



Photo: John Cairns

Photo: Richard Purkiss

Annual Report 2018-19



ROTHERMERE AMERICAN INSTITUTE



THE ROTHERMERE AMERICAN INSTITUTE

Photo: Richard Purkiss

Director's Foreword: Halbert Jones

As I come to the end of my tenure as director of the Rothermere American Institute, I am pleased to be able to report that the RAI has enjoyed another busy, stimulating, productive year as the University of Oxford's centre for the study of the United States. Throughout 2018-19, the Institute supported events and initiatives that served to advance a deeper understanding of US history, politics, and literature. And as always, our community of academic colleagues, students, visiting professors and fellows, and Institute staff made the RAI a lively place with a rich intellectual and social life.



Photo: John Cairns

Our community of historians had an active and exciting year. The Institute's history programming was enlivened by conferences organised by our fellows on such topics as moderation and extremism in antebellum US politics and patronage of the arts in twentieth-century America. We were also delighted to welcome Barbara Savage as the Harmsworth Visiting Professor of American History. A distinguished scholar of African-American history and of American social thought, Barbara convened a remarkable international symposium on the particular challenges of biographical work on black women. Another highlight of 2018-19 was the annual Sir John Elliott Lecture on Atlantic History, delivered by the eminent environmental and global historian John McNeill on the disease environment of the Caribbean from pre-Columbian times to the present.

The Institute also played host to important discussions on contemporary US politics. Together with colleagues from the University of Virginia's Miller Center for Public Affairs, RAI affiliates opened the year with a joint workshop on the future of America in the world. Our Winant Visiting Professor of American Government, Stephen Skowronek, helped to shed further light on the current political moment in the United States. Widely recognised as a founder of the political science subfield of American political development, Steve helped us to place the Trump presidency in the context of the

historical cycles that have characterised the evolution of US political institutions. The RAI was also proud to take on a leading role in the organisation of the Congress to Campus programme, which brings two former members of the US House of Representatives to schools and universities around the UK. In March, our guests Donna Edwards (D-Maryland) and Charles Boustany (R-Louisiana) engaged with hundreds of schoolchildren and university students, providing a personal perspective on the legislative process and on the workings of the American political system.

It was an equally great year for the study of American literature and culture at the RAI. At the start of 2018-19, we were delighted to welcome Merve Emre and Nicholas Gaskill to Oxford as two new academic postholders in American literature. Their arrival reflects the University's commitment to the field, which helps to cement the place of Oxford and the RAI as a world-leading centre for scholarship on US culture. We were also pleased to host Deborah Treisman, the fiction editor of *The New Yorker*, for our annual Esmond Harmsworth Lecture in American Arts and Letters, in which she reflected on the magazine's rich heritage as a venue for the publication of outstanding short fiction and on the role of an editor in a position such as hers.

You can read more about the wide range of activities, events, and academic work that has taken place at the RAI this past year in



Photo: Richard Purkiss

the pages of this report. The other hugely important development of 2018-19 that must be mentioned here is the appointment of Adam Smith to the Edward Orsborn Professorship of US Politics and Political History, a newly endowed post that will incorporate the directorship of the Rothermere American Institute. Adam is a renowned historian of US politics during the Civil War era, and we are very excited to welcome him back to Oxford (where he earned his undergraduate degree). I know he will provide outstanding leadership for the RAI when he takes over from me in 2019-20.

In closing then, I would like to take this opportunity to thank once more the Institute's many friends and benefactors for their counsel and support, and to record a special debt of gratitude to my colleagues on the small but exceedingly efficient team that keeps the show on the road here at the Institute. I am grateful to Tara Stubbs, Tessa Roynon, Joanne Steventon, and Richard Purkiss for all their support over the past year, as well as to Judy Warden, Johanna O'Connor, Martin Sutcliffe, Jessica Woodward, and Olivia Durand in the Vere Harmsworth Library. A special word of recognition is due here to Jane Rawson, who directed our Vere Harmsworth Library for 13 years, and to Huw David, the Institute's outstanding director of development, both of whom moved on in 2018-19 to well-deserved, and very exciting, new opportunities elsewhere in the University. They will be greatly missed, but the Institute will benefit from the contributions they made during their time here for many years to come.

I am proud to have had the opportunity to lead this wonderful community over the past three years and delighted to be concluding my term as director on such a high note. I am pleased to be leaving the Institute in good hands and am excited about what the future holds for the RAI.



Halbert Jones (Richard Purkiss)

A note from Adam Smith

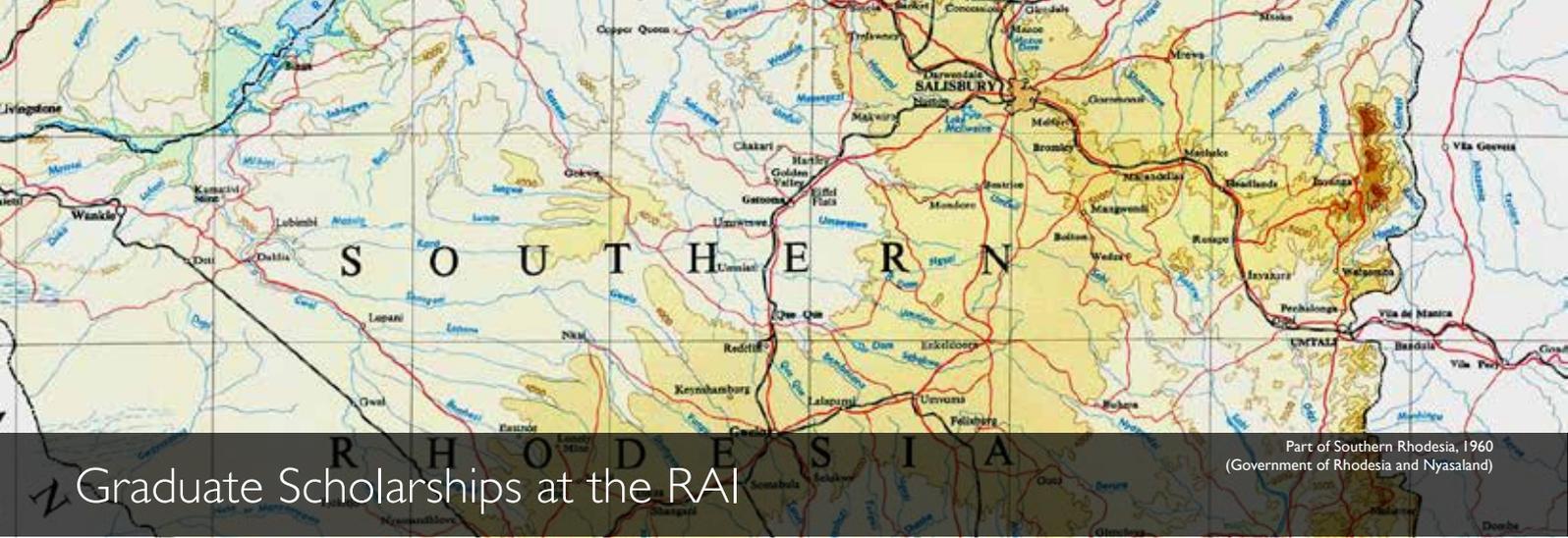
By the time this Annual Report is in your hands I will have taken over from Hal Jones as the RAI's new Director, and the first thing I want to do is to thank Hal for his work. The Institute, and the community it serves, has been incredibly lucky to have Hal steering the ship for the last three years. This report provides ample testimony to both the intellectual energy and the cheerful good spirit he has brought to the role. It is a reminder, too, of the range of activities in which the RAI is engaged—from funding doctoral students to hosting major conferences and bringing former congressmen to speak to school students.

This activity serves two main purposes. First, the RAI is here to serve the community of scholars in Oxford and beyond who try to understand America and its place in the world. And, second, we need to communicate that academic understanding to non-academic audiences. In the era of Trump and Brexit, both of these functions seem more urgent than ever. One thing that seems certain in an uncertain world is that the need will only increase for clear-sighted and informed analysis of what the US is, has been, and might become. I believe there is a great opportunity for the RAI to provide that perspective, bringing together and amplifying top quality research.

For me, the most exciting thing about taking on this job is the opportunity to spend more time talking with colleagues and learning about their research. I want the RAI to be an open and welcoming place for Americanists of all kinds—from Oxford, the rest of the UK, the US, and beyond. In the next few months I will be taking stock and making plans for the years ahead. Please be in touch; I'd love to hear any and all suggestions about how we can better serve our community.



