

PHS NEWS
January 2026
Newsletter of the Peace History Society
www.peacehistorysociety.org



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President's Column



Gail Presbey

Greetings to all members. Let me mention some highlights of PHS activities since I wrote in our last newsletter of May 2025. The biggest news is that we have held our Fall 2025 conference at Berry College this past November, hosted by PHS Treasurer Christy Snider. I have written a separate story for the newsletter, just about the conference! But here in this column, let me announce and congratulate the winners of our various prizes.

Our prizes cover publications from 2023-24. To quote our website:

Scott Bills Memorial Prize in Peace History, for a first book or dissertation: [Donald W. Maxwell](#), *Unguarded Border: American Emigres in Canada during the Vietnam War* (Rutgers University Press, 2023).

Elise Boulding Prize in Peace History, for a single-authored book (not first book or dissertation): [Marc-William Palen](#), *Pax Economica: Left-Wing Visions of a Free Trade World* (Princeton, 2024). Honorable Mention: Michelle M. Nickerson, *Spiritual Criminals: How the Camden 28 Put the Vietnam War on Trial* (University of Chicago Press, 2024).

Charles DeBenedetti Prize in Peace History, for an article or book chapter: [Sara L. Kimble](#), “[The Genocide Convention is ‘Our Cause’: International Women’s Advocacy for the Criminalization of Genocide, 1945–1952](#),” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 38, no. 3 (2024): 323-339. Honorable Mention: Elizabeth Son, “‘Stitching Korea Back Together’: Jogakbo Aesthetics of Care in Peace Advocacy,” *Theatre Journal* 76, no. 4 (2024): 525-548.

Edited Book Prize in Peace History, newly created this year, for an outstanding English-language edited book by one or more editors in the field of peace history, or peace studies or other disciplines with significant historical content: [Charles F. Howlett](#), [Christian P. Peterson](#), [Deborah D. Buffton](#), and [David L. Hostetter](#), ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Peace History* (Oxford University Press, 2023).

Lifetime Achievement Award, for outstanding scholarship and exemplary service: [Melvin Small](#), Distinguished Professor Emeritus, History Department, Wayne State University.

Some awardees were able to make it to the conference to receive their prize in person. Others participated by zoom. In one case, our Lifetime Achievement awardee, Melvin Small, he had attended via zoom, but still, I wanted to deliver his prize plaque in person, which I was able to do (luckily because we only live a few miles away from each other). He graciously welcomed me, and updated me on his current efforts. As Mitch Hall outlined in the award committee’s speech presenting the award to Prof. Small, not only was Prof. Small an important scholar, but he was also a longtime contributor to our Society.

I want to thank Toshi Higuchi, for his willingness to be the Prize Coordinator, helping to form the prize committees in record time, as well as presiding at the Awards Ceremony during our conference. I also want to thank the prize committees for all of their hard work in reviewing submissions for the awards.

The members of this year’s prize committees are below.

- Scott Bills Memorial Prize in Peace History: Michelle Tusan (Chair), Roger Peace, and Wendy Chmielewski.
- Elise Boulding Prize in Peace History: Victoria Wolcott (Chair), Tracy K’Meyer, Deborah Buffton.
- Charles DeBenedetti Prize in Peace History: Lauren Jannette (Chair), Harvey Strum, Sakiko Kaiga, and Ronald Musto.
- Edited Book Prize in Peace History: Scott Bennett (Chair), Brian Mueller, Leilah Danielson.
- Lifetime Achievement Award: Mike Clinton (Chair), Mitch Hall, and Robbie Lieberman.

Another highlight of the awards’ event was handing out the travel grant checks to graduate students and early-career faculty

who needed help with the costs of attending our conference. We are so happy to support them because we want to reach out to new scholars and encourage them in their desire to document peace history through their research. You can see the travel grant awardees as well on [our website](#). I also want to update you all on some recent news from the International Peace Research Association (IPRA). We partner with IPRA regarding our journal, *Peace and Change* – our two societies have a memorandum of understanding. Matt Meyer, who has been co-Secretary General of IPRA has been most helpful in coordinating our common efforts. IPRA members receive subscriptions to the journal, and the journal publishes special issues coordinated with IPRA conferences (such as the issue based on their conference in Trinidad and Tobago, 50/1, 2025). After six years of being IPRA’s co-Secretary General, his term is ending, but he assures us that cooperation with PHS and *Peace and Change* will continue. I want to congratulate Matt Meyer on his stellar work for IPRA all of these past years. IPRA recently held their international conference in Aotearoa, New Zealand, overlapping with our PHS conference, in November 2025. For those of you who missed it, you may want to catch some of it on the [IPRA You Tube channel](#). We look forward to working on a special issue related to that conference, and we also look forward to working with Rajib Timalisina, the new co-Secretary General who will be succeeding Matt Meyer.

Our journal, *Peace and Change*, is in the good hands of co-editors Renee Bricker and Yi Deng. They could always use more help, and that means, consider submitting your research articles to the journal for consideration. And, please volunteer to help review submitted papers. To offer your services as a reviewer, please use [this form](#).

