

# Rothermere American Institute Annual Report 2021–22

ROTHERMERE AMERICAN INSTITUTE  
1A SOUTH PARKS ROAD  
OXFORD  
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UNITED KINGDOM

*ISSN 2754-8694 (Print)*  
*ISSN 2754-8708 (Online)*

# Director's Foreword

## Adam Smith

During this academic year, much of our attention has been focused on the horrific war in Ukraine, but for a brief period the news media were distracted by the massacre of elementary school children in Uvalde, Texas. The first of these stories has an American dimension that is reminiscent of the Cold War: once again, US leadership of 'western democracies' has become essential, as has its military support. The second story is a sickening reminder of why, while millions around the world still aspire to go to America, millions of others shudder at the thought of living in a society with such a seemingly intractable and deep-seated problem of lethal violence. It is tempting for all of us—Americans and non-Americans—to see the United States in terms of these kinds of dichotomy: the good and the ugly, a great nation of futurity and a model of 'democratic backsliding'. The reality, of course, is endlessly complex, but the cartoonish extremes of America, locked in another of its cycles of violent polarisation, are dramatically compelling and politically consequential. The case for an Oxford centre for the study of the United States remains as strong now as it has ever been.

The heart of the RAI today are the postgraduate students and the early-career researchers we support. We now have four DPhil students funded by RAI scholarships, in addition to the many others who secure funding from other sources. Since the lifting of Covid restrictions, the ground floor of the building has been buzzing with our postgraduate members, many of whom

have desks in the offices which look out onto the Princess Margaret Memorial Garden (home to a very self-confident heron who comes to fish in the ponds, and a fox who slinks around silently checking up on us all).

Two of our most active postgraduate members completed their DPhils this year: Sage Goodwin, who wrote a thesis about the way in which coverage of the Civil Rights movement changed TV news broadcasting, and Grace Mallon, who works on federalism in the early republic. Grace will be returning as our new Kinder Junior Research Fellow in Atlantic History in the autumn, after a spell working at Utah Valley University. In October, we welcomed Dr Mark Power Smith from Arizona State University to the RAI as a Junior Research Fellow. Mark's brilliant book on the Young America movement and nationalism in antebellum America, published by the University of Virginia Press, will be out by the time you read this—and I urge you to get hold of a copy. At Christmas, we were sorry to say goodbye to Dr Sonia Tycko, who made a wonderful contribution during her two years here, but we are delighted that she has moved to a permanent lectureship at the University of Edinburgh.

If supporting the next generation of academics is probably the most important function of the RAI, a close second is bringing brilliant scholars from around the world to Oxford. This year we have been very fortunate to host Patrick Griffin from Notre Dame as our Harmsworth Professor of



**RAI**  
Winant Lecture in American Government 2022  
**THE POLITICS OF AMERICAN ISLAMOPHOBIA**  
Nazifa Lajevandi (Michigan State University)

Backlash against Muslims is on the rise in American politics. This talk will trace how 20 years after the attacks on September 11, 2001, Muslims are arguably situated at the bottom of the American racial hierarchy. Undoubtedly, research shows that animus towards Muslims has increased among the electorate and that anti-Muslim attitudes remain among the single most important predictors of Republican candidate and Trump support in American presidential elections, even after accounting for important factors, such as partisanship. Events such as the War on Terror, domestic terror attacks, the Breiter movement, and foreign conflicts, such as the Syrian Civil War, have led to a domestic political climate that has resulted in Muslims being portrayed often and negatively in the news media, experiencing increased surveillance and law enforcement monitoring, facing rampant discrimination and hate, and being excluded and ostracized by their elected representatives. This lecture will then trace the consequences of Islamophobia in American politics on members of the marginalized group, and will demonstrate in what ways they have been mobilized and demobilized into politics.

Registration required: please visit <https://www.rai.ox.ac.uk/events>

Tuesday 15 February  
17:00-18:30  
Rothermere American Institute  
Lecture followed by wine reception

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**RAI**  
**RICHARD NIXON'S LIBERAL LEGACY**  
John R. Price  
Former Special Assistant for Urban Affairs to President Nixon

Was Richard Nixon responsible for the rightward turn of the Republican Party, or was he in fact the 'the last liberal Republican'? John R. Price, who worked on social policy in the Nixon White House, has written a book making the case that Nixon has been misunderstood, pointing to plans to reform welfare to introduce something like a universal basic income and expand health insurance. John Price will be in conversation with RAI Fellow, Dr Mitch Robertson about Nixon's complex legacy.

Wednesday 11 May  
17:00-18:00  
Rothermere American Institute  
Discussion followed by wine reception.

Registration required: please visit <https://www.rai.ox.ac.uk/events>

Friday 6 May  
13:00-14:00  
Rothermere American Institute  
Wine reception will be provided.

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**RAI**  
**DOING HISTORY FROM THE INSIDE**  
A WORKSHOP WITH ALLIDA BLACK

Allida Black is a historian and advisor to Hillary Rodham Clinton, a former advisor to Nigerian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and distinguished expert on women's rights, human rights and the creation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In this special workshop, Allida will talk about her work as Hillary Rodham Clinton's historian. It will be an opportunity to discuss how history can be recorded in the present, and how, as scholars, we can better understand the process of decision-making at the very top of American government. This event is best suited to postgraduates and postdocs, but all are welcome.

Registration required: please visit <https://www.rai.ox.ac.uk/events>

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**RAI**  
Book launch  
**ALTAR CALL IN EUROPE**  
BILLY GRAHAM, MASS EVANGELISM, AND THE COLD-WAR WEST  
Uta Balzer (Oxford)

Billy Graham, American evangelist, Billy Graham was bigger more in London than in Texas. Graham was equally responsible for an entire field of post-war American religious life in the second half of the twentieth century. He is also remembered as America's most visible foreign evangelist, with over 100 churches across 50 countries. But Graham's faith in America was proved abroad, it was in Europe that he grew into an internationally recognized religious leader.

After our talk, one of the transnational history of Billy Graham's revival work in the 1950s by examining his revival meetings in London, Berlin and New York, to show how Graham's ministry took shape through transatlantic exchange of people, ideas, and practices. This event is part of the RAI's annual lecture series about the past and the future of religion, especially after the experience of war and at the end of the Cold War.

Graham challenged believers and religious leaders alike to re-evaluate religious expression in the face of modernism, mass media, and religious and social reformers. In the context of war, violence and death across the Atlantic, Graham's ministry revealed the religious and cultural tensions of the mid-century. This event is the response of Church leaders to the need for a renewed religious and cultural identity in the post-war world. It is a chance to explore the paths to secularisation between the US and the European states, Germany and the UK.

Join the author of *Altar Call in Europe*, Dr Uta Balzer (St Anne's College), for a conversation with Professor Bing Sheng Jiang (Mansfield College), Professor Stephen Todd (Newnham College), and Dr Christian Tuffner (St Peter's College), chaired by Professor Adam Smith (Rothermere American Institute).

Monday 16 May  
16:30-18:00  
Rothermere American Institute  
To be followed by a wine reception

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**RAI**  
**Evoking t**  
Indigenous Artists of the

This exhibition processes Native American art and social contemporary western (fame, artists, between people and horses and the cultural, spirit the past and today. Besides this, the exhibition and objects in academic research. This special event is part of the RAI's annual lecture series about the past and the future of religion, especially after the experience of war and at the end of the Cold War.

Exhibition  
16th-18th May  
Rothermere American Institute  
To be followed by a wine reception

Duration and  
12 May  
18:00-19:00  
Free admission  
Open to all

Several additional activities will be offered during the exhibition.

Curatorial  
National  
Indigenous  
High

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American History (you can read his report on pp. 6–7), and Nazita Lajevardi from Michigan State as our Winant Professor of American Government (report on pp. 4–5). Both Patrick and Nazita gave stimulating inaugural lectures, advised graduate students, and contributed hugely to the intellectual liveliness of the Institute. One of the many wonderful things about hosting these distinguished visiting professors is that they keep on coming back. Former Winant Professor Sid Milkis from UVA co-organised with us a symposium on the Biden presidency in May, and former Harmsworth Professors Eric Foner and Annette Gordon-Reed were interviewed for our podcast, *The Last Best Hope?*

Many further scholars have joined us for shorter periods as invited lecturers or as fellows-in-residence. Their work has ranged from Paul Tonks's research on American missionaries in South Korea to Alice Béja on food history, Nancy Martin on the First World War armistice, and Alice Kelly on fandom and queer memory. Among many others, we hosted talks by John Price (former Nixon aide and author of a revisionist book about the man Price calls the 'last liberal Republican'); Kathryn Olivarius, former RAI student and now Professor at Stanford; and Allida Black, who mesmerised our graduate students with a talk about her work with Hillary Clinton to create a massive oral history project recording Secretary Clinton's career.

Another visiting scholar was Alison Games from Georgetown, who delivered the Sir John Elliott

Lecture in Atlantic History. Professor Games gave a brilliant talk that surveyed the multiple contested commemorations of Atlantic voyages over the centuries, from the landing of unfree Africans in Virginia in 1619 to the landing of the *Mayflower* on Plymouth Rock. In its range, her talk would surely have appealed to Sir John Elliott. This was a bittersweet occasion since it was the first Elliott Lecture to take place without Sir John, who died on 10 March. He played a vital intellectual role in the shaping of the RAI, as my predecessor as RAI Director, Dr Nigel Bowles, explains in his tribute on pp. 8–9.

