



# INSIGHTS

NOTES FROM THE CCWH

52:1 • SPRING 2021



## CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

BY CRYSTAL FEIMSTER

On January 5, 2021, Georgia held two Senate runoff elections. Democrats won both seats and control of the U.S. Senate. Democrat Rev. Raphael Warnock, the Senior Pastor of the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, defeated Republican Senator Kelly Loeffler to become the first black senator in Georgia history and the first black Democrat elected to the Senate in the South. And Democrat Jon Ossoff, the head of a video production company that has never held public office, defeated Republican Senator David Perdue to become the first Jewish senator from Georgia and youngest sitting U.S. senator at age 33. Ossoff's and Warnock's

### IN THIS ISSUE

Co-President's Statement • P.1

Notes from the Executive Director • P.3

Connections Committee Chair's Statement • P.4

Membership Committee Chair's Statement • P.6

Public History Today • P.7  
Graduate Student Post • P.13

2020 Catherine Prelinger Award Winner Interview • P.14

Guest Column • P.18  
Book Reviews • P.19

historic victories solidified Georgia’s political transformation and created a 50-50 split between Republicans and Democrats in the Senate. The double victory ensured Democratic control of the U.S. Senate, where the former Democratic Senator and now the first female, first black, and first Asian-American Vice-President Kamala Harris will serve as the tie-breaking vote.

Taken together, the historic elections of Vice-President Harris and Senators Ossoff and Warnock bring into clear focus the instrumental roles that black women played in the 2020 elections. 91% of black women voted for President Biden and Vice-President Harris. Black women, however, did more than cast their votes on election day. In Georgia, hundreds of black women, including Stacy Abrams, the former minority leader of the Georgia House of Representatives and founder of the New Georgia Project and Fair Fight, spent years working on expanding the Democratic electorate, propelling Democrats to victory in the 2020 Senate runoffs. Thousands of black women in Florida, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Alabama, and Mississippi joined LaTosha Brown, co-founder of the Black Voters Matter Fund, to increase black voter registration and turnout in their states. While victorious in many of their campaigns, black women’s political efforts did not go unchallenged.



The day after Democrats won the runoffs in Georgia and Congress convened to certify the results of the 2020 Presidential election, a white supremacist pro-Trump mob invaded the Capital to overturn the election. Incited not only by former President Trump’s refusal to accept defeat and his violent call to action, but also by the racial and gendered implications of the Democratic victories, the rioters declared themselves “patriots” intent on “saving the Republic.” Mobilizing racist, antisemitic, and misogynist discourse, rioters killed a police officer, assaulted and injured hundreds more, and threatened to assassinate Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi and Vice-President Michael Pence.

Despite the sexism and misogyny that undergirds white supremacist politics, it comes as no surprise that white women joined Trump in his efforts to overturn the election and to disenfranchise millions of voters. During her runoff campaign, Republican Kelly Loeffler supported Trump’s refusal to acknowledge his defeat and concede the election and joined him in pressuring Georgia state officials to overturn the election. And while we have heard much about the Proud Boys, a male-dominated white supremacist organization whom Trump called to “Stand back and stand by,” we have heard far less about Women for America First, an organization founded as a challenge to “liberal feminists” and in support of Trump’s “America First” agenda. Led by Amy Kremer, a political activist from Georgia, Women for America

First perpetuated the lie that Trump won the election and organized pro-Trump rallies under the banners of “Stop Steal” and “Save America” that ultimately culminated on January 6, 2021, with the violent attack on the Capitol. And let us not forget Georgia Rep. Marjorie Taylor Green’s violent white supremacist rhetoric.

As a historian and feminist scholar who has written about how both black and white women have engaged in American politics—often with black women organizing for justice and inclusion on one side and white women violently campaigning to maintain exclusionary politics of white supremacy on the other—I cannot help but center black and white women in making sense of the elections and the January 6 riot. I have sought to understand when and where black and white women’s political interest intersect in my research. All too often, black and white women have been on opposite sides of the struggle to expand the racial and gendered meanings of citizenship. Of course, this is not to say that white and black women have not worked together in racial and gender equality struggles. But white supremacy exacerbates the difference between black and white women and pitches women against one another.