We want to be better at being responsive to our membership. We also want to invite you all to be more involved. And so, soon you will receive a survey, asking you about your opinion regarding the kinds of activities we should engage in, and/or procedures that PHS should adopt. Your feedback is very important to us, so please let us know.

Speaking of activities, one of our activities is to support the Mercy Peace Forum, which has held a Zoom presentation each semester. Four of our PHS members from four different Mercy universities have rotated in hosting the event. This past semester, in October 2025, Gwynedd Mercy University hosted the event, with two Honduran Mercy Associates as speakers – Noemi Dubon and Martha Sandoval. Their organization based in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, is devoted to preventing violence against women, and supporting women who are victims of violence, whether domestic violence or political violence. The Mercy Peace Forum event was hosted on Zoom. There is also a recording – please write me at presbegm@udmercy.edu to request the link to the recording. (The links to recordings of previous Mercy Peace Forums can be found [on our website](#).) After their event at Gwynedd Mercy, they came to Detroit Mercy and gave a similar talk. We learned a lot from them.



Mercy Peace Forum speakers, featuring Gail Presbey, Noemi Dubon, and Martha Sandoval

PHS Officers and Board Members, 2026

President: Gail M. Presbey
University of Detroit Mercy

Vice-President: Christian Philip Peterson
Ferris State University

Secretary: Toshihiro Higuchi
Georgetown University

Treasurer: Christy Snider
Berry College

PHS Board Members:

Scott H. Bennett,
Georgian Court University

Jacqueline Castledine,
University of Massachusetts-Amherst

Wendy Chmielewski,
Swarthmore College

Michael Clinton,
Gwynedd Mercy University

Erica Fugger,
Rutgers University-Newark

Lauren Jannette,
Kenyon College

Sakiko Kaiga

Tracy E. K'Meyer,
University of Louisville

Henry Richard Maar III,
California State University, Northridge

Don Maxwell,
Indiana State University

Brian Mueller,
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Roger Peace,
*U.S. Foreign Policy History
& Resource Guide*

Paul Robinson,
Bridgewater State University

Ex-officio members:

David Hostetter (past president)
Kennett Square, PA
Renee Bricker and Yi Deng,
Peace & Change editors
University of North Georgia

Julia Eichenberg,
*President, German Association for
Historical Peace and Conflict Research*

Book Review Editor

Robert Shaffer
Shippensburg University

Website Editor

Marc Becker,
Truman State University

PHS UN Representative

Blanche Wiesen Cook
John Jay College & CUNY Graduate Center

PHS Newsletter Editor

Henry Richard Maar III,
California State University, Northridge

Report on the 2025

Peace History Society conference
by Gail Presbey

Our biannual conference was held Nov. 6-8, 2025 at Berry College in Georgia and hosted by PHS Treasurer Christy Snider. It was a great gathering made up of some core long-term members of PHS as well as emerging scholars new to our Society. Our

theme was Peace Across the Ages: Legacies, Lessons, and Change. The campus was beautiful and quite extensive, with historic buildings with lots of character, and grounds with beautiful trees, and even a wildlife sanctuary. In this idyllic setting we discussed wars and peace movements. The Thursday evening opening of the conference began with a Board meeting, and a reception for registrants. Already at this opening we had a chance to have good discussions with each other, as well as good food and drink. We started up on Friday morning with concurrent sessions. It goes without saying that my report will be from my perspective, because no one can attend all the sessions at once.

Our morning panel on Peacebuilding in Africa highlighted the work of Henrike Vellinga of Leiden University, who shared her archival research on two chapters of the War Resisters International that opened and thrived, for a while (in the 1950s), in Ghana and Nigeria. Her study notes that correspondence shows that the WRI leadership in the global north seemed preoccupied to ensure that the group was doctrinally committed to nonviolence, and that they were not opportunists. Vellinga wishes there were more documents about the work of the groups, considering they seemed so substantial, with one group having thousands of members. As I was Chair and commentator, I shared some background on nonviolent tactics as they were promoted by Nkrumah in Ghana, and in particular what the newspapers owned by Nkrumah were saying about nonviolent (“positive”) action around 1949-60.

A subsequent panel focused on pacifism in Latin American women’s movements. Patricia Harms presented research on the Alianza Femenina Guatemalteca, active

around 1947-54, with the wife of President Arbenz playing a key role. They wanted women to be able to own land and to be participants in the land reform process underway under Arbenz. The women’s group also protested against the Korean War, wanting a world without war. Marc Becker presented about women’s voices for peace in Ecuador. Several of the women leaders had connections to WILPF, but they still paid attention to local issues in Ecuador. He discussed Heloise Brainerd, Adelaida Velazco-Galdes and Maria Piedad Castillo de Levi.

Friday’s lunch was also time for us to present the PHS awards for the best books and articles in peace history, as well as the Lifetime Achievement Award. Toshi Higuchi emceed the event, the Chairs of each of the prizes’ judges gave the description of the awarded work, and as President I handed out the awards. Most awardees were online to accept their awards with expressions of thanks. But we did have some awardees there in person, notably Donald W. Maxwell who won the Scott Bills Memorial Prize in Peace History for his book, *Unguarded Border*. Deborah Buffton was there to accept the new award for the best Edited collection, on behalf of herself and three more co-editors who had published *The Oxford Handbook of Peace History*. See our website for photos of the awards ceremony.