A highlight of the year was the return (in person for the first time since 2019) of the Esmond Harmsworth Lecture in American Arts and Letters, which was delivered this year by the Poet Laureate of the United States, Joy Harjo. And it was a joy to see the ground floor common room of the RAI transformed by a temporary exhibition curated by DPhil student Natalie Hill, showcasing contemporary Native American art. You can read more about the exhibit on pp. 14–15.

As I write this in the sunshine at the end of a busy Trinity term, I want to take this opportunity to thank the many people, beginning with our small but amazing staff, who have ensured that the RAI has not only survived the last two tumultuous years, but has thrived. Many challenges lie ahead, not least securing funding so that we can continue this work, but as the academic year comes to a close I am optimistic about the future. ■



**the Horse**  
North American Plains

Incited by the recent convergence and contrasting commemorations connected to the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing of enslaved people in Virginia in 1619 and of English dissenters in Wampanoag territory in 1620, this talk analyses multiple commemorative activities in the twenty-first century that similarly recognized what have been key events in Atlantic history, including the British abolition of the slave trade and the creation of the English colony at Jamestown. An Atlantic perspective on these national and local activities reveals common themes of rearticulation—a preoccupation with and celebration of European ships—and periodization—the transformation of ship arrivals into originative national moments. These intertwined features efface indigenous histories and inflict temporal violence on indigenous people: the contrast with the deployment of ships—or their absence—in commemorations of slavery and abolition is stark.

**Monday 24 May**  
17:00–18:30  
Rothamere American Institute  
Lecture followed by wine reception

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The Sir John Elliott Lecture in Atlantic History, 2022

**STUCK IN YEAR ZERO: PERIODIZATION AND THE MARITIMIZATION OF COMMEMORATIONS IN ATLANTIC PERSPECTIVE**

Alison Games (Georgetown University)

*Mayflower 1620*  
The Ship that Made a Nation

Hybrid event: please register at <https://www.rai.ox.ac.uk/events> to attend on Zoom.

**Tuesday 17 May**  
10:30–14:30  
Rothamere American Institute

**PROGRAMME**

**10:30–12:00 Domestic Politics** Chair: Gerost Dinos (UCL) Participants: Sidney Hiers (SOAS), Margaret Kelly (UVA), Lisa Jackson (Royal Holloway, London), Nazita Lajevardi (Michigan State and Oxford)

**12:00–13:00 Lunch**

**13:00–14:30 World Politics** Chair: William A. Strotz (UVA) Participants: David Johnson (UVA), John Dean (UVA), Alexander Sells (SOAS), Kurt Schickel (Emory)

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**THE STATE OF PLAY**  
THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION AT MIDTERM

A pair of round-table discussions will address the successes and failures of the Biden administration so far, and prospects for the midterm elections in November. Organised jointly with the Miller Center at the University of Virginia.

Hybrid event: please register at <https://www.rai.ox.ac.uk/events> to attend on Zoom.

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Book launch

**NECROPOLIS**  
DISEASE, POWER, AND CAPITALISM IN THE COTTON KINGDOM

Kathryn Olivarius (Stanford)

Disease is thought to be a great leveler of humanity, but its arrival in New Orleans during slavery brought the brutal legacy of American colonialism. As epidemics have crept out at the heart of America's slave and cotton empires, it was also where people first understood and managed to control a deadly, centuries-old disease. With this understanding of miasma, bones, viruses, and the fragile public health infrastructure a person's only protection against the scourge was to 'get vaccinated' by turning the disease, about half of those who contracted yellow fever dead.

Historical epidemics costed New Orleans's great racial hierarchy by introducing another hierarchy: white survivors could leverage their immunity as evidence that they had paid their biological dues and could then pursue economic and political advancement. For enslaved Blacks, the most difficult immunity protected them from yellow fever, but its eradication came at a steep price: the social and monetary value of their accumulation accrued to their white owners. Whereas immunity conferred opportunity and privilege on whites, it relegated enslaved people to the most grueling labour.

**Wednesday 8 June**  
17:00–18:30  
Rothamere American Institute  
To be followed by a wine reception

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The 2022 Esmond Harmsworth Lecture in American Arts and Letters

**AN EVENING WITH JOY HARJO**  
23<sup>RD</sup> POET LAUREATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Joy Harjo was appointed the 23<sup>rd</sup> United States Poet Laureate in 2021. The first Native American to hold the position and only the second person to serve three terms in the role, Harjo's rich body of poetry includes *An American Water*, *Coffee*, *Blackfoot*, *Blackleg*, *Blue*, *How the Sun and Moon Were Born* and *Delicate Dreams*, and *She Also Sings*. Harjo is also the author of two memoirs, *Chickadee* and *Blue*, which have been lauded for their lyrical beauty, honesty, and humble celebration of her 'poet warrior' roots. She has established an archive of Native history, stories, and living traditions. Living vessels, the companion anthology to her ongoing poetry archive project, her many writing awards include the 2019 Jackson Prize from the Poetry Society of America, the 2017 Lilly Prize from the Poetry Foundation, the 2016 Wallace Stegner Award from the Academy of American Poets, and the William Carlos Williams Award from the Poetry Society of America. She is a member of the Academy of American Poets, Board of Trustees of the Native Arts & Culture Foundation, and is artist-in-residence for the Bob Dylan Center. A recognized musician, Harjo performs with her soprano saxophone and harmonica; her most recent album is *They Say by My Enemies*. She lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Please visit <https://www.rai.ox.ac.uk/events> to register.

**Thursday 16 June**  
17:00–18:30  
Rothamere American Institute  
Lecture followed by wine reception

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# A Year in the Winant Chair

*Nazita Lajevardi*

I arrived at the RAI in mid-October 2021, weeks after the UK lockdown lifted. A community that had thrived on making connections, sharing stories, and enlightening one another for centuries had appeared to make the best of the pandemic's challenges in the year and a half prior. But in my estimation, it was ready to pick up just where it had left off.

I learned of my selection as the Winant Visiting Professor just a couple months after the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in late spring 2020. I remember how elated I was when I heard the news; the selection not only gave me hope that we would return to in-person spaces, but also confidence that I could offer something to an institute that—in my view—is arguably at the center of conversations about all things 'America' in the UK.



As I reflect on this past year, I am struck by a remarkable feeling that the RAI felt like an academic 'home' for about a year before I ever set foot on campus. Before the 2020 US Presidential election, Director Adam Smith had invited me to participate in an event on the 2020 election remotely, hosted alongside Mitch Robertson, who would rather quickly become someone I enjoyed meeting around the office. And it was during this webinar that I first caught a glimpse of the amazing opportunities that this position offered me. Not only was it possible to reach a large global audience, but I was a panelist alongside the likes of Wesley Lowery, a Pulitzer Prize-winner for reporting on policing and race, and Maria Givens, a revered expert on Native American agriculture policy.

Once I arrived in person at the RAI, I quickly integrated into life at the Institute. Whether it was meeting Patrick Griffin for a walk, going to the Monday morning coffee hours with Grace Mallon, Dan Rowe, and Mark Power Smith, joining someone for lunch at the Alternative Tuck shop, or even attending the numerous events that the RAI was hosting each week, I seemed regularly to be having conversations that opened my mind and expanded my curiosity. I delivered the Winant lecture, entitled 'The Politics of American Islamophobia', on 14 February 2022. This event

was not only my first in-person lecture since the pandemic, but it was also an opportunity to tell a new story, one that took my research, which typically centered on the US, and demonstrated the ways in which it had much more to offer in explaining phenomena happening in Europe. The dinner that followed was a special occasion, filled with colleagues I respected greatly, as well as my mother, who had made the journey to the UK to support me.

Ultimately, being at the RAI as an early-career scholar on the cusp of tenure at my home institution was an immense and unique privilege. It is the kind of position one imagines filling towards the middle or even perhaps the end of one's career. Instead, I was lucky enough to learn from some of the brilliant minds who had gathered in Oxford in that moment. Being at the RAI gave me an opportunity not only to attend fascinating lectures on history but, as a race scholar, allowed me to learn from some of the most insightful scholars and writers on race—such as Beverly Tatum and Valerie Amos, who held a public conversation on race in the US and the UK in November 2021. Attending this event was a formative experience. Later, Valerie Amos, Master of University College, recognized that I was starving to share space with other women of color, and invited me to her home with fellows at her college, so that I could be more integrated. These are the types of relationships that enriched me and made me feel welcome while at the RAI. But they didn't end there. Towards the end of my tenure at Oxford, Sid Milkis, a former Winant Professor, organized a conference on Biden at the Midterms in May 2022, and invited me to participate alongside academics and policymakers from the US and the UK. This event was one of the most memorable experiences I had during my time in Oxford. What an amazing opportunity to engage in thoughtful discussion with such a formidable group of colleagues from around the world.

