

Insights:

Notes from the CCWH

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Challenging the Boundaries of History: Women's History and Beyond

Sasha Turner, Co-President, CCWH

In April of this year, the CCWH issued a statement condemning the all white male conference held at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. In our statement, we challenged readers to look beyond the conference convener Niall Ferguson's excuse that the all white male conference was merely coincidental, the accidental result of packed schedules. Viewing the conference through Ferguson's critique of the changes in the discipline of history in the last several decades suggests a deliberate omission. According to Ferguson, history is in decline because the content has changed from concentrations in such tra-

ditional subfields as diplomatic and international history; legal and constitutional history; and social and economic history. Increased concentrations in histories of women, gender, race, and ethnicity as well as environmental history and cultural history are so parochial, Ferguson claims, they interest a mere handful of students. Such provincial approaches to history combined with their overtly political platform, Ferguson continued, account for undergraduates' growing disinterest in history.

I do not intend to rehash points already made in our statement: readers may view the entire statement via History News

Network, Black Perspectives, and on page 11 of this Newsletter. I point to the statement here to discuss historical conservatism as part of a longer history of backlash by traditional historians against so-called new and revisionist histories. Ferguson's defense and the Stanford Conference are also not isolated events; they reflect a much broader pattern within the discipline where minority scholars and scholarship on women, race, and gender are marginalized. I am concerned about present-day dismissals of women and gender histories, including at the 2018 American Historical Association Meeting in Wash-

ington, D.C. where the basis of a senior white male professor's scathing criticism of a graduate student's paper was that he "does not believe in gender." On the other end of the spectrum, belief in Black inferiority has been accepted as legitimate scholarship. The *American Historical Review's* 2017 decision to assign Ansley T. Erickson's book on racial inequality in American public schools to Professor Raymond Wolters, whose work and review of said book reflects his belief in white supremacy, illustrate how academic institutions have given platform to racist ideas and discriminatory practices. Wolters's critique of Ansley's failure to engage debunked pseudo-scientific theories that link intelligence to race – sociobiology – shows the ongoing purveying of racist ideas by the academy: many academics contributed to race science in their erroneous attempts to prove Black inferiority. Deirdre Cooper Owen's recent book, *Medical Bondage: Race, Medicine, and American Gynecology*, for instance, illustrates how the founding of modern gynecology depended on racialized medical ideas about Black women's bodies. The Medical College of Georgia, along with the works of such physicians as Drs. Paul Eve, Charles Meigs, and James Marion Sims diagnosed and treated patients according to their belief that Black bodies were inferior to whites. The glaring contradiction, however, was that these said doctors experimented on Black women be-

cause they deemed Blacks to be stronger than whites and were therefore less immune to the painful experiments to which they subjected Black women.

The work of Ulrich Bonnell Phillips is especially important to recall historians' role in producing racist scholarship and its long-term dangers. From textbooks and movies, to politicians, celebrities, and ordinary folks, Phillips's 1918 outrageous claims of the beneficial effects of slavery on Blacks, an "inert and backward people," haunts us today. Kanye West's uninformed remarks that slavery was a choice and a North Carolina middle school assignment that instructed students to explain why "Africans made good slaves" are examples of persistence of Phillips's docile slave thesis.

It is, therefore, not simply enough to issue apologies and statements of regrets on these occasions, which are endemic rather than unique to our discipline. Academics must be critical of our own culpability as purveyors of racism, sexism, and other prejudices and hold accountable those seeking to justify the status quo rather than analyze it. As academics writing such subjects as women and race, considered too parochial or political by traditionalists, we must persist anyway. It is not only the personal that is political, our histories that grow out of our realities are political too. It is only through the democratization of history that we challenge prejudicial histories and uproot the flawed assumption that the only history that



Sasha Turner

matters are political, diplomatic, legal, and constitutional.

I often turn to the publication story of Deborah Gray White's now path breaking book *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South* for inspiration and courage to research and write Caribbean women's history. *Ar'n't I a Woman* barely saw the light of day because publishers feared there was no "audience for books that connected black women's thoughts and experiences to the history of other Americans." Within the academy, historians doubted the contributions of Black women, and few deemed a study of Black women a worthwhile subject. Suspicious of the trustworthiness of Black women's records, reviewers questioned the veracity of manuscripts on Black women. Reviewers doubt Black historians writing on such topics as slavery and civil rights and questioned their objectivity.

Framed as lacking in objectivity, biased reviewers derail histories that fall beyond tradi-

tional boundaries, crippling them before they have had an opportunity to establish themselves as history. Yet, we must be attentive to when objectivity is used as a marginalizing tool and masquerades as critical analysis. We must also challenge the assumptions that objectivity is neutrality and historians are mere conduits, transmitting the absolute truth about the past, and that objectivity requires historians' detachment from their subjects. White men historians who wrote (and continue to write) great white men history could claim no such disinterest. We must focus attention on the historian's subjectivity and the contributions of histories grown out of the subjective realities of the historian. What fresh insights do such subjectivities yield?

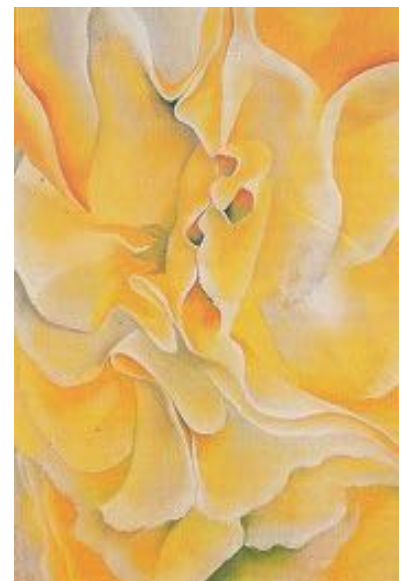
At the end of *Ar'nt' I a Woman*, Gray White explained, "History is supposed to give people a sense of identity, a feeling for who they were, who they are, and how far they have come. It should act as a springboard for the future." Gray White's search for identity and historical purpose placed Black women as historical subjects, and reconfigured the field of history. Any attempted to understand any aspect of American life, from politics, to culture, economy, and history, is incomplete without critical attention to Black women and their enslavement.

As women historians, and historians of women, we persist in talking back and challenge limiting visions of what consti-

tute worthwhile historical subjects. The mushrooming of trans history is another important example of historians writing back. I read with excitement and inspiration the May 2018 publication of *Perspectives in History*, with the cover title, "What is Trans History?" Outlining the stories of trans historians whose research into trans history commenced, in part, because, in the words of the author of *Trans-gender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman*, Leslie Feinberg "I couldn't find myself in history. No one like me seemed to have existed," the piece offered a brief and important synthesis on what trans means for the study of history. Trans history comes full circle to Simone de Beauvoir's assertion that one is not born a woman, but becomes a woman. Categories like race and gender are not "fixed," but fluid "subject to change and altered by changing conditions." In his recent book, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*, C. Riley Snorton cautions, however, that trans is not simply a category of gender to be discovered; trans, as in transversal, is an approach to history that disrupts traditional emphasis on linearity in history. Narratives of native genocide, the Middle Passage, and slavery, cannot be written as if they "belong in the past": the "collateral damage produced" in the words of Saidiya Hartman, lives in the "afterlives of slavery."

Women's history has come full circle, but in another direction. When a group of his-

torians organized the Coordinating Committee of Women Historians in the Profession in 1969, and later joined with the Conference Group of Women's History to become the Coordinating Council for Women in History, it did so out of frustration with the exclusionary practices of white male historians. The combined organization insisted that women as historians and women as historical subjects mattered. Although our organization and sub-field continue to fight battles for inclusion, as the Stanford conference makes clear, we can mostly agree that women's history is an established field in its own right. Yet, as we witness the struggles of allied subfields, like trans history, we must now be conscious that our own established status does not become a stumbling block. The tensions among women, gender, and trans history must be productive ones that valorizes different ways of "knowing and being."



Notes from the Executive Director

Sandra Trudgen Dawson
Executive Director, CCWH

Dear CCWH Members,

As I was thinking about Kanye West's recent statement that "slavery was a choice," I remember an incident that reminded me that slavery was a choice – not for the enslaved, but for the enslavers.

Almost exactly two years ago, my family moved to Maryland. One of our first outings as a family was to Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington. We went because my daughter, Anna, had learned about George Washington in kindergarten, first grade, second grade, and third grade. Anna loved to talk about George Washington's false teeth and the way he "only powdered" his hair instead of wearing a wig like the English. He was the first President and he was Anna's hero.

Once at Mount Vernon, we moved through the museum (saw the false teeth) and then went to tour the house. There were several re-enactors, including a woman of color dressed as a "house-slave." As we talked to the re-enactor, Anna became more and more agitated. "George Washington had slaves?" "Why?" she shouted. "He didn't have to! He was President of the United States of America!!! He didn't have to keep slaves!"

Suddenly, I knew that George

Washington had lost stature in the eyes of my nine-year-old African-American daughter. I also realized that for some reason, her teachers had "forgotten" to tell Anna that Washington was a slave owner. As a child who had only known Barack Obama as her president, the fact that President Washington "chose" to keep slaves was truly shocking.

Anna's reaction that day reminded me that writing history is about uncovering the good, the bad, and the ugly. Many of our s/heroes are flawed and as historians, we have a responsibility to tell those stories as well. Anna's reaction that day also reminded me that some of the best conversations we have had as a family are about the things teachers "forgot" to mention.

As an organization, the CCWH is committed to inclusivity – not just inserting the things that others forget to include, but actively searching for voices that have been silenced, for those whose lives have been not remembered, whose contributions to our histories have been overlooked, disparaged, discarded.

We are #inclusive history.

Sincerely yours,

Sandra



Sandra Trudgen Dawson

CCWH Mentorship 2.0 New Program

Ilaria Scaglia, CCWH's Membership Coordinator reports that the Mentorship Program has undergone an impressive process of expansion and transformation.

If you are a graduate student, or if you have a Ph.D. and are seeking guidance about issues such as applying for your first tenure-track job or are seeking guidance about junior/mid-career issues let us find a mentor for you.

Women at advanced stages of their career (e.g., full professors, independent scholars, and/or people in administrative positions) may also ask for a peer mentor.

We are also seeking additional mentors interested in joining this unique program and providing guidance and inspiration.

Please do not hesitate to email Ilaria Scaglia if you have questions or wish to participate in the program. Emails may be sent to membership@theccw.org.

Membership Programs & Opportunities

Ilaria Scaglia
Membership Coordinator

E-Mentorship Update

During the past academic year, the Mentorship Committee has conducted a series of e-mentorship sessions on the challenges and opportunities of various aspects of our profession. Various speakers have tackled a broad range of topics, from job applications to motherhood, from the tenure process to adjunct work. Through the electronic platform Zoom, participants met at set times and had the opportunity to ask questions.

The e-mentorship sessions from the past year included:

How to Tailor a Job Application – Choosing the appropriate ads, researching the institution in advance, and inserting in the cover letter the “right” passages to help you make the “first cut.” Panelists included: Dorothy Chansky, Director of Humanities Center, Texas Tech; Natanya Duncan, Assistant Professor of History & of Africana Studies, Lehigh University; Emily Tai, Associate Professor of History, Queensborough Community College, CUNY; Chair and Moderator: Ilaria Scaglia, Assistant Professor, Columbus State University.

Skype and Phone Interviews – Preparing for them, setting up the right backdrop, and devising concise, but effective answers. Panelist included: Nicole Pacino, Assistant Professor of History, University of Alabama, Huntsville.

AHA Interviews – Understanding what and how they are, preparing for them, and handling them most effectively. Panelist included: Cassia Roth, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of History, Classics, and Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh.

On Campus Interviews – Preparing for them, dos and don’ts during the various phases of your visit (job talk, teaching demo, meeting with chairs and deans, social occasions with potential students and colleagues, down time). Panelist included: Dorothy Chansky, Director of the Humanities Center, Texas Tech University.

Negotiating a Job Contract – What can and cannot be negotiated; suggested wording and timing to obtain the best possible contract. Panelist included: Lynn Wyner, Professor at Roosevelt University in Chicago (with experiences as Chair and as Dean of Arts & Sciences).