After the awards lunch, we had a special treat. Mary L. Dudziak of Emory Law School gave her presentation, where she explored the concept of “wartime.” Dudziak specializes in U.S. Legal and Diplomatic history. In the U.S. she notes, seeming domestic peacefulness on our streets has always coincided with war. “Peace” can’t be a time in between wars, it can’t be understood as “normal” time, since wartime

overlaps so much, it covers almost all of U.S. history. To back up this assertion, she looked at the history of the awarding of “U.S. military campaign medals.” The awarding of these medals for service marked the dates that the U.S. was involved in a military campaign. There were so many overlapping campaigns, there is hardly a time without a war. She therefore wonders, can the space of peace only be a space of privilege?

The late afternoon had more concurrent sessions. Janette Aileen Clay presented on the Greenham Common feminist peace encampment in the early 1980s. Women used these encampments to draw attention to otherwise unnoticed nuclear weapons sites across Europe. Gail Presbey shared her paper about women in Bloemfontein and environs in South Africa who protested pass laws by adopting tactics of the suffragettes, filling the jails through acts of civil disobedience. Their actions had influenced Mohandas Gandhi to allow women to engage in civil disobedience in his movement. Matt Stannard was the commentator.

The second day of the conference brought more concurrent sessions. Deborah Buffton and Christy Snider presented their studies of Kathleen Lonsdale and Mary Emma Woolley. A subsequent session explored international coalitions for peace during the period of decolonization and the Cold War. Carolien Stolte described the research project at Leiden University, exploring the possibility of a more global understanding of peace advocacy: one that can accommodate multiple intellectual genealogies of peace and pacifist thinking. While some movements in the decolonizing world did not conform to traditional definitions of peace movements, they nevertheless agreed that their long-term goal would be a world

free of arms. Floris de Ruiter, a Ph.D. student at Leiden, shared his insights regarding Sri Aurobindo and his ideas of evolutionist peace.

Auroville, the community started by Mirra Alfassa with Aurobindo’s philosophy as inspiration, mixed concern for health with a life of nonviolence. Dr. G. Vinod argued that eating meat caused war. These connections between health, diet and peace were further explored by de Ruiter, who shared some of his recent experience at a Naturopathy ashram in India. Daniele Paolini is a post-doctoral researcher in Leiden and Perugia. He presented on his work on the decolonization of the Maghreb. Miners from Southern Tunisia focused on “positive peace” which involved respecting people’s rights, not just an absence of violence. Peace movements were in tension with nationalists who thought violence was inevitable. His work outlines how the activists in various groups, despite these tensions, cooperated and stayed together through personal relationships. The Chair and commentator, Mike Clinton, explained that the PHS peace history series publisher Brill wanted to cover peace history in a global perspective, and so he was grateful to be able to cooperate with this group from Leiden to expand the perspective on peace history. The Q and A session included debates over how to define pacifism when one is creating a global history of pacifism, where some movements had not defined themselves in the terms of Western pacifism, or have different priorities. There is also the question of the spiritual motivations for pacifism, which are different than scientific (for example, Darwinist/evolutionary ideas) or more strictly political understandings – these divisions can be found in Western pacifism also.

One of the last concurrent panels included Ralph Levering discussing his parents' role in helping to pass the Law of the Sea Treaty, which involved getting agreement among 180 countries to sign on. Elena Kempf researched the history of weapons prohibition, and asked, is the goal to humanize war, or prevent it? She looked at the activism of WILPF advocate Gertrud Woker as well as Liddell Hart, both of whom were concerned about the misuse of science. Steve Minnema presented his survey of moral whistle-blowers who have created TED Talks. He focused on 8 themes found in 25 speakers, and reported that the talks work well with students. Brief closing remarks and congratulations were led by conference host Christy Snider.

Let me also say that meals, whether they were the lunches or breakfasts at the hotel, gave presenters opportunities to get to know each other, and to learn about the history and legacy of PHS as well. And the extensive campus, all lit up with fall color and great weather provided opportunities for participants to briefly sneak off and experience the grandeur of nature. All of this was done on a weekend when airports were reducing their flights due to air traffic shortages. This led to some problems with people arriving and getting home in a timely manner, but in the end, I think all participants reached their destinations.

Looking forward, PHS will create a new sub-committee to review options for our next conference, that will be held in Fall of 2027. I encourage you to get involved as host, committee member, or future presenter/ attendee. It will be a rewarding experience. Below are some photos from the conference. More can be found on pages 10-13 of this newsletter.



Gail Presbey and Marc Becker at Berry College, PHS Conference 2025. Photo by Yi Deng.



Gail Presbey and Deborah Buffton

US Peace Memorial Foundation

20th Anniversary

By Deborah Buffton



What would it mean to live in a world where public spaces that celebrated peace and peacemakers were at least as common as those dedicated to war? A world where, for every tank in a city park, there was also a peace sculpture? Where for every Veterans Memorial Highway there was a Peace Corps Memorial Bridge? Where for every wall of names of soldiers, there was a wall of names of people who worked for peace?