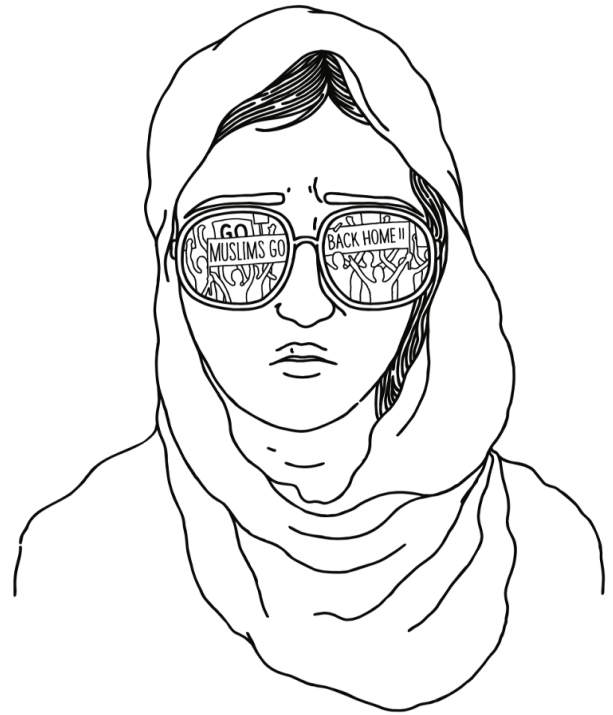
At Oxford, I came to know so many people across the colleges. I regularly met Des King, who generously hosted me at high table at Nuffield, and introduced me to the core group of people



with whom I spent much of my leisure time across the year. While at Oxford, I also had the chance to either meet for the first time or get to know better scholars like Rogers Smith, Taeku Lee, Nelson Ruiz, Uta Balbier, Florian Foos, Sara Hobolt, Emily Katzenstein, Ria Ivandic, Vicente Valentim, Sumitra Badrinathan, Mads Elkjær, and many, many more. I had a chance to interact closely with colleagues at nearby colleges, and for that I am very grateful.

As the Winant Visiting Professor at the RAI, I was also a Fellow of Balliol College. When I first arrived, Elizabeth Wood, a visiting professor from MIT, was my next-door neighbor at the King's Mound. She and her partner not only invited me for dinner and walks, but we regularly went to lunch together in college during the term she was in town. At Balliol, I was fortunate to participate in weekly Consilium dinners, filled with some of the best food, wine, and conversation anyone could ask for in a lifetime, let alone regularly on a Wednesday night. The other visiting fellows at Balliol this year—such as Harold Koh and Clemens Puppe—are renowned and brilliant minds, and I always enjoyed our meals together. Clemens, especially, was a wonderful next-door neighbor to have for a term. But my time at Balliol was made most special by three other fellows, namely Lauren Burgeno, Hasan Dindjer, and Nick Dickinson. Though one year was not nearly enough time to spend with these three brilliant, kind, and wonderful people, my experience at Balliol was very special because of them.

By the start of Trinity term, the UK had taken the decision to end Covid-19 restrictions completely. This was an opportune moment to host in-person conferences. With Vicente Valentim at Nuffield, I co-hosted a Women in Quantitative Political Science workshop in early May. And, with some resources that the RAI had generously provided, and with Katy Long's immense support, later



Line drawing by Adji Herdanto

Below: Balliol College, seen from Broad Street (engraving by John Le Keux)

that month I hosted an all-day conference on Public Opinion and Political Behavior in the US and the UK featuring three panels and fifteen presenters from Oxford and all over the UK. This was, I think, one of the most exciting and engaging academic experiences many of us had had the fortune to participate in since the pandemic began. The participants shared some brilliant feedback with one another, and numerous professional connections were made.

I have many treasured memories from the RAI over this past year, and I am full of gratitude for the people I have met and the opportunities I have received. And I cannot wait for the day I can come back. ■





# View from the Harmsworth Chair

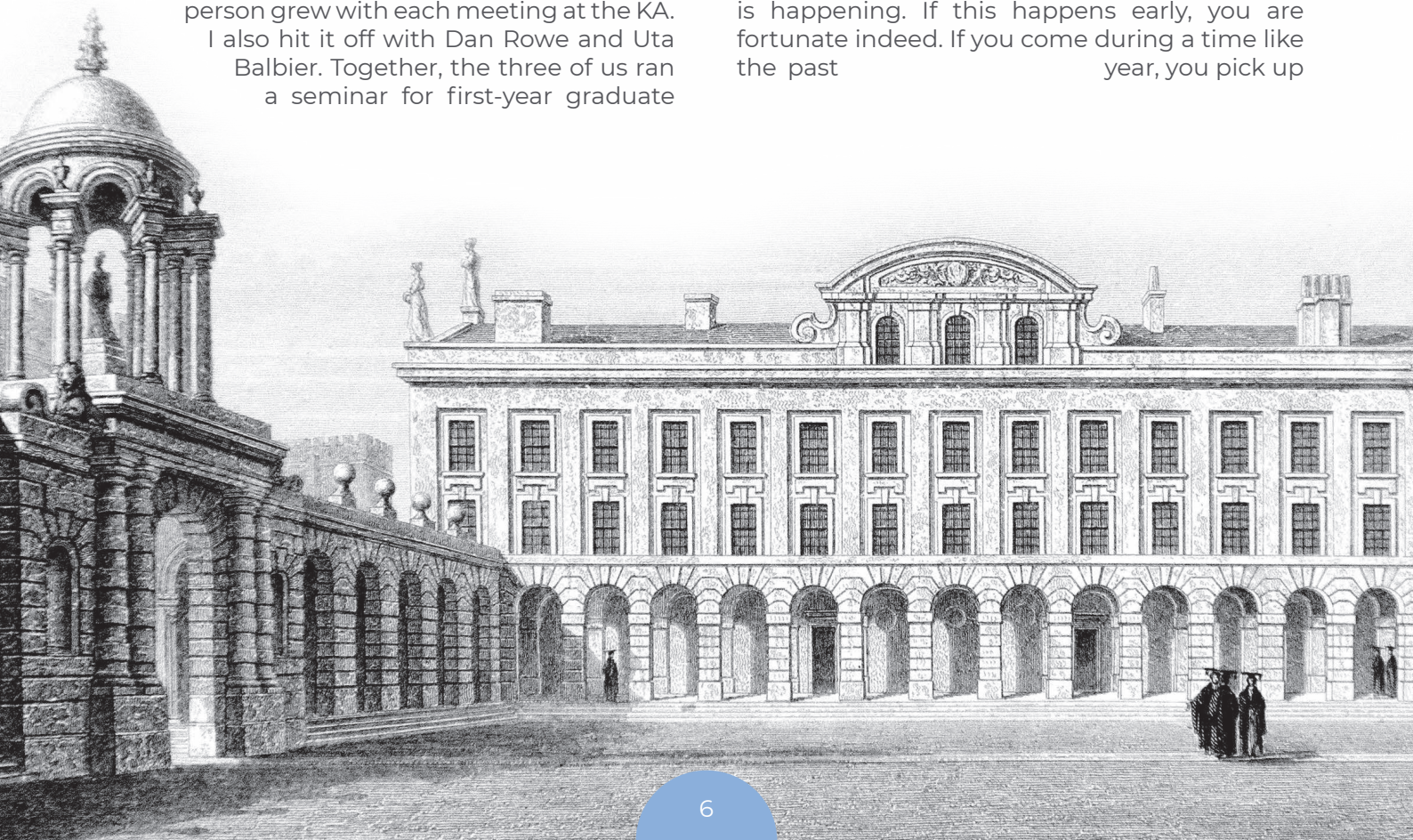
*Patrick Griffin*

Well, let's be honest. It was a strange year. Anyone will tell you that. Michaelmas started under the cloud of COVID and other things, seemed to get on-track a bit, only to be derailed again with Omicron. Christmas in Oxford was a bust. Through the first few months of the academic year, people interacted fitfully and cautiously. Some fellows remained absent. Zoom and hybrid—sigh—continued. Things picked up a bit of steam as Hilary term progressed, after a very slow start. Trinity term saw us collectively chugging along. I said to myself, "Wow. So it was meant to be like this."

So, was it a good year? Absolutely. But not in ways I had imagined or expected. Let me start with a few observations about the RAI. The RAI is blessed with a superb leader. Adam Smith is kind, rigorous, and humane. He has sound judgment. Of all the things I come away with this year, getting to know him is the top of the list. I treasured the pints we had together, and my respect for him as a scholar and as a person grew with each meeting at the KA. I also hit it off with Dan Rowe and Uta Balbier. Together, the three of us ran a seminar for first-year graduate

students. It was a joy to teach with Uta and Dan, and I came away learning so much from both of them. They showed me great kindness, and the way they treated students—pushing, challenging, and encouraging—was a model. In this strange year, when so many fellows were away, they provided a constant presence. Another impressive person: Katy Long. Katy proved patient throughout, even as she was struggling with so many things flying at her all the time. I was impressed with her abilities and the grace with which she did her work. And she does a lot! Finally, it was a treat to get to know another Fellow, Steve Tuffnell, hang out with the visiting scholar Paul Tonks, and reacquaint myself with an old friend, Nicholas Cole.

As you can tell from my observations, the good men and women you meet mean a great deal to the life of a Harmsworth Professor. They matter more than anything else you will do. You come here, and you don't have a clue. You depend on people to show you the ropes and to figure out what is happening. If this happens early, you are fortunate indeed. If you come during a time like the past year, you pick up





things a bit more slowly and fitfully. The good ones help you.

I came away excited about the graduate students. They are as good as any in elite American graduate programs. I was buoyed—indeed, we all were—by their fortitude. Through this strange year, they kept research seminars going, and they showed up for each other. How wonderful it was to see them become a community. Indeed, they exemplified community for the RAI. The great joy of this year was their letting me participate in all that they did.