Adam Smith (Richard Purkiss)



Graduate Scholarships at the RAI

Once again, the generosity of the RAI's benefactors has enabled the Institute to offer financial support to graduate students writing up their theses in American history, politics and international relations, and literature. Here, three scholarship recipients reflect on the impact of this support on their doctoral research.



The signing of the Rhodesian Internal Settlement, 1978 (Government of Rhodesia)

Todd Carter

The RAI's Graduate Scholarship in Politics and International Relations has been crucial to the continuation of my doctoral research project: "'Clinging like barnacles to the old hull of empire!': Race, Rhodesia and the US-UK relationship, 1963-1980'. Combining exhaustive archival research in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and South Africa with an extensive programme of oral history interviews with the major players and policymakers involved, the project focuses upon the conduct of British and American policies towards the Rhodesian crisis in the context of the Cold War in southern Africa. Stretching from 1963, immediately before the last white Prime Minister of Rhodesia, Ian Smith, made his Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain, until the creation of the new nation of Zimbabwe in April 1980, my thesis explores the dimensions and content of US and UK diplomatic engagement in the region. It sheds light both upon the US and UK's coordination of Cold War strategy and policy and, furthermore, demonstrates that the so-called 'Special Relationship' was a distinctly malleable construct, dependent upon the capacities, characters, and propensities of the officials involved as well as the political contexts within which they interacted and operated.

I am indebted not only to the generosity of the Institute's benefactors but also to its Academic Programme Committee. I also wish to

extend my thanks to my supervisors Nigel Bowles, Sue Onslow, and Stephen Tuck; to Hal Jones, Jane Rawson, Jo Steventon, Tara Stubbs, and Huw David; and to my friends and colleagues at the RAI. My year as a Graduate Scholar would not have been as productive, rewarding or enlightening without their kindness, their support and their friendship. It has been a privilege to contribute in my own way to the intellectual excitement, energy, and vision that go into the RAI.

Taking advantage of the office space that comes with the Graduate Scholarship, in the last twelve months, I have made sustained



Vice-President Walter Mondale in 1977

American Literature Research Seminar

To be held at 5pm on Thursdays at the Radcliffe American Institute unless otherwise noted

Jeanette Schroeder, VUwWick Tue, 11 Jan: 'The embrace of the will: loss and the master of metaphor'

Lytle Shaw, NYU Tue, 29 Jan: 'Third person: the FBI's genius of invisibility in the 1950s'

Nicholas Gaskill 7 Feb: 'Chromographia: American Literature and the Modernization of Color'

Edward Soggin, KCL 12 Feb: 'New York, 1881: lessons from "Who's Who a Biography"'

The ALRS provides a friendly and engaged forum for invited speakers to present their research...

American Literature Research Seminar

To be held at 5pm on Thursdays at the Radcliffe American Institute unless otherwise noted

Emily Gott, Bristol 2 Mar: 'Pure English: Edith Wharton's American debt'

Philip Gould, Brunel 9 Mar: 'The Nile and the time of war'

Sara Johnson, UC San Diego 16 Mar: 'Notes toward a Black encyclopedia: African language, biographical fragments, and Early American print culture'

Deborah Treisman, The New Yorker 23 Mar: 'New Yorker fiction through the decades'

The ALRS provides a friendly and engaged forum for invited speakers to present their research...

Chromographia: American Literature and the Modernization of Color

Nicholas Gaskill (Oriel) with Jonathan David Balch (Oriel) and author of Chromographia: Charlotte Ralston (Somerville and Oxford) Elise Tarricone (St Catherine)

Chromographia is the only study of modern color in US literature. It presents a new reading of perception in literature and a history of experiment that uses color to move beyond the usual divisions of modern thought...

Thursday 7 February 17.00-18.30 Radcliffe American Institute 1a South Parks Road Oxford OX1 2JF

NEW YORKER FICTION THROUGH THE DECADES

The 28th Esmond Harmsworth Lecture in American Arts and Letters

DEBORAH TREISMAN Fiction Editor, The New Yorker

Deborah Treisman has been fiction editor at The New Yorker since 2013. Being named the magazine's 1996 Esmond Harmsworth New Yorker Fiction Fellow...

Thursday 13 June 5pm All welcome

Registration required: Please sign up via the RAI website...

Radcliffe American Institute 1a South Parks Road Oxford OX1 2JF

progress toward the completion of my thesis. In particular, I have been able to arrange and carry out over forty interviews with British, American, South African, Zimbabwean, and Commonwealth diplomats who played a role either in formulating and instigating policies toward Southern Africa, or in maintaining US-UK relations from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s.

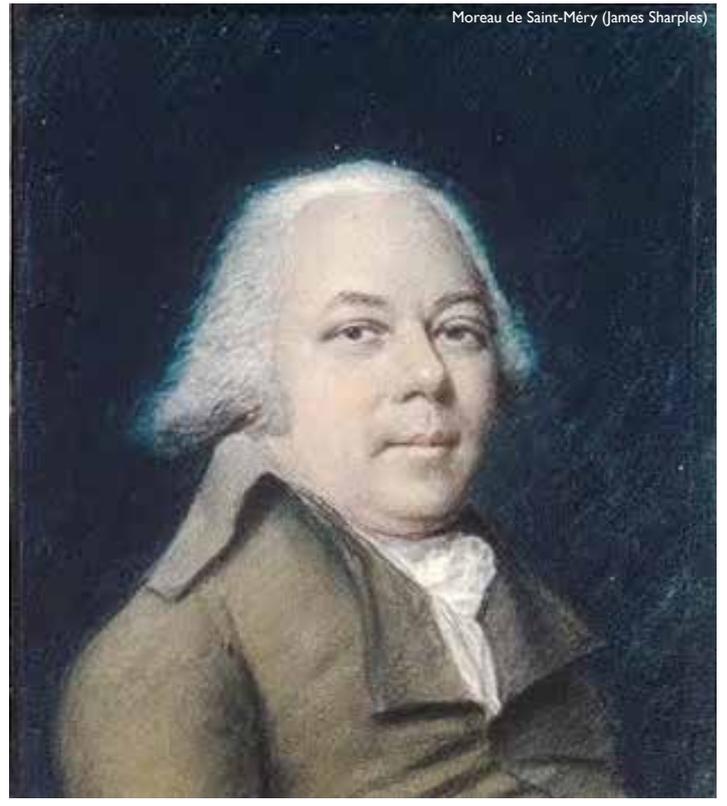
Beyond working on my doctoral thesis, I have taught multiple courses and papers in History and the Department of Politics and International Relations here at Oxford, and contributed a chapter to a forthcoming edited collection examining the importance of personal chemistry and friendship in US-UK diplomatic relations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Once more, I would like to say a huge thank you to the RAI, its benefactors, and its wider community of scholars for their support. The Graduate Scholarship enabled me to make sustained progress in my research and writing, and has undoubtedly made an important contribution to my development as a scholar.

Camilla Chen

The Esmond Harmsworth scholarship gave me a comfortable working space within a friendly and engaging community in the heart of Oxford, and enabled me to devote my fourth year to finishing up the research and writing for my thesis.

Over the course of the year, I also convened the American Literature Research Seminar (ALRS) at the RAI, alongside an English faculty member each term; I am glad to have had the chance to work alongside and learn from Merve Emre, Nicholas Gaskill, and Tara Stubbs.



Moreau de Saint-Méry (James Sharples)



President Nixon meeting the Washington Redskins football team, 1971 (NARA)

Graduate Scholarships at the RAI

RAI Seminar
American Literature Research Seminar
 To be held at 5pm on the following Thursdays at the Rothermere American Institute (unless otherwise noted)

Alia Beeston, Cardiff
 17 Oct: 'Proust in the glass, Musset's red air: John De Passer's photographic metropolis'

Bryan Cheyette, Reading
 23 Oct: 'Chris Sinclair is not Philip Roth'

Gayle Rogers, Pittsburgh
 12 Nov: 'The price of speculative luxury: Fran Zerk to Schuyler'

Erinly Cook, Bristol
 29 Nov: 'Pure English: Edith Wharton's American story'

The ALRS provides a friendly and engaged forum for invited speakers to present their research programs in the form of a paper of c. 40-45 minutes in length, followed by a question period and wine, and then a dinner hosted by the seminar's co-convenors. Free dinners are available for the first few graduate students to sign up each week; please write to caroline.chen@rai.ox.ac.uk if you would like to join in. The seminar meets on Thursdays (Weeks 1, 3, 5, and 8) from 5-8.30pm at the RAI.