The “Two-Bodies” Problem – Ideas on how to accommodate a trailing partner, and/or how to thrive as one. Negotiating double-appointments and job-split-



Ilaria Scaglia

ting options; maximizing opportunities for academic and non-academic partners. Panelist included: Eileen Boris, Hull Endowed Chair, Feminist Studies, UC Santa Barbara.

Thriving as a VAP/Postdoc – Making the most out of these experiences, and heightening the chance to find a permanent job the following year. Panelist included: Einav Rabinovitch-Fox, Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of History, Case Western Reserve University.

Thriving as an LGBT+ person in History – Current situation and suggestions on how further increase LGBT+ representation in the profession. Panelist included: Pamela Stewart, Senior Lecturer, History, College of Integrative Sciences and Arts, Arizona State University.

Race, Gender, and the Challenges of History – Current situation and suggestions on how to further increase diversity in the profession. Speaker: Mary Ann Villarreal, Associate Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, California State, Fullerton.

Membership Programs & Opportunities (cont.)

Thriving as an Assistant Professor – Learning how to grow into the profession while avoiding burnouts; the world of annual reviews and tenure. Panelist included: Nicole Pacino, Assistant Professor of History, University of Alabama, Huntsville.

Thriving as an Adjunct – Challenges and opportunities of various types of adjunct work. Panelist included: Sandra Dawson, Executive Director of the CCWH.

Balancing Life and Work – Striving for balance and serenity in the long run. Tips for scheduling, planning, and timing various aspects of life. Panelist included: Dorothy Chansky, Director of the Humanities Center, Texas Tech University.

Balancing Motherhood and Academia – Tips, resources, and opportunities for mothers in History. Panelist included: Suzanne Litrel, Georgia State University, Department of History, Ph.D. Candidate and Instructor – World History.

Notes from individual sessions are available to members by email. Please send requests to: mentorship@theccwh.org.

The program has been a great success. Attendance and note requests have been good, and the substance of each session has proven very helpful – and at times even inspiring – to all. The importance of such a forum cannot be overstated: knowledge is power, and having a living-room at our disposal to exchange it can be a vital resource for all of us.

In the upcoming year, the Committee is planning to hold sessions on “advanced” topics such as How to Contact a Book Publisher; The European Job Market; I am an Associate, Now What?; and “What I Should Expect When Becoming a Chair” to ensure support for women at all stages of their career. Meanwhile, the Committee is always looking for suggestions for future sessions on any and all topics. Please send them along by email to: mentorship@theccwh.org.



Little Berks: Great Opportunity for Historians on the Tenure Track

Are you assembling a promotion file? Would you like feedback on your description of your teaching, research, and service? Could an extra pair of eyes help you to strike the right balance between self-promotion and modesty, academic rigor and accessibility? Aside from asking your colleagues and friends for suggestions, we encourage you to turn to outsiders.

Who are those “outsiders”? The retired women historians who have gathered under the capacious umbrella of the Little Berks. Our initial impetus for setting up this network was to support women historians facing hostility from institutional and/or non-academic sources. But since even minor skirmishes can present challenges in writing an upbeat narrative, we expanded our aim to include guidance in statement writing. If you’re interested, please contact Claudia Koonz (ckoonz@duke.edu), who will then contact appropriate individuals among the four dozen or so retired women historians who have expressed an interest in supporting junior colleagues (but may not have time to take on mentorship).

Public History Forum

Elyssa Ford

Public History Coordinator

National Council on Public
History 2018 Conference
Round-Up

Many public historians are recently returned and reinvigorated after the annual NCPH conference, held April 18-21 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Las Vegas – with its varied, complicated, and contested past – made for an exciting and timely conference setting. The theme “Power Lines” also proved timely with our current political climate and environmental concerns, but the organization pushed the idea of power lines even further to examine how power and lines – both those that divide and connect – exist and are created within communities and between the past and present.

To address these different issues, conference sessions were centered around the following sets of questions:

- How do boundary lines divide us and create inequities? Can public history help envision a civic whole?
- How does delineating boundaries enhance a sense of identity? What is public history’s role in building community?
- What “lines” can we deliver that will cut through and get heard, and what transmis-

sion lines work best in a fractured media landscape? How can public historians be effective advocates, facilitators, and spokespeople for the power of the past?

As an organization that brings together students, academics, and professionals from the field, the NCPH has pushed recently to move away from the traditional reading of papers and offers presenters a variety of session formats. While more formal panels and roundtables still exist, other formats like structured conversations are audience-drive discussions and point-counterpoint are debates that present opposing views in a moderated debate. Several of the presentation options that have been the most popular and effective are the workshops and skill labs, pop-ups, working groups, and community viewpoints. The full diversity of sessions can be seen at <http://ncph.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2018-Annual-Meeting-Program.pdf>.

The community viewpoint sessions are one of the most important because they feature the participants from the communities that the project served, rather than the more traditional panels that give voice only to the academics and institutions that designed the projects. These sessions are closely tied to the “Power Lines” theme as they try to break down the lines of power that often separate universities and cultural institutions from the communities and people they serve. Community leaders, activists, residents, and non-profit partners



Elyssa Ford

rarely have the money to travel to conferences in far-flung locations, so the NCPH offers grants to help some of these participants attend.

Yet, while the community viewpoint sessions and these voices are seen as some of the most important, they often are the least represented. Cost is just one part of this. Another is relevance. Our desire as public historians is to open our practice and work in a more democratic way (sharing the authority, according to oral historian Michael Frisch – or letting go, according to Laura Koloski and Bill Adair), but when we talk about this work at conferences populated primarily by university academics and professionals from cultural institutions, is the push to encourage community voices primarily to help us learn from the experiences or does that inclusion also benefit the partners and participants? As more academic organizations increase their work with activists and underrepresented community partners, these are questions that we must all ask ourselves.

Despite this struggle, the NCPH

Public History Forum (cont.)

has seen great success in being a welcoming conference for new attendees and graduate students. The conference recently began to offer “dine arounds” for people to meet for dinner and discuss pre-announced topics (atomic history, the National Register, teaching online, and activism were some of the 2018 options), “out to lunch” possibilities for professionals and students, a meet-up and mentorship program for first time attendees, and a social for new professionals and graduate students. These opportunities help ease the conference experience for those new to the organization and encourage networking. They also enhance the conference experience and provide value beyond the sessions. Through these efforts, the NCPH has become one of the friendliest and most impactful conferences that I attend, and I encourage anyone in the CCWH to go to the NCPH when it is in your region.

The 2019 NCPH conference is scheduled for March 27-30 in Hartford, Connecticut. The theme “Repair Work” asks for proposals that highlight the ways public historians engage in repair work – restoring objects and building, reconstructing historical evidence to offer new understandings of the past, rebuilding and revitalizing our communities, and partici-

pating in reparation efforts. Questions of how repair work relates to time, collaboration, and equity are welcomed. Proposals are due by July 15th, and more information can be found at <http://ncph.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/NCPH-2019-Call-for-Proposals.pdf>.

Even if you do not plan to participate on the program, the 2019 conference is sure to offer an array of public engagement opportunities in the Hartford area, an exciting slate of sessions, a place for conscientious and open dialogue, and a friendly group of people eager to welcome you into the public history community.



MEMBER NEWS

We invite CCWH members to keep us updated about their professional activities. New book, award or prize, promotion, new position – whatever it might be, share it with your CCWH colleagues.

Send your news to the Newsletter Editor at newsletter@theccwh.org.

Interested in Becoming a CCWH Conference Liaison?

We have a goal to ensure that the CCWH has somebody representing us at as many conferences as possible, large and small, and that women in history receive all the support they deserve. Consider becoming a CCWH conference liaison for any conference you attend regularly!

You can find details as well as a list of current liaisons here: <https://theccwh.org/ccwh-resources/conference-liaisons/>.

For further information, contact Dr. Cassia Roth at conferences@theccwh.org.

Graduate News

Jasmin Young
Graduate Representative

For at least a year, #TrustBlackWomen has been trending in particular circles on Twitter. The ethos undergirding the hashtag certainly speaks to a feminism Black women have articulated for generations. The most recent use of the popular hashtag appeared when Doug Jones defeated Roy Moore in the Alabama race for Senate in December 2017. According to exit polls the victory was in part due to the overwhelming turnout of Black women voters. Then the hashtag gained momentum in recent conversations about women's health, specifically as NPR and *Propublica* reported on the dismal maternal death rates of Black women. The point the phrase makes clear is that Black women have knowledge worth trusting, listening to, and taking serious. In the spirit of that idea, I took the opportunity to survey a few Black women historians to see what their experiences were like on the job market. Each woman was an applicant on the 2018 job market, some had applied for jobs two, three, and four times. I wanted to know what their experiences were like locating positions, campus interviews, and their overall relationship to the academic field. In this issue, the Graduate Column focuses on Black women historians and the job market. The following responses are filled with insightful

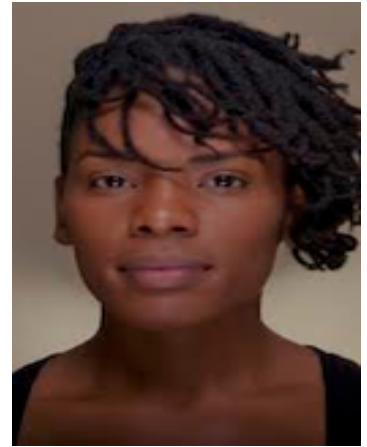
tips, feedback, and caveats for the next wave of applicants.

Preparing Professionally for the Job Market

The majority of the responses I received on preparing professionally for the job market involved getting feedback on job market material. One respondent clarified that first she made sure she had a strong C.V. After that, she found Karen Kelskey's *The Professor is In* useful for explaining what should be in job market materials. Be sure to ask your dissertation advisor and other mentors to review your application documents including your C.V., personal statements, teaching philosophy, research abstracts, and sample syllabi. Having candid conversations with faculty who served on search committees was also a tip one historian gave. Another respondent took advantage of practice job talk opportunities by flying back to her university to prepare with faculty in her department after she had moved out of the city. If this isn't an option, I would suggest creating your own mock job talk at a university or college in your area.

Preparing Mentally, Emotionally, and Physically for the Job Market

From the responses I received, it seems that the preparation that one must have to be on the job market changes. For instance, one scholar who had been on the market twice



Jasmin Young

said: "I prepared mentally and emotionally for the job market by trying to stay positive and not get in my head too much. I think I was more successful at this the second time around than the first. The first year on the market I had a lot of anxiety, which was exacerbated by checking the Academic Jobs Wiki too frequently. The second year, I decided to not check the Wiki and it made such a difference. I realized that for me there was really no benefit to checking it." While a first timer said, "I definitely was not mentally or emotionally prepared for the market. For example, I knew that it would be a time-consuming process, but it was way more time consuming than I anticipated...I was not prepared for the emotional ups and downs of being on the job market: all of the no's (or lack of responses) can be really discouraging and bring up feelings of imposter syndrome. Not that I am not used to getting more no's than yes's, but there's so much more at stake." I personally employed

Graduate News (cont.)

a mantra: “What is for me shall be for me” keeping this fact in mind helped me to manage my worrying and self-doubt. I found comfort in this idea, especially as I consider how many things were out of my control, but that everything would be okay. I found that women who practiced some form of self-care had a better overall experience while navigating the application process, interviews, and rejections. Hopefully, the CCWH Newsletter will feature an entire column on self-care in academia.