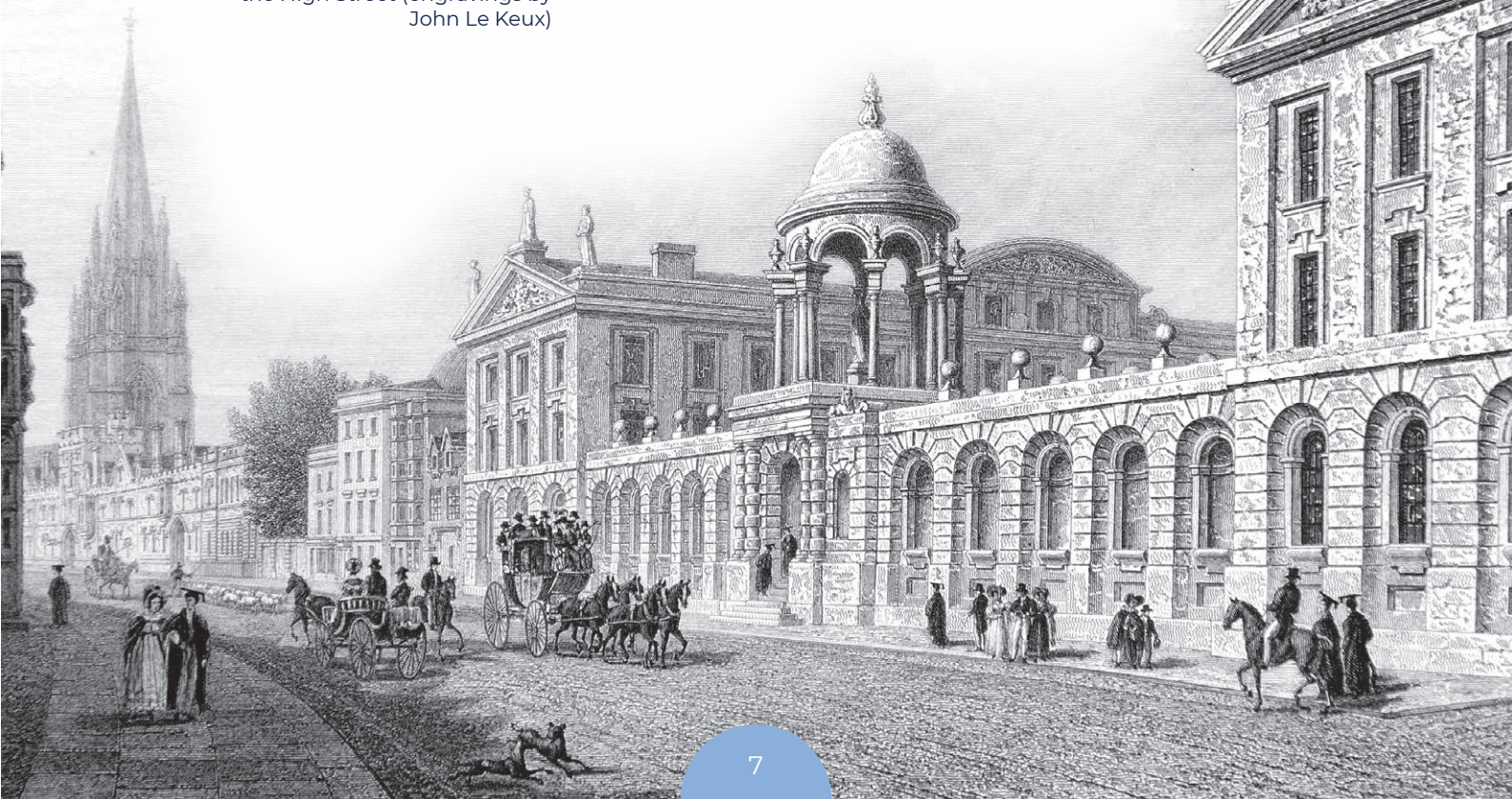
Don't get me wrong. I accomplished a great deal during this year. The Harmsworth Lecture I gave on the American Revolution and the fractious nature of politics in the United States today seemed a success, even if capacity in the room had to be limited. I put a book on the age of Atlantic revolution to bed this year that will be coming out with Yale. The time here allowed me to do so. I also got a new project off the ground. This one will be on boxing, democratic culture in the early-nineteenth century US, and globalization. My stay at the RAI afforded me the opportunity to conceive of such a bold new

departure from the sort of work I had done before. But I did not come to Oxford only to get stuff done.

People, people, people. That is what I took away from this year. I understand the RAI has some budget concerns. I know the Director wants to develop more ambitious programming and opportunities for fellows and post-docs. Thus it will always be—and should be—for an institute of the caliber of the RAI. The big takeaway? The culture of the place works. If the good people at the RAI can sustain a supportive and seriously intellectual environment in such a year as this, then they will always be able to do so. I think the unusual nature of the year allowed me to appreciate how much the life of an institute depends on the quality of its people.

To the field of American history in the United States the RAI matters. To have a top-notch institute outside of the US studying our past and our culture is vital to what we do and how we do it back home. I was privileged to be invited to join that community for a year. And I hope I remain part of that community in the future, when things will be less strange. ■

*Below left: Queen's College, Front Quad  
Below: Queen's College, seen from  
the High Street (engravings by  
John Le Keux)*



# Sir John Elliott, FBA (1930–2022)

*Nigel Bowles*

Sir John Elliott's work reshaped understanding of early modern Britain and Spain, the rise and decline of European colonial powers, and the consequences for European metropolises of political and social changes in the colonies that colonial powers neither reliably controlled nor comprehended. His vision and energy contributed to reshaping curricula, strengthening existing institutions, and creating new ones. He changed the way historians thought about their craft, emphasising and explaining the importance of voluntary and enforced movements of people, ideas, goods, and commodities across the Atlantic. The kindest of people, his unaffected intellect was capacious, and his encouragement of others generous. The Rothermere American Institute and the Vere Harmsworth Library, whose founding he shaped, are among his priceless legacies to Oxford and the world.

An energetic traveller fluent in numerous European languages, an expansive reader of history, literature, sociology, and anthropology, John came to the study of Spanish history in the early modern period at a point in the twentieth century when the Civil War's legacy bore heavily upon Spain's academic historians. He came to it, too, in the context of Britain's own retreat from Empire. That gave him a sympathy for what he characterized as "the collective predicament of the last great imperial generation of Spaniards after the triumphs of the sixteenth century [which] was not entirely dissimilar to the collective predicament of my own generation after the triumphs of the nineteenth and early twentieth." (*Spain and Its World 1500–1700: Selected Essays*.)

In *Imperial Spain, 1469–1716*, John explored the puzzles of Spain's rapid rise to and descent from international power. His account was multi-dimensional: he revealed the extraordinary succession of contingencies leading to Spain's political and administrative existence as a state; illustrated the importance of human agency in general, and the bankruptcy of the Castilian ruling class in particular; explored the nature, structure, and culture of the state, its competitors, possibilities, and vulnerabilities; analysed themes of sudden, even violent, change in Spain's geopolitical reach; and explained why the structure of the centralized state that emerged was dysfunctional to the point of perpetual instability. Unsparring in his



assessment of egregious policy errors such as Castile's domestic (and international) monetary policy mismanagement that contributed to the decay of Castilian institutions in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, he drew portraits of institutional decay in flesh and blood.

From his early days as a research student at Cambridge, John forged links with students of Spanish culture. Artistic and literary scholarship and connections enrich his work: his interest in painting (in respect of which Velázquez plays a defining role) connects to his unparalleled expertise on Philip IV (including that monarch's vast collection of European paintings), and Count-Duke Olivares, whose genius as political counsellor to the King proved insufficient to arrest Spain's decline. John's 738-page book, *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline* drew rapturous reviews and won him the Wolfson Prize in 1986. Other prizes, including the Balzan, came his way throughout his life. So, too, did honours and honorary doctorates, especially from Spain, where he enjoyed the greatest esteem.

Arriving in Oxford as Regius Professor in 1991 from richly productive years in Princeton, John used his inaugural lecture to recommend a new agenda: "some kind of Centre for Atlantic Studies, embracing Europe and the Americas, and conceived particularly but not exclusively with comparative possibilities in mind, would



help to focus and invigorate our intellectual enterprise.” In an apparently post-Cold War and globalizing world, such an open understanding of history’s place and historians’ roles found a readier audience in Oxford than when Philip Williams and like-minded scholars had imaginatively advanced ideas for an American Institute a decade earlier.

