RIAS Newsletter December 2024

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Roosevelt Institute for American Studies

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It's been a while since our last update before the summer, but rest assured that the RIAS team has been very busy with a full agenda of activities and planning for the new year!

As we round off 2024, we invite you to look back with us at the past months' higlights, including (public) events, award ceremonies, visiting researchers, and conferences. Towards the end of the newsletter you will also find some important dates to put in your calendar for next year, and a few other exciting updates.

If you would like to give a little extra this holiday season, we also welcome you to take a look at the Friends of the RIAS Foundation. As a Friend of the RIAS, your donation will go directly towards providing MA and PhD students the opportunity to conduct research in our archive and library for an extended period of time. You can find more details about the Foundation and this student scholarship at the end of this newsletter or through our website.

The RIAS will be closed from 23 December to 3 January. We wish everyone a restful holiday and a happy new year!

For more information about past events, upcoming activities, and more, visit: www.roosevelt.nl.

Highlights of the Past Months

Town Hall Meeting: The End of Democracy?

On Friday 13 September, a Town Hall Meeting on the November 2024 United States elections – and the state of US democracy more broadly – was fittingly held in the magnificent former Town Hall in Middelburg. The event, held in Dutch, was organized by the RIAS in cooperation with the Zeeland Library (ZB) and University College Roosevelt (UCR). Over 100 people were in attendance to discuss such themes as voter registration, the shifting roles of federal and state power, and the decline of cooperation between the Republican and Democratic parties.

RIAS-NAF Webinar

In this webinar on 3 October, organized by the RIAS and Netherland-America Foundation (NAF), MIT Professor Craig Wilder discussed how the residents of a Dutch farming village used the slave economy and the early national desire for schools to recover from several years of warfare and military occupation. RIAS director and slavery scholar Damian Pargas moderated the session.

Maarten Zwiers Environmental History Lecture

On 4 October, Dr. Maarten Zwiers visited us all the way from Groningen to present our annual RIAS Environmental History Lecture. He spoke on the meaning of wetlands throughout history in the Netherlands, the US, and beyond.

You can find the full report as well as the recording of the lecture on our website.

Colonies of Benevolence

International PhD Seminar Fall 2024

From 27 to 29 November, the biannual International PhD Seminar took place at the RIAS, which brought together PhD candidates from across the globe to discuss their projects and network with other scholars of American history.

Read the full report here.

Contesting Black Citizenship International Conference

From 12 to 13 December, the RIAS organized a conference dedicated to the history and legacy of Black citizenship in the United States. The conference brought together established and early career scholars in the field of African American History from across Europe and the US. Each participant presented their own fascinating insights into a broader discussion surrounding the practices and institutionalized manifestations of exclusion from citizenship rights for African Americans, as well as the resistance to this exclusion, on both federal and state levels.

For more details, read the report on our website.

Seminar Series on Modern North American History

With the start of the academic year in September, we also kicked off the newest edition of our Seminar Series on Modern North American History, held in cooperation with the Sciences Po Paris Center for History. This (hybrid) seminar series brings together scholars at different stages of their career — with the past months' roster including Melani McAlister, Jayita Sarkar, James T. Sparrow, and Emma Day — in an interdisciplinary and historiographical conversation around the latest developments in the field of Modern North American History.

Awards & Research Grants

Visiting Researchers

It is never quiet at the RIAS, not even over the summer! Several visiting scholars came to conduct research in our archive in the summer period using funding from the RIAS Research Grant. Sky Lukas Mukti, who came all the way from Pretoria, South Africa to use our primary source collection on diplomatic history, was the recipient of our annual Mary B. Young Research Grant.

More information about our grants can be found here.