Affiliated Honor at Trinity

monograph, *Chromographia: American Literature and the Modernization of Color*, with a symposium comprising a panel of artists and authors who responded to Nick's work in distinctively individual and richly thought-provoking ways. The following day, one of the speakers, Elisa Tamarkin (University of California, Berkeley), held a lunchtime workshop on the subject of 'Apropos of Nothing: A Critical History of Irrelevance and Relevance', in which participants had the chance to discuss ideas

in her current book project. Finally, in Trinity term, Sara Johnson (University of California, San Diego) spoke to the ALRS about her ongoing research on Moreau de Saint-Méry, an eighteenth-century Caribbean intellectual, in a talk entitled 'Notes Towards a Black Encyclopedia: African Language, Biographical Fragments, and Early American Print Culture'.

Trinity term also saw the annual Esmond Harmsworth Lecture in American Arts and Letters, delivered this year by Deborah Treisman, fiction editor at *The New Yorker*. The lecture was eagerly anticipated among American literature students, and we were not disappointed: Deborah entertained the audience with witty anecdotes of her experiences working with authors at the magazine; her lecture, along with her subsequent conversation with Merve Emre, provided much food for thought about the work that goes into producing a polished piece of literary fiction, as well as about the role that *New Yorker* fiction plays in shaping contemporary literary tastes and predilections.

As I approach the end of a fulfilling and productive year, and, more generally, the end of my DPhil, I am extremely grateful for the RAI, a welcoming space in the University where conversations can be had about American literature both in itself and in relation to American history and politics. I would also like to extend my thanks to Tara Stubbs and Tessa Roynon, who supported my work for the ALRS; Hal Jones, who made me feel very welcome in joining the RAI community; and Richard Purkiss and Jo Steventon, without whom I would not have known how to operate the coffee machine, among other things, and without whose help ALRS events—as, indeed, many other events—would not have run as well and as smoothly.

Rivers Gambrell

In his State of the Union address in 1975, President Gerald Ford reminded Americans that “progress comes not in comfortable and complacent times, but out of trial and confusion”. Although the same adage certainly applies to most doctoral students, I found that—thanks to the Rothermere American Institute—times of trial and confusion were quite limited during my fourth year at Oxford.



President Nixon meeting the Washington Redskins football team, 1971 (NARA)

One of the greatest perks of being awarded an RAI scholarship was undoubtedly access to the graduate scholars' office, which quickly became less of an office and more of a second home. The Institute's garden provided the perfect amount of Vitamin D (Phil), and the sunny location served as an intellectually stimulating rallying point for our close-knit postgraduate community. With scenic views of Mansfield College (not to mention access to unlimited caffeine in the Institute's kitchen) it was virtually impossible for me to wallow in Watergate, although the scandal does play a central role in one of my chapters.

My thesis investigates the historical roots of presidential deployment of professional sport for political gain, or what I call 'pigskin politicking'. I explore how the Nixon-Ford administrations utilised pro football and major league baseball for public relations purposes, and suggest new ways of understanding the significant historical relationship between institutionalised sport and the presidency.

Although researching the politics of sport is in itself very exciting, this year has been particularly rewarding. Thanks to the RAI graduate scholarship, I was able to present my research at a number of conferences over the past year, such as the Historians of the Twentieth Century United States Conference in Liverpool. Perhaps most excitingly, fellow doctoral candidate Christoph Nitschke and I both received Albert D. Chandler Travel Grants to present papers at



Apollo 15 astronaut David Scott at the Hadley Rille, 31 July 1971 (NASA)

the prestigious Business History Conference in Cartagena, Colombia. This provided us with an invaluable opportunity to network with the leading scholars in business history, many of whom—I was happy to learn—were interested in the intertwined history of presidential politics and the business of pro football.

Additionally, as a result of the RAI's fantastic public engagement work (and specifically the efforts of Senior Research Fellow, Karen Heath), I gave a public talk entitled 'An All Star Event: Athletes, Astronauts, and Richard Nixon's Moon Landing' at the Bodleian Library's Lunar Activity Day at the Weston Library (see p. 18). This featured a multidisciplinary team of academics drawn from across the country, and I am very happy to have been included. If all goes well, my paper on sportsmen and spacemen will be published in a forthcoming edition of the *European Journal for American Cultural Studies*.

Simply put, my year as an RAI scholar could not have been better, and it is only with Nixonian levels of reluctance that I hand over the keys to the graduate scholars' office. My supervisors, Dr Gareth Davies and Dr Simon Skinner, and the fellows at the RAI have been incredibly supportive during the final stages of my project. Although I will miss the views and the company, I can take solace in the fact that this year has been enormously beneficial to my personal and



Cartagena de Indias, Colombia (Norma Gómez, Flickr, CC BY 2.0 - cropped)

professional development. President Ford also stated that "personal excellence can be achieved by a visionary goal, through planning, dedicated execution, and total follow-through". He left out that it still depends a good deal on the generosity of institutions like the Rothermere American Institute.



President Nixon welcomes the quarantined Apollo 11 astronauts aboard the USS Hornet, 24 July 1969 (NASA)



Balliol College (Tony Hisgett, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0 - cropped)

View from the Winant Chair

Each year, the Winant Visiting Professorship in American Government brings to Oxford an eminent scholar of American politics and government. The Winant Chair was founded by Rivington and Joan Winant in honour of Rivington's father, John G. Winant, US Ambassador to Great Britain from 1941 to 1946. In 2018-19, the Chair was held by Stephen Skowronek, Pelatiah Perit Professor of Political and Social Science and resident fellow at the Institution for Social and Policy Studies at Yale University.



Stephen Skowronek (Halbert Jones)

A political scientist with interests in the history and institutions of US government, Stephen Skowronek has played a leading role in shaping the study of American political development. A graduate of Oberlin College and Cornell University, he began his academic career in 1978 at UCLA and moved to Yale University in 1986. Skowronek's books include: *Building a New American State, 1877-1920* (1982); *The Politics Presidents Make* (1993, 1996); *The Search for American Political Development* (2004, with Karen Orren); *Presidential Leadership in Political Time* (2008, 2011); and most recently, *The Policy State* (2017, with Karen Orren). In 1986, he and Orren founded the journal *Studies in American Political Development*. Skowronek has held the French American Foundation Chair in American Civilization at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, and has been a visiting fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington D.C.



John Gilbert Winant, c. 1943 (Dutch National Archives, CC BY-SA 3.0 - cropped)

Professor Skowronek writes: It was a great privilege to serve as the John G. Winant Visiting Professor of American Government during Hilary and Trinity terms in 2019. In the Winant Chair, I found a near-perfect combination of broad-ranging scholarly engagement and undisturbed research time. That made my stay at RAI one of the most rewarding and productive periods of my career. It was my honor to participate in the vibrant intellectual community I found there.

The primary responsibility of the Winant Professor is the inaugural lecture. I titled my talk, 'Has American Democracy Outstripped its Institutional Accommodations? Principles Without Traction in 21st Century Governance'. In it, I put the current crisis of governance in America in historical perspective. I wanted to counter the smug confidence of many academics and pundits about the problems currently in view, voiced with easy brush-offs like "we've been through a lot worse" and "the institutions are strong". Looking back on the long history of institutional reform in America, I detailed reasons to think that the problems of governance in our day are categorically different, and different in ways that bear directly on the resilience of the American institutions going forward. The strength and adaptability of the American Constitution is, I argued, not something to be taken for granted; it is a feature of American development that today we would do well to scrutinize carefully, seeking a better understanding of its conditions and contingencies. I was able to use my time at the RAI to turn this talk into an article for publication and to secure its acceptance in *Perspectives on Politics*.

The inaugural lecture followed closely upon the analysis that Karen Orren and I presented in our recent book, *The Policy State*. Interest in *The Policy State* brought other invitations. I participated in a forum on the book at Kings College London in February. In May, I took the project to Paris. I gave a talk on the book at the Center for the Study of European Politics at Sciences Po and participated in another panel discussion of the thesis.