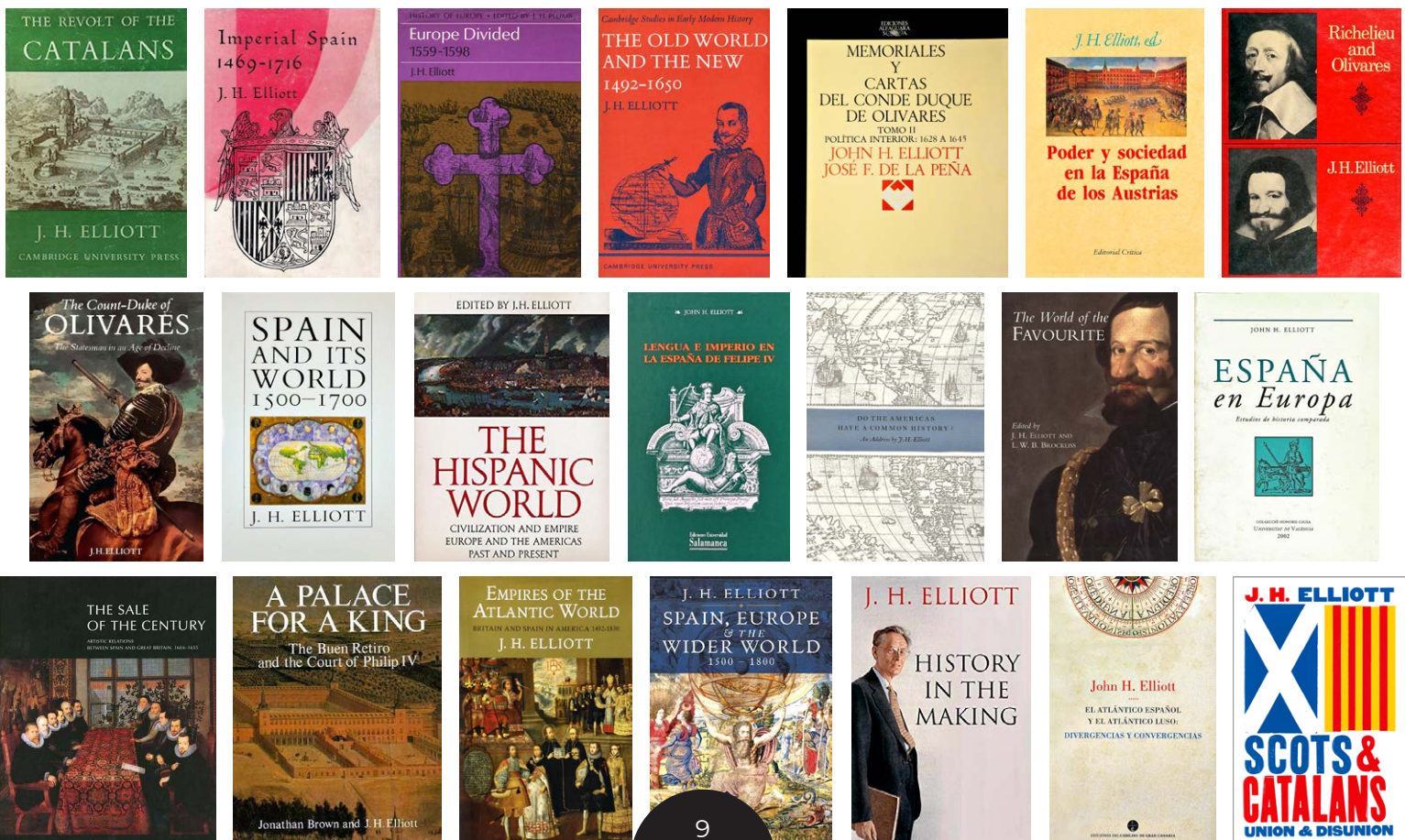
There followed an invitation from the Vice-Chancellor that John chair a Task Force to prepare the groundwork for an Oxford Institute in the Americas and Atlantic History. He accepted, offering a vision for such an institute; persuading audiences within and beyond Oxford of that vision’s attractiveness; and working with Esme Cromer and Viscount Rothermere, ‘co-chairmen’ of the Founding Council, and others to win support from donors, most especially the Rothermere Foundation, the Rhodes Trust, and Drue Heinz. John emphasized that many academics, university officers, and donors contributed to the creation of the RAI. Yet he defined the tone. His remarks at the Founding Council’s meeting in October 1993 thrill with intellectual and institutional ambition. Placing the study of America in Atlantic and comparative contexts should, he thought, “... help to counteract the dangers of becoming too inward-looking. Our national mission... will be to respond to the growing undergraduate interest in the United States and so help to create an informed public opinion; to train a future cadre of British and European leaders in American Studies; and to foster research and the

exchange of ideas, including the exchange of ideas between academics and non-academics.”

The Institute that emerged differed somewhat from the purposes that John had articulated by including scholars of American Literature and those historians and political scientists with interests more narrowly focused on the United States than was true of him. He nonetheless generously welcomed those whose approaches to American politics and history were less obviously comparativist than his own. As his vision shaped the RAI’s creation, so it has informed the continuing development of its catholic, inclusive, and questioning character. In 2013, John gave the first in a series of annual RAI lectures named in his honour, in which he explored the “... inherent danger in the creation of institutes devoted to the study of a particular country or region—the danger of becoming inward-looking and cutting themselves off from the academic and intellectual world that surrounds them. It is wonderful to see the Rothermere avoiding this trap and looking outwards as it brings a depth of expertise to bear on the United States, its history, politics, and culture.”

With his death, the RAI has lost a decisive founding figure. John’s deep humanity and pathbreaking work are his enduring legacies to our community and to the world. ■

*Nigel Bowles is a Distinguished Fellow and former Director of the RAI.*







## The American Civil War *Adam Smith*

*The following is an outline of RAI Director Adam Smith's inaugural lecture as the Edward Orsborn Professor of US Politics and Political History, delivered in the Examination Schools on 25 April 2022. A recording of the full lecture is available on the RAI's YouTube channel.*

We are familiar with the idea that the United States is a new country, with the forward-looking orientation that implies. But at the same time, America's future prosperity and freedom nevertheless depend—so it has frequently been proclaimed—on adherence to the institutions and traditions established by a previous generation. You might say that, in a deeper sense, the United States of America is really an old country.

It is old in the sense that its political institutions, and to a great extent its political culture, are still shaped by its eighteenth-century moment of origin, its politics curiously distorted—in a way that has no real parallel in this country—by arguments about what the founding fathers intended. In America, the past is not just prologue; it confers authority.

This framing helps us to understand the American Civil War—how it happened, how it ended, and how we should understand its place in American history. This is so because the war was shaped by a political culture which, for all its embrace of change, was in important ways also profoundly *conservative*—a term which came into broad use in American politics as the sectional crisis was intensifying, and almost always had positive connotations even while meaning different things to different people.

The Civil War was the greatest, and certainly the most violent disjuncture in American history. But the concept of a *conservative revolution* is helpful in thinking about the Civil War insofar as it helps us to see this as a revolutionary situation which arose as much *because* of the conservative dimension of American political culture, as in spite of it.

What was 'conservative' about antebellum American political culture? It boiled down to

The inauguration of Abraham Lincoln on 4 March 1861 (Library of Congress)

Presidents immediately preceding Lincoln, left to right from the most recent (from 'Presidents of the United States 1776–1876: A Centennial Memorial', by J.T. Patton, Detroit, MI)



# Civil War as a Conservative Revolution

the consensus that the prevailing constitutional order must be preserved.

By the 1830s, the leaders of the American Revolution of the 1770s and '80s had passed away, but the rising generation of politicians defined themselves as the inheritors of their fathers' 'sacred trust', tied by a thread of gold to those who had gone before. Only in the American republic, the argument went, was a conservative posture necessary in order to defend liberal Enlightenment values.

The framers of the Constitution had expected sectional politics and partisanship to exist. What they hoped was that they had created institutions and set in motion a constitutional politics in which it would be impossible for any one faction to gain complete control. For many decades, that was broadly how it worked. Both the Jacksonian Democratic Party and the much less successful Whig Party could wield national power only by stitching together bisecting coalitions. This was not high-mindedness or (notwithstanding the rhetoric) some abstract patriotic commitment to compromise. It was just basic numbers: they needed to do it in order to win.

The new Republican Party, of which Lincoln was a leader, argued that the so-called 'Slave Power' (the conspiracy of southern oligarchs who were controlling the Supreme Court) were, in effect, a counter-revolutionary force, subverting the institutions of the republic and replacing them—as the people of Boston had witnessed when Anthony Burns was carried off by Federal forces—with the tyrannical methods of despots.

Yet Republicans repeatedly and emphatically stressed their 'conservative' aims. Theirs was the "only *true* conservatism," wrote one party member, because it proposed to restore the administration of public affairs to the "principles and policy established by the founders of our political system." Clearly, the language of preservation was a source of legitimation. But this does not mean that it was insincere or unimportant—on the contrary, it goes to the heart of how the Republican Party saw their

mission: to save the republic by imposing on the South *their* deeply felt and plausibly articulated antislavery version of the political order created in the 1780s.

Most white Americans in the 1850s and '60s did not want to transform their world; they wanted to rid it of enemies. For a majority of the white citizens of the free states, the slaveholders, who had been exposed as counter-revolutionary oligarchs, had become the republic's enemy number one. The dominant narrative of the Civil War dismisses the moderate majority as bystanders, hapless as radicals drove change. But at best this is only half the story.

The choices this silent majority made were the ones that, in the end, led to the election of Lincoln as President in 1860, triggering secession and leading to war. Trying to make political judgements that would preserve their free institutions and the political order in which they had grown up, which they believed was the most perfect the world had ever seen—trying to preserve all this—they stumbled, eventually, into a situation where they felt compelled to use immense force to preserve the Union, and to destroy the institution of slavery not just for themselves but, to quote Lincoln once again, for the "whole family of man."

When the war was over, the dominant tone on the winning side was *relief* that the republic, shorn of slavery, had survived and that the original American Revolution had been vindicated. To people at the time, the Civil War mattered as much as for what it preserved as for what it transformed, for the changes it foreclosed as much as for those it advanced.

