My last grant from FRFB was awarded in spring 2010 for research in London, England, for a project on German internment. I filed my final expense report in early summer 2010, and I’ve since been invited to present in England on the topic this summer as part of a workshop, which will lead to an edited collection. Thanks to the Board for all of your past support of my work. The last time I received the $3000 Faculty Research Grant was in 2004, and it helped me complete research for my most recent book, *Civilians in a World at War*.

Title of project:  *U.S. Generosity and the Expectation of Gratitude*

Starting date:  15 May 2011

Anticipated Completion date of research:  31 December 2011

Short abstract outlining goals and outcomes:

During World War I, U.S. non-profits fed much of the population of German-occupied Belgium and Northern France, while the American Relief Administration provided famine relief in Germany, Austria and Poland after the war. Americans again shipped food and clothing to Europe in the wake of the Second World War, focusing on war victims, even former enemies, for American generosity. My project examines these food relief efforts and the expressions of gratitude that Americans received. Europeans thanked their American benefactors with letters, pieces of art, homemade crafts, and personal visits, all of which helped establish a conversation between those giving and receiving aid. I argue that in the wake of American generosity after these two global upheavals, European gratitude for aid helped forge an expectation of gratitude among many Americans, which has shaped US foreign policy. My goal in applying for a Faculty Research grant for summer/fall 2011 (when I'll be on sabbatical) is to complete research for a planned book on the topic. At the moment, I have good research from several U.S. and European archives that I gathered when I was working on a different project, but I need to look at several specific collections in order to finish my book. These collections include: Rockefeller archives (New York), Library of Congress and National Archives (Washington DC), and League of Nations/International Red Cross archives (Geneva). I’ve written for external funding for several of these trips, but I have not yet found funding for the Washington DC archival work. The FRFB research grant would allow me to conduct that research in summer or fall 2011.

Project Description

Background on the project:

Between 1914 and the 1950s, U.S. food nourished many European civilians during war and its aftermath. Upon the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, millions of Americans in a neutral nation mobilized to relieve the suffering of civilians in Europe through substantial contributions of money, food, and clothing, thus beginning a long relationship between Americans and Europeans. Non-profit organizations fed much of the population of Belgium and Northern France in 1914 using tens of thousands of volunteers and hundreds of millions of dollars under the Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB), until the U.S. entry into the war in 1917. Food, a vital weapon in the Allied blockade strategy of starving the enemy during the conflict, became the hope for peace, social stability, and U.S. goodwill in 1919, as former foes became the objects of food relief efforts. European men, women and children found themselves part of a series of major humanitarian
projects under the auspices of the American Relief Administration (ARA), which provided famine relief in Germany, Austria, Poland, and Russia in the years after the war. The food aid program lasted into the 1920s and re-emerged in the Second World War era as Americans again shipped food to Europe in the wake of the Second World War. Both through government-funded programs and private initiatives, Americans shared their bounty. These food aid efforts targeted war victims, even former enemies, with the twin goals of using American surplus goods and staving off social revolution in societies devastated by war. While never fully articulated in charitable publications and propaganda, the message for Americans participating in food aid programs was clear—U.S. food would make the world safer and would cement a relationship between American benefactors and the grateful recipients of aid.

American leaders called for assistance for war victims with the understanding and expectation that Europeans would not only understand and welcome the aid, but would also show appropriate gratitude. Europeans did indeed thank their American benefactors with letters, pieces of art, homemade crafts, and personal visits, all of which helped establish sustained encounters between those giving aid and those receiving it. Many Americans who had provided the resources and labor for the projects received hand-produced tangible expressions of thanks from individuals within Europe, which helped validate U.S. governmental claims in both wars that it was intervening in world affairs to safeguard freedom and democracy. Many of the Europeans were often genuinely grateful for the assistance, but few imagined the price this gratitude might have in the long-term expectations of U.S. policymakers and the American general public.

My planned book analyzes how these relationships shaped both European and American perceptions of their relationship with each other. I argue that in the wake of American generosity after these two global upheavals, European gratitude for U.S. aid helped forge an expectation of continued indebtedness and approbation among many Americans that has shaped foreign policy and popular understandings of the U.S. position in the world to the present day. My project seeks to fill a gap in the historical scholarship while also tying historical developments to the creation of U.S. foreign policy, European impressions of Americans in the 1950s, and American understandings of their own place in the world in the last half of the twentieth century. While conceived of as discrete efforts during wartime, many of these humanitarian food relief agencies transformed by the 1950s into permanent aid organizations, with strong ties to U.S. personnel and funds, including USAID, CARE, and UNICEF, all of which have had global impact in the last half-century.

