FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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JARED FARMER RECEIVES 2015 RAY ALLEN BILLINGTON PRIZE FROM THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN HISTORIANS

BLOOMINGTON, IN—During its annual meeting in St. Louis, the Organization of American Historians (OAH) announced that Jared Farmer, Stony Brook University, SUNY, received their prestigious 2015 Ray Allen Billington Prize, which is given every two years for the best book about American frontier history, defined broadly to include the pioneer periods of all geographical areas and comparisons between American frontiers and others.

Trees in Paradise: A California History (W.W. Norton & Company) is a stunning example of interpretive narrative, told with complexity, nuance, and wit. Rooted in four iconic species associated with California (redwoods, eucalyptus, citrus and palm trees), Jared Farmer’s book offers a fresh perspective on the history of that important western state while demonstrating the broader lesson that American settlers have dramatically remade the North American landscape everywhere. Trees in Paradise is a story of optimism and despair, expectation and unanticipated consequences, exploitation and preservation, destruction and rebirth. It laces insights from environmental, economic, conservation, labor, and cultural history, to name the most obvious, into a compelling story. The breadth of research is impressive. The writing is fresh and inviting, filled with deep insight and original observations. It deftly weaves mythological tales with botanical descriptions and vivid human stories. Farmer’s ambitious project reinterprets natural and cultural landscapes and changes our understanding of them. The book is illuminating, wry, touching … brilliant. You may never look at trees, California, or your own environment the same way again.

The prize was announced on April 18 by OAH’s 2014–15 President Patty Limerick and 2015–16 President Jon Butler. A total of 50 recipients received 2015 OAH awards and prizes.

For more information, visit oah.org or call 812.855.7311.

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ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN HISTORIANS
Founded in 1907, the Organization of American Historians (OAH) is the world's largest professional association dedicated to American history scholarship. With more than 7,800 members from the U.S. and abroad, OAH promotes excellence in the scholarship, teaching, and presentation of American history, encouraging wide discussion of historical questions and equitable treatment of history practitioners. It publishes the quarterly Journal of American History, the leading scholarly publication and journal of record in the field of American history for more than nine decades. It also publishes The American Historian magazine. Formerly known as the Mississippi Valley Historical Association (MVHA), the association became the OAH in 1965 to reflect a broader scope focusing on national studies of American history. The OAH national headquarters are located in the historic Raintree House on Indiana University's Bloomington campus. The house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.