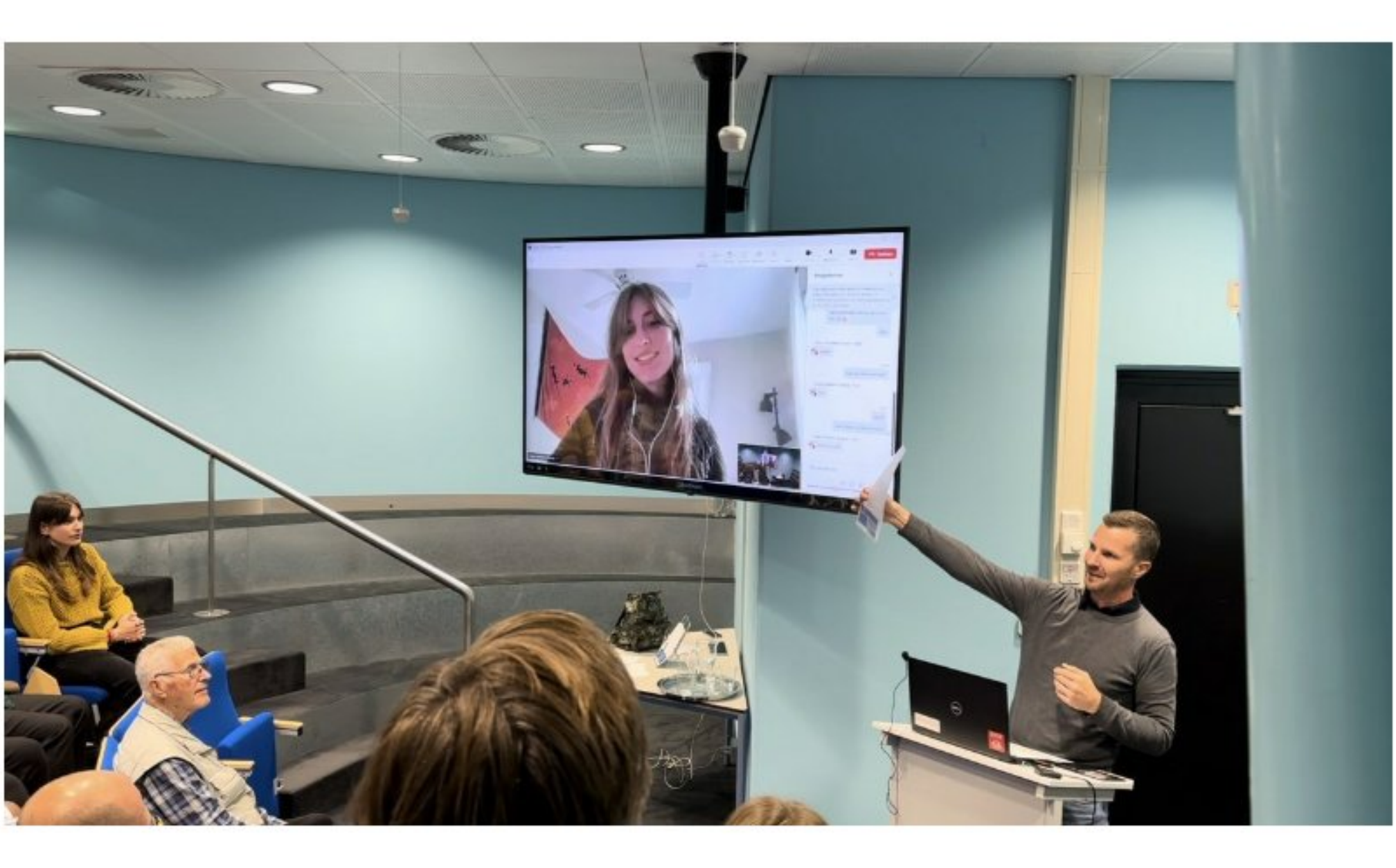
Oran Patrick Kennedy was the RIAS Short-Term Fellow from September to December 2024. At the RIAS, Oran explored campaigns for Black citizenship and resistance to racial exclusion in the Midwestern United States between the early American republic and Reconstruction.

BA Dissertation Prize

Since 2007, the RIAS has invited BA students from the University of Plymouth to conduct their research in our archive. The results of the produced undergraduate research have been so impressive that in 2011 a dissertation prize was created as a reward for the best output from the exchange program.

This year's prize went to Tom Crew (pictured here), whose dissertation, titled "The Big Stick: The Administration of Theodore Roosevelt and the Rationale for Imperialism in the Caribbean Basin," greatly impressed the jury!