Setting Boundaries

Often times, eager wide-eyed graduate students are told that tenure-track jobs are fleeting and that they should apply far and wide. They are encouraged to cast a wide net and “go where the job is.” This advice, however, did not work for most respondents. One historian said she was told by another Black woman in the profession that “it’s ok to be selective.” At least two other respondents conveyed a similar message. Another wrote, “After pursuing my undergraduate degree in Hanover, New Hampshire, I promised myself that I would never repeat the mistake of attending school in a virtual “no-black-woman’s-land” ever again. Period. Nevertheless, I

found it difficult to dismiss the resources that Princeton offers, so in spite of myself, I figured that, at the very least, I could spend a few years in a small, nearly lily-white town once more...But, after suffering through a fairly abysmal social life in Central New Jersey, I promised myself that I would not abuse myself yet another time seeking tenure track fame (lol). So, my parameters for the job market essentially boiled down to “race and place.” In other words, I needed to know that there would be some more black folks – not just people of color, but black folks – in my immediate proximity. I needed to know that I’d have increased options for social activity versus borrowing outdated DVDs from the local library. As for the other elements, such as student body, department reputations, I figured beggars couldn’t be choosers. In all honesty, I think I could put up with most any challenge – publishing expectations, teaching load, etc. – if my new surroundings offered a glimmer of hope for my social life. I think the same is true for so many of us.” Indeed, the same was true for many of the women I spoke with. They understood that being in a nearly all-white space had major consequences not only for their social life, but for their health and well-being. This was certainly the lesson we gleaned from Deborah Gray White’s book, *Telling Histories*, a collection of meditations on the field of history written by Black women. Pioneering Black women

had gone where “the job” led them and found themselves isolated, abused, or in danger. It seems the next generation of Black women historians stands on the shoulders of these women and have vowed to make the necessary changes.

But it’s not just about location, the institution also matters as one respondent clarified: “The first time I went on the market I applied for jobs based solely on location...I think my experience the first time around helped me to realize that institution type was actually more important to me than the location. So, my second time on the job market, I had much narrower criteria for the type of institution, and I was more flexible about location. The second time around, I applied for jobs in the Northeast, the Midwest, the South, and Canada. I am glad I expanded my geographic parameters, because I ended up accepting a job in Canada, which had not previously been on my radar.”

Whatever parameters you set for your search, you have to be most comfortable with them. More importantly, it’s completely “ok” to set parameters and boundaries. What I’ve gathered from talking with Black women in academia is that many of us can’t afford to simply “go where the job is,” we have to take into account family concerns (aging parents, jobs for our spouses, and the racial-demographics of primary schools in the area), social life for ourselves and our loved ones (including the ability to

Graduate News (cont.)

attend spiritual and social institutions, the dating scene, self-care options, the ability to purchase hair and skin products, or frequent establishments that cater to our specific needs), and the proximity to other Black folks, not just at the university, but also in the surrounding area. Moreover, there are some academic institutions that infamously undervalue Black women professors and their work – getting tenure is nearly impossible, isolation within the departments and amongst colleagues is common knowledge – and many of us have been warned to stay away from these pitfalls.

Experiences of Racism & Sexism on the Job Market

When I asked women about their experiences (if any) of racism and /or sexism while applying for positions, I found many women had no overt racist or sexist experiences this year. A triple Ivy League graduate stated, “However, I would like to state that I was quite amazed how –based on my experiences having earned degrees at three top-ranking schools and years of teaching experience – few opportunities I encountered...Of course, I understood going into my Ph.D. program that the opportunities would narrow as I proceeded,

but I didn’t imagine that I would be forced to choose between migrant teaching (visiting professorships) for 25% less than what I made at my last job as a high school teacher or relocating to places where I might have counted as 1 of 2 black people. So, while I might not have been privy to any racism or sexism (who knows what influences decisions behind closed doors?), I’d say disparity and discrimination are built into the process and system by way of the limited choice ranges people like me have. Academia in many ways mirrors society at large: There are questionable structures in place that are the by-products of history and for which no amount of reputable degrees will compensate.” While overt acts of racism and sexism seem out of favor in most academic settings, especially as faculty are trying to recruit, there are still countless stories of Black women encountering would-be colleagues who offer backhanded compliments and out right microaggressions. The majority of these women were prepared early on in their careers for a racist or sexist assault- in many ways, it’s part of our academic training.

Other Things to Note

In my conversations with these women, they dropped small gems of wisdom worth sharing:

1. Start building up your professional wardrobe before you go on the job market. This was really important for me be-

cause I can’t always find clothes that fit properly, and it was good to space out the shopping. Also, if you need to have jackets or slacks altered, that takes time. I really recommend not waiting until you find out you have an interview to rush and try to find interview outfits. Going on interviews is stressful enough, and it was such a relief to not have to spend time thinking about what I was going to wear.

2. I did not begin preparing my job materials until the fall, which is something that I do not recommend. If I could go back in time, I would have been more disciplined about starting work on my drafts over the summer.

3. Be open to jobs outside of academia – “To mix metaphors, I just realize that there are indeed many ways to make lemonade.”

#TrustBlackWomen has taken a life of its own, but I suspect that in the case of the job market, we will see a lot more women historians taking a new and different approach to securing a career in the field (or opting to forego academia in general).



The CCWH Responds to Stanford's All White Male History Conference

Originally published on History News Network: <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/168632>.

By Barbara Molony and Sasha Turner, Co-Presidents of the CCWH, and Sandra Dawson, Executive Director of the CCWH

In December 1969, a group of historians organized the Coordinating Committee of Women Historians in the Profession, which, in 1995, joined forces with the Conference Group of Women's History to become the Coordinating Council for Women in History (CCWH). Both organizations arose from divergent, but overlapping goals to support women students and faculty and to secure greater inclusion of women in the research and teaching of history. At the time of these organizations' founding, the American Historical Association (AHA), and the history profession in general, were deemed "a gentlemen's protection society...openly supporting practices of sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, and anti-Semitism" (<http://muse.jhu.edu/article/363547>). With a woman historian and a scholar of women's history now at the helm of the AHA (Mary Beth Norton), and, more broadly, the addition of women historians and women and gender history to departments and curricula across the country, few would dispute that the AHA and the history profession have become more inclusive.

Yet, the recent all white male history conference held at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University (<https://www.mytimes.com/2018/03/17/us/stanford-conference-white-males.html>) seems to suggest a return to history's dark age as a gentlemen's protection society. Happily, the strong and growing presence of and disciplinary focus on women in history as well as the sharp criticism and condemnation (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2018/03/26/an-academic-conference-featured-only-white-men-how-should-the-university-respond/?utm_term=.ddb813313e29) (and rightly so) of the exclusive conference make clear that a return to great white men history and historians is a fantasy. Even so, the holding of this

conference and others of its kind reflect the ongoing challenges women historians and women in history face.

The CCWH strongly condemns the choice of holding an all-white, all-male conference at Stanford University, and expresses concern regarding its implications for the historical profession and for its treatment of women in history.

Conference organizer and Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Niall Ferguson, defended that the exclusion of women was not deliberate and that the women invited to participate in the panel had declined to do so (<https://www.chronicle.com/article/Multiple-Steves-and/242841>). Yet, it seems that the lack of diversity stemmed more from deliberate omission than packed schedules. One is hard-pressed not to view the conference Ferguson organized through the lens of his acceptance speech for the 2016 Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contribution to Liberal Arts Education (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WXNF6Vy07A>). While admitting that various social and economic reasons account for the decline in history in the last several decades, Ferguson argued that the changing content of history is the "best explanation."

Such content changes, Ferguson explained, are the decline in diplomatic and international history; legal and constitutional history; and intellectual, social, and economic history, on the one hand, and the growth in women and gender history; cultural history; history of race and ethnicity; and environmental history, on the other hand. Challenging the larger significance of courses that center on women, including one on women and mental illness offered at Stanford University in Fall 2016, Ferguson remarked that such subjects are certainly less important than investigations into how the United States became an independent republic, for example. The problem with "the new history that's displaced the old," Ferguson bemoaned, is that "some are so disconnected from contemporary concerns that it is little better than the antiquarianism scoffed at" by the discipline's forbearers. Others are so overly politicized, "so

The CCWH Responds to Stanford's All White Male History Conference (cont.)

skewed by contemporary concerns,” that they are ahistorical and anachronistic.

To be sure, one can hardly gain a critical understanding of women in history by perusing course description and titles. Undeniably, American independence is among the most significant events in the history of the United States. And yet, the question of the historical event of independence is less significant than questions about the nature of the revolution and how revolutionary it might have been. To engage meaningfully in key debates about the revolution, whether it was conservative or radical, is to engage women, race, and gender history and historiography. Diverging from older historical definitions of the revolution as radical, new critical race and gender histories defined it as “the illusion of change” (https://www.worldcat.org/title/beyond-the-american-revolution-explorations-in-the-history-of-american-radicalism/oclc/494213242&refre=brief_results). Women, black people, and Native Americans saw their conditions worsen, their liberties restricted, and rights of citizenship denied after the Revolution. The broadening of the study of the American Revolution beyond the merchant class and wealthy elites, for example, yields a more inclusive history. Resulting debates about how radical the revolution was has also led to the reconceptualization of American history and democracy.

Chiding the so-called new parochial histories as overly political and as importing too much politics into the classroom, it seems quite the double standard (pun intended) when we consider that the conference aimed to discuss questions like, “Are recent developments in American politics unprecedented, or is Trump merely populism revisited?” and “What can we learn from past attempts to learn from the past?” Undoubtedly, one can no more take the politics out of legal and constitutional histories of the United States than they can pretend that American constitutional history is devoid of race and gender politics. Women’s struggles today for bodily autonomy and greater participation in politics, law, and governance

are rooted in the fact that none of the original authors of the constitution were women (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/schw12892>).

That people of different genders, races, religions, and sexual identities are currently marginalized as interpreters of the Constitution is the direct result of the writing of a constitution that defined political activity in white and masculine terms. Needless to say, how does one discuss recent developments in American politics and Trump’s populism without a critical engagement with American race and gender history and its pivotal role in the election campaigns and voting patterns.

As we contemplate the ways in which the Stanford conference makes it clear that the vestiges of history as an old boy’s club linger, it is difficult not to address the club’s twin pillars: sexual harassment and assault. The recent panel discussion at the AHA (<https://aha.confex.com/aha/2018/webprogram/Session17119.html>) along with Catherine Clinton’s presidential address at the Southern Historical Association (https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/168545#_edn2) have made plain that the history profession is not immune to the problem of sexual abuse that plagues other space.

But women and girls today have inherited centuries of male orchestrated legal systems that sanction sexual violence (<https://time.com/4062637/against-our-will-40/>). Although now illegal in the United States, marital rape, for example, received legal grounding on the assumption that wives “belonged” to their husbands and therefore could not be raped. Further still, during American chattel slavery, while white women gained some protection from rape, black women, deemed property, could not be raped. To be sure, the persistence of the erroneous view that black men are sexual predators, particularly threatening to white women, and the remarks made by Donald Trump’s lawyer, Michael Cohen, that “it is impossible to rape one’s spouse” (for which he subsequently apologized), highlight how social attitudes outlive legislations (<http://time.com/3975175/spousal-rape-case-history/>). The outlaw-

The CCWH Responds to Stanford's All White Male History Conference (cont.)

ing of spousal rape in the United States in the late 1970s was a direct result of women's rights campaigns and the insistence that such subjects as women and rape have historical merit. Such histories have also yielded insight into the ways in which power is exerted through sexual acts. By tracing the perpetrating of rape, for example, across social and cultural settings, geographic and time boundaries, historians have shown the use of sexual violence as tools of social control and domination.

The persistence of sexual violence further makes clear that statements of regret and condemnation, while important, are insufficient to address deep-seated problems of sexual harassment and abuse. In addition to continued investment in such fields as women, race, and gender, outdated and bureaucratic processes that make accountability and redress impossible must be eliminated. In contrast to the all white men conference, the democratization of history is incumbent upon women and minorities having a seat at the table and access to power and prestigious positions.

CCWH Executive Board Position: Affiliate Outreach Coordinator

The CCWH is currently looking for an Affiliate Outreach Coordinator. Applicants should be a CCWH member with good communication skills. The position responsibilities include maintaining regular contact with all CCWH affiliates; communicating with affiliates about CCWH awards and news; communicating with the newsletter editor about affiliate events; compiling CCWH and affiliate news for the International Federation for Research in Women's History's newsletter twice a year (June and December); and, finally, writing an annual report for the CCWH business meeting in January at the AHA.

If you are interested in this position, please contact Sandra Dawson at execdir@theccwh.org.

Feminist Protest Against Scholarly Exclusion

On April 5, 2018, the CCWH received a letter from members of the German Women's History Group addressed to Members of the Board of Central European History and the Editorial Board of Central European History.