Michael Knox, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of South Florida, believes that this would be a world in which there were fewer wars. In 2005, while visiting Washington, DC, he noted that in the midst of all the war memorials throughout the city, there were none that celebrated those who worked for peace. He wrote: “These [war] memorials exist to reinforce the notion that war efforts...are highly valued by our society...[but] there are no national monuments here to convey a message that our society also values peace....There is no

public validation of antiwar activities and no memorial to serve as a catalyst for discussion regarding courageous peace efforts by Americans over the past centuries.”¹ This inspired him to create the US Peace Memorial Foundation to raise public support and funding to build a peace memorial that he hopes one day will be on the National Mall.² Such a monument would represent resistance to the dominant narrative that war and militarism are necessary solutions to our problems.

In the 20 years since that foundation was created, it has sought to generate public awareness of and support for peace initiatives by celebrating antiwar heroes—leaders and activists whose example inspires others to work to end U.S. war and militarism. The Foundation publishes the *US Peace Registry* honoring and documenting the specific activities of Americans who have taken a public stance against war and who work for peace. Currently, over 300 individuals and organizations are recognized and the Foundation welcomes additional nominees. This recognition can inspire others to think about new ways to create a culture of peace in our country. Having identified role models can help people feel more comfortable speaking out and increase citizen involvement in antiwar actions. Since 2009 the Foundation also has awarded its annual US Peace Prize to an outstanding American antiwar organization or individual.⁴ Past winners include Cindy Sheehan, Chelsea Manning, Dennis Kucinich, Kathy Kelly (Voices for Creative Nonviolence), Ajamu Baraka (Black Alliance for Peace), CODEPINK, Veterans

¹ Michael Knox, *Ending U.S. Wars by Honoring Americans Who Work for Peace* (Washington, DC: Pax, 2021), 14.

² www.USPeaceMemorial.org

³ www.USPeaceMemorial.org/Registry.htm

⁴ www.USPeacePrize.org

⁵ www.USPeaceMemorial.org/2024.htm

⁶ www.USPeaceMemorial.org/Quotes.htm

for Peace, Women for Peace, and many others. (See a complete list of winners at the website.) While recognizing that peace certainly intersects with many other issues of social justice, the Foundation chooses to focus on the specific work of opposing war and militarism.

Knox believes that we can transform our war culture into a culture of peace by making it clear to Americans that it's socially acceptable to speak out against war, and that the U.S. has a long history of those who have worked for Peace.¹ The monument is envisioned to include antiwar quotations from famous Americans throughout our history. Visitors to Washington, including young people, will see names they recognize, but be surprised by the strong antiwar content. They will learn that opposing war is not unpatriotic, un-American, or anti-military, but is instead an obligation that we all have. Among those likely to be quoted are Margaret Mead, Helen Keller, Albert Einstein, and many others who are easily recognized by virtue of their prominent leadership roles, cultural contributions, and historical importance.⁶

In its most recent Annual Report, the Foundation reports that it now has 500 Founding Members representing forty-six states (plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands).⁵ The work of the Foundation is both necessary and difficult given our current political climate. But without such efforts, we will simply continue to celebrate war as a reasonable way to live in the world. For further information about the Foundation, to learn more about its history, to volunteer, or to contribute to the Memorial, please go to www.USPeaceMemorial.org.

**The Lifetime Achievement Award
presented to Melvin Small by
Mitchell Hall on behalf of the
Lifetime Achievement Award Committee**



Mitch Hall presents the Peace History Society's Lifetime Achievement Award to Melvin Small (on screen) on behalf of the Lifetime Achievement Award Committee

The Peace History Society established its Lifetime Achievement Award to recognize those members who have contributed outstanding scholarship and exemplary service to the PHS and to the field of peace history. Charles Chatfield was the first recipient in 2007, with the most recent recipient being Blanche Wiesen Cook in 2023. This year, the Peace History Society presents the Lifetime Achievement Award to Melvin Small, Distinguished Professor of History Emeritus at Wayne State University. Dr. Small's involvement with the Peace History Society began with its origins as the Council for Peace Research in History (CPRH) in 1964 and spans decades, culminating in a term as CPRH president from 1990-1992; he also served on the CPRH Council and on the Board of Editors for *Peace & Change*.

Earning his degrees at Dartmouth and the University of Michigan, Dr. Small established his professional home at Wayne State, where he taught from 1965 until his retirement in 2010. A truly international scholar, his career has included Visiting Professorships in Denmark and Canada as well as lectures in Italy, Norway, and Sweden. His numerous presentations across the United States have addressed both scholarly and public audiences. His own antiwar activism during the Vietnam era helped inform his professional life. He has a lengthy and impressive record of scholarship that has had a huge impact in shaping our understanding of antiwar activism and its effect on American politics and society during the Vietnam War era. These works include: *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves* (1988); *Antiwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Struggle for America's Hearts and Minds* (2002); *Covering Dissent: The Media and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement* (1994); and *At the Water's Edge: American Politics and the Vietnam War* (2005). He also co-edited *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement* (1992), based on papers presented at the Charles DeBenedetti Memorial Conference, co-sponsored by the CPRH at the University of Toledo in 1990, which he helped organize as program chair. Other notable works include *The Presidency of Richard Nixon* (1999), *Democracy and Diplomacy: The Impact of Domestic Politics on U.S. Foreign Policy, 1789-1994* (1996), and *The Wages of War: 1816-1965* (1972) (revised and republished in 1982 as *The Resort to Arms: International and Civil Wars, 1816-1980*), the latter a product of his work as co-investigator in the Correlates of War project and which “established a standard definition of war that has guided the research of hundreds of scholars since its publication.” Over a nearly fifty-year span, he produced an extensive list of articles that