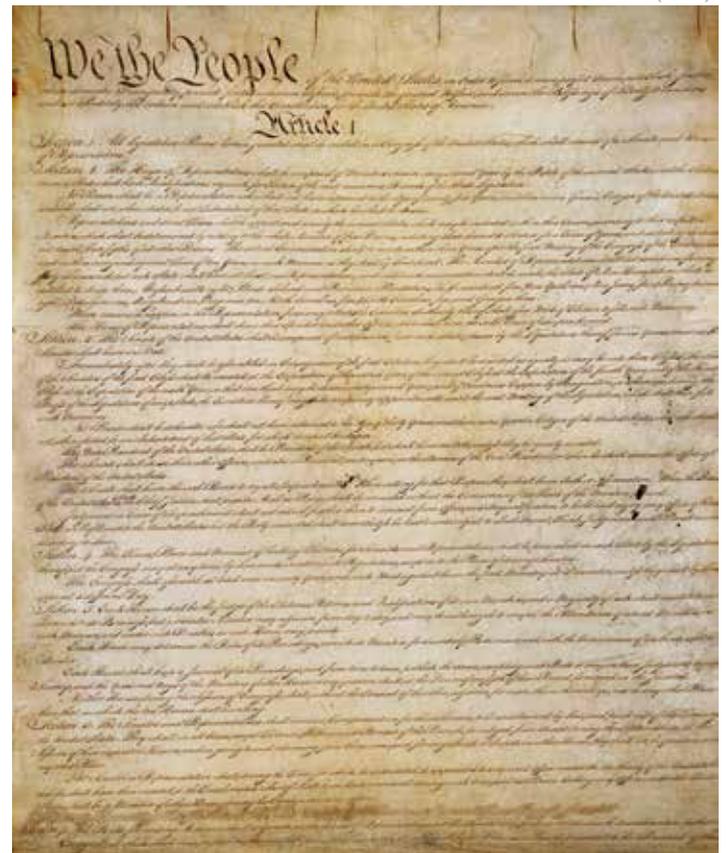
Nuffield College (SBA73, Flickr, CC BY 2.0 - cropped)

A colleague at Balliol, Sudhir Hazareesingh, invited me to give a lecture on the American presidency to Oxford undergraduates in his 'Introduction to Politics' course. My talk for that occasion, 'Mobilization, Management and the Modern American Presidency', traced the shifting balance between management values and mobilization values in presidential politics over time. The idea was to call attention to the near compete inversion of these values, from the original, 'constitutional' presidency (conceived as government management without political mobilization) to the Trump presidency (in which all aspects of government management are enlisted in service to political mobilization). I was able to rework this lecture into an article during my time at the RAI. It will appear in *The American Presidency in Troubled Times: Historical Essays* by David Kennedy, James Kloppenberg, Jack Rakov, Stephen Skowronek and Julian Zelizer.

My stay at the RAI corresponded with the start of the presidential election season in the US, and though I was mainly working on other things, I found time to add my voice to this fast-moving conversation. I contributed a piece for a project on 'Democracy after Trump' put together by David Orr at Oberlin College. I also responded to a spike in editorial interest in how the Trump presidency fit into a scheme I had elaborated some 25 years ago for thinking about presidential leadership in 'political time'. I was invited to place Trump in political time in a public lecture at London School of Economics and Political Science in May. My paper for that occasion—'What's New in the Political Leadership of Donald Trump?'—became an LSE podcast. It will find a more permanent home in the third edition of my collection of essays, *Presidential Leadership in Political Time*.

My time at the RAI was enriched immeasurably by the opportunity to work with Desmond King, Andrew Mellon Professor of American Government at Nuffield College and a longtime affiliate of the Institute. I was delighted to join Des during Hilary Term in co-teaching his graduate seminar on American Government, and learned a lot from the students in that class about how to think about American government in a comparative perspective. Later, in Trinity term, Des and I organized a joint Winant-Mellon conference on 'The Trump Presidency and the Course of American Political Development'. We brought together leading scholars on American government and politics from the UK and the US to try to make sense of the current administration. Out of our many conversations about American government and politics, Des and I hatched a joint project which will look into the relationship between the 'deep state' and the 'unitary executive'. This should keep our exchanges going for months to come.

Constitution of the United States (NARA)



Some of the most rewarding experiences during my time in Oxford came in less formal settings. I participated in the RAI's history and politics research seminars, sometimes as a designated commentator but more often just as an active participant. At the annual 'Congress to Campus' program, I joined Larry Jacobs (visiting from the University of Minnesota) to host a panel with former House members Charles Boustany and Donna Edwards. The three main centers in which I interacted with students and faculty during my time at Oxford were all very different from one another: the RAI, an interdisciplinary American studies institute; Nuffield, a graduate college of social science; and Balliol, a traditional college. But more striking to me than the differences from one to the next, was how different they all were from the usual sites of my interactions in the U.S., where the academic day is much more highly structured by departments and disciplines. As an institutionalist, I could not but be struck by how profoundly the organization of the University of Oxford affects the intellectual life of the community. In my everyday interactions with scholars in other fields, the inside game fell away and ideas ran free of their professional trappings. That was a truly extraordinary experience.



Rothermere American Institute (Richard Purkiss)

A year in the Harmsworth Chair

Established in 1922, the Harold Vyvyan Harmsworth Visiting Professorship of American History is the oldest and most prestigious chair in American history outside the United States. It was created by the 1st Viscount Rothermere in memory of his son Vyvyan, who died in the First World War. Associated jointly with the RAI and with Queen's College, the Harmsworth Professorship brings one of America's most distinguished historians to Oxford every academic year. In 2018-19 it was held by Barbara Savage, Geraldine R. Segal Professor of American Social Thought and Professor of Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.



Barbara Savage in Radcliffe Square (Barbara Savage)

Professor Savage writes: My year as Harmsworth Professor began with a crowded overnight flight from Philadelphia and long snaking immigration lines at Heathrow. But after the drive to Oxford, I was ushered into the serenity of the light-filled Harmsworth House, my literal home away from home. With its framed window views of farmers' fields and modernist gardens, I knew immediately that all would be well. Later, Alison and Paul Madden and Elaine Evers warmly welcomed me into all that a fellowship at Queen's College brings—great conversations, fine food and drink, and extraordinary music. Soon, colleagues on the History Faculty fused an easy comradeship with me, built on common ground of shared methods and challenges.

But of course it was the RAI which became my intellectual home, made easily mine by the warmth and efficiency of Hal Jones, Jane Rawson, Jo Steventon, and Richard Purkiss. The RAI was the place where I co-taught seminars with Stephen Tuck, met with Oxford's great students, took in talks and lectures, worked in the always sunny library, and lingered at our lively Tuesday morning tea break. The intensity of Oxford's eight-week teaching terms means that everything seems to happen all the time and all at once, resulting in a relentless and dizzying array of presentations by stellar scholars

from around the globe. I embraced as much of that as possible, but I also spent my most productive times in a quiet office across from the Princess Margaret Memorial Garden doing what scholars do—reading, writing, and trying to think.

As I enjoyed the many privileges that came with this Professorship, the person who was never far from my mind was Merze Tate, an American diplomatic historian who took her B.Litt. in International Relations at Oxford in 1935, at a time when she was the only African American, man or woman, there. When Tate arrived alone by transatlantic voyage in 1932, she was a high school history teacher intent on earning an Oxford graduate degree because she yearned to be a scholar. With limited financial resources, Tate still managed to complete her course of study, and this at a time when there were few women at Oxford and fewer still doing graduate work. Tate went on to get her Ph.D. in government from Harvard, to join the history department at Howard University in 1942, and to write five books and dozens of articles on disarmament and on imperialism in the Pacific and Africa.



Merze Tate in Radcliffe Square (Western Michigan University Archives)



Queen's College (Motacilla, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0 - cropped)



Victoria Memorial Garden, Kolkata
(Barbara Savage)

I am writing a book on Tate's life and work and made her the topic of my Harmsworth Lecture. My daily walks around Oxford took me past the spot in front of the Radcliffe Camera where she proudly posed for a photograph in her academic gown astride a bicycle with the towers of All Souls in the background. I gave talks on Tate at twelve institutions in the UK and Germany and in many seminars here; her life and her ideas never failed to intrigue, interest, and inspire. I also traveled to India, following in Tate's steps, as she had held a Fulbright Lectureship in 1950-51 at Visva-Bharati University, established by Rabindranath Tagore near Calcutta. Tate always said that her time at Oxford and her year in India and Asia were the two highlights of her life, and I have come to see how central both

were to her intellectual formation. That is now reflected in the long account I wrote during my time here on Tate's extensive travels and writings on the geopolitics of India and Asia.