The willingness of so many white women to embrace white supremacy and to participate in politics that act in concert with the male-defined interests of a white supremacist state on the one hand, and the dogged and often thankless work black feminist activists and scholars do to create a beloved community on the other hand, raises the question of what women historians and feminist scholars can do? Can CCWH be a place that Toni Morrison imagined, “where self-sabotage is harder to maintain; where the worship of masculinity as a concept dies; where intelligent compassion for women unlike ourselves can surface; where racism and class inequity do not help the vision or the research; where, in fact, the work itself, the very process of doing it, makes sororicide as well as fratricide repulsive.” Indeed, the answer is YES- if we are willing to do the work together.

## Notes from the Executive Director

### Elizabeth Everton

Dear CCWH Members,

Happy new year! It’s good to welcome 2021 with you. I want to open by talking about something you may have noticed—we’ll be making some changes to the newsletter in 2021! The co-presidents and I are happy to introduce our new newsletter editor, Jacqueline-Bethel Tchouta Mougoué. Jacqueline-Bethel is an assistant professor of African Cultural Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the author of *Gender, Separatist Politics, and Embodied Nationalism in Cameroon*, among many other publications.



Welcome again, too, to our newest board members, Karla Strand (Book and Media Review Editor), Farina King (Media Coordinator), and Julie Johnson (Graduate Student Representative). And we welcome Jacqueline Allain, who is stepping into a new role as Graduate Student Representative. It’s so exciting to have the opportunity to work with you and learn from you. And this is the moment where I’m going to ask you to stop reading this column and skip right ahead to Jacqueline’s on a recent panel on non-tenure-track careers for historians (on page 13).

I’m so excited that Jacqueline chose this topic to write on. It’s an important topic, and one to which the CCWH and other organizations have been paying close attention in the past years. Indeed, I think that the CCWH can claim to be somewhat

ahead of the curve in thinking about what it means to be a historian and the breadth of work that historians engage with.

Our distinguished former Executive Director, Sandra Dawson, recently reminded me that next year will be the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Catherine Prelinger Award. The award recognizes and enhances the work of a scholar whose academic path has not followed the traditional path of uninterrupted study. In so doing, it honors Catherine Prelinger's path as a lecturer and scholar outside of the tenure track and her advocacy for other scholars who likewise find themselves in alternative academic careers.

The question of who is outside and who is inside—the tenure track, the academy, even the professor of history—is one I have considered carefully and for a long time. Like the panelists Jacqueline describes in her column, I also work primarily outside of academia. When I completed my graduate degree, I went on the academic job market while working as an adjunct. It was at this time that I also started volunteering for the CCWH. Due to changes in my personal circumstances, however, I realized that I wanted to pursue a different path. I took a job as an instructional designer, and since then, I have worked on building a career in a very different environment than I expected when I first started graduate school.

While making this choice, I wrestled with what it meant to be a historian outside of the academy: whether it would be possible to continue to research, to write, to teach, to be part of the active life of the mind that is the historical profession and to be a contributor to the community of historians. It's something I still wrestle with, to be honest. What is clear to me is that there are many ways to do history and be a historian. Historians take many paths, both on their way to the historical profession and within it.

To learn more about Catherine Prelinger, the Prelinger Award's history, and its winners' stories, I encourage you to check out *Reshaping Women's History: Voices of Nontraditional Women Historians*, edited by Julie A. Gallagher and Barbara Winslow. The edited volume features excellent essays by previous winners of the Prelinger Award. The CCWH will be holding an online roundtable next month on careers for historians beyond academia. I hope to see you there!

All the best, and happy new year,

Liz

## The Importance of a Feasible Profession

### Ilaria Scaglia Connections Coordinator

At a time when challenges to “truth” and their implications are all too clear, and while accelerating cuts to programs and positions—together with the exploitation of underpaid adjuncts—are leading to nothing less than the widespread collapse of our discipline, we must have the courage to connect with our students and to share our views on what universities can do to improve the situation.