have appeared in journals such as *Peace & Change*, *Diplomatic History*, *the Journal of Peace Research*, and *the Journal of Conflict Resolution*, while several valuable essays appear in notable edited collections. Dr. Small served the historical profession through frequent appearances as a session chair, commentator, or panelist at a wide range of conferences. He was very active as a book reviewer, as a manuscript referee for some of the leading journals and book publishers in our field and was a frequent interview subject by television and print media. He mentored nearly forty graduate students at Wayne State University and as a colleague generously served as a sounding board for peace scholars at all stages of their careers.

The current vitality of the Peace History Society was made possible by the contributions of pioneers such as Mel Small, and so it is with gratitude that we extend our appreciation by recognizing him with the 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Photos from the 2025 PHS Conference:
[Peace Across the Ages: Legacies, Lessons,
 and Change](#) (Berry College Mount Berry,
 Georgia, November 6-8, 2025)**



Mary Dudziak delivers the keynote, “War and Peace in Time and Space”



Berry College President Dr. Sandeep Mazumder



PHS Secretary Toshihiro Higuchi,
Georgetown University



PHS Treasurer, Christy Snider, Berry College



Keynote Speaker, Professor Mary Dudziak
Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Law,
Emory University



Panel 1: Legacies and Lessons of Intergenerational Peacebuilding in Africa, presenter Henrike Vellinga, Leiden University



Panel 6: Women's Roles in Peacebuilding and Protests for Change, featuring Gail Presbey, University of Detroit Mercy (left) and Janette Aileen Clay, North Park University (right)



Panel 8: Exemplary Women in the Fight for Peace, featuring Carolien Stolte, Leiden University (left), Christy Snider, Berry College (center), and Deborah Buffton, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (right)



Panel 9: International Coalitions for Peace in the Era of Decolonization, featuring (left to right) Michael Clinton, Gwynedd Mercy University; Daniele Paolini, Leiden University; Carolien Stolte, Leiden University; Floris de Ruiter, Leiden University



Panel 11: The Diplomacy of Peace. Left to right (seated), Elena Kempf, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Ralph Levering, Davidson College; Stephen W. Minnema, Independent Scholar; Laurence Marvin, Berry College (standing)



Dominic J. Markham, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs

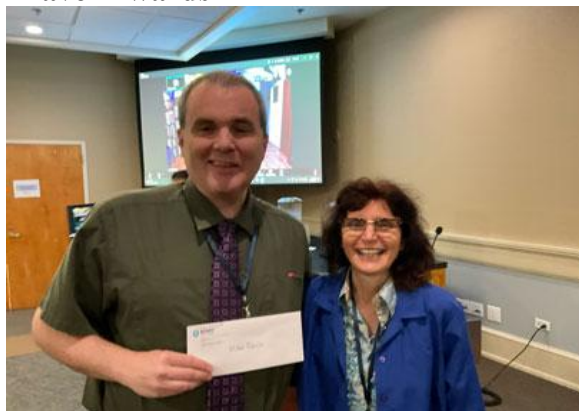


Sean Raming, University of Notre Dame



Marc Becker and Gail Presbey walking at Berry College

Travel Awards:



Mike Davis, Lees-McRae College



Lubna Qureshi, Independent Historian

PHS Member Spotlight



Jean Mills

Professor of English Literature

John Jay College – CUNY

MILLSJ7@gmail.com

Gender Pronouns

she/her/ma'am :)

Website, Instagram, and/or another social media profile page

@blueheronbooksny.com

Alma mater/s, degree(s)

B.A. English, Mount Holyoke College, 1983; Ph.D. English, The Graduate Center of the City University of New York, 2007

Fields of Interest

Woolf Studies, Modernism, Feminist Theory, Peace Studies, 20th c literature

Describe the development of your interest in peace history. What led you to study peace history?

My mentors, Blanche Wiesen Cook and Jane Marcus, via my dissertation topic on Woolf and absolute pacifist Jane Ellen Harrison

What brought you in contact with Peace History Society? Through a conference presentation? A publication on our journal Peace & Change? Or something else?

Sandi Cooper; I began reviewing for PHS

What projects are you currently working on finishing Virginia Woolf and Philosophy for Routledge; working on Literary Approaches to Peace, expecting to complete 2026,

Is there an article, book, movie, blog etc that you would recommend to our PHS members?

Vernon Lee, *Satan the Waster; Ballet of Nations*; George Bernard Shaw, *Back to Methuselah*; Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*; films: *Pray the Devil back to Hell*; Paul Precidio's *Orlando My Political Biography*

What do you value most about peace history? Why is peace history important to you?