Dear Members of the Board of Central European History and the Editorial Board of Central European History,

The members of the German Women's History Group, a longstanding group of feminist scholars working in Central European History, note with dismay and consternation that the "Special Commemorative Issue: Central European History at Fifty (1968-2018)" is severely gender-challenged (<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/central-european-history/issue/special-commemorative-issue-central-european-history-at-fifty-19682018/15FF6018DEB6525E0FC72E2D0E33898>). Of 26 contributions, six are by women. While 20 of the male scholars are sole author, four women (of a total eight) are included in two co-authored pieces. Two of the female authors are included ex officio, as book review editor and the current president of the CEHS. Women have been given space to speak on the topics of culture and gender, but not on many other major themes of German history. It would seem from this anniversary issue that women scholars have not come very far in the history of the field's flagship journal. This issue does not accurately reflect the changes in our field nor even the actual content of the journal over the past fifty years. We certainly hope that it does not reflect the future direction of CEH.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Anderson
Dolores Augustine
Rebecca Boehling
Renate Bridenthal
Belinda Davis
Atina Grossmann
Amy Hackett

Maria Hoehn
Marion Kaplan
Jan Lambertz
Molly Nolan
Krista O'Donnell
Kathy Pence

Author's Corner

Editor's Note: As part of a continuing feature for Insights, we are interviewing authors of fiction and non-fiction books of interest to our membership. If you are an author, or would like to nominate an author to be interviewed, contact newsletter@theccwh.org.

*With this issue, Whitney Leeson interviews Rachel Kadish about her latest work, *The Weight of Ink*.*



Rachel Kadish

In *The Weight of Ink*, a British historian nearing retirement named Helen Watt, and her assistant, Aaron Levy, a young graduate student from the United States, are called into examine a cache of seventeenth-century documents found during the renovation of a London townhouse. They quickly find themselves in a race against the clock to solve the mystery of who is Aleph, the unknown scribe working for a blind rabbi in 1661 while also corresponding furtively with the brightest minds of Europe, before a rival team of historians does the same.

Can you explain for our readers how Virginia Woolf's question about Shakespeare's hypothetical sister inspired you to start writing *The Weight of Ink*?

Woolf famously posed the question: what would have been the fate of Shakespeare's sister were she as talented as her brother? Woolf's answer is as heartbreaking as it is succinct: *she died young – alas, she never wrote a word*. For a woman of capacious intelligence in that era, literacy and artistic silence was certainly the most likely fate. The burdens of domestic labor and childrearing were forbidding on their own – nearly insurmountable when combined with restrictions on access to education and to the sorts of intellectual exchanges that sharpen ideas and embolden minds. Still, I couldn't help shadowboxing with that notion of a woman's inevitable silence. I kept thinking: what would it have taken for a woman of that era *not* to be silenced? What does it take – then and now – for a woman not to be defeated when everything around her is telling her to sit down and mind her manners? I knew that a seventeenth-century woman who managed to set serious thoughts on paper – particularly if that woman were Jewish and poor – would need to be a genius at breaking rules. I went looking for a historical setting that had the elements I needed, and I fell in love with the Portuguese Inquisition refugee communities of Amsterdam and London. I started writing the voice of a seventeenth-century woman with something to confess...and I improvised from there.

Of the three main protagonists – Ester Velasquez, a young Jewish woman scribing for an elderly rabbi blinded by Portuguese inquisitors, Helen Watt, a soon-to-retire British historian analyzing a cache of seventeenth-century Jewish documents uncovered during a house renovation, or Aaron Levy, the brilliant, but flippant Jewish-American graduate student assisting Professor Watt in her endeavors – whose story did you find easier or harder to tell?

I love that question, because it pushes me to think about the challenges writers face in crossing various lines. Ester's predicament – and the possible ways she might solve it – was what drove me to start the novel, and in that sense, she was always closest to my heart. But the period language was initially daunting – how would I

Author's Corner

render believable seventeenth-century speech without making the novel impenetrable to the reader? Also, I had to continually remind myself that a seventeenth-century character would have a different relationship than I to notions of death, light, time and so many other basics. And then there was the philosophy! Ester has a philosophy-shaped brain; I don't. But I was determined to learn to see the world through her eyes. And, I think it's very important that novelists always try to stretch and write characters unlike them – otherwise they end up writing the same few characters and the same novel over and over. So, Ester's chapters took me easily five times as long to write as the other characters' chapters. Helen and Aaron's sections of the book took shape far more easily – research and language issues were much simpler. Yet there were different challenges. Though we live in the same era, Helena and Aaron are both – whether through culture, gender, or simply personality – quite unlike me. So I had to check myself to make sure I was understanding them right.

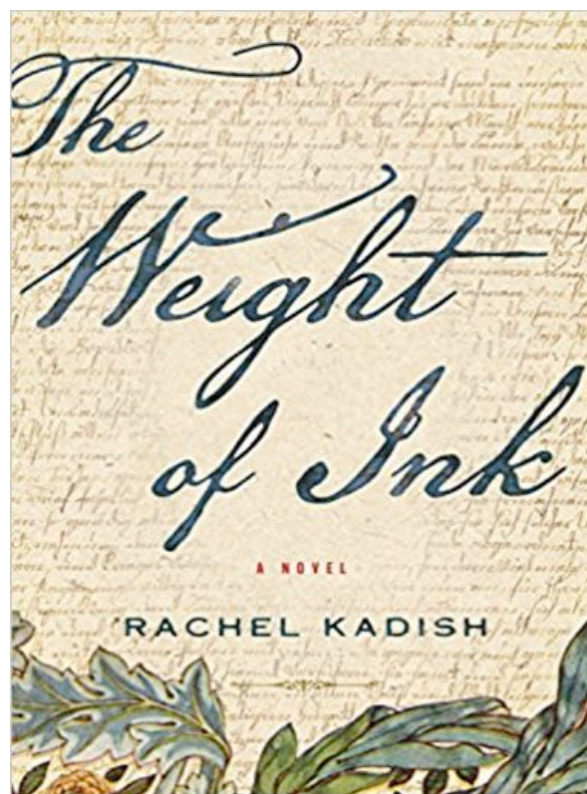
The Weight of Ink is a spellbinding, fast-paced 560 pages that kept me reading through the night. Can you tell us about your writing process and how do you maintain momentum on a “weighty” project of this length?

I'm delighted to hear that the book felt fast-paced! I was aware that in writing such a long and history-rich book, I was asking the reader to invest a great deal – so I wanted there to be a real payoff, especially toward the end of the book. I wanted those last couple hundred pages to feel like the end of a good fireworks show, where you think, *That's the finale!* But then...wait, no, *that wasn't the finale, this is the finale...* But the process of writing doesn't feel like a fireworks show. On the contrary: it's a whole lot of painstaking, patient, and hopefully-productive bewilderment. The first draft of anything I write is always an improvisation. I don't decide on the plot in advance – I need to first figure out who my characters are and what pressures they're under. So I focus on

one detail at a time: what's happening in this scene? Why does a character seem agitated – and what does she do after the door shuts and she finds herself alone in the room?

I wrote the chapters in the order in which they appear. If I improvised a line about something Helen and Aaron found in the documents, I would then turn to the seventeenth century and try to figure out why Ester would have written such a thing. If I was working in the seventeenth century and didn't know what Ester would do in response to a dilemma, I'd turn to the contemporary characters to see what they might discover next. So I really had no idea where the story was going for most of the time. That kept it interesting for me, and I hope some of that sense of constant discovery comes through for the reader. But it also meant that the writing process was messy. The streamlining happened later – I had to make sure all the chronologies and details lined up.

What intrigued you about selecting 1660s London for the setting of your historical novel as opposed to another city such as Amsterdam or Florence?



Author's Corner

It probably boils down to me being an Anglophile. Lots of years of studying English literature, especially seventeenth- through nineteenth-century literature, means I've spent more hours imagining England than any country except my own. In my mind, England is a vivid and rich terrain. From what I hear, this is an experience shared by many writers, particularly in post-colonial societies. I know of Caribbean writers whose early education focused so intensely on English classics that England – a country they'd never seen – felt like a second home.

The richness of detail in *The Weight of Ink* is remarkable without overwhelming the reader. I found facts such as Mary's use of belladonna drops in her eyes to appear more alluring to her lover fascinating. Of all the unique facts you uncovered in the research process, how do you decide what to include, or not, in the story line?

The writer Ryszard Kapuscinski had a phrase I love: "the universe in the raindrop." The key is selecting just those details that sum up the larger whole. Every now and then in the research process I'd stumble across a detail that riveted me. Those belladonna drops women used in their eyes...the iron gall ink that dissolved paper over centuries...the fact that poorer grades of flour sometimes contained pebbles. I was struck by the fact that as people died or fled the city during the plague, London's famed pollution eased: there was no smoke because the tanneries were closed. I realized, too, that because London's government had ordered all cats and dogs killed in the mistaken belief that it was these animals that carried the plague, the natural predators of the birds would have been eliminated...so there would once again be birdsong in the city. In my imagination, that contrast really stood out: the return of natural beauty at the moment of the city's greatest horror. For me, that's the kind of detail through which a world comes to life. As I worked, I searched for those small, but fascinating facts, and tried to eliminate less evocative ones – I didn't



want to clutter the story with too much detail. I tried to approach the historical scenes like some kind of minimalist visual artist, using the smallest possible number of inked lines to conjure a figure.

Several characters in your book are passionate about history, including Helen Watt and Aaron Levy, of course, but also Helen's academic nemesis and the two Patricias. How did you come by your passion for history?

History was everywhere when I was growing up. My grandparents were Holocaust survivors, my mom was a refugee kid born on the run. My relatives had fled Hitler's Poland, been in Russian prison; they'd escaped through Lithuania and Japan, been turned back from the U.S., jumped ship in Mexico. Events were often referred to obliquely, so you never knew when some detail would pop into daily conversation. *That was when we were arrested at the border...pass the salt...* And even though the history on my father's side of the family was less dramatic, my American grandmother was a consummate storyteller, so I grew up on her vivid tales of the Great Depression. To me, it seems perfectly normal that history can pop up and trip us while we're going about our daily business. It's what we do about those visitations that fascinates me – do we ignore them, or do we

Author's Corner

listen to what they have to teach us?

One of Aaron Levy's biggest intellectual hurdles is learning how to listen, really listen, to the words on the page in front of him – "the historian's only true charge" as you say (413). Can you talk a little more about the relationship between the art of listening and the art of storytelling?

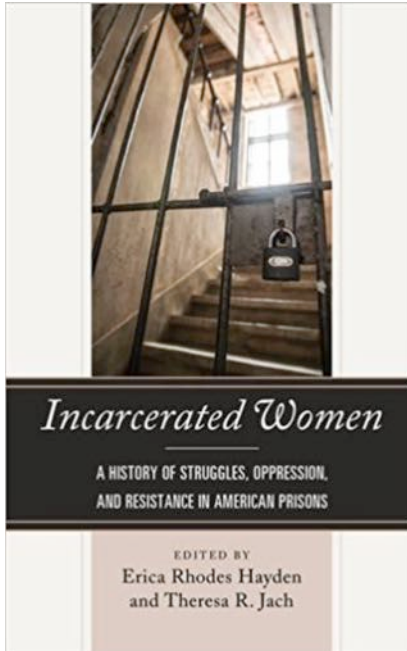
Yes – thank you for following up on that theme! This is why I love talking to historians. I think that notion of listening deeply is so important and it's something I'm always trying to learn. One of the things that spurred me to set the novel in this particular seventeenth-century community was reading the text of Spinoza's excommunication, which I learned about in Rebecca Newberger Goldstein's wonderful *Betraying Spinoza*. In the Amsterdam Jewish community of that era, excommunications were generally mild and temporary censures – but in the case of Spinoza the community's leaders brought out the fire and brimstone language. You can read the text of his excommunication here: <http://web.mnstate.edu/mouch/Spinoza/excomm.html>. This document may be more than 350 years old, but when I read it I could hear the fear behind those words. The Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam had found a narrow and precarious perch of safety...and now Spinoza was endangering it. Reading their writ of excommunication, I thought *I know these people. They're refugees, and they're scared*. Their fear made sense to me, because I'd grown up among refugees. And though the issues and the culture are of course different for Holocaust refugees than for Inquisition refugees, there's something about the vigilance, the fierce and beautiful desire to rebuild and the sense of precariousness, that I understand deeply. That was the moment when I chose to set the novel in this community. So, yes, listening! Lately, I've been thinking about the importance of listening not only to what's said in an historical account, but to what's not said. I'm asking myself what I can learn if I listen to the message of those omissions.