After the war, politics continued to be shaped, just as it had been in the antebellum years, by a preoccupation with the various sources of opposition to liberty, by narratives of history in which freedom did battle with despotism and generally won, and by an enduring faith in the providentially blessed, world-historical importance of the American republic. Everything had changed, and yet nothing was different. ■



BUCHANAN



PIERCE



FILMORE



TAYLOR



POLK



TYLER



HARRISON



VAN BUREN

# Writing about the Seminoles

Mandy Izadi

Over the course of the past year, I have been working on completing my book, and increasingly excited to think about its eventual publication. Recently, I signed a contract to publish it as a crossover title with Yale University Press, which is the premier press for my specialty, which centers on Indigenous and environmental histories.

At its core, the book is a transnational history of the multi-ethnic Indigenous- and African-descended people known as the Seminoles. It extends from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century—their moment of origin as a group—to the 21<sup>st</sup> century; and it spans multiple continents, from the Americas to Africa and Europe, following the Seminoles across their many worlds. Over the past year, I advanced with my project to focus on the research and writing for the chapters that deal with the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. These chapters serve an important purpose. Ultimately, they allow me to develop

an overarching perspective on both the early and modern eras, which are typically studied in isolation. While there are several important, classic works on the modern era, histories of Indigenous America more typically focus on the early period. It has long been the gold standard for historians to write stories that end in the mid- to late-nineteenth century.

Entitled *Born of War*, the book tells the story of a small nation that not only survived war, slavery, and removal, but also shaped the fortunes of multiple empires, before clashing with the United States. This group is both small and extraordinarily powerful; they have, for instance, survived the longest Indian war waged by the United States against an Indigenous nation. With a longue-durée perspective, the book examines some of the darkest eras in Indigenous history and the more contemporary story of resurgence that began during the Civil Rights Era. Along the way, it engages with ongoing issues that remain central to national debates on race, violence, survival, and sovereignty.

The process of writing this book has been a real pleasure. It has anchored me, season after season, especially in the throes of the pandemic. I also happen to really enjoy teaching. It is the kind of work that leaves me feeling energized, inspired, and connected. So, this year, I made sure I could work with students in various capacities. At Oxford, with the help of the History Faculty, I was able to continue advising students working on their undergraduate theses. This work is always a privilege and a pleasure—from the first moments of meeting and brainstorming ideas with students, to the last read-through of the final draft. Last year, my graduate and undergraduate students received marks of Distinction for their work. I am looking forward to hearing from my students about this year's results.

I feel enormously lucky to be a historian engaged with precisely the issues at the very heart of the public conversation about the American national past. As interest in Indigenous studies, race, slavery, and other related issues deepens, this conversation will invariably evolve. I am really looking forward to becoming a part of it, as a teacher and scholar who engages with the world beyond the university. ■

*Mandy Izadi held the Broadbent Junior Research Fellowship in American History at the RAI and St Edmund Hall, 2017–21.*



'A Seminole in the Everglades' (C. Johnson, *What to See in America*, 1919)

'Land of the Seminoles' (J.C. Ridpath, *United States: A History*, 1893)





# Historical Perspectives on Gendered State Violence in the United States

*Elizabeth Barnes, Elizabeth Evens,  
and Grace Watkins*

In Michaelmas term of 2021, the Rothermere American Institute hosted a research seminar addressing Historical Perspectives on Gendered State Violence in the United States. The seminar provided a valuable opportunity to discuss the relationship between gender and the carceral state with scholars from across the United States and United Kingdom.

One of the joys of convening a seminar series was that it allowed us to invite scholars whose work we had long admired to share their ideas with us in an informal, supportive environment that allowed attendees to share ideas, engage with each other's work, and pool resources. As our own work spans more than a century—from the antebellum period through to the mid-twentieth century—we were keen to ensure that a wide range of fields were represented. Our speakers took us from the eighteenth century through to the present, examining gendered state violence from a range of perspectives. Michelle Daniel Jones shared her work with the Indiana Women's Prison (IWP) History Project, which is examining the history of this prison led by scholars incarcerated within the IWP. Althea Legal-Miller shared her work on the sexual violence suffered by Black women and girls who were active in the Civil Rights Movement, stressing links to present struggles in the US and UK. Romarilyn Ralston shared with us her experiences of organising with the California Coalition of Women Prisoners, her current research and writing project, and work supporting formerly incarcerated students through Project Rebound in the California State University system. We also invited Scott De Orio to share his work on queer experiences of carceral

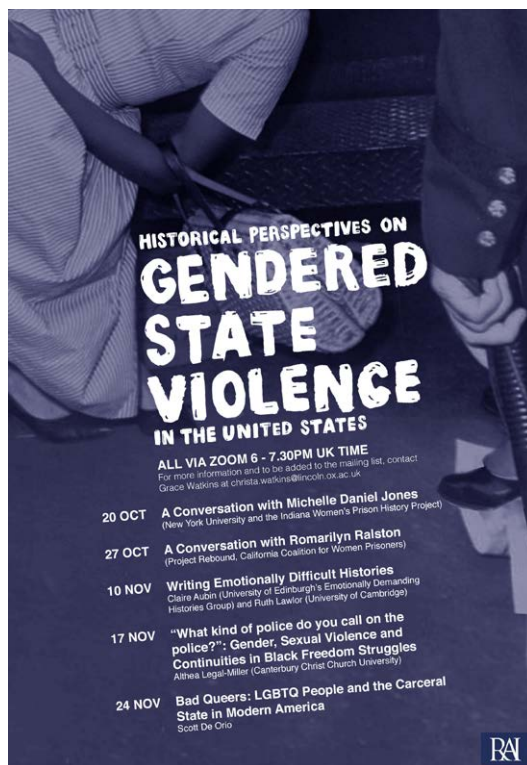
violence and criminalisation, highlighting the experiences of trans and gender nonconforming people.

Over the course of the series, there were many thoughtful conversations about approach, method, and ethics. Ruth Lawlor and Claire Aubin joined us to discuss the particular challenges that scholars face in working on emotionally demanding histories. The conversation expanded to include ethical issues and experimental methods and proved a fruitful space for sharing reading recommendations and tips as well as discussing common difficulties.

In March 2022, we gathered again to celebrate the release of Anne Gray Fischer's new book, *The Streets Belong to Us: Sex, Race, and Police Power from Segregation to Gentrification*. Dr Fischer's work has inspired many seminar attendees' interest in gendered state violence, so it was an honour to be able to host her for a discussion of her newest publication. It was also a fantastic opportunity to meet with and learn from other scholars of

state violence, and testament to the strength of the community that had formed during the seminars in the previous term. With generous funding from the British Association for American Studies, we have also begun work on a website that will house a range of different archival and teaching resources on the topics discussed in the RAI research seminar.

We hope to continue collaborating in the future, carrying on these valuable discussions and working through methodological challenges. We thank the speakers, participants, and the RAI for their generous support of the series. ■



# Evoking the Horse: Indigenous Artists of the North American Plains

*Natalie Hill*

One hot afternoon in the summer of 2019, I was in the office of Robert Hall, Blackfeet language specialist and teacher at Browning Public School, Blackfeet Country, Montana. I had interviewed him as part of my DPhil research in Indigenous American History, about the relationships between Blackfeet people and horses. As I turned to leave, I noticed a vivid depiction of a horse and rider painted on ledger paper sitting on his bookshelf. I commented on it. Robert immediately answered “well, you can have it”. I felt a little flustered and declined, saying I couldn’t possibly. But he told me “in my culture I have to give it to you because you complimented it”. I felt pretty bad about this, but there was nothing I could do to change it, so I gratefully accepted, and as we parted he asked me only this, to make sure that it was displayed and seen.

This was part of the reason why I wanted to curate an exhibition of artwork by artists with whom I had worked during my fieldwork. I had always wanted my research to be more widely accessible and there was a feeling among many of my Native contacts that the most important thing was for me to get their stories out into the world. One of my curatorial aims was therefore to give exposure to artists who did not necessarily have many resources or opportunities for promoting their work. I applied to the RAI’s Conference and Events Fund, proposing an exhibition in the communal area of the Institute. The artworks featured came together through being gifted to me, or through my purchasing them from artists who had participated in my fieldwork. The exhibition represents artists from three out of the four communities with whom I worked—Apsáalooke (Crow), Piikani (Blackfeet), and Lakota (Western Sioux).

Domestic horses entered the lives of the Indigenous people of the Northern Plains in the first half of the eighteenth century, having been shipped to the continent by the Spanish, and dispersed through Native uprisings and pre-established trade routes from the south. Plains tribes were quick to adopt horses and the myriad advantages they brought, and the horse soon became a major catalyst for change within these communities. The move to mounted warfare and hunting influenced social

and political structures, while the use of horses for travel increased the distance and speed of movement within a nomadic lifestyle.

Horses have been documented in art from their earliest interactions with Plains communities. These creative expressions often illuminate how horses became woven into the makers’ cultural and spiritual lives. Horses were incorporated into pre-existing artistic traditions, such as quillwork, beading and parfleche designs, as well as inspiring new traditions, such as the decorative horse regalia which still play a significant role in Plains—especially Crow—culture today. Ledger drawing, which developed during the Reservation Period, shows the continuation of an important source of Native historical documentation.