Working on Tate has led me to think rather constantly about the relationship between history and biography and the particular challenges of writing about black women's lives. The RAI welcomed holding a symposium on just that, an idea hatched with Farah Jasmine Griffin (Columbia). We hosted a very successful gathering of prominent scholars from the UK and the US who generously explained their own approaches to work on a diverse group of black women. The day included splendid presentations by Griffin, Judith Casselberry (Bowdoin), Erica Armstrong Dunbar (Rutgers), Merve Fejzula (Cambridge), Sinead McEneaney (Open University), and Imaobong Umoren (LSE).

The enthusiasm that day among students and faculty was one more expression of what I found most surprising at Oxford: the enduring interest in African American history and the history of race in the United States, now coupled with demands for more attention to the history of black Britons and of British imperialism and colonialism. I found that insistence everywhere I traveled but the yearning for more teaching and study of these fields was perhaps felt most starkly here at Oxford. I hope my time as Harmsworth Professor has helped to advance those subjects while also leaving evidence of a continuing urgent need.

Leaving Oxford was bittersweet, but time spent with Alexandra and Vyyan Harmsworth in June brought my time here to a fitting close, as we toured the splendid gardens at Sissinghurst, the home of the writer Vita Sackville-West. The beauty that is the English garden never failed to inspire the amateur gardener in me. So sharing that with them seemed just the right way to conclude a year of walking through gardens and architectural grandeur, whether on my way to the RAI or Queen's or dinners or teas or Evensong, or on my way back to the thriving diversity of Headington, my home away from home.

**WRITING BLACK WOMEN'S LIVES:
PRESENT AND PAST**

11 May 2019
Rathbone American Institute
University of Oxford
1a South Parks Road
Oxford OX1 1RH

Please join for a one-day symposium featuring stellar scholars who bring innovative approaches to writing about Black women's lives. This interdisciplinary and international group will challenge us to consider links between biography and history in American, African American, African, and African diaspora studies. We will highlight lessons learned from prize-winning biographical work while discussing new scholarship in the growing field of Black women's biographical studies.

Reading Black women's lives requires us to revise and expand scholarly topics, whether on slavery, migration, politics, religion, transnationalism, or knowledge and artistic production. The complexities, contradictions, and contradictions within these lives also often require invention of new forms of writing and new categories of analysis.

The day's format will encourage informal discussion among participants and the authors.

Speakers:
 Mia Bay, *Pantheon*
 Judith Casselberry, *Rowan*
 Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *Rowan*
 Merve Fejzula, *Cambridge*
 Farah Jasmine Griffin, *Columbia*
 Sinead McEneaney, *Open University*
 Imaobong Umoren, *LSE*

For further information and to register:
<https://ocw.mit.edu/raia/2019/writing-black-women-from-present-and-past>

Organized by Barbara D. Steiger
 Harmsworth Family Professor of American History, University of Oxford
 Graduate R. Boyd Professor, American Social Thought, University of Pennsylvania



The port of San Francisco in 1851

Visiting fellows' reflections

As every year, the RAI welcomed a number of visiting research fellows to write, conduct research, and join the Institute's scholarly community. Here, Senior Visiting Research Fellows Konstantin Dierks and Sarah Knott (both of Indiana University) look back on their time in Oxford.

Konstantin Dierks

Spending an academic year at the RAI was an absolute blessing. From day one through day 365, there were the incomparable staff at the RAI itself, especially with Hal Jones creating an energetic intellectual atmosphere and Jane Rawson managing the library with extraordinary efficiency. My year coincided with the presence of Barbara Savage as Harmsworth Professor, who served as an exemplary role model in her mentoring of students, and as a generously rigorous interlocutor in the RAI's American History Research Seminar. Within Oxford, the RAI harbors a wonderful intellectual community of faculty and graduate students. I arrived keen to work on mutual research interests with Stephen Tuffnell, and was delighted throughout the year to exchange ideas with Pekka Hämäläinen, Lloyd Pratt, Gareth Davies, Nigel Bowles, Mandy Izadi, and others. I was myself pleased to mentor some fantastic graduate students: Chris Nitschke, Grace Mallon, and Stephen Symchych. From the wider world beyond Oxford, the RAI brought in a number of superb visitors to share their research, among them Caitlin Fitz, Jen Manion, Phil Gould, and John McNeill. All in all, it was a great privilege to be part of such a vibrant research center.

For my part, I devoted my time to working on a book manuscript focused on the globalizing of the United States between the War of 1812 and the American Civil War. This time period is often narrated as an era of 'manifest destiny' across the North American continent, but I have found countless—what I fondly call—'crazy Americans' pursuing sundry activities all over the world. And for every American who ventured out into the world, there were many more gazing at the world via new forms of print and visual culture such as illustrated magazines and moving panoramas. The shrinking of geographical distances, courtesy of steamship and telegraph, did sometimes inspire open-minded curiosity, but oftentimes categorical racism, a paradox that continues to afflict American culture in the present day. A sabbatical year is a precious commodity, and I was grateful to see my book manuscript to take shape over the course of this one.

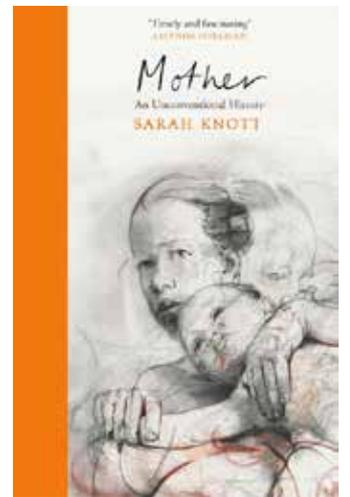
Sarah Knott

My year was shaped by the publication of *Mother: An Unconventional History*. Part history, part memoir, the book explores the many pasts of pregnancy, birth and the encounter with an infant. *Mother* was published by Penguin Viking in the UK in March, and (as *Mother is a Verb*) by Farrar Straus and Giroux in the US in April.

So the year started with copy-editing and fact-checking in the RAI's Vere Harmsworth's Library, and discussing the book's method with the American History Research Seminar. And the year ended with talking about the book in a whole range of venues: in Oxford, in the Blackwell's Marquee at the Oxford Literary Festival, or the new 'Cultural Studies, Cultural Histories' seminar; or in London at the British Library, the Feminist Book Society, and the Institute of Historical Research; and beyond at universities from Manchester to Glasgow to Valencia; as well as on public media such as BBC Radio 4 and BBC Scotland.

Meeting Jenny Murray for Woman's Hour was a particular highlight: I remember listening to her brand of feminism with my dad when I was growing up. She swept into the green room with stories about giving birth in seventies and eighties, and proceeded to ask on air about representations of maternity and its lived experience.

I held the RAI fellowship alongside one at Oxford's Centre for Life Writing, a pairing that beautifully expresses the book's empirical foundation in American history and its literary commitment to first-person writing. Aside from the unfortunate simultaneity of the two institutions' main seminars—yes, I cleaved to my 'first home' in US history, and stayed in the building!—this was an embarrassment of riches. And then there was the SVRF's association with Mansfield College, where I enjoyed many conversations over lunch and gave a public lecture. Cycling to and from South Parks Road, talking to new colleagues like Barbara Savage and former colleagues like Hal Jones and Steve Tuck, made for the loveliest of academic years.





United States Capitol (Martin Falbisoner/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0 - cropped)

Congress to Campus 2019 at the RAI

Congress to Campus is the centrepiece of the RAI's programme to engage wider audiences in the politics, history, and literature of the United States. Working with the British Library's Eccles Centre for American Studies, the US Embassy, and the Association of Former Members of Congress, the initiative brought former US Representatives Donna Edwards (D-Maryland) and Charles Boustany (R-Louisiana) to the UK, and to the RAI, to discuss US politics and share their experiences of working in Congress with secondary school pupils as well as with undergraduate and graduate students. RAI Graduate Scholar Todd Carter managed their itinerary during the visit.



Donna Edwards (US Congress)

He writes: The March leg of this year's Congress to Campus tour was a great success, providing a perfect forum for an extended discussion of US politics and governmental process with a diverse range of audiences—including secondary school pupils, university students, teachers, scholars, and experts. Over six days, the two former members of Congress spoke to A-level students and undergraduates at London Metropolitan University, Wellington College, and Reading University; took part in a

livestreamed Q&A session in front of an audience of 50 students at the British Library; and, at the RAI, participated in two lively discussions and debates. The first of these addressed a packed room of A-level students and teachers, and featured further contributions from Professor Philip Davies (Eccles Centre), Dr Trevor McCrisken (Warwick), and Dr Maya Kornberg (Oxford). Later, an afternoon seminar for Oxford students and faculty members was chaired by Professor Lawrence Jacobs (Minnesota) and closed with comments from Professor Stephen Skowronek (Yale). In combination with an earlier tour in November, hosted at the Eccles Centre, the aggregate audience for this year's Congress to Campus UK programme totalled around 2,400 people.