At what point did you decide upon the title in the writing process and how did you know *The Weight of Ink* was the right title?

I worked on the book for years under a different title – I thought I would call it *Kindness*, from the speech Eliazar made to the men atop Masada. In the context of that speech, the word "kindness" is double-edged – it refers to mass suicide, which Eliazar was trying to convince the men to enact (without input from their wives or children). And it speaks to the dilemma women face when what's defined as "kindness" is actually self-sacrifice – sometimes, as in this case, self-sacrifice of the most radical sort. In fact, the whole reason we know what happened atop Masada is that two women chose to hide in a cave with some children, ignoring their community's call for martyrdom and allowing themselves to be captured. That story and those themes were in my mind as I wrote the novel (Ester and Rivka in the London mob scene are my two women in a cave, refusing martyrdom). But as people rightly pointed out to me, you can't call a book *Kindness* unless you want it to get mis-shelved under self-help, alongside books called *Hope* and *Optimism*!

So, began a long period of trying to come up with a better title. It was maddening- every title felt wrong. Then my editor, Lauren Wein – who is truly brilliant I'm so grateful for her – started playing around with the idea of *The Price of Ink*, *The Cost of Ink* ... I can't remember which of us finally came up with *The Weight of Ink*. The fact that I can't remember means it was probably Lauren! And it's exactly the right title. The novel is fundamentally about the power and the danger of the written word – the passion as well as the redemption and the risk involved in setting our most honest thoughts down for others to see. That feels especially poignant to me now in the age of Twitter, when we're collectively treating language as disposable even as it has the power to build up lives or destroy them. I'd already written the passage on page 196 in which the rabbi recounts the early days of his blindness and his loss of access to books – so once we had the title, I just went back in and inserted "for my hands would never again...be stained with the sweet, grave weight of ink, a thing I had loved since first memory."

Book Reviews



Erica Rhodes Hayden and Theresa R. Jach, eds. *Incarcerated Women: A History of Struggles, Oppression, and Resistance in American Prisons*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2017. 202 pp. ISBN 978-1-4985-4211-1. \$90.00.

Jennifer Ash,
University of Illinois, Chicago

The anthology *Incarcerated Women: A History of Struggles, Oppression, and Resistance in American Prisons* is a fabulous addition to the field of carceral studies and the history of women in the United States. As the editors claim, this collection successfully focuses on the agency and resistance of imprisoned women, examines change over time and geography

and accounts for, “the influence of major issues of race, ethnicity, and class on the women’s experiences” (p. xiii). As the editors reveal in the introduction, much of what we know about the history of prisons emerged from literature focused on institutional histories and men’s experiences on the inside. This new edited collection adds significantly to what we know about women, gender, and prisons from the antebellum South to the twenty-first century Midwest.

Two of the numerous themes that emerge in this anthology are first, the interconnected relationship between slavery and prisons and, by extension, the historical relationship between state and private interests in the prison system; and, secondly, the desire of women to define and maintain a sense of identity while imprisoned, both as a survival strategy and as a way to resist.

Because the collection is organized chronologically beginning with the nineteenth century, one of the first major themes that emerges is the relationship between slavery and the carceral system. White slave owners benefitted, in numerous ways, from the existence of prisons in the South. The first two essays, “Secret Horrors,” by Brett Josef Derbes and “In the Care of the Supposed Powerful State,” by Hilary L. Coulson, brilliantly exhibit how the slave-holding class profited specifically from the imprisonment of enslaved Black women and their children. Southern prisons not only

provided a space to lock away enslaved individuals who were deemed threats to their masters and mistresses, but prisons also provided white men with access to Black women’s bodies. Sexual assault and rape were common occurrences in antebellum prisons. After emancipation, imprisoned Black women found themselves just as vulnerable to sexual coercion, as Theresa R. Jach’s essay “I thought if I got a chance I would do it,” illustrates.

Additionally, Derbes and Coulson’s essays explain how wealthy whites profited from investing in prisons through lease contracts, auctions of Black children born in state prisons, and through state compensation when an enslaved person received a life sentence. The state unquestionably benefitted from these private connections as well, setting the historical precedence for the contemporary prison labor industry. While the privatization of prisons is a huge concern in current prison reform circles, this collection of essays demonstrates that privatization is not a novel phenomenon enacted by relatively new corporations – those with the financial means to invest in prisons have done so for generations, since the era of slavery.

Perhaps, most importantly, this anthology, though pointing to early privatization, does not let the state off the hook; rather, it gives numerous examples of how entities of the state perpetrated the most inhumane forms of violence, particularly

Book Reviews (cont.)

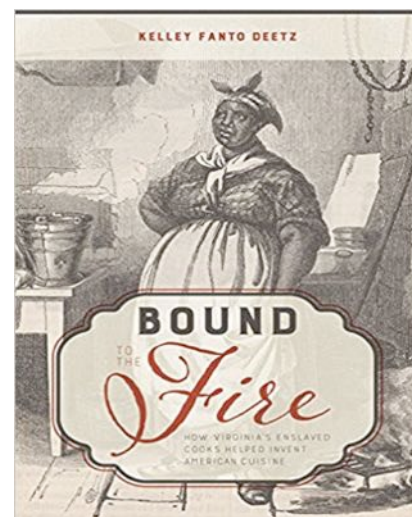
violence against women. We see this in three hundred women's deaths at Parchman Penitentiary, mostly Black women who were overworked and living in horrific conditions, in T. Dionne Bailey's essay "I Beg for Your Mercy." This is also exemplified in the extreme disciplinary codes and forms of punishment seen in L. Mara Dodge's essay, "Discipline, Resistance, and Social Control at the Illinois State Reformatory for Women." It is also illustrated in the tough choices mothers were forced to make about their children and the outright neglect, or in the unusual case of Westfield Reformatory, excessive surveillance they and their children underwent on the inside, as explained in Ilse Denisse Catalan's essay, "Making Mothers."

Finally, this collection of essays demonstrates, more than anything, women's desire to maintain their identities as a way to resist and merely survive the torture they often endured inside the prisons that caged them. Whether it was through creating chosen family on the inside, writing letters to loved ones and acquaintances, as seen in Erica Rhodes Hayden's essay, "Letters from Inside," or participating in educational opportunities like those in Breea C. Willingham's essay, "It's a Way to Get Out of Prison," historically, women who found themselves locked

inside prisons sought to define and maintain their own identities and resisted the prison system's definition of who they were as individuals and as a group.

With this major theme in mind, some essays have a tone or language issue. Instead of using terms like convicts, inmates, or criminals, authors should consider using language that honors the self-sustained identities of the individual women they are studying, instead of the labels of criminality that were placed upon them by the penal system. Of course, when quoting from the archives it is appropriate to replicate such language accurately. Much of what these authors desire to uncover, however, is individual women's agency and determination to survive and resist an oppressive system. Using the language of that system to identify these women, either as individuals or as a group, weakens some readers' ability to see the subjects as wholly human and their experiences as evidence of structural inequality, as opposed to individual behavior. Similarly, statements like, "this interaction caused further corruption as untried offenders and debtors sometimes encountered hardened criminals who instructed them in the ways of vice and criminal behavior," (p. x) and "Had she survived her illness, perhaps she would have turned her life around outside of prison," (p. 47) can be interpreted as pathologizing when devoid of any in-depth analysis of systemic issues that led women to imprisonment.

Despite this issue, these essays will make excellent additions to both undergraduate and graduate history courses, specifically those focused on the history of mass incarceration in the United States and the history of marginalized American women. These essays could be utilized in popular education circles as well. Many of them would pair well with the work of scholars and activists like Beth Richie, Andrea Ritchie, and Victoria Law, to give a chronological view of how women's prisons evolved and to illustrate how the criminal legal system has historically and contemporarily depended on heteropatriarchal conventions in addition to white supremacy.



Kelley Fanto Deetz. *Bound to the Fire: How Virginia's Enslaved Cooks Helped Invent American Cuisine*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2017. 177 pp. ISBN 978-0-8131-7473-0. \$29.95.

Kelly Kean Sharp
University of California, Davis

Kelley Deetz's work directly

Book Reviews (cont.)

challenges the popular culture image of the “loyal, happy house slave” so engrained in both product packaging and our historical imaginations. The primary aim of the author is to redefine how we remember, acknowledge, and promote the legacies of enslaved cooks. In achieving this aim, *Bound to the Fire* redefines the mythical slave cook, uncovering the role of enslaved cooks on Virginia plantations in the kitchen as well as the larger plantation community. Instead of concentrating on the dishes produced by enslaved cooks, Deetz acknowledges enslaved cooks experienced a personhood beyond these dishes. Through tracing architectural changes, living conditions, and domestic relations, *Bound to the Fire* enhances the historiography of Southern hospitality, race, and gender.

Each chapter begins with well-organized, though fictional, vignettes, which guide the reader into the physical and emotional world of Virginia’s enslaved cooks. After a brief introduction to the history of colonial and antebellum Virginia, Deetz walks the reader through the primary workplace for enslaved cooks of Virginia’s plantations – the kitchens in which they worked and lived. Deetz explores the architectural transformations that paralleled Virginia’s evolving social traditions of whites’ ef-

forts to increase physical and social distance between themselves and people of color. While the analysis of power dynamics through reading change in vernacular architecture is not a novel approach, Deetz’s contribution is in its explicit focus on the kitchen space. Understanding the physical space of these kitchens is integral to the social and cultural history examined in the remaining chapters.

In the third chapter, “In Fame and Fear,” Deetz creatively and masterfully intertwines several cameos of enslaved individuals who rose to fame through their role in the kitchen. Beginning with the histories of enslaved cooks who were celebrated by Virginia’s plantation elite for their culinary skill, including George Washington’s enslaved cook Hercules and Thomas Jefferson’s James and Peter Hemmings, Deetz explores the power of enslaved cooks to incite fear among the Southern elite through their control over the content of food. She articulates enslaved cooks produced not only food for daily consumption, but also medicinal remedies and thus, “their position of trust as the feeders and nourishers of the plantation household made for a very tangled power relationship” (93). Fueled by a fear of insurrection, slaveholders of the mid-nineteenth century were likewise on high alert for poisoning as a form of resistance enacted by their enslaved cook.

Most successfully done is the fourth chapter in which Deetz places enslaved cooks at the

center of white Virginians’ culinary pride. Deetz begins by explaining the meaningful centrality of entertaining revolving around the production, presentation, and consumption of food, within the physical isolation of rural Virginia (99). While the “mistress took pride in her self-proclaimed central role,” Deetz’s work articulates “behind every meal and in the shadow of every mistress was an enslaved cook who was responsible for these lavish dinners” (99). Exploring the dependency of mistresses on the labor of their enslaved cooks, Deetz finally engages in a gendered analysis of power, violence, and oppression which bore out of this tangled relationship. In her argument about the influence of African foodways on the tables of Virginia’s plantation elite as transmitted by their enslaved cooks, Deetz is building on a history laid forth by a previous generation of Southern foodways scholars such as Joe Gray Taylor, Sam Hilliard, and John Egerton. However, like those before her, Deetz takes for granted the transfer of enslaved peoples’ knowledge of how to prepare African-origin ingredients such as black-eyed peas and okra and if and when these ingredients were requested by the elite shareholders. Deetz gives no primary source evidence that the food culture of enslaved cooks indeed crossed the color line to the tables of their elite white masters.