The ledger art pieces have been of particular interest to visitors, who are fascinated by the palimpsest created by Native drawings overlaying used ledger pages, and their layered historical narratives and meanings. All artworks feature horses, and the exhibition considers the relationship between people and horses, the role of horses in Native American identity and culture, and the ways in which horses are depicted in art.

While showcasing Native art, the exhibition also highlights the importance of Indigenous American voices within American history. It is timely to promote these voices within the current dialogue on race in America, and historically marginalised groups. By transforming the RAI communal space with images which spark interest and conversation, I wanted to create a more engaging aesthetic, to encourage dialogue on related topics.

Within the exhibition, the bold colours and ledger-style horses of Mona Bear Medicine Crow, Butch ThunderHawk and Jeremy Johnson contrast with the evocative lines and emotive scenes of Ernest Marceau and Earl Biss. The works of Birdie Real Bird and an unknown beader require contemplation of the intricacies of their art, and reflection on the materiality of human-animal relations.

The field of animal history is relatively new, and the exhibition encourages reflection on the





Untitled, pen and acrylic on ledger paper, 2019, by Jeremy Johnson (Piikani – Blackfeet). Gifted to the author by Robert Hall.

role of horses in shaping history. It is especially relevant in this historical moment, with increasing awareness of how our interactions with animals are involved in shaping our future. The works of Ernest Marceau, in particular, have elicited personal reflections on individuals' own experiences, alongside appreciation of the horse as a sentient being. On an academic level, I aimed to engage fellow scholars with the medium of art as an important source in historical study. As an interdisciplinary researcher, I enjoyed sharing how these artworks relate to historical narratives in the hope of inspiring others.

On 3 May we launched the exhibition with an opening night event, which gave me the opportunity to share some of these narratives as well as to provide more context on how I met the artists and acquired the artworks. It was an honour to be introduced by Professor Charlene Villaseñor Black, who powerfully contextualised the exhibition within the framework of decolonising institutional spaces and revisioning Indigenous art history. A video of a Crow Fair

parade played on one wall, together with pow-wow music from drum group Black Lodge Singers of the Blackfeet Nation, and Apsáalooke hip-hop artist Supaman, to give an immersive experience to guests as they contemplated the artworks. The exhibition is ongoing, and continues to attract enthusiastic comments in the visitors' book. ■

Natalie Hill wrote her DPhil thesis in History on 'The Art of Human-Horse Engagement: Tracing lived and represented human-horse relations in northern plains Indian communities, c.1700 to the present day'. The exhibition would not have been possible without the generosity of Maggie Carlson, Bill Yellowtail, Putt and Jill Thompson, Robert Hall, Ernest Marceau, Butch Thunder Hawk and Chris Dorsett.

# Cataloguing the Philip and Rosamund D

## *Kelly Burchmore*

Between the publication of the first catalogue in 2012 and March 2022, Professor Phillip Davies donated another 8.85 linear metres (59 boxes) of American political ephemera to his US election campaign archive, held at the Vere Harmsworth Library. The new material covers more than the last eleven tumultuous years of United States politics; many new accessions date from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and supplement material from 1840–2010 which was already held in the archive. In Hilary term 2022, I came to the VHL in my capacity as a project archivist for archives and modern manuscripts at the Bodleian Special Collections in order to process the material on site.

Cataloguing this second tranche of election ephemera required meticulous attention to detail. Each item received by VHL staff over the past decade was treated and recorded as an individual accession, in order to make a full inventory and retain acquisition information and custodial history at collection level in the archive catalogue. The material required extensive sorting. Items produced for different election candidates, in different years, and in different formats had been stored together when first acquired from the donors. Everything needed checking for duplication with catalogued material and between accessions. As a result, sorting and making a full inventory took up the majority of the allotted time. Material could then be catalogued at item level, to fit into the existing structure of the catalogue, which is organised firstly by level of election (from presidential elections downwards) and then into sub-series such as format, geographical location, and election year. Along the way, the material was transferred into conservation boxes, folders, and acid free paper in the interest of permanent preservation.

It would be hard to overstate the depth and breadth of the collection: the ephemera cover all levels of election, from grassroots and interest groups to political parties, to the presidency. Formats preserved in the archive include printed literature, posters, audio-visual material, and buttons as well as more assorted objects such as items of clothing, mouse-mats, socks, emery boards, calendars, and even a voodoo doll. The origins of the donated material are similarly

varied, with items coming to the VHL from state and national party conventions, circular mailings, caucus events, and rallies. The campaign material allows researchers interested in the social history, politics, and culture of America to observe variations in the approach and style of political campaigns, and the shifting priorities of the United States electorate. It testifies to the changing interactions between candidates and the electorate and vice versa, as well as the material culture of American elections. Not only this, but there is ample opportunity to use tangible political ephemera to pursue more specific lines of enquiry such as:

- Women's suffrage in the United States
- Grassroots groups and parties, including many independent and third parties
- Particular periods such as the Cold War
- Specific political events
- Individual presidencies and offices
- Comparisons between regions
- The history of the labor movement and AFL–CIO

A fascinating theme in this cataloguing project has been the imprint of movements which exerted social and political influence for a period of time, such as the Women's Temperance Movement and Freeze Nuclear Weapons campaign. A more recent example is Rock the Vote. Founded in 1990, Rock the Vote is a non-profit and non-partisan organisation aimed at empowering young, new voters to register and use their right to vote. The 2012 material relating to Rock the Vote comprises snappy and digestible literature such as leaflets, stickers, and postcards, as well as a democracy lesson plan, which forms part of RTV's established high school civic education programme.

The second version of the catalogue is currently in preparation, and will soon be made available on Bodleian Archives & Manuscripts. To request U.S. Elections material via the Bodleian Archives & Manuscripts catalogue, please see this blog post by librarian Bethan Davies: <http://blogs.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/vhl/2022/04/27/request-elections-archive-bodleian-catalogue/> ■

*Kelly Burchmore is a project archivist for archives and modern manuscripts at the Bodleian Special Collections.*



# Davies U.S. Elections Campaigns Archive

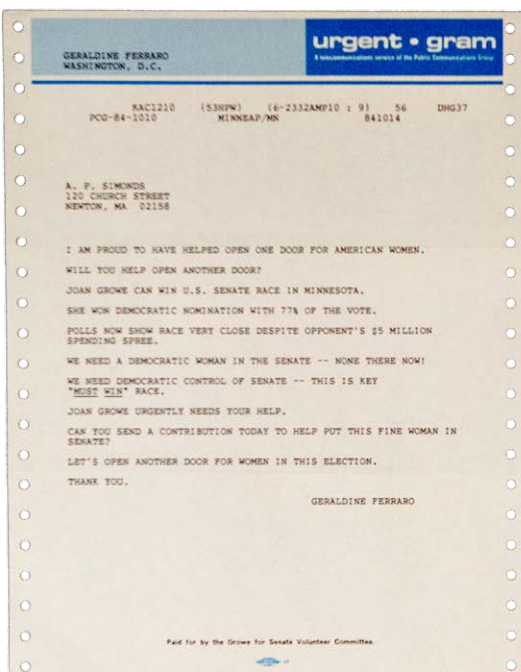
Right: Rock the Vote literature, 2012 (MS 21344/1)



Below: A pair of Obama presidential inauguration special edition Washington Metro tickets. Barack Obama was inaugurated as the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States on 20 January 2009. (MS 21389/59)



Above: Buttons relating to campaigns for nuclear disarmament, 1980-1984 (MS 21395/213)



Left: The National Women's Political Caucus called on American voters to increase the level of representation of women at all levels of elective office, in ways such as supporting female Senate candidates. Three of these candidates are represented in the archive through ephemera from their campaigns: Joan Grove (D-MN), Millicent Fenwick (R-NJ), and Barbara Leonard (R-RI). Here, Grove is endorsed by Geraldine Ferraro, the first woman to be nominated for the Vice-Presidency, in 1984. (MSS Amer. s. 33/11/2)

# A New Podcast: *Flashback*

Katie Fapp

Where do you get your history? According to a 2020 survey conducted by the American Historical Association and Fairleigh Dickinson University on the public's perception of history, a whopping 66% of respondents said that they get their history from fictional film or television—second only to documentary film or television. Nonfiction history books, by comparison, ranked twelfth at 32%. This data reflects what some of us probably already suspected—many people largely consume their history from non-academic sources. With apologies to my colleagues, it would seem that America's favourite historian is in fact Hollywood.

As much as our historian's impulse may tell us not to, if we take movies that depict the past as works of history in their own right, what do we find? More importantly, what do we learn? These are the questions I explore in my new podcast, *Flashback: American Historians on Movies*. Listeners tune into conversations between historians about movies that depict America's past. Beyond just pointing out inaccuracies, *Flashback* dives deep into how movies represent the past, what audiences can learn from them, and what they might tell us about our wider, ever-changing understandings of history.

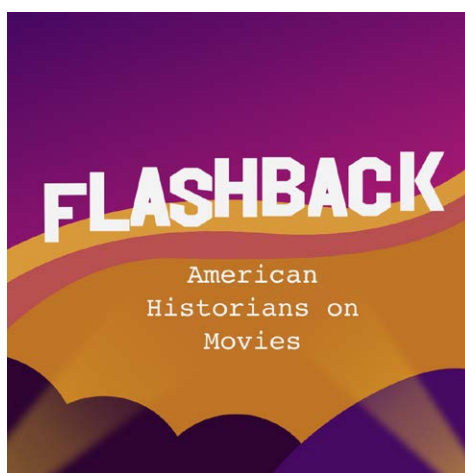
Each episode brings a historian's eye to a different cinematic representation of American history. A guest and I explore a movie that touches on some aspect of their own field of expertise through an open-ended discussion that can range from historiography to costume design.