Charles Boustany, Jr., M.D., represented Louisiana's 7th district from 2005-2013 and, following the elimination of the 7th, the 3rd district from 2013-2017. During his 12 years in Congress, Boustany served on the House Ways and Means Committee and was Chairman of the Subcommittee on Tax Policy. He was a co-founder of the Friends of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Caucus, co-founder of the

House Doctors Caucus, and a co-chair of the bipartisan US-China Working Group. Boustany authored legislation on a wide range of subjects, from tax issues to welfare, and initiated the IRS investigation that uncovered the abusive practice of targeting individuals and organizations based on political and religious beliefs.

Donna Edwards represented Maryland's 4th district from 2008-2017. Elected in a special election in June 2008, Edwards became Maryland's first African American woman in Congress, serving 5 terms. She served on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the Committee on Standards and Official Conduct, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, and the Committee on Science, Space and Technology. In her last term, Edwards was a member of the Democratic leadership team as co-chair of the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee. She also served in the leadership of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

The organisers are grateful to Donna Edwards and Charles Boustany, as well as to the British Library's Eccles Centre for American Studies, the US Embassy in London, the Association of Former Members of Congress, and the British Association for American Studies. Thanks are also due to Dr Cara Rodway, Dr Phil Hatfield and Professor Philip Davies (Eccles Centre), Professor Andrew Moran (London Metropolitan), Dibran Zeqiri, Tarla Woolhouse and Robin Dyer (Wellington College), Dr Dafydd Townley and Dr Darius Wainwright (Reading), and all the other speakers and participants who helped to make each event in this year's Congress to Campus tour so engaging.



Charles Boustany (US Congress)

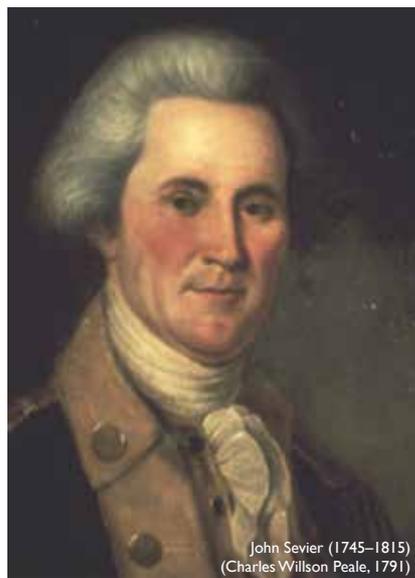


Nashville, Tennessee skyline from the south (Bill Penn, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.5 - cropped)

Travel awards for primary research in the United States

The generous support of the RAI's friends and benefactors allows the Institute to make travel awards to undergraduate and graduate students undertaking primary research in the United States. Grace Mallon (D.Phil. in History, University College) received one such award in 2018-19.

She writes: In August 2018 I took advantage of my RAI travel grant to make my first proper foray into the American South, spending one week at the Tennessee State Library and Archives, right by the capitol building in downtown Nashville, and another at the Georgia Historical Society, whose grand quarters overlook Savannah's famous Forsyth Park. My thesis on the interactions of state governments with each other and with the federal government in the earliest decades of the new American nation will be based on legislative records and politicians' correspondence. I applied to visit Tennessee and Georgia in the hope that I could draw my material not only from the big states and the big names—Virginia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania; Jefferson, Adams, Wilson—but from all the states, including those teetering on the edge of the uncertain early American empire, and from the lives of politicians who may not take centre-stage in traditional narratives of national development but whose written remains can help to illuminate how Americans went about governing their new federal union on a day-to-day basis.



John Sevier (1745–1815)
(Charles Willson Peale, 1791)

During the course of my trip I was able to examine the extant records of the Georgia assembly, especially from the 1780s, and the papers of assemblyman, US congressman, and later Georgia governor James Jackson, who was also an important figure in the state militia during and after the Revolution. In Tennessee I was able to read the records of the territorial and state legislatures from 1794 to 1800, and to read the official correspondence of governors William Blount and John Sevier. My examination of these sources has suggested several conclusions about the realities of governing



William Blount (standing, centre right) waiting to sign the US Constitution (Howard Chandler Christy, 1940)

in the 1780s and '90s. The US Constitution, ratified 1789, indicates that states were meant to interact with the federal government by sending representatives to Congress, where they could press the agendas of their particular states and contribute to national policy. The Constitution, and subsequent Congressional legislation, also tried to reserve the management of Indian policy to the federal government. My archival findings suggest that both of these initiatives were unsuccessful. Governors—at least on the frontier—found themselves in what might be considered a diplomatic relationship with the federal government, trying to negotiate with the Secretary of War and local federal commissioners to influence federal Indian policy, especially when the state's representatives failed to get the job done in Congress. Legislators sent streams of 'remonstrances' to Congress to complain about their failure to act in the face of what were perceived as serious crises. Governors, militia officers, and state legislators appear to have broken federal law with abandon in their attempts to negotiate bilateral agreements with Indian nations. While these findings may be unsurprising to historians of Indian affairs, they begin to break down the obsessive focus of historians of the early national government on the intentions of the framers and later lawmakers, and to show that in studying government, the letter of the law itself forms only a small part of the picture.

My visit to the South allowed me to stand where my subjects had stood—in fields of cotton and colonial city streets—and to hold in my own hands the letters they wrote to friends, family, and colleagues almost 250 years ago. I am immensely grateful to the benefactors of the Rothermere American Institute for this opportunity, which allowed me to consult resources otherwise inaccessible to me, and the experience of which will lend so much colour to my historical writing.



Panoramic view of Forsyth Park, Savannah, Georgia (Jim from Lexington, KY, USA; Wikimedia Commons; CC BY-SA 2.0 - cropped)

The RAI has made awards to a number of outstanding undergraduate and graduate students to enable research in the United States during the 2019-20 academic year:

Leonardo Ackerman, B.A. in History, Somerville College.
Award for archival research on media representations of black American football players, in Washington, D.C.

Louis Beer, B.A. in History, St Peter's College.
Award for archival research on the US punk subculture from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s, in the D.C. Punk Archive at the D.C. Public Library and the D.C. Punk and Indie Fanzine Collection at the University of Maryland.

Alex Coccia, D.Phil. in Politics, St John's College: *Poverty Narratives in the United States*.
Nicolas Ollivant Award for fieldwork in Cleveland, Columbus, and Athens County, Ohio.

Rachel Cordery, B.A. in History, St Anne's College.
Award for archival research on crime in Prohibition-era New York, at the New York Municipal Archives and New York Public Library.

Angelica DeVido, D.Phil. in English, Oriel College: *A Home at the End of the World: Forms of American Girlhood post-1990*.
Award for archival research at Columbia University, New York University, and New York Public Library; held in association with a Gilder Lehrman fellowship at the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History in New York.

Claudia French, B.A. in History, St Peter's College.
Award for archival research on uses of whiteness by the US women's suffrage movement (c. 1870-1920), at archives in Boston and New York.

Sage Goodwin, D.Phil. in History, University College: *Framing the Civil Rights Story: Prime-Time Television News and the Black Freedom Struggle, 1954-1968*.
Award for research in the Library of Congress's Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division.

Amelia Hart, B.A. in History, New College.
Award for archival research on organising against incarceration within the Black Power movement, in New York and Washington, D.C.

Samantha Mack, M.Phil. in Politics (Political Theory), Lincoln College: *Epistemic Authority in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: People and Lands of Alaska Native and Settler Colonial Ontologies*.
Award for archival research at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the University of Alaska Anchorage, and Native Corporation offices.

Grace Mallon, D.Phil. in History, University College: *Governing the Union: The States in the Early American Republic, 1789-1812*.
Award for research in the archives of the New-York Historical Society (New York) and Massachusetts Historical Society (Boston); held in association with a Gilder Lehrman fellowship at the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History in New York.

Daniel McAteer, M.Sc. in the History of Science, Medicine, and Technology, Pembroke College.
Award for research in the special collections archive of the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Nathaniel Rachman, B.A. in History, Magdalen College.
Award for archival research on the ideology of the German-American Bund in the 1930s, at the National Archives at College Park, Maryland.