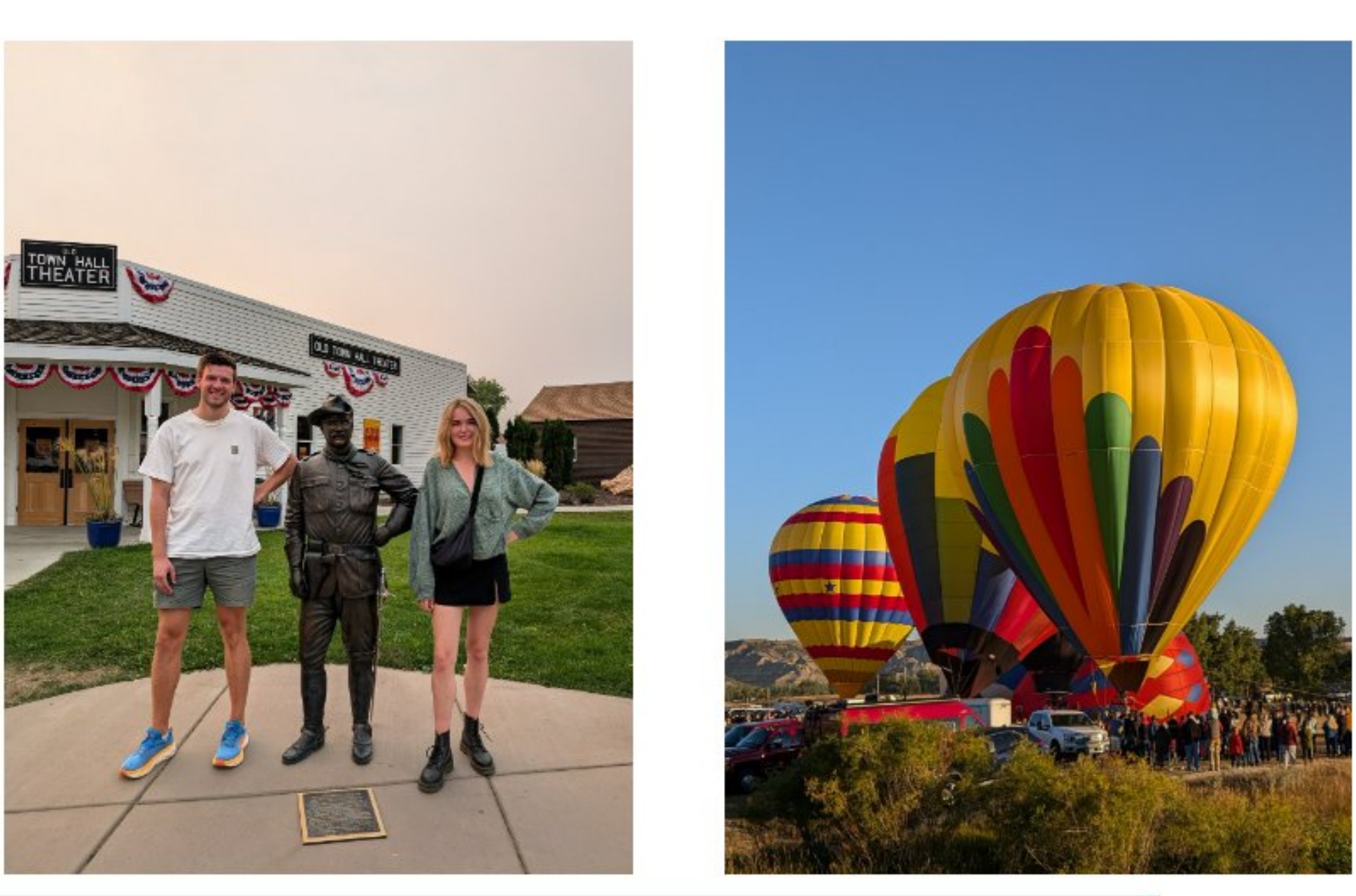
RIAS-UCR Sustainable Freedoms Essay Prize



Preceding our annual Environmental History Lecture on 4 October was the presentation of the "Sustainable Freedoms Essay Prize." This year, it was awarded (virtually) to UCR student Madeline Edgar for her eye-opening and thought-provoking paper "Constructing Deadly Nature at the US-Mexico Border." You can find Madeline's essay and more information about the essay prize on our website.

TRAHA 2024 Recipient Stef Lage Venterink Travels to North Dakota

As part of his prize for winning the annual Theodore Roosevelt American History Award (TRAHA), Stef Lage Venterink traveled to North Dakota in September to follow in the footsteps of TR during his "cowboy years." See his full report on our website.



Call for Submissions

TRAHA 2025

Every year the RIAS presents the Theodore Roosevelt American History Award (TRAHA) for the best Master's thesis written by a graduate student at a Dutch university on an American history topic.

Check out the details about submitting your thesis through our website.

Upcoming Events in 2025

Seminar Series on Modern North American History

The next speaker in this series will be Evan McCormick (Columbia University) on Monday, 27 January 2025, presenting his research titled Remembering a Presidency: The Obama Presidency Oral History Project.

More information and registration to come in the new year!

A Water's History of the United States

From 21 to 23 May 2025, the RIAS and the Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson State University will hold a conference in Middelburg on the role that water – in all its forms and manifestations – has played in the history of the United States.

Find more information about this interdisciplinary conference here.

Symposium on International Environmental Governance

From 5 to 6 June the RIAS and the Political Environment Research Collective at Utrecht University will co-organize a symposium in Middelburg, titled "The Montreal Moment: Ozone Depletion and the Rise of International Environmental Governance."

For more information, visit our website.