Our first season hosted several RAI members, old and new, to delve into a diverse group of five films. Starting things off with the biggest pop-history moment of the century, Kinder JRF Grace Mallon came in to talk about *Hamilton* (2020), in a conversation that ranged from fiscal policy rap battles to the erasure of Philadelphia as an early American metropolis.

From the 'room where it happens' we moved to the frontier with *There Will Be Blood* (2007), with DPhil student Gwion Wyn Jones offering his thoughts on the ties between religion and oil in the American West. For our episode on 1989's *Glory*, I sat down with RAI Distinguished Fellow and former Director Jay Sexton to explore that movie's role in historical representation and the development of Civil War film down the years. Our *Jackie* (2016) episode tackled the legacy

of both that First Lady and the JFK administration with the help of DPhil student Liz Rees. Rounding out the season, DPhil student Josh Lappen joined me to explain the real history behind fictional cartoons in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (1988)—an idea that isn't as loony as you might think.

Born out of my own love of movies, *Flashback* mirrors conversations I was already having in the RAI—and I'm elated that more people can now join in. With a great response to the first season, I look forward to digging into further facets of America's past in the second. You can tune in wherever podcasts are found, and follow *Flashback* on Twitter @FlashbkHistoPod for updates on future episodes. ■





# Supporting Transatlantic Friendship

## Guy Collender

The scale and majesty of the Statue of Liberty always impress. Standing 151 feet high, on top of a colossal pedestal, she looks out triumphantly over New York Harbor. She was a welcome sight for millions of immigrants making the crossing from Europe to new lives in the New World at the beginning of the twentieth century. Today, she is a must-see for tourists to the Big Apple.

I saw her from the deck of a sightseeing boat on a blustery day on my first fundraising visit to the US for the RAI. Taking the obligatory selfie, I began to reflect on the history of the statue and its symbolic significance. It is an inspiring story of friendship and philanthropy.

In recognition of America's democratic ideals and freedom, Lady Liberty holds a torch in one hand and a tablet bearing the date of the Declaration of Independence in the other. The statue was a gift from the people of France to their American counterparts. The grand pedestal upon which she stands was funded by US donors in what could be considered an early example of match funding.

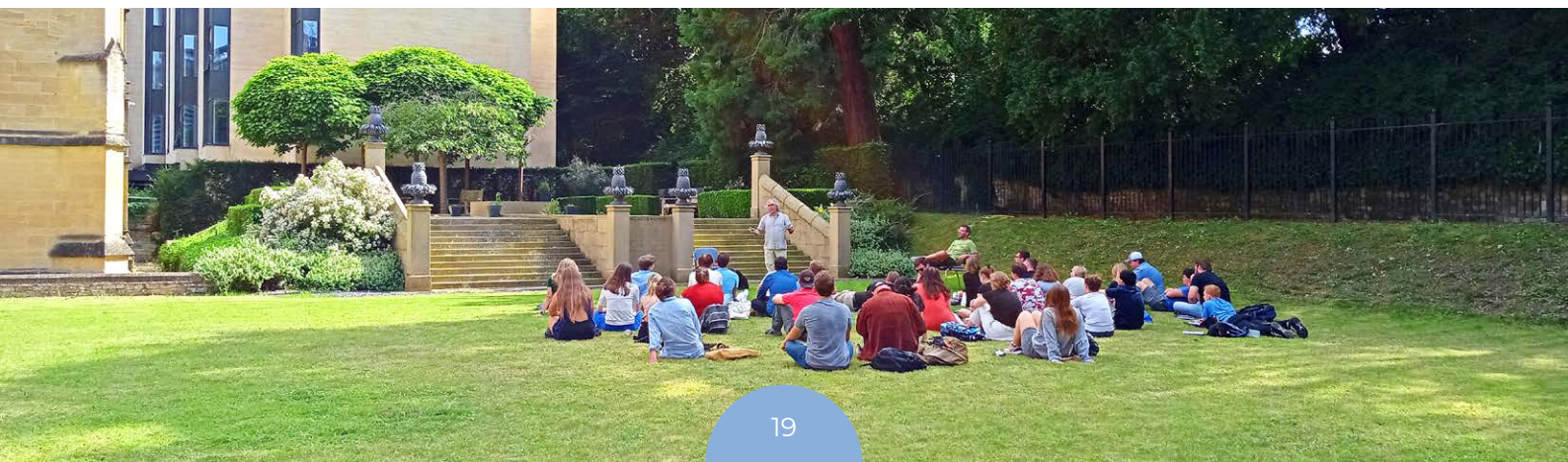
Similarly, the RAI's recent visit to the US—the first for two years due to the pandemic—was all about friendship and philanthropy. Professor Adam Smith, Dr Alice Kelly and I were delighted to meet the RAI's friends and supporters in New York in June 2022. These meetings included a convivial lunch at the Harvard Club to discuss the RAI's past and its future. The occasion marked a welcome return to in-person gatherings in the US after a two-year hiatus imposed by the pandemic.

Adam, Alice, and I shared updates about the RAI's mission to promote the public and academic understanding of the history, culture, and politics of the US and its place in the world. We also discussed the RAI's ambitious plans and fundraising priorities: to extend its programme of activities to include a new senior visiting fellowship, three new postdoctoral fellowships, and scholarships. With the RAI celebrating its 21<sup>st</sup> birthday this year, we highlighted how we are seeking donations to mark its coming of age by building on its successful track record and expanding its activities. These conversations reinforced the importance of the special relationship between the US and the UK in a turbulent world, and the interest Americans have in the UK and vice versa.

Just as the French and Americans worked together to fund, design, and build the Statue of Liberty in the nineteenth century, our plan is for friends on both sides of the Atlantic to collaborate in support of the RAI in the twenty-first.

Discussions with our American friends and supporters will continue in-person in the US and Oxford, and online. ■

*If you would like to find out more about the RAI's future visits to the US, or support the RAI by making a donation, please contact Dr Guy Collender, Deputy Head of Development – Humanities: by post at University of Oxford Development Office, University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JD, United Kingdom; by email at [guy.collender@devoff.ox.ac.uk](mailto:guy.collender@devoff.ox.ac.uk); or by telephone at +44 (0)7850 902 561.*



# The Vere Harmsworth Library in 2021–22

Bethan Davies

In 2022, the VHL has been able to begin reflecting on the lessons of the past three years, and turn its attention to new challenges ahead. With study space bookings no longer required, the VHL has been able to welcome more readers to its reading rooms and move back towards a 'normal' reading room experience. But there are more important changes to come.

The Radcliffe Science Library will be moving out of the VHL next year, in August 2023. Without the RSL, we would have struggled to provide the level of access and services we did during the pandemic, and it has been wonderful to get to know the RSL team and their readers. Our RSL colleagues will be missed, but will still be close-by in the new Reuben College on Parks Road.

I have been making provisional plans for the post-RSL library, which will include book and furniture moves, as well as changes in our opening hours, but also open up possibilities. Any significant changes will be communicated before implementation, but if you have any feedback or ideas you would like to discuss, feel free to email me ([bethan.davies@bodleian.ox.ac.uk](mailto:bethan.davies@bodleian.ox.ac.uk)), or find me in the library.

Like all Bodleian Libraries, the VHL will soon be moving to a new library management system. As part of the change, we will be adopting a common lending policy to provide a simpler, consistent experience for Bodleian readers. The expected date for the switchover has been delayed, but a new start date will be announced soon.

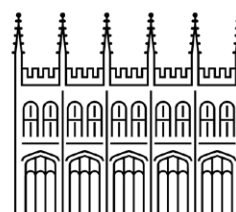
We are also looking forward to promoting access to the newly catalogued items in the Philip and Rosamund Davies U.S. Elections Campaigns Archive, housed in the VHL—see Kelly Burchmore's wonderful article above (p. 16–17) for more information. We are grateful to Professor Philip Davies for his continued donations.

Following a trial in January, the VHL has been able to commit funds to purchase *Jet Magazine*

*Archive. Jet* covers civil rights, politics, education, and other social topics with an African American focus. The archive includes over 3,000 issues providing a broad view of news, culture, and entertainment from its first issue in 1951 through 2014. The database will become available to Bodleian readers in the next few months.

We would like to record our thanks to all those who have donated books and other material over the course of the year. This includes the continued support of the Association of American Rhodes Scholars for the Aydelotte-Kieffer-Smith (AKS) collection. We would also like to thank the AARS for allocating funds for a new Alain Locke Collection, dedicated to purchasing monographs focused on African American history and culture. This collection will greatly enhance teaching and research on an important and topical area of study.

For the most recent updates on accessing the VHL, and other Bodleian libraries, please visit <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/service-updates>. You can find more information on the VHL on the RAI website at [www.rai.ox.ac.uk/vhl](http://www.rai.ox.ac.uk/vhl) and our own site at <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/vhl>. We also have a blog (<http://blogs.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/vhl>), Facebook ([facebook.com/VereHarmsworthLibrary](https://www.facebook.com/VereHarmsworthLibrary)), and Twitter ([twitter.com/vhl1lib](https://twitter.com/vhl1lib)) if you want to keep up with our news. ■



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