

Dr. Erin Stewart Mauldin is the recipient of the 2016 Harold N. Glassman Distinguished Dissertation Award in the Humanities for her dissertation, “Unredeemed Land: The U.S. Civil War, Changing Land Use Practices, and the Environmental Limitations of Agriculture in the South, 1840-1880,” which she defended, with Distinction, in June of 2014. Dr. Mauldin earned her M.A. in History in May of 2010, and her Ph.D. in History, with an emphasis on U.S. Environmental History, in July of 2014. She was mentored by University Professor John R. McNeill.

Using primary source materials such as farm and plantation records, soldier’s letters, family papers, as well as government documents, and attending to scientific matters such as soil nutrients and animal diseases, Dr. Mauldin’s dissertation is an ambitious and comprehensive examination of the effects of the Civil War and the abolition of slavery on 19th century Southern agriculture. Beginning with the Antebellum South of the 1840s and continuing beyond the end of Reconstruction to the early 1880s, the dissertation demonstrates how the Civil War had a transformational effect on southern agriculture. Both the War and abolition combined to undermine the antebellum practice of extensive land use, heavily reliant on periodic movement to new soils, free-range livestock, and slave labor. The post-bellum agricultural system relied on extractive industries, deforestation, and increased land tenancy and sharecropping driven by an overinvestment in cash crops such as cotton. Spanning four decades and expanding several states, the dissertation, Dr. Mauldin posits, “revisits the questions historians have long asked regarding the importance of the Civil War, the impoverishing nature of postwar cotton production, and the periodization of nineteenth-century southern history.”

The dissertation is an important contribution to environmental history, Civil War, history, Southern history, and the history of agriculture. In the words of her mentor, it is a “*tour de force* and among the very best dissertations I have ever read. It certainly ranks with the best I have ever directed.”

Dr. Mauldin is an assistant professor in the Department of History at Samford University in Birmingham, AL. Her article, “Freedom, Economic Autonomy, and Ecological Change in Cotton South, 1865-1880,” is under revision at *The Journal of the Civil War Era*, with an expected publication date in 2016, and a second article, “The Stockman’s War: Hog Cholera in Nineteenth-Century Alabama,” was accepted for publication in a special edition of *The Alabama Review* focusing on the environment forthcoming in 2017. A monograph of her dissertation, entitled “Unredeemed Land: Confronting the Ecological Legacies of the Civil War and Emancipation in the South, 1840-1880,” is in progress.

The Graduate School is very proud to award Dr. Mauldin the Glassman Dissertation Award in the Humanities.