

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan – Flint
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Social Sciences and Humanities

Thomas C. Henthorn, associate professor of history, with tenure, Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences, is recommended for promotion to professor of history, with tenure, Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2009	Michigan State University, History, East Lansing, Michigan
B.A.	2004	Saginaw Valley State University, History, Saginaw, Michigan

Professional Record:

2016-Present	Associate Professor of History, with tenure, and Wyatt Endowed Professor of Public History, University of Michigan-Flint, Michigan
2010-2016	Assistant Professor of History, and Wyatt Endowed Professor of Public History, University of Michigan-Flint, Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Henthorn is mandated to engage in public history, manage our internship program, and extend his talents into the community. His teaching is thus broader than a traditional history appointment. Professor Henthorn's public history courses connect students directly with the community through experiential learning. Since his promotion to associate professor, Professor Henthorn has taught twelve different preparations, ranging from traditional classroom, public history, and internship courses. He approaches each course from a perspective of maximum impact on the lives of the students. Student comments show that Professor Henthorn has successfully accomplished this goal. One student commented, "Believe it or not, my favorite part of this class was having to think critically and write the papers. Writing the papers challenged me to think outside the proverbial box, and to think about history in a different way than what is normally taught."

One of his most popular and publicized courses is "Cities of the Dead" which takes students to local cemeteries for an immersion across the boundaries of history and historic preservation. Numerous students commented that they "will forever look at cemeteries in a different way." This is reflective of Professor Henthorn's approach to history and historic preservation. Positive student comments pervade Professor Henthorn's course evaluations, and students particularly note his meaningful and consistent feedback. His syllabi demonstrate that his courses are well developed and consistently refined. Course expectations, assignments, grading, and management are addressed clearly. He lays out themes clearly and accompanies themes with videos that give students the confidence to succeed. During the pandemic Professor Henthorn explored ways to enhance his online courses from creating engaging video content to starting each unit with a representative song.

Professor Henthorn has continued to build the internship program and it has become a highly visible component of the history program. He prepares students thoroughly for the experience and emphasizes the expected academic outcomes for each experience. Even though the pandemic interrupted the internship program, his leadership and community support brought the internship program back to full effort when restrictions eased.

Research: Combining traditional and applied scholarship with community engagement and advocacy, Professor Henthorn has excelled in the quality, significance, and contribution of his work to the fields of

public and local history. Since his promotion to associate professor, Professor Henthorn has completed five public history projects: the Old Calvary Cemetery Preservation Project; two exhibitions on the history of the Civic Park neighborhood; two biking tours exploring the history of Flint's cemeteries and racial segregation; and "Amazing Graves," a series of YouTube videos demonstrating the value of cemeteries as historical sources. Describing and reflecting on these projects, the *Invisible Flint* website places Professor Henthorn's collective work in a context that uncovers missing pieces of history and challenges the traditional narrative of Flint's past.

In addition to his public history projects, Professor Henthorn published "The Civic Park Story" *The Michigan Historical Review*, one of the most respected state historical journals in the nation. In addition, Professor Henthorn has presented papers at five conferences, given six scholarly presentations to the public and has been awarded funding from the EDA Research Fund and the Community Impact Seed Grant. Overcoming the obstacles presented by the pandemic, Professor Henthorn continues to develop his scholarship with a new project entitled "Heritage in the Vehicle City" which examines how preservation efforts shaped elements of urban development in Flint from 1976 to 1995. Professor Henthorn's work seeks to uncover and better understand the "invisible" histories of Flint, the stories of marginalized people and places hidden by the city's grand narrative celebrating the urban progress of the Vehicle City and the glamor of the auto industry. Similarly, Professor Henthorn's work has challenged the focus on the economic development of downtown in Flint's heritage tourism by creating and running a public history tour exploring places that tell the stories of the impact of racial segregation in his program "Ride the Redline."

Recent and Significant Scholarly Activity:

Henthorn, Thomas, "The Civic Park Story," *Michigan Historical Review*, Fall 2021

Henthorn, Thomas, *Amazing Graves, Flint*, Michigan YouTube Channel, Adjudicated

Henthorn, Thomas, *Looking Back & Moving Forward: A History of Civic Park, Flint*, Michigan Digital Exhibit sponsored by Ruth Mott Foundation, Adjudicated

Service: In 2021, Professor Henthorn was named Humanities Champion of the Year by MIHumanities. The award is given to the person whose contributions result in outstanding public humanities impact in their community and in the state and for his engaged scholarship that brings history to the public forum in inventive ways. Professor Henthorn's community service is indeed impressive. He has served in leadership capacities in numerous civic organizations, including the Michigan Humanities Council, Glenwood Cemetery Association, the Sloan Museum of Discovery Board, Diocese of Lansing Cemetery Board, and the Durant-Dort Carriage Foundation.

In addition to this extensive community service, Professor Henthorn has undertaken substantial college and professional service. He served as the chair of the Department of History, where he undertook revisions to the major and minor in response to student demand and to utilize course sections more efficiently. Professor Henthorn's service is extensive and exceptional. The university, communities in the greater-Flint area, and the state of Michigan have benefitted from his work.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "It is without hesitation that I write in support of Henthorn's application based on his work as a teacher, scholar, and member of the academic and public communities."

Reviewer B: "I fully support his promotion to full professor as his scholarship, dedication to effective and thought-provoking student projects, and service to the field as most impressive... Dr. Henthorn is precisely what universities should seek in public history faculty."

Reviewer C: “His record reflects engagement—in the rich network of relationships he has built with community organizations he serves, in his courses and curriculum development, in his mentoring of public history interns, and not least in the public history projects and research that he pursues.”

Reviewer D: “I highly recommend that Thomas Henthorn be promoted with tenure to Full Professor at the University of Michigan-Flint.”

Reviewer E: “Professor Henthorn is clearly producing high-quality public history scholarship in a quantity appropriate to the rank.”

Reviewer F: “Dr. Henthorn’s service commitments to the field of public history are outstanding and deserving of promotion to full professor.”

Reviewer G: “He is extraordinarily productive *and* impactful as a scholar...Henthorn’s work bears marks of distinction that range from publication in respected venues to positive impacts in the Flint community.”

Summary of Recommendation:

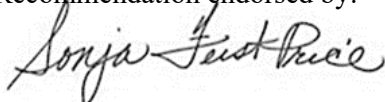
I am confident that Professor Henthorn will expand and extend his record of excellence after promotion to full professor, for which I recommend him wholeheartedly and unreservedly. It is with support of the College of Arts and Sciences Executive Committee that I recommend Thomas C. Henthorn for promotion to professor of history, with tenure, Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences.

Recommended by:



Douglas Knerr, Interim Dean
College of Arts and Sciences

Recommendation endorsed by:



Sonja Feist-Price, Provost and
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs



Debasish Dutta, Chancellor
University of Michigan – Flint

May 2023