Noah Remnick, D.Phil. in History, Balliol College: *US Carceral History and Resistance*.
Award for archival research in New York and Washington, D.C.; held in association with a Gilder Lehrman fellowship at the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History in New York.

Lewis Roberts, B.A. in English Language and Literature, Magdalen College.
Award for archival research on the material practices of transatlantic Queer male artists, in New York, Boston, Cincinnati, and Los Angeles.

Ella St George Carey, D.Phil. in History, Pembroke College: *One's Own Medicine: The Practice of Nursing Amongst Black Women in the United States 1878-1932*.
Award for archival research at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York and the National Archives at College Park, Maryland; held in association with a Gilder Lehrman fellowship at the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History in New York.

Stephen Symchych, D.Phil. in History, St Antony's College: *American Political Identity Between 1800 and 1830*.
Award for archival research at Harvard University, the Boston Athenaeum, and the Massachusetts Historical Society.



Photo: Richard Purkiss

Conferences at the RAI

The academic year 2018-19 saw the RAI host and support an unprecedented array of conferences and workshops. Topics spanned American history, politics, and literature, ranging from the Early Republic to the 21st century and from drone warfare to arts patronage.

In September 2018, the RAI and the Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia convened a workshop on **The Future of America in the World**, hosted at the RAI. With the mid-term elections drawing near, two panels assessed how the Trump White House and widespread polarisation had affected American politics and government, as well as global trade and America's role in a changing international landscape.

Next, the RAI welcomed a workshop on **Drone Warfare: Trends and Emerging Issues**, organised by Vacation Visiting Research Fellows, James Rogers and Caroline Kennedy-Pipe. Drone experts from policy, military, and academic circles gathered to discuss the latest research and critique the convenors' forthcoming book, *Drone Warfare: Concepts and Controversies* (Manchester UP, 2020).



President Lyndon B. Johnson on his 1964 poverty tour (Cecil W. Stoughton)



Joe Sacco in conversation with Alice Kelly (Richard Purkiss)

In November, a workshop addressed the work of the American writer Willa Cather (1873-1947). **Willa Cather Outside the Box** sought to reassess a currently somewhat neglected author on the centenary of the publication of her most popular novel, *My Ántonia* (1918). A round-table discussion responded to a series of mini-papers and a keynote presentation by Catherine Morley (University of Leicester).

Trinity term 2019 saw the fifth workshop in the 'Cultures and Commemorations of War' series convened by Harmsworth Junior Research Fellow, Alice Kelly. **Drawing Wars: Art and Cultural Memory** focussed on the artistic and visual representation of war. Contributions ranging from the First World War, to the Troubles in Northern Ireland, to the 21st century European refugee crisis drew out ways in which conflict is remembered through art, while a keynote conversation with the world-famous graphic novelist Joe Sacco—author of works including *Safe Area Goražde*, *The Fixer*, *Footnotes in Gaza*, and *Journalism*—reflected on the theme from a journalistic perspective.

The annual postgraduate conference for 2019 addressed the subject of **Poverty in America: The Past, Present, and Future**, seeking to understand why—55 years after President Lyndon B. Johnson first declared an 'unconditional War on Poverty'—poverty still persists in the world's richest country. Early-career researchers as well as leading experts from the fields of history, sociology, and political science gathered over two days to uncover the roots of a condition which afflicts nearly 40 million Americans.

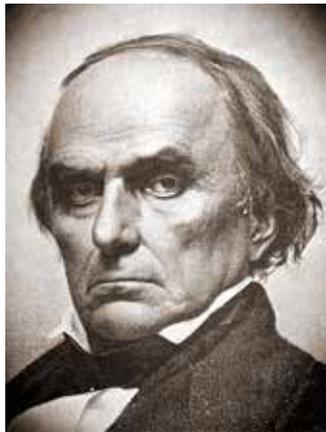
The RAI's annual postgraduate conference for 2018 also took place in the run-up to Michaelmas term. **Incredible: Lying, Credibility, and the Truth in Historical Research** took its inspiration from recent interest in fake news, asking how historians cope with lying in the historical record. Not all voices inspire the same degree of trust, and many variables affect which accounts appear credible to whom. Postgraduate students from the UK and North America considered how the phenomenon of lying manifests itself, how it is to be defined, and how historians should approach it.



Photo: Richard Purkiss

This academic year's Harmsworth symposium, convened by Barbara Savage, compared various innovative approaches to **Writing Black Women's Lives: Present and Past** (see p. 11). A participatory format facilitated the exchange of ideas arising from the growing field of black women's biographical studies, and encouraged a broader reassessment of links between biography and history in American, African American, African, and African diasporic studies.

Before May was out, the RAI hosted a further colloquium, on disagreement and conflict in the United States between the American Revolution and Civil War: **Compromise, Moderatism, Extremism, and Fanaticism: Disagreement in American Politics and Society, 1783-1861** featured contributions from distinguished historians Joanne B. Freeman, Daniel Walker Howe, Kay Wright Lewis, Donald Ratcliffe, and Sean Wilentz. Convened by RAI Fellow, Raymond Lavertue, the two-day gathering surveyed the development of doctrines such as abolitionism and nullification, and of concepts such as race war, extermination, and pacifism during the early republic and antebellum eras.



Daniel Webster (1782-1852) by John Adams Whipple, c. 1847 (Boston Public Library, CC BY 2.0 - cropped)

June began with a symposium on **Women's Transatlantic Prison Activism since 1960**, which brought together researchers, creative thinkers, artists, and members of wider communities interested in policing, criminal justice, and incarceration, focussing particularly on women's prison activism in Britain and the US. The plenary lecture was given by the author and journalist Victoria Law.

Another conference with a highly contemporary focus was convened by Winant Visiting Professor of American Government, Stephen Skowronek and Mellon Professor of American Government, Desmond King. Held at Balliol and Nuffield Colleges, but supported by the RAI and featuring a number of past and current fellows, **The Trump Presidency and the Course of American Political Development** considered the place of the forty-fifth president in broader contexts of political leadership, governance, and resistance (see p. 9).

The last week of Trinity term saw the culmination of Oxford's 'Globalising and Localising the Great War' project—one of the largest hubs for First World War research in the UK during the centenary period—in a three-day conference held at the RAI.



Panel discussion (Halbert Jones)

A World Transformed: The First World War and Its Legacy brought together a wide range of researchers at all career stages to share their findings and chart the post-centenary future of First World War studies.

Finally, early in the 2019 summer vacation, the RAI hosted the **Arts Patronage in Modern America** conference, featuring plenary lectures from Dr John R. Blakinger, Terra Visiting Professor of American Art, and Mary Anne Goley, founding Director of the Fine Arts Program of the Federal Reserve Board, 1975-2006; as well as a special practitioner panel comprising Courtney Austrian, Minister Counselor for Public Affairs at the US Embassy, London; Angela Emmerson, United States Development Advisor at the British Library; and Richard Wendorf, Director of the American Museum & Gardens at Claverton Manor. Nearly forty scholars and practitioners from North America, Europe, the UK, and Asia—historians, art historians, museum curators, political scientists, and dance, theatre, and literary scholars—came together to deliver papers spanning the breadth of American studies. The conference closed with a special behind-the-scenes tour of the Oxford Playhouse and a private viewing of drawings at the Ashmolean Museum.



The Museum of Modern Art, New York (Alex Proimos, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0 - cropped)



Photo: Karen Patricia Heath

Lunar celebrations

Fifty years ago, on 20 July 1969, the first crewed mission landed on the Moon. Dr Karen Patricia Heath, Senior Research Fellow at the RAI, explains how the project *Lunar: We Look to the Moon* celebrated that achievement.

On Saturday 20 July 2019, the 50th anniversary of the Apollo XI Moon landings, the RAI joined with colleagues across the university to deliver a *Lunar Activity Day* at the Bodleian Libraries. This public engagement event provided an opportunity to highlight the Institute as a centre for multidisciplinary research and for partnerships working across both the sciences and the humanities.



Rivers Gambrell (Edward James Gibbons)

The RAI's Rivers Gambrell, a fourth-year doctoral researcher in American History, spoke alongside colleagues Dr John R. Blakinger, the 2018-19 Terra Foundation Visiting Professor of American Art; Dr Merve Emre, Associate Professor of English; and Dr Mark Lee, a postdoctoral researcher on a multidisciplinary project based at Wolfson College; plus Prof. Kendrick Oliver, Professor of American History at the University of Southampton. Dr Neil Bowles, Associate Professor of Physics, and Dr Jon Wade, Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Earth Sciences, also delivered very well-attended lectures representing the sciences. Plans are afoot for selected talks to be published as part of a special Moon landing-themed issue of the *European Journal of American Culture*.

