

## History Department News

# Archive for November, 2011

### [David Armitage elected Honorary Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities](#)

[David Armitage](#), Lloyd C. Blankfein Professor of History, has been elected an Honorary Fellow of the [Australian Academy of the Humanities](#).

The Academy was established by Royal Charter in 1969 to advance knowledge of, and the pursuit of excellence in, the humanities in Australia and comprises more than 500 elected Fellows, including 72 Honorary Fellows. According to the Charter, “Honorary Fellows shall be persons not necessarily resident in Australia who are of the highest distinction in the field of the humanities or whose election would be of benefit to scholarship and the advancement of the humanities.”

Professor Armitage is also an Honorary Professor of History at the University of Sydney and a member of the Harvard Committee on Australian Studies.

See the [full list](#) of winners.

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Posted on November 28th, 2011

### [Harvard and Slavery: Seeking a Forgotten History](#)



Students from Harvard College and the Harvard Extension School “have spent many hours working in Harvard’s archives to untangle the historical relations between Harvard University and the institution of slavery,” said Sven Beckert, the Laird Bell Professor of History.

Harvard College came of age in the 17th and 18th centuries, a period with values often very different from our own. Slavery — which was legal in Massachusetts until 1783 — is a case in point. Did this dark chapter of American history affect Harvard? Yes.

That entanglement is the point of “Harvard and Slavery: Seeking a Forgotten History,” a booklet launched on Wednesday by the [Harvard and Slavery Research Project](#). Involved were 32 students, one faculty historian, and a graduate student. “The history of slavery,” write authors [Sven Beckert](#) and [Katherine Stevens](#), “is also local history.”

The 34-page study packs into its economical format details of what will be historical surprises to most readers. It reports that three Harvard presidents owned slaves; that slaves worked on campus as early as 1639; that among the first residents of Wadsworth House (built in 1726) were two slaves, Titus and Venus; that slave labor often underwrote the success of Harvard’s early private benefactors; and that the connection between College donations and slave-related industries persisted until the Civil War.

Read the full [Gazette](#) article.

*\*photo credit: Rose Lincoln/Harvard Staff Photographer*

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Posted on November 22nd, 2011

### [Maya Jasanoff wins Recognition of Excellence Award](#)



Harvard History Professor [Maya Jasanoff](#) has won a Recognition of Excellence Award as part of the 2011 [Cundill Prize in History at McGill University](#) for her book, “[Liberty’s Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World](#).” The prize recognizes history books that have a profound literary, social, and academic impact.

“‘Liberty’s Exiles’ tells the story of loyalists who fled the U.S. after the [American Revolution](#) and settled all over the [British Empire](#), especially in [Canada](#),” Jasanoff said. “It argues for the importance of taking history out of patriotic, national boxes and seeing it from many sides, so it’s wonderful to be recognized by an international history prize that’s also dedicated to crossing borders, and especially appropriate, given my subject, to receive this recognition from a Canadian university, at a ceremony in London.

“I’m thrilled to see these ‘losers’, whose stories have so often been neglected in the past, receive some attention now. It suggests that there are readers out there who appreciate more nuanced, multisided histories. And it’s a great vote of confidence in the kind of global history I and so many of my colleagues, at and beyond Harvard, are trying to write.”

The full article can be found in the [Harvard Gazette](#).

*\*Photo credit: Rose Lincoln, Harvard Staff Photographer*

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Posted on November 16th, 2011

### [Rachel St. John discusses “Line in the Sand” in the Harvard Gazette](#)

For nearly 2,000 miles, it runs alongside California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. It begins in the east in Brownsville, Texas, and marches west along the Rio Grande, halting at the Pacific, in the town of Tijuana, notorious for its drug violence and reputation as a party spot for frat boys.

Whatever the cause, the mythic U.S.-Mexico border draws millions of people to it each year. It’s the most frequently crossed international border in the world, and is one of the most intriguing unseen lines in history.

Just ask [Rachel St. John](#). In her new book, “[Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico Border](#),” the Harvard associate professor of history traces the border’s origins to its modern-day consequences.

Read the entire *Gazette* interview [here](#).



*\*Photo credit: Justin Ide, Harvard Staff Photographer*

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