It's important because it's a counter narrative that is under-represented historically and it's important today because the methods of peace have barely been tested, not to mention deployed...I could go on... but...

Harvey Strum

Tenured professor of history and pol sci.

Russell Sage College

strumh@sage.edu

Gender Pronouns

Male

Website, Instagram, and/or another social media profile page

none

Alma mater/s, degree(s)

BA, history and international relations, 1970, Syracuse U; MA in Canadian-American Relations history, 1972, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada; MPA 1976 SU; Ph.D. 1978 SU Maxwell School.

Fields of Interest

Early national period and opposition to the embargo and War of 1812 in New York,

New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Maine, Antiwar World War I-US, American Jewish history and antisemitism, American and Canadian aid to Ireland in 1847, 1863, 1880, anti-Catholicism in New Jersey, 1820-1870, and Canadian Press and 1908 American presidential election.

Describe the development of your interest in peace history. What led you to study peace history?

Came out of three research and interest areas
1-Opposition to Anglo-American War 1803-1815
2-American Jewish history
3-Violations of free speech World War I
4-Voluntary aid from Canada and US during the Great Famine, food crises of 1860s, and Little Famine in Ireland
5-Antisemitism and anti-Catholicism
6-Jewish refugees, 1933-48.

What brought you in contact with Peace History Society? Through a conference presentation? A publication on our journal *Peace & Change*? Or something else?
In 1982 *Peace and Change* published an article of mine.

What projects are you currently working on
Just gave a paper on June 6th on Albany Four--Four Albany Socialists arrested in August 1917 violating Espionage Act, SC ruled against them in 1920 by 7-2 in *Clinton Peirce et al v United States*; American and Canadian voluntary aid to Ireland in 1863 and 1880.

Is there an article, book, movie, blog etc that you would recommend to our PHS members?

Mike Wallace, *Gotham at War*

What do you value most about peace history? Why is peace history important to you?
History of American antiwar movements.



Charles F. Howlett

Professor Emeritus

Molloy University, Emeritus

chowlett@molloy.edu; or

chowlett.molloy.edu@gmail.com

Gender Pronouns

He

Alma mater/s, degree(s)

BA, Marist University, 1968; American

History MA, University at Albany, 1970;

American Intellectual & Social History,

University at Albany, 1974; History of

Higher Education and Public Policy, Ed.M.,

Columbia University, 1983 Ph.D.

Fields of Interest

Intellectual & Social, Early 20th Century;

Higher Education; Peace

Describe the development of your interest in peace history. What led you to study peace history?

Served in Vietnam War; Mentored by one of the Founders of PHS

What brought you in contact with Peace History Society? Through a conference presentation? A publication on our journal *Peace & Change*? Or something else?

My Doctoral Mentor who oversaw my study on John Dewey and the peace movement.

What projects are you currently working on?
Book reviews and article about the 1938
Horrors of War Bubble Gum cards

Is there an article, book, movie, blog etc that you would recommend to our PHS members?

Daniel Manthey's *Peace Script*, recently published

What do you value most about peace history? Why is peace history important to you?

Serves as a valuable compass for researching how nations decide to go to war and how citizens can take a more active role by examining past actions in the name of peace and justice.

David S. Patterson

Historian (retired)
dspattsn@gmail.com

Gender Pronouns

He/him

Website, Instagram, and/or another social media profile page

Davidpattersonhistory.com

Alma mater/s, degree(s)

Yale, History, B.A., 1959; U. of California, Berkeley, History, Ph.D. 1968

Fields of Interest

Peace movements, women's rights, family studies

Describe the development of your interest in peace history. What led you to study peace history?

Reaction to the Vietnam War and interest in citizens' movements influencing foreign policy

What brought you in contact with Peace History Society? Through a conference

presentation? A publication on our journal Peace & Change? Or something else?

Association with antiwar historians during the escalation of the Vietnam War.

What projects are you currently working on?
An article about Amos Pinchot, "Patrician for Peace"

What do you value most about peace history? Why is peace history important to you?

Intellectual interaction with other scholars in the field

Member Announcements

Teresa Fava Thomas's book, *The Allied Bombing of Central Italy: The Restoration of the Nile Mosaic and Sanctuary of Fortuna at Palestrina* (Routledge Press, 2025), has just been released in a paperback edition.

Robert Shaffer, Shippensburg University, emeritus, published "Pearl S. Buck on American Society: Towards a Multi-Racial (Post-Racial?) Future," in Cowrie:

Comparative and World Literature, open access online at

<https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.1515/cwl-2025-2008/html>. He also

reviewed *Friendly Connections:*

Philadelphia Quakers and Japan since the Late Nineteenth Century, edited by Linda

Chance et al., in *Pennsylvania History*, Autumn 2025; Arthur Hansen's *Manzanar Mosaic* in *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Fall 2025; and the American

Historical Association's *American Lesson Plan: Teaching US History in Secondary Schools*, in *Social Education*, March-April 2025.