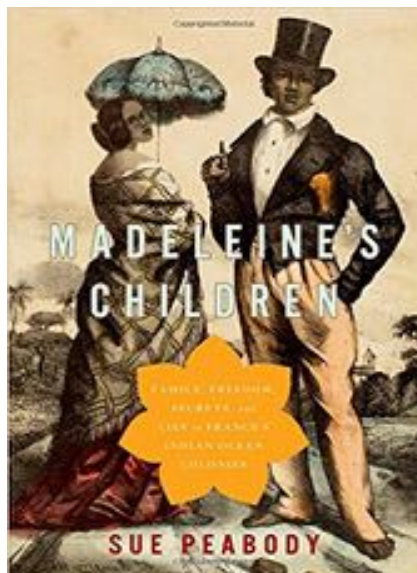
While Deetz employs skilled interpretation of architecture and makes extensive use of re-

Book Reviews (cont.)

collections and personal correspondence, several areas of the book are general in their analysis. Particularly, I found her sections on negotiations and resistance as well as living conditions lacking in both evidence and analysis. Deetz argues enslaved cooks existed in a uniquely liminal space. While physically true, with the kitchen most commonly situated between the enslaved quarters and big house, the author gives no evidence of how, or even asks the question if, enslaved cooks used their exclusive knowledge to negotiate better treatment or material conditions. The author gives some large quotations from plantation owners complaining about the behavior of their enslaved cooks, but I find the work lacks primary or secondary source evidence about how negotiation was experienced or practiced from the point of view of enslaved cooks themselves.

Overall, *Bound to the Fire* critically acknowledges enslaved cooks at the core of the evolution of Virginia's formalized landscape of hospitality which reverberated throughout the American South. In bringing her work to the present day, Deetz concludes the legacies of plantation kitchens and the racialized labor that occurred within them exist in perpetuated racial landscapes of "otherness." This work is sem-

inal in pushing forward the dialogues between archaeology and history as well as centering the role of enslaved labor in performance of white domesticity.



Sue Peabody. *Madeleine's Children: Family, Freedom, Secrets, and Lies in France's Indian Ocean Colonies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. 321 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-023388-4. \$35.00.

Jessica Reuther
Ball State University

Madeleine's Children tells the entangled familial histories of an enslaved Indian woman Madeleine, the title's namesake, and her children as well as that of Madeleine's owners, the Routiers and their descendants. This monograph uses some of the same themes and central questions that Peabody previously addressed in *There are No Slaves in France*. In the two decades since her first book's publication, Peabody has remained committed to her

soil principle, the lived meanings of freedom, and the evolution of racism during the early modern era. *Madeleine's Children* reorients the discussion of freedom and enslavement in the Francophone world from the metropole to France's colonial possessions in the Indian Ocean – Isle Bourbon, modern-day Réunion, and Isle de France, modern-day Mauritius.

Peabody contributes to the growing field of slave biographies, which trace the lives of exceptional slaves, or those formerly enslaved, as their lives took them across oceans to circulate within an evolving world increasingly dominated by Western powers. Notable, recent examples of this subfield include *Atlantic Bonds: A Nineteenth-Century Odyssey from America to Africa* by Lisa Lindsay, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* by Rebecca J. Scott and Jean M. Hébrard, and *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* by James Sweet. Peabody's scholarship provides a rich counterpoint to a field dominated by a focus on the African diaspora in the Atlantic World.

Peabody tells the dramatic story of the lives of Madeleine and her children in the Indian Ocean world of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The first three chapters focus on Madeleine's life history. Chapter One concerns Madeleine's enslavement as a young child, perhaps as young as three-years old, during the 1760s in Chandernagor, in mod-

Book

Reviews (cont.)

ern-day India. Chapter Two continues Madeleine's early life story with her trip as a teenager to France where, after a brief sojourn, she is then transferred from her original owner, Mademoiselle Despense, a wealthy single French woman who had resided in Chandernagor, to the Routiers, a Creole family who takes the enslaved servant girl to their plantation and townhouse on Isle Bourbon. Chapter Three places the limited information known about Madeleine in the context of the emergent colonial society on the island in the late eighteenth century.

In these early chapters, Peabody shifts from prosopography to biography whenever possible. These chapters, at times, rely on a very thin evidentiary basis directly linked to Madeleine. Peabody makes clear when she is extrapolating. For example, Peabody attempts to understand the sexual vulnerability of a young Madeleine as her circumstances changed (47). Sexual abuse and predation was undoubtedly part of Madeleine's life as a young slave, but Monsieur Routier was no Thomas Thistlewood, the infamous eighteenth-century plantation overseer in Jamaica who left a journal of his sexual exploits. Routier left no such record, but Peabody convincingly shows that Routier was most likely the father of two of Madeleine's

children, Constance and Furcy. Peabody, of necessity, must write about Madeleine's sexual experiences with a speculative air that some may find problematic.

I would argue that the moments in which Peabody slips into a hypothetical voice is one of the work's distinctive strengths. She responsibly grapples with how to address the voluminous omissions, lies, and lacunae in the historic record. The volume, length, and detail of the footnotes – a remarkable one hundred plus pages – attest to the academic rigor of the work and her commitment to exhaustively searching the archives for scraps of pertinent information. Peabody's historically informed conjecture pushes the reader to empathize with all of the historic personalities in both families. She promotes empathy most certainly for Madeleine and her children, but also surprisingly for the white slave owners, even the duplicitous Joseph Lory, the story's antagonist who married into the Routier family. He is at times downright villainous, but Peabody always makes sure to place his actions within the cultural logic of a racist, slave-owning, colonial society.

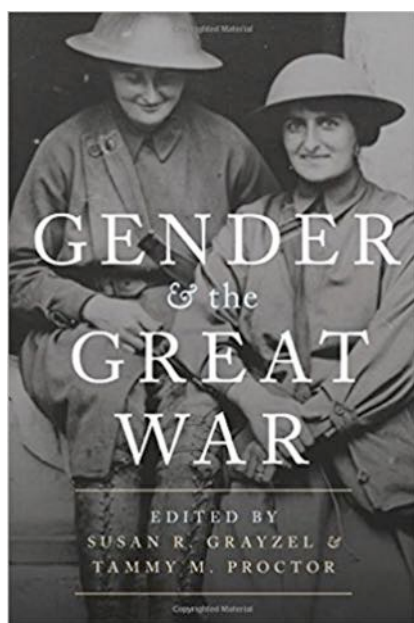
The majority of the book is devoted to a legal history of Madeleine's eldest son, Furcy. Much of the knowledge about Madeleine's life comes from testimony and documents generated by Furcy's three decade-long struggle against Lory, his master. Furcy fought for recognition of his free status and subsequently, for damages for

his wrongful enslavement. His battle was individual, not ideological. Furcy, as Peabody points out, was no abolitionist. In fact, Furcy purchased slaves to work on his behalf as soon as his finances allowed. Furcy's legal struggles unfold within the tumultuous era following the French and Haitian Revolutions when people of color struggled to define what freedom meant in meaningful ways to them. Peabody argues that forming a legally recognized family, whom he could reside with and financially support were central to the meaning of freedom for Furcy.

Furcy's life story is made all the more tantalizing because of the documented secrets and lies that the case reveals as it unfolds at all levels of the colonial court structure. In the acknowledgements, Peabody points out that there exists a vast "slippage between written evidence and historical truth" (vii). This slippage comes in a variety of forms, such as forged documents, purposefully unrecorded slave transfers, and the manumission of Madeleine without informing her for over a decade. The value of *Madeleine's Children* for any historian regardless of their interests in slave studies, the French Empire, or the Indian Ocean world is the way in which Peabody engages this slippage in responsible and critical ways. Historical research inevitably produces fragments of information that do not always fit neatly into a narrative; rather than sweep these incongruous pieces aside or footnote their existence, Pea-

Book Reviews (cont.)

body places the incongruities at the center of her analysis. *Madeleine's Children* is an engaging, well-researched work of scholarship whose value to specialists is irrefutable. Its more subtle message to encourage human empathy in historic perspectives and the more provocative use of sources in imaginative ways contains lessons that resonate more widely.



Susan R. Grayzel and Tammy M. Proctor. *Gender & the Great War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. 286 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-027108-4. \$29.95.

Sandra Trudgen Dawson
University of Maryland,
Baltimore County

The Great War and the events

that tore empires apart and reorganized the post-war world, continues to intrigue scholars a hundred years later. This nuanced collection adds to the literature on the war and reveals the way gender expectations permeated every aspect of the management of the war both uniting and dividing military and civilian populations and complicating the relationship between the state and citizens. Expectations of masculinity meant that opting out of military service was not an option for men. Women, on the other hand, were not expected to take up arms, but rather maintain the “home front” as sisters, wives and lovers, mothers, and daughters. Many women engaged in war work yet feminists were divided and some actively campaigned for peace. This collection of thirteen essays interrogates the way gender and war intersected with race, class, gender, age, sexuality, work, citizenship, occupation, warfare, violence, mourning, memory, and everyday life, to explore the ways men and women experienced the first truly world war.

While the war firmly reinforced links between masculinity, military service, and citizenship, it also offered opportunities to marginalized groups. Colonial subjects, men of color and women, undertook patriotic civic service on the home and war fronts that led to an expectation of full citizenship at the end of the war. Such patriotic service also identified the “anti-citizen,” the “enemy alien,” radicals, and ho-

mosexuals whose masculinity was suspect. Men who resisted the war by refusing to fight had to counter the gendered idea of a masculine military. Yet conscientious objectors also revealed the way that war is a negotiation between and among citizens and government. If men will not fight, there can be no war. Feminist also used gender expectations to oppose the war by claiming women’s role in peace. War work also reveals the gendered nature of the war. Men were expected to undertake military work and women were increasingly recruited to replace or supplement their work. Nevertheless, the assumption of the male breadwinner and the female homemaker persisted despite the enormous shifts of wartime and these assumptions determined wages. Yet women’s views of themselves were changed by their experience of war work even if men’s views of women did not change.

Race and gender intersected in the Great War. The belligerents were empires and thus colonial subjects were very much a part of the war. Men of color served as workers and soldiers in all the many theaters of the war. The most salient way that gender and race intersected was through interracial sex and love. Men of color found the population of France far less concerned with racial divisions than Europeans living in the colonies. Yet these interracial relationships created anxieties about white male impotence, potentially disrupting the imperial project that had huge ramifications for

Book

Reviews (cont.)

the post war world.

Postcards from the war and photos of hospital “shows” reveal cross-dressing that might appear to suggest homosexual or lesbian identities. Yet these “topsy turvy” images reflect the impact of war rather than shifts in sexual identity. Intergenerational relationships existed during the war as statistics suggest that armies comprised of men aged as many as forty years apart. The generational diversity meant that men experienced various understandings of masculinity, courage, and nurturing within their units. Prisoner of war camps provide valuable insight into age relationships and memoirs suggest that older men “mentored” younger prisoners.

The experience of occupation in the Great War has been overshadowed by the widespread Nazi occupation in World War II. Additionally, the realities of the hardships experienced by civilians under occupation and invasion are often obscured by the symbolism ascribed to them. While women were statistically targeted less often than men, contemporaries seized on atrocities and sexual violence meted out to women and young girls. Thus, occupation was symbolized as male violence perpetrated against a female body. While these images aided propaganda, they also obscured the lived realities of occupation for

civilian populations. Blockades by both sides in the conflict made food a weapon of war. Spurred by the extreme challenges of everyday life, women rioted, stole, protested. Food scarcity was gendered as women remained responsible for finding food and feeding their families. Yet women also gained political power in their role as providers, challenging the patriarchal order.

New forms of warfare and technologies disrupted the lines between home front and war fronts. Long-range guns bombarded civilian spaces and bombs fell from the air increasing civilian casualties. New technologies like poison gas also altered wartime and ideas and debates on masculinity. Gas disturbed soldiers physically and psychologically, resulting in “shell shock” and complicating the idea of war as one of masculine valor as men were incapacitated and “hysterical” and unable to respond.

Inhabitants of French, German, and British colonies were part of a militarized hierarchy and used as forced labor, porters, and sex workers. Colonial subjects were caught up in a European war and subjected to physical and psychic violence meted out to uphold a racialized military rank structure. For women, this often meant being caught up by a military column and forced into sexual labor.

