderstanding of the past. Moreover, this sameness not only disturbs the temporal orientation resulting easily in anachronisms, but it also impedes the acknowledgement of other perspectives. Living the past as the present and vice versa blocks an open mind. If the past is everywhere, it is hard to discover new viewpoints. Then it is also impossible to construct shared historical knowledge.

Recently, I worked with some colleagues on a large-scale European proposal regarding popular encounters with war heritage that evoke fierce public debates in relation to the risks of banalising history and the circulation of distorted knowledge. These controversies reveal the growing contrast between the often uncontrollable popular initiatives and the institutionalised commemorative practices of acting in a respectful way. In this research I will explore the tensions between familiarity and strangeness again, but this time in the context of popular historical culture and city branding.

**\* MORE TO COME NEXT MONTH!**