International PhD Seminar in Environmental History

June 2025 will be a busy month at the RIAS, as we are also organizing an International PhD Seminar in Environmental History in collaboration with the Dutch Environmental History Network (DEHN), from 12 to 13 June 2025.

Visit our website for more information about this two-day seminar.

Other Updates

THE RESULT OF THE FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT

PhD Positions

This year we said goodbye to our three amazing PhD candidates: Marcella Schute, Manar Ellethy, and Christine Mertens. After successfully completing their disserations, they have all found positions at various universities across the Netherlands. We wish them the best of luck with what will undoubtedly be successful careers as brilliant and well-rounded scholars.

We are very excited to welcome Femke Fakkeldij and Bálint Honos, our two new PhD candidates, to the RIAS in January! They will form part of the project "In the Shadows of Slavery: Free Black Citizenship and Democracy in Antebellum America," supervised by RIAS director Damian Pargas.

Vacancy: Library Internship

The RIAS offers a Library Internship (36 hours per week) for a period of three months for a student in American studies, history, or international relations. We have yet to fill the position for the summer period of 1 July to 1 September 2025.

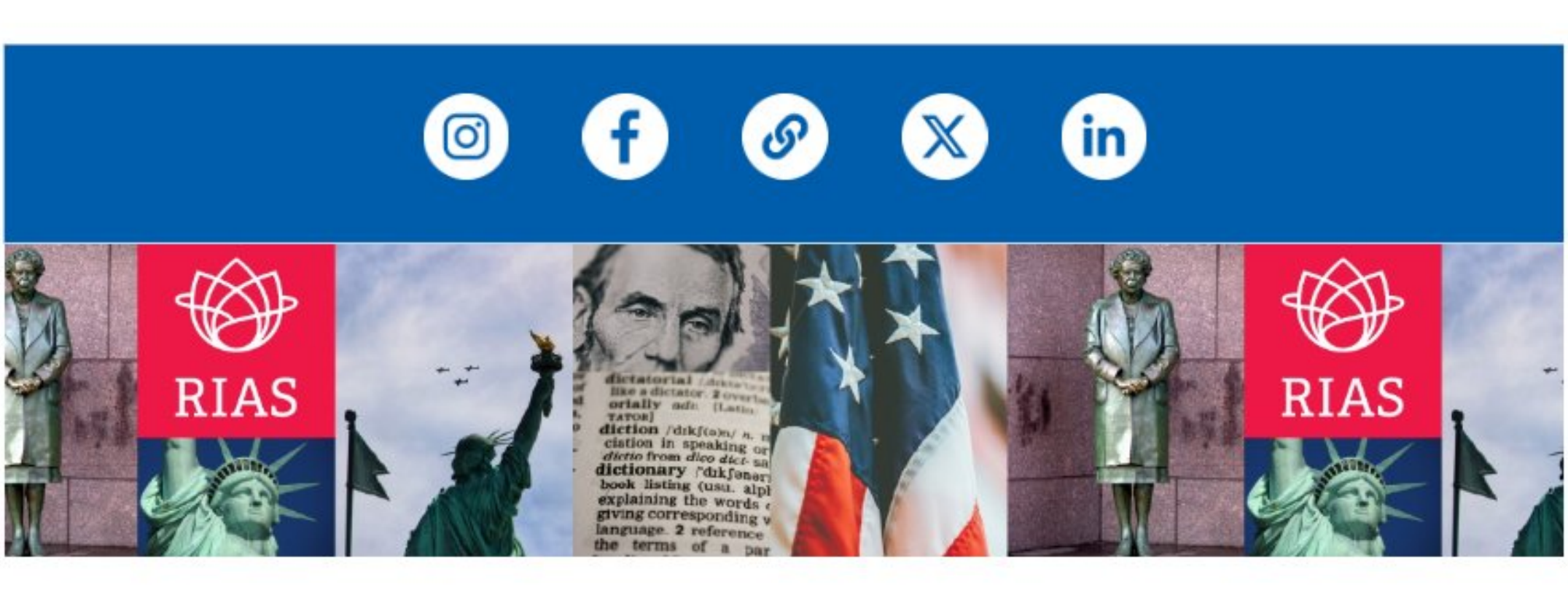
Visit our website for more details. On the same page you will find more information about the Research Internships offered by the institute.

Friends of the RIAS

Become our Friend!

The Friends of the RIAS Foundation has created the RIAS Student Scholarship for MA students and doctoral candidates to spend a month in the RIAS library using our archival collections. The scholarship amounts to €1,000, awarded once in a calendar year. MA and PhD students interested in conducting research in Middelburg with this scholarship in 2025 should submit their application before 1 March 2025.

For more information about the Friends of the RIAS Foundation, donation options, and the application procedure for the Student Scholarship, visit our website.



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