**Objectives of project and description of final product:**
During my 2011-2012 sabbatical, I plan to compile the evidence collected from archives over the past few years and to complete a first draft of a book manuscript entitled “U.S. Food Aid and the Expectation of Gratitude, 1914-1950.” Most of my archival research is complete, but the missing pieces are in the League of Nations, International Red Cross, and United Nations archives in Geneva, Switzerland, as well as in several US archives, including the Library of Congress and National Archives collections in Washington DC. A Faculty Research grant would allow me to travel to Washington DC in summer (or fall) 2011 to consult those archival materials, which contain official records, first-hand accounts, and expressions of gratitude from Europeans after both world wars. My preliminary research should be completed by Fall 2011, at which time I will concentrate on drafting the manuscript. Polishing of the work and submission of the book prospectus to publishers will take place in 2012, and I hope to have a completed monograph by summer 2013. Please see the chapter outline in Appendix I.

This research is significant in a number of ways, most importantly as a context for the discussions taking place regarding American foreign policy goals and status as a world power. As the current U.S. president accepts a Nobel Peace Prize and while American armies continue to occupy
Iraq and Afghanistan, the historical picture of American generosity provides a frame for the ongoing public understanding of the United States as a benefactor and protector to the world. With frequent cries from ordinary Americans in the past ten years centering on the question “Why aren’t ‘they’ grateful?” for American help, the narrative I am constructing helps explain the origins and surprising strengths of such views. American food aid in the two world wars forged an image for many both inside and outside the United States of an emerging superpower with a conscience that was willing to feed its enemies. My project seeks to elucidate the broader outlines of this image in order to inform both scholarly and public debate, while also examining the pragmatic political and economic reasons for US food aid in wartime.

**Methodology:**
Methodologically, this project is designed around three interlocking developments in the construction of U.S. aid efforts and their consequences:

1) **Advertising and Recruitment.** The first stage in all of these programs was the identification of a perceived humanitarian crisis in Europe, followed by advertising of the problem to a target population in the United States. Recruitment of people to provide goods, money and time required a concerted propaganda campaign and resources for disseminating the call for volunteers. Women were particularly drawn into this aspect of the relief work, and their efforts made the organizations successful. Personal letters, news clippings, speech transcripts, and propaganda materials provide the background for this part of the project. Most of these primary sources are available in American archives that I visited in the past three years, such as the Hoover Institution, the Hoover Presidential Library, and the Truman Presidential Library. My collection of archival materials will be complete by the end of 2010.

2) **Aid and Logistics.** Organizing and distributing the aid was a massive project in each of the historical periods (1914-1920s, 1920s-30s, 1941-1950s), so a major research focus for the project is the people and networks that made it happen. Food relief involved volunteer personnel both within and outside of Europe, but U.S. government agencies also increasingly co-opted relief work, claiming pseudo-governmental organizations as their own. American presidents such as Woodrow Wilson and Harry Truman trumpeted U.S. benevolence and saw food aid as a way to bring peace on American terms to Europe, often giving little credit to the thousands of local European volunteers that facilitated the programs’ success. Again, my visits to archives in the United States have provided the basis for much of this research, but I plan one more visit to the National Archives and Records Administration. In 2010-11, I also plan to consult the UN archives and Rockefeller archives in New York as well as the League of Nations, United Nations, and International Red Cross records in Geneva.

3) **Expressions of Gratitude and their impact.** After each of these humanitarian events, the people receiving the aid were encouraged to thank Americans for their generosity and did so with creativity and emotion. From the letters of schoolchildren to embroidered flour sacks to commissioned artwork to the naming of European streets and buildings, recipients of aid made it clear that they wanted to thank the U.S. for its help. In some cases, a more sustained correspondence arose between the victims and their benefactors. In gauging the impact of gratitude on U.S. consciousness, I will look at examples of these tangible expressions of thanks from Germany, Belgium, Poland, and France, from both world wars. In order to understand the media narrative of humanitarian aid both within Europe and in the United States, newspapers, popular magazines, and oral history transcripts will help elucidate the creation of expectations regarding gratitude toward the United States. Much of the material culture of gratitude from the two wars was collected in U.S. museums and libraries, so I have gathered dozens of examples of these expressions of thanks.

The most difficult part of the project is making connections between these concrete relief programs and popular opinion in Europe and the United States. Here, I will rely on memoirs,
published newspaper and magazine accounts, and data from public opinion polls. In addition, the book will include a look at political and diplomatic memoirs that speak to how government officials understood the U.S.-European relationship over this time period and how humanitarian food aid was perceived on both sides of the Atlantic. Other historians have made similar connections for particular nations; a notable example is David Engerman’s analysis of the post-World War I US famine aid in Russia in *Modernization from the Other Shore* (2003). However, despite its important role in world history, U.S. food relief efforts are understudied within the United States, and indeed, in the broader scholarly community. Although several graduate students are presently working in the field, there are as yet no book-length historical studies of the CRB, the ARA, or other food programs from 1914-1920s, and few larger works on World War I mention these ground-breaking humanitarian efforts beyond official histories written by participants. Herbert Hoover himself wrote about the CRB and his biographers have touched on its role in his life, but military specialists and diplomatic historians alike have not fully utilized the rich records available to analyze this organization.