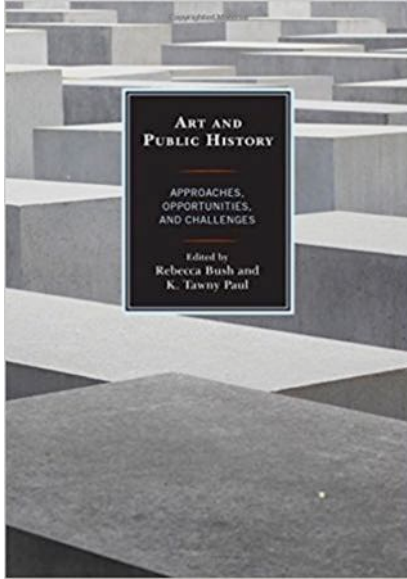
The experience of war and gender shaped mourning. Women became the “quintessential figures of mourning and bereavement during the Great War” in many nations

(213). Mourning was public and commemorated through statues, art, and poetry. In Russia, the Orthodox Church remained central to mourning. In other countries, Spiritualism became a way for the living to retain contact with the dead. Gender also plays an important part in the way that war is remembered and the male body was central to memorialization. Yet the way that war was remembered – either destructive or heroic – shaped postwar mourning and the interwar dialogue about the nature of war.

The final chapter of the volume is a brief historiography of the Great War that is essential reading and a valuable part of this fascinating and timely volume. This collection is a significant addition to the scholarship of the war. By focusing on the multiple intersections with gender, the collection also signals that there is more to be learned about the lived experiences of men and women during World War I. This is a highly readable and accessible volume that will prove useful in both undergraduate and graduate courses. It is also a collection of essays that will interest scholars of gender, war, and twentieth-century history.



Book Reviews (cont.)



Rebecca Bush and K. Tawny Paul. *Art and Public History: Approaches, Opportunities and Challenges*. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017. 254 pp. ISBN 978-0-4422-6843-2. \$40.00.

Antara Bhatia
University of Delhi, India

In a particularly breezy, relatable strain, Rebecca Bush identifies the interaction between art and public history, focusing on the way in which the two mutually engage to address ongoing social and political issues. To add a sense of immediacy and practical application to her arguments, the author consistently uses examples from current affairs and events such as twenty-first century conferences, museum exhibitions, and institutional in-

itiatives.

A key note in the text is its focus on marginalized art, investigating the lives of groups such as the Florida Highwaymen during the 1950's. Not only does this example give a voice to these door-to-door landscape artists, but also brings out the subtle manner in which the artwork becomes historically representative of the Jim Crow segregation period (xiv). Bush's sustained argument, thus, is "how interdisciplinary working can yield new meanings, new stories and new forms of engagement with the public (2). In other words, art can succinctly and effectively express disturbing social and political issues in a way that impacts and engages the audience and forces it to take notice.

I believe that the book primarily makes an attempt to contest the commonly held view of art, and the humanities in general, as ethereal, escapist, or removed from society and so-called reality. It highlights the advantages of interweaving art with public history and the role this synthesis plays in making significant inroads into volatile current debates. Along this vein, an interesting point that the author discovers is the ability of art to be used as "a tool for telling 'difficult' or 'challenging' histories" (5). This effectively links art with trauma theory, and the propensity of the visual to record complex, painful history. In the Introduction to the book, a powerful example is picked up – Britain's history of slavery and its expression in contem-

porary art. The very fact that such exhibitions have been held in galleries as established and frequented as the Victoria and Albert Museum shows an encouraging turn in the value of such art and its absorption into mainstream culture. Placed side-by-side in museums, installations and paintings engage in what Bush describes as "visual dialogue" bringing out into the open uncomfortable, embedded histories and truths (5). The positive note of the Introduction continues when Bush examines the therapeutic potential of painting for groups such as Holocaust survivors and Somali refugee women. This field, for the author, seems not an escape from reality, but a way of dealing with horror and pain, a way of healing and moving on.

Bush admits that some histories are "beyond words" and that the visual has the faculty of addressing what the verbal may be unable to (6). However, the text does not restrict itself to simply stating the impact or infallibility of the artistic domain. It also critiques the exclusionist nature of the field, especially in that museum visitors, audiences/viewers, and the general public may not always possess the "interpretative tools" required to understand multiple layers of meaning in an artwork. A point that can be added here that Bush has not broached is the desire of the average viewer for aestheticism and beauty in painting, a notion that may then be resistant to the grim and harsh truths depicted in war and historical painting.

Book Reviews (cont.)

Part I of the book specifically deals with the perception of American history and culture “through the lens of the African American artist” (26). This endeavor thus incorporates issues of racial and cultural nuances vis-à-vis marginalized artists and their works. Through a description of the gallery *The Beauty of Color and Form*, for instance, the authors investigate “the ways through which the culture and history of African and diasporic nations have inspired African American artists to reclaim aspects of their history, engage in broader social and political movements, and incorporate a variety of styles and traditions in their work” (31). The following chapter, *Citizenship and Caricature*, explores similar issues of “otherness” and identity through illustrations and cartoons such as Edward William Clay’s *Life in Philadelphia*. Through this genre, Bush and Paul exhibit the effectiveness of this interesting technique in outlining social mores and middle class eccentricities.

Part II takes an offbeat turn into the portrayal of history and culture through tattoo art over the centuries. It is pointed out here that tattoos as an art form can take on historical significance as “an emotional response to the harsh toll of war, the therapeutic ability of art, and the redemptive power of

shared grief” (109). The next chapter picks up the genre of portrait art to further deepen the study of national identity and cultural markers.

The final part of the book, as well as the conclusion, links the role of art in shaping public history and the necessity of making the two fields accessible to the general public. The book in its final message emphasizes the merits of a collaboration between the historical, the artistic, and the technological/digital to “help us interpret the past, tell stories, and engage audiences” (227). Bush and Paul’s study is effective in that it encourages interdisciplinary approaches to history and culture, explores the artistic and cultural narratives of marginalized groups, promotes exhibitions of the art of such groups in mainstream museums and galleries, and brings in multiple perspectives into the traditional, linear view of history. However, while the book does give a voice to meta-narratives through art discussion and exhibition, a section could have been included on women artists to enable the study to be more inclusive. If marginalized groups such as African Americans, Highwaymen, and tattoo artists are discussed, it would have been effective to explore a gendered view of history and culture and the way in which artwork by women becomes representative of subjugation and patriarchy over the centuries. However, Bush and Paul make a well-planned and sustained argument for a collaboration between history and the fine arts.

Books Available for Review

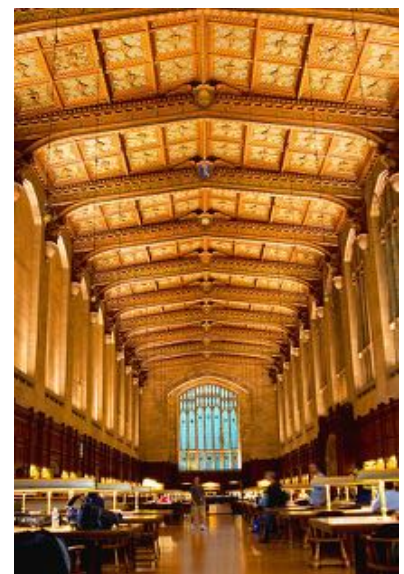
Interested in reviewing one of the books below? Contact Whitney Leeson at wleeson@roanoke.edu.

Jean Elson. *Gross Misbehavior and Wickedness: A Notorious Divorce in Early Twentieth-Century America*, 2017.

Elizabeth F. Fideler. *Margaret Pearmain Welch (1893-1984): Proper Bostonian, Activist, Pacifist, Reformer, Preservationist*, 2017.

Jenifer Parks. *The Olympic Games, the Soviet Sports Bureaucracy, and the Cold War: Red Sport, Red Tape*, 2017.

Mary Ellen Pethel. *Athens of the New South: College Life and the Making of Modern Nashville*, 2017.



Archives of Interest

Editor's Note: As a continuing feature for Insights, we are looking at archives of interest to our membership. Some archives may be familiar and others may be hidden gems. If you are an archivist, or would like to suggest an archive for us to feature, contact newsletter@theccwh.org.

With this issue, we look at The Carey C. Shuart Women's Research Collection at the University of Houston.

The Carey C. Shuart Women's Research Collection University of Houston Library

By Vince Lee
The Carey C. Shuart Women's Research Collection Archivist

The Carey C. Shuart Women's Research Collection was established in 1996 at the University of Houston Library to support research and instruction for the Department of Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies (WGSS) established five years earlier in 1991. Starting with a modest budget, the department enlisted a group of faculty that taught courses on Women's Studies from related disciplines such as the Arts, Business, Sciences, and Health. A community development board was formed, and Carey Shuart, an early supporter and proponent of Women's Studies, would work with the board in outlining the direction of the program and in planning the creation of the archive.

One of the distinctive focuses of the program was a grassroots, community-oriented approach to acquiring collections. The focus and strength of the archive would be in the documentation and preservation of materials by Houston and Texas women and their organizations. Since its founding, the Shuart Collection has rapidly grown each year and currently has accessioned close to 90 col-



Blanche Espy Chenoweth on air at WLS with transcript, circa 1931. Photo courtesy of Vince Lee

lections, many of which have been processed. Total extent of the archive as of this writing is 954 linear feet, with an average collection size of approximately 11 linear feet. The Archivist for the collection works closely with WGSS and Friends of Women's Studies in identifying potential donors for collection development and cultivation. The existing donor base of the archive also play active roles within the community as advocates to potential donors.

Collection Highlights

One of the early seeds planted that would lead to the establishment and growth of the archives was the donation of the Blanche Espy Chenoweth Papers by Carey Shuart. In addition to being a writer, radio personality, and lecturer at the Chautauqua Institute during the early part of the 20th century, she was also Carey's grandmother. Upon her passing in 1960, Carey came into possession of a box she had kept which contained an assortment of materials – books and papers she had written over the years. On the box, written in Blanche's hand in bold lettering, was the phrase “**DO NOT THROW AWAY!**” Over the next 20 years, Carey had kept the box, heeding her grandmother's instructions, while waiting for the right time to do something with the materials. As a result of her patience, Carey's early donation of Blanche's Papers into the archives would serve as a cornerstone for building the collections.

Archives of Interest (cont.)

The Chenoweth Papers contain photographs, lecture materials, notes, correspondence, and notebooks on lesson plans and instruction she delivered at Chautauqua, Chicago, Indianapolis, and other parts of the country on women's dress, comportment, and personal hygiene. Also within the papers is a binder containing personal sketches and paper cut outs of dresses and costumes which she designed for women for various occasions. There are also typed transcripts and photos of her radio broadcast, *Little Dramas from Life*, which aired on WLS in Chicago during the 1930s. Considered the *Dear Abby* in her day, Chenoweth would dole out advice and reenact problematic situations that her listeners would send to her.



Photo of Minnie Fisher Cunningham, undated, Minnie Fisher Cunningham Papers, University of Houston Special Collections

Minnie Fisher Cunningham, an early 20th century suffragist, became the President of the Texas Women's Suffrage Association in 1915. She worked with Carrie Chapman Catt, campaigning throughout Texas on a woman's right to vote. Her efforts culminated in the Texas Legislature's ratification of women's suffrage in 1918 and, ultimately, to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. She served as the first Executive Secretary

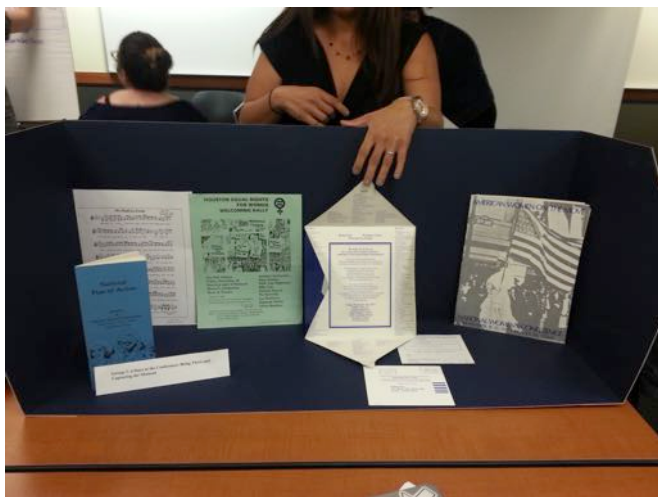
of the League of Women Voters in 1919. The Cunningham Papers are one of the most heavily used collections in the archive. In addition to correspondence of her activities from the National American Woman Suffrage Association, there are letters to the Governor of Texas, William Hobby, Carrie Chapman Catt, as well as a telegram from President Woodrow Wilson congratulating her on the ratification of women's suffrage in Texas. Also of particular interest are a series of pamphlets and flyers asking communities to organize against vices such as prostitution, red light districts, and the spread of venereal diseases, as well as pamphlets on temperance and the use of alcohol.

