

The John Carter Brown Library

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NEWS

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**NEW SCHOLARLY ORGANIZATION FOUNDED: THE FORUM ON
EUROPEAN EXPANSION AND GLOBAL INTERACTION**

Thirty distinguished historians gathered at the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island, in April for the purpose of creating a new scholarly organization dedicated to the promotion of research and teaching on the history of European expansion.

The organization, to be known as the Forum on European Expansion and Global Interaction; is premised on the fact that the expansion of Europe, and the repercussions of that expansion worldwide up to the present, is the most important event in modern history and deserves attention as a single phenomenon.

At the April meeting, the founding group drew up a constitution, elected officers, laid plans for opening the organization to new members, and made arrangements for a national meeting in 1996. The Forum will be formally linked with the European Science Foundation's Network on the History of European Expansion and with the Leiden University Institute for the History of European Expansion and the Reactions to It.

The newly-elected officers of the Forum on European Expansion and Global Interaction are: George Winius, Brown University, president; Patricia Seed, Rice University, vice-president; Robert L. Hoover, California Polytechnic University, secretary; and Thomas Cohen, Catholic University; treasurer. Members of the Executive Committee, in addition to the officers, are: Michael Adas, Rutgers University; Philip Boucher, University of Alabama at Huntsville; Pieter C. Emmer, Leiden University; Edward G. Gray Brown University; and Carla Phillips, University of Minnesota.

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Despite the obvious importance to the history of the entire globe of the expansion of Europe--and regardless of whether one views this fact negatively or positively--academic attention to this monumental phenomenon, considered as a whole, has been skimpy at best. We have French historians and English historians and Spanish historians, meaning historians who specialize in the history of those countries, but few self-described European expansion historians, especially in the United States. And those who are captivated by this big subject find themselves a lonely lot, without an established community of scholars to sustain and nourish their interest.

Yet it may be said that the question of how the technology, languages, institutions, and even pastimes of Western Europe came to dominate global civilization -- or better said, came to create that civilization -- is the, greatest historical question of modern times. The Forum on European Expansion and Global Interaction will call attention to the complex ramifications of the European movement outward, which though it transformed the globe also resulted in the transformation of Europe itself as a direct result of the expansion, and the Forum will promote the study of European interactions with peoples, cultures, and societies throughout the world:

Among other purposes, the Forum is intended to facilitate the teaching of European expansion as, an advanced undergraduate course by giving its members a new feeling of purpose and solidarity. Universities in the United States and Canada have never institutionalized the study of European expansion, and there are few faculty positions or courses of study allotted to it. Instead, the unique history of European expansion and its consequences is usually subsumed under the rubric of "global history" or "world civilization," neither of which captures the singular significance to modern history of European expansion in particular.

The Forum will publish a newsletter and has adopted the Dutch journal, Itinerario, published at Leiden, as its official journal.

The John Carter Brown Library, which hosted the organizational meeting, is an independently funded and administered institution for advanced research in history and

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the humanities located at Brown University. The Library houses one of the world's outstanding collections of early and rare Americana, covering the area from Greenland to Patagonia. Its more than 45,000 volumes dating from before ca. 1820 pertaining to the Americas include, for example, European accounts of voyages by explorers, literature on the growth of colonies, accounts of the American Indians, religious writings, and literature on the colonial wars and wars for independence. The Library also has an extensive collection of maps dating from 1477 to the mid-19th century.

Other scholars present at the founding meeting, in addition to those named above, were: Onesimo Ahneida, Brown University; James Axtell, College of William and Mary; Bernard Bailyn, Harvard University; J. Leonard Blussé, Leiden University; Pierre Boulle, McGill University; David Buisseret, Newberry Library; Timothy Coates, Brown University; Philip Curtin, Johns Hopkins University; Robert DuPlessis, Swarthmore College; Francis Dutra, University of California, Santa Barbara; Iris Engstrand, University of San Diego; Norman Fiering, John Carter Brown Library; David Hancock, Harvard University; John Hattendorf, Naval War College; Paul Hoffman, Louisiana State University; Karen Kupperman, University of Connecticut; Murdo MacLeod, University of Florida; Geoffrey Parker, Yale University; Stanley Payne, University of Wisconsin; William Phillips, University of Minnesota; A. J. R. Russell-Wood, Johns Hopkins University; Antonio Saldanha, Universidade Technica de Lisbon; Merle Severy, National Geographic Magazine; Susan Socolow, Emory University; Norman Thrower, University of California, Los Angeles.

Information about membership may be obtained from Prof. Thomas Cohen, Oliveira Lima Library, Catholic University, Washington, D. C. 20064 or from Prof. Robert Hoover, Dept. of Social Sciences, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California 93407.