Peter Cousins's article, "[Rev. Earl M. Smith: the 'grandfather' of contemporary, organized Latin American nonviolence,](#)"

was recently published in *Historical Research*, Volume 98, Issue 282, November 2025, Pages 636–655, <https://doi.org/10.1093/hisres/htaf013>

Book Review

William E. Scheuerman, *Property Disobedience as Protest: Rethinking Political Nonviolence* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2026). Reviewed by Jerry Elmer

On October 27, 1967, the Rev. Philip Berrigan and three colleagues walked into a Baltimore draft board, poured blood on draft files, passed out Bibles to the startled clerks, and quietly waited for the police to arrive to arrest them. On May 17, 1968, Berrigan and eight colleagues entered a draft board in Catonsville, Maryland, carried 378 draft files outside to a parking lot, and burned the files with homemade napalm that they had made themselves from a recipe they found in a Green Beret manual. Once again, the protesters waited for the police. During the following five years, literally hundreds of draft boards all over the country had files destroyed. Many of the affected draft boards never functioned again.

Not surprisingly, there ensued a lively debate—especially within the pacifist wing of the wider peace movement—on the propriety and ethics of actions that not merely *involved* property destruction but were *predicated* on it. Many of the participants in draft file destruction considered themselves to be pacifists; in fact, many were staff or board members of traditional pacifist organizations such as the War Resisters League, Fellowship of Reconciliation, and Catholic Peace Fellowship. “Certain property has no right to exist,” they often said. At the same time, many members of these same organizations

deplored the tactic. “Raiding, looting, and destruction cannot command respect,” wrote Jim Peck in the November-December issue of *WRL News*, the house organ of the War Resisters League. The debate, while lively, was not especially sophisticated or nuanced.

Now, fifty-five years later, William Scheuerman, the holder of an endowed chair in political science at the University of Indiana at Bloomington, has published a detailed examination of the moral, political, and practical questions posed by property destruction as a deliberate, politically-motivated act. Throughout the book, Scheuerman focuses especially on the relationship between property destruction and traditional understandings of civil disobedience as grounded in the pacifist tradition of Gandhi and King: “When, if ever, are politically motivated property harms justifiable? What standards should be expect those pursuing them to meet?” (2); “How exactly should we evaluate tangible harms to property rights, and when should activists avoid incurring them?” (25). Throughout the book, Scheuerman seeks to interrogate our “broad ideas of violence as encompassing destructive harms to” property as well as to persons (2). To address these questions, Scheuerman creates a taxonomy of three distinct types of property disobedience: symbolic property disobedience, disruptive property disobedience, and property seizure.

Scheuerman’s examination of the first category, symbolic property disobedience, takes up all of chapter 3; his exemplar is the hundreds of Confederate monuments that were defaced or toppled during the Black Lives Matter protests. These actions were symbolic because the BLM protesters “surely did not believe that [toppling statues] would immediately disable racism” (54). Scheuerman examines

the multi-faceted roles that symbols (such as statues) play in society, and some of the real-world consequences, including psychological ones, that flow from attacking symbols. Paying particular attention to traditional views of nonviolent civil disobedience, Scherman concludes:

When intended as communicative acts aimed at changing public opinion, resulting in no bodily or psychological violation of persons, and with protesters accepting possible legal consequences, they prospectively gain both a moral status and possible legal and political benefits frequently denied participants in other types of militant protest (74).

Scheuerman quickly acknowledges that “things are more ambivalent when symbolic property damage occurs secretly, or activists circumvent legal consequences” (74).

Scheuerman’s consideration of the second category in his taxonomy, disruptive property disobedience, is contained in chapter 4. What Scheuerman calls “disruptive property disobedience” is more commonly known as sabotage, and here Scheuerman’s exemplar is the ecological sabotage (or ecotage) committed by environmental activists including Earthfirst!, the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), and others. Scheuerman’s discussion here is sophisticated and truly excellent. He presents, and discusses in some considerable detail, three evaluative criteria for considering the ethics and politics of sabotage. The first of these is “the *intensity* or *extent* of the protest-related damage to property and resulting infringement on ownership rights” (81-82, italics as in original). Here Scheuerman distinguishes “1980s antinuclear protests that blockaded rail tracks and roads” causing mere

inconvenience, from the ELF’s “1988 attack on a Vail, Colorado, ski resort that generated an estimated \$12 million in damage” (82).

Scheuerman’s second criterion in evaluating sabotage is “*temporal* contours, that is, the extent to which property damage is brief and temporary, rather than long lasting and durable” (82, italics as in original). “At some point, ongoing and seemingly permanent violations of property rights become more than merely or exclusively disruptive: property is being *taken* from its legal owners, and violations of their rights are correspondingly significant,” Scheuerman asserts. Finally, Scheuerman would have us “classify incidents of disruptive property disobedience in relation to familiar ideas about *nonviolent civil disobedience . . . civility, conscientiousness, publicity, fidelity to law, and nonviolence*” (82, italics as in original). Here, as elsewhere in the book, Scheuerman is plainspoken about his commitment to nonviolence: “Crucially, have disruptive property disobedients practiced nonviolence vis-à-vis persons? When entailing no bodily or severe psychological harm, their acts remain in principle nonviolent” (82-83).