Appointed as Women's Advocate in 1976, by Mayor Fred Hofheinz, Nikki Van Hightower served the City of Houston in investigating pay inequalities, hiring practices, and lack of women represented within certain professions. Her collection contains studies and reports she compiled regarding the status of women in Houston in 1976 and 1977. The reports illustrated the lack of support and services in place for working women, such as childcare, and the lack of women represented and hired to work in the media. Nikki Van Hightower's role as Houston's Women's Advocate would play a pivotal role in Houston's selection as the site for the 1977 National Women's Conference in which she served as a delegate.

Her papers also contain drafts of speeches and presentations she delivered at various events, transcripts of her radio program, *Daily Commentaries and Doubletalk*, when she worked at KTRH addressing a variety of topics posed by her listeners. There are also files on her involvement and founding of the Houston Area Women's Center, an organization known for serving women in the Houston area facing domestic abuse. She would serve as the organization's first Executive Director.

Having just celebrated the 40th anniversary of the 1977 National Women's Conference this past November, the Marjorie Randal National Women's Conference Collection played a prominent role in the exhibit held at the reunion conference. Marjorie Randal was an activist for women's rights in the Houston area and was a volunteer during the 1977 National Women's Conference. She was instrumental in establishing the Houston Area chap-

Archives of Interest (cont.)



Ephemera from the Marjorie Randal National Women's Conference Collection for exhibit. Photo Courtesy of Vince Lee.

ter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) during the early 1970s. Her collection is rich in ephemera such as fliers and brochures for the Texas Women's Meeting during the summer of 1977, which was a prelude and planning meeting before the actual conference in the fall. There are also signed ticket invitations, session and operations cards for attendees and volunteers, agendas, instructions, and planning materials for the conference.

Of particular interest are the Houston Equal Rights Welcoming Rally flier in which organizers convened at Houston's City Hall to kick things off during the first day of the conference. There is also a Hyatt Regency Houston brochure which provided information about the hotel where conference attendees stayed. An exhibitor brochure provided the layout of the Albert Thomas Convention Hall, site of where the conference was held and where delegates were seated. There's also a playbill and ticket stub of Playwright Shange Ntozake's "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf." This was a special performance for attendees of the conference.

In addition to these highlighted collections, the archives contain a wide spectrum of materials, representative of the many endeavors women have been a part of in Houston and Texas history including politics, business, arts, sciences, philanthropy, law, journalism, feminism, and spirituality. Social service organizations established by women are another strong area represented within the archives. Organization records such as the Houston Area Women's Center, Texas Council of Family Violence, and the National Center for Domestic and Sexual Violence contain administrative files documenting their training and work with counselors and law enforcement in the community. Much of the training, policies, and procedures that were established by these organizations would serve as templates for regional and national adoption by other agencies, such as the creation of a 24-hour hotline and housing to relocate victims and their families. Their records are of particular interest to both students and faculty of the University of Houston's School of Social Work researching the statistics, incarceration, and the public policy aspects of domestic violence on both a local and state level.

Instructional Support and Programming

The Shuart Women's Research Collection is not only a repository that accumulates archival collections for scholars and visitors to use. There are a variety of programmatic activities that accompany the archives each year. The archive is part of the course curriculum and instruction for students pursuing a major in WGSS. Students are expected to engage with materials and collections for projects and papers, as well as demonstrate primary source literacy in being able to critically analyze primary sources and formulating research questions from the primary source examined. Students from the "Issues in Feminist Research" course were assigned to work with the archivist as co-curators for the 1977 National Women's Conference exhibit in honor of the its 40th anniversary this past November. Working from the Marjorie Randal Collection, students working in groups created themes, selected items, and wrote captions for the exhibit.

Archives of Interest (cont.)



Pop up exhibit display of materials from the Women's Institute of Houston at the 2018 Table Talk Luncheon. Photo courtesy of Vince Lee.

The Shuart Women's Research Collection is also part of the annual Table Talk Luncheon hosted by Friends of Women's Studies and WGSS. Over 500 women in Houston hailing from many disciplines converge in conversation over lunch on a variety of topics selected by the conversationalist at each table. The event is an opportunity for financial and material support for the Friends of Women's Studies, WGSS, and the Shuart Women's Archive. Sample materials from the archives are displayed at the event each year to highlight new collections, spark discussion, and cultivate potential donors.

Three to four times each year, The Barbara Karkabi Living Archives Series presents panel discussions which are hosted by Friends of Women's Studies and the WGSS. Panelists are invited to discuss a variety of topics affecting women's lives in Houston and the issues that affect them. The panel discussions are recorded and collected as part of the Shuart Women's Research Collection.

Hidden in Plain Sight

Women's History can develop in the most un-

likely places, oftentimes in places we couldn't imagine such as a Southern city like Houston. Many times, unless you know where to look or who to ask, much of that history is hidden in plain sight to both the public and scholars. That the Shuart Women's Research Collection is housed in an urban environment at the University of Houston, on a campus considered to be one of the most diverse in the nation, is a testament to the vision of what's being built. Part of the archive's transformative effect, both for students and scholars that come in to use the materials, is in breaking down perceived stereotypes and perceptions that Women's History is regional and can only happen in a certain part of the country. They come away impressed by the rich history created by women in the Gulf Region.



Pop up exhibit table at the 2018 Table Talk Luncheon. Photo courtesy of Vince Lee.

Archives of Interest (cont.)

Dean of the University of Houston Libraries, Lisa German, acknowledged that, “The Archive tells the many stories of women in Houston that were important to its history through their roles in governing, philanthropy, education, and culture to the city. It’s very fitting that the Shuart Women’s Research Collection is housed at Houston’s public university so that students and scholars everywhere can learn more about the rich talents of Houston and Texas women.”

The impact of the archives lies not only within its own growth and expansion, but in its contribution to the creation of another newly formed archive, the LGBT History Research Collection. The seeds were planted through such collections such as the Norma Lee Feminist Correspondence, the Houston and Texas Feminist and Lesbian Newsletters, and the Houston Area NOW and Other Feminist Activities Collection. With these materials from the Shuart Collection, other community members and donors from Houston’s LGBT Community were inspired to step forward to contribute their history that would add to the body of knowledge concerning sexuality, gender identity marriage rights, and inclusion.

Research

The Carey Shuart Women’s Research Collection supports the instruction and research activities of the University of Houston and serves as a resource that’s open to the scholarly community and the general public. Students from many disciplines consult a variety of collections within the Archive for the intersectionality of materials that are represented. To begin research and to find out more about the Carey Shuart Women’s Research Collection visit the collection’s portal page, which contains finding aids, digital collections, and related resources (<https://libraries.uh.edu/branches/special-collections/shuart/>).



Student Curators from the Issues in Feminist Research class research for an exhibit. Photo courtesy of Vince Lee.

Additional questions and inquiries can be directed to the archivist of the collection, Vince Lee, at velee@uh.edu.

Additional Links and Resources

- Carey Shuart [interview](#)
- Dr. Cynthia Freeland [interview](#)
- Dr. Elizabeth Gregory [interview](#)
- The Spirit of Houston: A Retrospective 40 Years in the Making [Podcast](#)



Announcements

Women's History Review Suffrage Centennial Article Collection

In celebration of the centenary of the 1918 Representation of the People Act, publishers Taylor & Francis are giving free access to an article collection from the *Women's History Review* devoted to women's suffrage in Great Britain. The collection includes such topics as "Militant Women: Strategies and Consequences," "Resistance: Opposition to Female Suffrage," "Women's Suffrage Around the Globe," "Writing and Re-Writing Women's History," and "Constructions of Memory: Reflections on the Suffragette Movement."

Additionally, the collection contains a series of video interviews with Professor June Purvis, Editor of the *Women's History Review*, and Emeritus Professor of Women's & Gender History at the University of Portsmouth. Professor Purvis shares her extensive knowledge on this historic movement.

All of the content within this collection is free to the public until the end of 2018. This sounds like it could be a great resource for classroom use, as well as research. Check out the collection at explore.tandfonline.com.

Call for Papers: NCPH 2019 Conference

The National Council on Public History (NCPH) invites proposals for its 2019 conference in Hartford, Connecticut that explore how public history intersects – sometimes purposefully, sometimes with unintended consequences – with the ongoing task of making and remaking places, communities, and politics.

To learn more about the conference theme, "repair Work," and to fill out the proposal form, visit us at <http://bit.ly/ncph2019CFP>.

Final submissions are due Sunday, July 15, 2018 at 11:59 p.m.

Please email NCPH Program Manager Meghan Hillman at meghillm@iupui.edu with any questions.

Call for Proposals: Edit the *Journal of* *Women's History*

The *Journal of Women's History*, founded in 1989 as the first journal devoted exclusively to the international field of women's history, invites proposals for a new editorial home for a five-year term beginning June 1, 2010. Over the course of nearly three decades, the *Journal* has successfully bridged the divided between "women's" and "gender" history by foregrounding women as active historical subjects in a multiplicity of places and times. In doing so, it has not just restored

women to history, but has demonstrated the manifold ways in which women as gendered actors transform the historical landscape.

We seek an editorial team that will continue to foster these traditions while also bringing new and innovative ideas to the *Journal*. Interested parties should contact the *Journal* offices as soon as possible to request a prospectus that outlines the current organization and funding of the *Journal*.

Proposals to edit the *Journal* should include: 1) a statement of editorial policy, including an analysis of the current place of the *Journal* in the historical profession and a potential agenda for the future; 2) an organizational plan for the editorial and administrative functions of the *Journal*; 3) a statement of commitment of institutional support; and, 4) copies of curriculum vitae for the editor or editors. Available software for online article submission and review now make it possible to assemble an editorial team from multiple institutions.

Proposals are due to Teresa Meade, President, Board of Trustees, *Journal of Women's History*, Department of History, Union College, Schenectady, NY 12308 by March 1, 2019. The proposal can be sent via hard copy and/or email in a Word file to meadet@union.edu. If you send only via email, please send a communication in advance so that we will know it is arriving. You will receive a confirmation via email upon receipt of the full proposal.

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Membership in the CCWH runs from 1 January to 31 December each calendar year

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\$ ____	\$80 institutional membership	\$ ____	Joan Kelly Memorial Prize in Women's History (CCWH Sponsored, AHA administered)
Please make check or money order (in U.S. funds) payable to CCWH. Print and mail to: Dr. Pamela Stewart College of Integrative Sciences and Arts Arizona State University 455 N. 3rd St Suite 380 Phoenix, AZ 85004-1601		\$ ____	Peggy Pascoe Memorial Fund (at the University of Oregon)
		\$ ____	Rachel Fuchs Memorial Award for Service and Mentorship
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Insights: Notes from the CCWH is published four times a year. Our publication dates are Spring (March 1st), Summer (June 1st), Fall (September 1st), and Winter (December 1st).

We invite members of the CCWH to share your professional news with colleagues. Submit announcements about recent awards, appointments, achievements, publications, and other news. If you wish to submit material for inclusion in the newsletter, please send material to the Newsletter Editor no later than two weeks prior to publication (e.g., for the Spring issue, no later than February 15th). Material should be sent to newsletter@theccwh.org. If you have any questions about whether material would be appropriate for the newsletter please email the editor.



Instruct a man, you instruct an individual. Instruct a woman, you instruct a nation.

-Moroccan Proverb

INSIGHTS: NOTES FROM THE CCWH

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