Outside the Lecture Theatre, Blackwell Hall came alive as over 1,500 visitors took part in a diverse array of family-friendly activities. Children and adults alike visited the RAI's Astronaut Art stall to make a Moon souvenir or to take a Starman Selfie with life-size figures of astronaut Buzz Aldrin. Earth Sciences and Physics provided popular object-handling stalls, while the Performance Pad offered space for rotating slots from a folk duo playing live lunar tunes, a singing scientist teaching about geology through song, and a storyteller recounting stories to children about the Moon from around the world.

Over in the Proscholium, visitors were able to view the *We Look to the Moon* display, which ran from 13 July to 15 September 2019. This exhibit brought together a variety of unusual lunar-related material, ranging from a late-nineteenth century card produced by the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Company of Massachusetts advertising a (highly alcoholic) medicinal remedy to purportedly cure menstrual and menopausal symptoms, to a clip of Nixon's historic telephone call to the Apollo XI astronauts on the Moon.

The *Lunar: We Look to the Moon* project was conceptualised and delivered by Dr Karen Patricia Heath, working with a multidisciplinary team of academics, curators, and staff drawn from the Department of Earth Sciences, the Department of Physics, the Oxford Internet Institute's *Cabinet* team, and the Bodleian Libraries. Other Oxford-based partners included the Museum of the History of Science and the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, while the Richard Nixon Presidential Museum and Library, Yorba Linda, California, kindly provided images and audio-visual content.

More information on the exhibit, including a special extension showcasing selected materials from the Philip and Rosamund Davies US Elections Campaigns Archive held at the Vere Harmsworth Library, is available at <https://www.cabinet.ox.ac.uk/lunar>





Photo: Richard Purkiss

Finances and fundraising

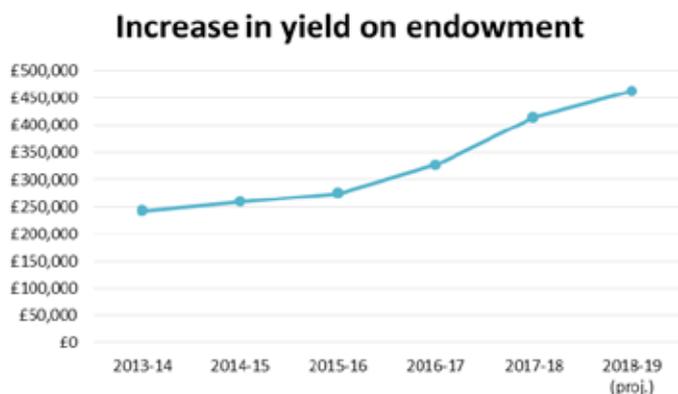
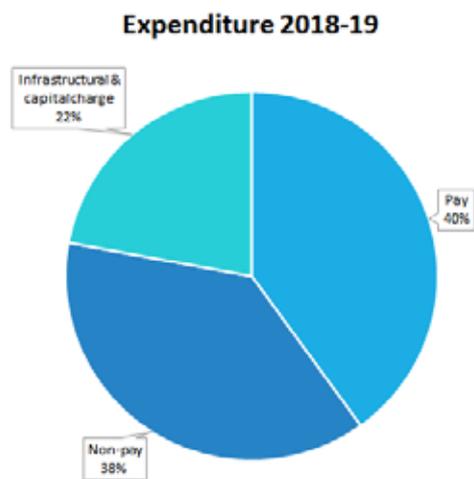
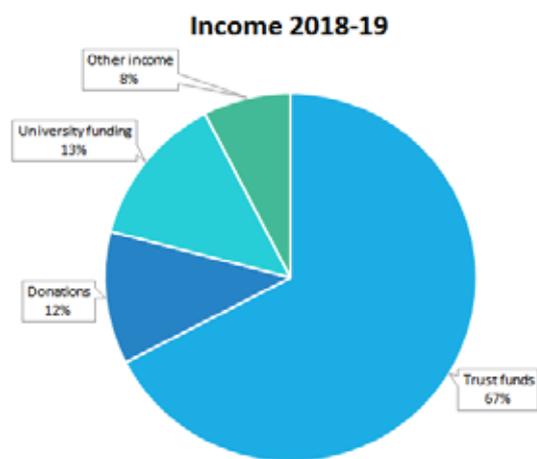
The RAI maintained a healthy financial position in 2018-19 thanks to the generosity of its benefactors, returns from its endowment funds, and by maintaining careful control of its costs.

In 2018-19, the RAI generated revenue of £599,200 (2017-18: £613,600), comprising an income of £403,800 from its endowment funds (2017-18: £371,300), £69,700 from donations spent in-year (2017-18: £125,000), £80,100 in University funding (2015-16: £76,900), and £45,600 in other income such as rent for room hire and for the space occupied by the Vere Harmsworth Library (2017-18: £40,400). Expenditure of £598,700 (2017-18: £614,200) comprised £239,700 in pay (2015/16: £238,900), £226,700 in non-pay expenses (2017-18: £254,100) and £132,300 in infrastructural and capital costs (2017-18: £121,200).

The RAI was the beneficiary of £2,022,000 in new funds in 2018. This total included several gifts in excess of £100,000: £726,000 from an anonymous donor to endow two graduate scholarships in American literature; £78,000 for the Institute's general endowment; £55,000 to support the Harmsworth Junior Research Fellowship and graduate scholarship on the US and the First World War; and £37,000 to enable the Vere Harmsworth Library to acquire important online newspaper archives. The Institute also benefitted from £757,000 in endowed match funding from the university's graduate matching fund and £266,000 from University College's Radcliffe benefaction for graduate scholarships in American history and politics. The 2018 total was the second highest since the RAI was founded in 2001 and compared to £1,915,000 in donations in 2017, £2,461,000 in 2016, £494,000 in 2015, and £388,000 in 2014.

The RAI records its special gratitude to those donors who made or pledged major gifts during 2018: William and Camille Broadbent, Joan Winant, the Rothermere Foundation, the Association of American Rhodes Scholars, the Josephine P. and John J. Louis Foundation, and several benefactors who wish to remain anonymous.

The total value of the endowments which sustain the RAI's academic activities stood at £12m by market value in December 2018, and the RAI's trust funds generated approximately £457,000 in 2018-9 (2017-18: £415,000).



The Vere Harmsworth Library in 2018-19

Jane Rawson writes: After 13 years, this is my final annual report as Vere Harmsworth Librarian, as I leave in the summer of 2019 to take up a new role as Director of Library Services at Nuffield College. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to manage this wonderful library and support so many fellows, visiting scholars, students, and other researchers for so many years.

The library will, I am sure, be in good hands with my successor, Bethan Davies. Bethan comes to the VHL from the University of Reading, where she worked as a Trainee Liaison Librarian supporting the departments of Philosophy and Classics. Originally from Shropshire, Bethan gained her undergraduate degree in English and American Studies from Keele University, which included a semester abroad at the University of Greensboro, North Carolina. She also holds a Master's in Renaissance Literature from the University of York and a postgraduate qualification in Librarianship from the University of Aberystwyth.

We also said goodbye this year to Martin Sutcliffe, who worked as a Library Assistant in the VHL and previously as an Administrative Assistant in the RAI for eight years. We wish Martin all the best for his retirement.

Staff changes aside, we continued to build our collections, both physically with the acquisition of over 1,000 print books, and digitally with the purchase of two significant collections of digitised, historic American newspapers: *African American Newspapers, series I (1827-1998)*, and *Ethnic American Newspapers from the Balch Collection (1799-1971)*. These two collections were financed by the generosity of the Association of American Rhodes Scholars, who also funded another 89 books to add to the Aydelotte-Kieffer-Smith collection.

We would further like to record our thanks to all those who have donated books and other materials over the course of the year, which has seen particularly notable gifts from Colin Brooks, Philip Davies, Donald Ratcliffe, and Byron Shafer.



We are always delighted to welcome visitors to the library. You can find us online both on the RAI website at www.rai.ox.ac.uk/vhl and on our own site at www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/vhl. We also have a blog (<http://blogs.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/vhl>), Facebook (facebook.com/VereHarmsworthLibrary) and Twitter (twitter.com/vhllib) if you would like to keep up with our news.



Courrier des États-Unis, front page, 9 January 1878

RAI



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