In chapter 4, Scheuerman discusses not only the moral and ethical implications of sabotage, but also the real-world political consequences. This is an especially strong (and useful) aspect of the chapter. Scheuerman gives an excellent recapitulation of the brief but “ill-fated” espousal of sabotage a century ago by the International Workers of the World (IWW or Wobblies; 79). He describes both the sabotage that the Wobblies engaged in and the fierce governmental response it elicited (88-91). He goes on to explain why we should care about this history today, and draws explicit parallels with contemporary examples of ecotage (92-94).

In chapter 5, Scheuerman addresses property seizures. This chapter is interesting because property seizures such as, say, squatting, do not necessarily involve property *destruction*; indeed, urban and rural squatters often seize unproductive land or buildings and renovate and improve them, sometimes extensively. However, as Scheuerman shows, such seizures, count as property *disobedience* because the legal rights of the owners are being compromised or expropriated. There is, in other words, an assault on Western notions of property *rights*. In this chapter, Scheuerman creates a three-part taxonomy of different types of property seizures: repossession, repurpose or reuse, and outright consumption.

Scheuerman draws from a wealth of domestic and international real-world examples to illustrate each category—ranging from Native American repossession of stolen lands (112-114) to exemplars from Brazil (120), Mumbai, India (121), and Amsterdam, Netherlands (128). Using extensive materials from King, Scheuerman considers in considerable detail of how each of his sub-categories of politically-motivated property seizure comport with traditional notions of nonviolence and nonviolent civil disobedience. To his credit, Scheuerman’s discussion does not shy away from difficult cases, such as Seattle’s Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone created in the wake of the 2020 BLM protests (130)

Unfortunately, there are an excessive number of proofreader errors in the book, some fairly egregious. I pause only to give a few examples. A footnote cites James Scott’s [sic] *Weapons of the Weak* [read: weak]: *Everyday Forms of Resistance* (201); “present-day disinterest [read: uninterest] in the ‘moral and material plight of those who own nothing’” (51); “psychosocial stressors that lead to deleterious health incomes”

[read: outcomes] (66); “Even when predicted [read: predicated] on nonviolence vis-à-vis persons . . .” (96); “Drawing a strict line between property damage and violence seems implausible: the former was intended to serve the form” (who knows what the author intended?) (87). Culpability for these many errors may lie more with the publisher (University of Pennsylvania Press) than with the author. In any event, their frequency is an embarrassment to both. It is, however, a virtue of the book that it is written in plain English, with a refreshing absence of arcane academic jargon. There is none of what the late Justice Antonin Scalia famously derided as “argle-bargle.”

I found the last chapter a complete surprise. Because of the subtitle of the book (*Rethinking Political Nonviolence*) and because of the title of this chapter (“Goodbye to Nonviolence?”), I had expected the author to conclude that the traditional commitment to nonviolence as an essential component of *civil* disobedience was somehow flawed or not worth preserving. Instead, Scheuerman gives us a spirited defense of nonviolence. In several places Scheuerman sounds very much like twentieth century pacifist activist and icon Barbara Deming (who is mentioned and cited on page 48, but is somehow omitted from the index): “Violence violates other persons in profoundly injurious ways, threatening to remove them from the political playing field altogether” (172); and “Movements that embrace violent self-defense tend to take on martial contours . . . Violence humiliates political opponents, making it impossible to win them over” (177). Scheuerman’s arguments in favor of nonviolence provide an important framing for the entire book and, especially, for his discussion of sabotage.

The last chapter contains Scheuerman's two over-arching conclusions: First, there are moral, tactical, and prudential reasons for activists to embrace nonviolence and explicitly reject violence (178-180); Second, "When conducted responsibly and avoiding injuries to persons, with targets carefully selected to impart a clear symbolic message, property disobedience coheres with political nonviolence" (183). I acknowledge that I am a biased reviewer because I agree with both of Scheuerman's principal arguments. Nevertheless, my view (biased though it may be) is that Scheuerman has made a detailed, thoughtful, deeply erudite, and ultimately persuasive, argument in favor of his view.

Jerry Elmer is the author, most recently, of *Conscription, Conscientious Objection, and Draft Resistance in American History* (Brill: 2023). In 1969 and 1970, he participated in the public, nonviolent destruction of draft files at 14 draft boards in three states. Later, he was the only convicted felon in his graduating class at Harvard Law School.

Call for Proposals:

The [12th triennial conference of INMP \(International Network of Museums for Peace\)](#) will take place 12th-16th August 2026 at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, in Winnipeg. We would love to see you there. In particular, we would be delighted to have a paper from you, telling the story of your museum or institution, or related to the wider themes of the conference. This is a great opportunity to meet people engaged in similar pursuits to your own, to tell your stories and to learn from them. Please check out the conference details [here](#), and consider how you might be able to engage with this very special event.

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Robert Shaffer, Book Review Editor
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Also, if you have published a book which you think should be reviewed in the journal, let us know about it! We try to keep abreast of the literature of interest to our members, but there are inevitably books which escape our notice. Send an email announcement of relevant books to Robert Shaffer at the email address above.

The quality of the journal is dependent on the participation of PHS members!

The next issue of the PHS Newsletter is anticipated in June. Please email any contributions or announcements to the newsletter editor, Henry Maar (hrmaar@gmail.com) for inclusion by June 1, 2026.

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