

**Bosch Foundation Archival Seminar for Young Historians 2010**  
**American History in Transatlantic Perspective**  
**(September 6-17)**

**Final Report**

Participants:

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Generously sponsored by the Robert Bosch Foundation and jointly organized by the German Historical Institute, the Heidelberg Center for American Studies and the University of Chicago, the Bosch Foundation Archival Seminar for Young Historians convened for the first time in September 2010. On a tour spanning four cities, Chicago, Madison, Boston, and Washington DC, the ten seminar participants from Germany and the United States were introduced to the holdings and policies of a broad spectrum of American archives and research libraries. The goal of the Seminar was to prepare doctoral students from both countries working in diverse fields of American history for their prospective research trips; to teach them how to contact archives, use finding aids, and identify important reference tools; and to help them gain a greater appreciation of the various kinds of archives and special collections located in the United States.

After a historical walking tour of Chicago on Labor Day, September 6, the Bosch Archival Seminar 2010 commenced the following day with a thesis workshop at the University of Chicago hosted by Prof. Kathleen Neils Conzen and attended by members of the history department and graduate student body. The seminar participants, who had been grouped into five transatlantic tandems consisting each of one German and one American student, commented on the work of their respective tandem partners, exposed their projects to academic scrutiny, and received valuable feedback from their peers and present faculty members. On Wednesday, September 8, the Seminar met Daniel Greene, Director of the William M. Scholl Center of American History and Culture at the Newberry Library, for a daylong introduction to the institute's collections as well as for a general overview over American archival policies and practices. Among the topics discussed were the purchase of rare books, how to browse manuscript collections, the expedience of maps for historical research, and the digitalization of archival resources. Thursday morning, before the group departed for Madison, Wisconsin, was reserved for a brief visit at the Cook County Court Archives where Phil Costello demonstrated how historians could make creative use of legal records and court cases.

Our first destination in Madison was the Wisconsin State Historical Society, which welcomed the Bosch Seminar in the morning hours of September 10. Nancy Green and Harry Miller spoke about the history and holdings of their institution within the broader context of American state

historical societies and impressed the students with the Wisconsin State Historical Society's dedication to accessibility and public education. After that, time was set aside for individual research before the group reassembled at the local University of Wisconsin history department for a roundtable talk on career opportunities in the historical profession. Under the guidance of Jeremi Suri, William Reese, Adam Nelson, and James Danky, the participants engaged in a spirited dialogue about the chances of hazards facing young historians on both sides of the Atlantic aspiring to pursue an academic career in an ever more mobile yet highly competitive environment. Despite the news about a tightening job market, however, the discussants agreed that graduate education offered a range of skills badly needed in and outside academia, and that historians cooperating across national borders were exceptionally well suited to meet the demands of today's globalized world.

On Saturday evening, September 11, the group arrived in Boston, the third stop on our itinerary. The following morning gave the seminar participants a chance to witness public history in action with a guided tour of the Freedom Trail. On Monday, September 13, the Bosch Archival Seminar 2010 resumed at Harvard University. The first of three research libraries on our schedule was Houghton Library, where Peter Accardo walked the group through some of the library's most precious Early Americana collections and gave valuable advice on how to use them for various research agendas. Ellen Shea, librarian at the Schlesinger Library, one of the leading U.S. research facilities for women's history, then put on display letters, pamphlets, books, and visual material related to topics ranging from domesticity to black women to the female suffrage movement. The day concluded with a visit to the Baker Library Archives at the Harvard Business School. Katherine Fox, Associate Director of Public Services, acquainted the students with the richness of the Baker Library's holdings, which touch upon almost every issue pertaining to the country's economic development from an agricultural society to an industrial and postindustrial superpower. Our sojourn in Boston drew to a close the next morning when we drove to Columbia Point to see the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library. Enjoying a two-and-a-half hour tour of the museum and library archives under the supervision of Stephen Slotkin, the group listened to staff presentations on audiovisuals, declassification, and the library's manuscript collections and oral history program.

After reaching Washington DC in the late afternoon of Tuesday, September 14, the Bosch Seminar continued the next day at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. Craig Orr, Associate Curator of the museum archives, talked to the students about the archive's holdings on American technological, scientific and consumer history, raising their awareness of connections between the three and of important overlaps with the broader fields of social and cultural history. The second half of the day was spent across the street at the National Archives. Richard McCulley guided the students through the Legislative Records including statutes and the official correspondence of congressional delegates, while Reginald Washington provided an instructive survey of the Freedmen's Bureau Records, which contain significant data on African American life during and after Reconstruction. Our appointment with the Library of Congress was set for the next day, September 16. After a tour of the Jefferson building, the students spoke to historian Daun van Ee about the breadth of manuscript collections available through the Library of Congress Manuscript Division. The group then advanced to the Prints and Photographs Division, where Sara Duke and her coworkers had worked hard to muster illustration samples conducive to the participants' individual projects, thereby underscoring the

significance of visual material for historical research. Finally, the group made the acquaintance of the Deputy Historian of the House of Representatives, Fred Beuttler, to talk with him about his work as a congressional historian. The ensuing tour of the Capitol marked a true highlight of this year's Archival Seminar and will be fondly remembered by those who partook in it.

On Friday, September 17, the Bosch Archival Seminar came to a cheerful conclusion at the German Historical Institute. William Burr, Senior Analyst of the National Security Archives, joined the group to give a presentation on the archive's origins, holdings, and mission. He was followed by Elisabeth Jones from Howard University's Moorland-Springarn Research Center, which holds a remarkable array of collections on African American history and culture. Participants and organizers then took stock of the results of the Bosch Archival Seminar 2010 in a wrap-up discussion. All concurred that the three basic objectives of the Seminar – building archival knowledge, expanding scholarly networks, and fostering international cooperation – had been fully achieved. The idea to form German-American tandems along the lines of similar research interests received special praise, and it is to be expected that further cooperation will grow out of these transatlantic partnerships, be it through continued academic exchange or joint conference appearances.

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