The Second World War humanitarian projects have received some attention, but Cold War ideology has permeated many of these studies, focusing most attention on the issue of containment rather than the humanitarian aid programs themselves. Scholars have spent countless pages debating the logistics of the Berlin Airlift, but little work has focused on its work on the ground and the relationships formed between Americans and the European recipients of aid. Additionally, this has meant a focus on the Soviet Union to the exclusion of many other European nations. Likewise, major organizations such as CRALOG (a cooperative of private organizations) or CARE (Cooperative for American Remittances in Europe) get virtually no mention in studies of the period. Finally, the connections between personnel involved in both World War I and World War II is also a fruitful field for more research, since many American aid and relief workers developed their ideas in the First World War and used these ideas to shape their action in the 1940s and 1950s. More has been written about the presumption of gratitude for U.S. military interventions (for example, Louis Perez’s work on Cuba in 1898), but this scholarship does not encompass the real overlaps between the perceived “masculine” face of the U.S. military and the “feminine” humanitarian aid provisions. Thus, a gendered analysis of the aid itself and its consequences will be central to the finished book.

Theoretically, the project relies on gender theory and cultural studies literature for its underpinning. However, while primarily a social and cultural history of food aid and its consequences on the lives of ordinary people in Europe and the United States, practically the questions the book raise necessitate an understanding of political, diplomatic, and psychological dimensions to the provision of food. A better description of the project might be that of an international studies or peace studies perspective, which crosses national and disciplinary lines to address broad questions facing the world today and in the past. Sources include cultural materials such as ephemera, posters, artwork, and textiles as well as more standard written documents and oral histories. One other consideration that is important to state is that the project crosses chronological lines in an unusual way. By not only combining the two world wars but also by moving the project into the early years of the Cold War, this work challenges the divide that 1945 or 1919 often creates in historical scholarship and instead seeks to read history across these so-called watershed years.

**Detailed Budget:**

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<td>Mileage from Springfield to Washington DC/College Park, MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lodging (27 nights @ $100/night)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food (major city rate x 28 days @ $45/day)</td>
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TOTAL (estimated cost) $4510.00
TOTAL requested in FRFB funds $3000.00

Proposed plan of work (with tentative schedule):
Summer/Early Fall 2011 (depending on other grants): Washington DC Research
2011-2012: Work on manuscript draft
Summer 2013: Submit manuscript to publishers

Thanks for your consideration of my proposal.

APPENDIX I – Short Chapter Summary

Introduction. “Why aren’t they grateful?” A short introduction will lay out some of the important questions the project raises with an emphasis on both the historical dimensions and the current debates regarding U.S. power, food aid in present context, and Europe’s recent relationship with the United States.

Chapter 1. The Birth of Aid. Examination of the history of modern humanitarian agencies and food aid in global context, paying particular attention to the origins and consequences within European and American societies. This chapter will use authors from the period to look at conceptions of the role of civilians in war, the necessity of relief in wartime, and the role of powerful nations in such aid efforts.

Chapter 2. Food Will Win the War, 1914-1918. Analysis of food relief in Belgium and Northern France during the First World War, with emphasis on private schemes under the auspices of Herbert Hoover’s Commission for Relief in Belgium and the Rockefeller Foundation charities. Also examined are the failed relief efforts in regions like Poland, demonstrating the limits of American power to aid war victims.

Chapter 3. Countering Bolshevism, 1918-1920s. Overview of the creation of the American Relief Administration and of American Red Cross humanitarian aid programs in the post-World War I world. The ARA mounted a major “child-feeding” operation throughout Germany, Poland, Austria, and Hungary, but it also combated famine conditions in Russia, Ukraine, and other soon-to-be regions of the USSR.

Chapter 4. Consolidating the Role of Benefactor, 1920s-1930s. This section will include examples of interwar programs that expanded earlier notions of humanitarian relief and shaped international conversations in the League of Nations and other organizations, especially in the Spanish Civil War.

Chapter 5. We CARE: United States Surplus and European Famine Relief, 1941-1950. Discussion of the development of U.S. food relief schemes in countries devastated by war, with a focus on American post-war aims in Europe. Aid expanded exponentially in this period, with diverse organizations funded by the U.S. Government, private agencies, and the United Nations.

Chapter 6. The Meaning of “Thanks.” This chapter examines the reciprocal relationship of giving and receiving, the meaning of generosity, and the expectations for gratitude that such charity implies. Focusing specifically on the U.S. as benefactor, this chapter will explore the creation of foreign policy as well as popular opinion on the subject of U.S. food aid in the first half of the twentieth century.

Conclusion. Aid Today. The conclusion will explore the broader implications of the historical developments of food aid policy, paying particular attention to the expanded role of permanent programs such as USAID in the world today. It will also look at how the US-European relationship has changed in the period since the end of World War II, but more importantly, how the end of the Cold War brought a new public rhetoric between the two regions.