Here is my drop in the bucket, which I hope will be followed by many more. I believe that ours has been designed as a profession for a few, and despite substantial progress in terms of representation, this has not changed. The expectation has long been that an academic would be willing to move wherever; one is fortunate to have found a job, any job. Adjunct and visiting positions, often underpaid and temporary, are the norm; a permanent post is the best it can get.



But even then, one should not dare ask for support to make it easier for a spouse to accompany them to another state or country for a new job. In a profession still designed around a model featuring a husband with a

dutiful wife in tow, individuals on the job market dare not mention the “s” word. The norm is that one is either single or equipped with a “portable” partner, or ready to live and love in a long-distance relationship. If unhappy with any of these options, then academia is out. In terms of pay, “a foot in the door” and “exposure” naturally count as salary. If lucky enough to have a full-time and permanent position, one shall not complain about the fact that self-funding of research/conferences and moving costs are expected and will have to come out of pocket. Even when funded, one will have to put the money down first and wait for a refund. Now living far away from any support network, with family life uncomfortably adjusted to make it possible to continue to work while often short in cash—and frequently without a member of their identity group to rely upon while facing all kinds of discrimination—one shall not dare to complain. Faculty satisfaction is not a priority; at least you’ve got a job. Still unhappy? Someone else will take it.

One should not be surprised by how few women—especially first generation—are in academia and how many are still hanging on.

Who can do something about it, then? The students. Since neo-liberal models have now reduced them to customers, then they should use their power to ask that teaching staff is employed and paid fairly; they should insist that universities keep class size and course loads reasonably low so that faculty can give students the attention they deserve (then they should complain if that does not happen!). Students should boycott academic sweatshop institutions and demand that an academic job becomes a feasible profession even for people who do not have significant capital to rely upon and a family to support them. They should aspire to study and someday work in an inspirational environment to perform a societal function that we need now more than ever.

Do they stand a chance to succeed? To be sure, somebody will quickly point out that this is not possible because of financial reasons. To this, they should politely reply that while student numbers and fees have grown exponentially, faculty pay, status, and experiences (of both the faculty and students) have sharply decreased. Then they should highlight the many

items in the budget that the university can cut—administrative overpay and marketing resources to “attract” customers could be first on the chopping block. Any step to eliminating the unreasonable expectations listed above would then inevitably lead to more women in academia. Wondering about blacks, LGBTQ, disabled, etc.? Control-find-replace the term “women” with the desired category. Above all, they should insist that in our troubled “1776” times, this should not be a concession, but the *priority* of any government committed to democracy.

Since the day they earned their Ph.D., faculty members have been held hostage by this system. There is no better time for students to free us—and themselves, and society as a whole—from this dangerous chronic disease whose nefarious effects have never been more evident and scary.

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New year, time to renew!  
Don't forget to renew your  
membership for 2021.

Renewing allows you to  
continue to be part of this  
vibrant community and  
enjoy the initiative and  
programs we are offering.

Renew your membership at  
[http://theccwh.org/  
membership/](http://theccwh.org/membership/). If you have  
questions, please contact  
[membership@theccwh.org](mailto:membership@theccwh.org).

As always, spread the word to  
friends, colleagues, and students  
who may be interested in our  
organization and its mission.

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## Membership Committee

### Chair

#### **Einav Rabinovitch-Fox**

Dear Members,

For many of us, writing is perhaps the most challenging aspect of being a historian. We love being in the archives, and we love doing research (at least for me, it is the reason I became a historian), and we also enjoy teaching and engaging with students and colleagues.

Yet, writing—and deadlines—are a different matter. Although I enjoy writing about my research, I still understand why so many of us dread it and why we often cling to rigid deadlines that will motivate us not to procrastinate or stare for hours at a blank page, trying to turn our thoughts and research into a coherent narrative.

Another issue that makes writing a daunting task to many is perhaps the loneliness that is part of the process. We all have in mind the image of the lone scholar working on her manuscript, drudging her way in crafting words and finding references. In some sense, this image is not a feminist one, but one that goes counter to all ideas of collaboration, support, and solidarity. And while many of us were taught to see ourselves in this image, academia as a

whole still favors the image of the lone male scholar, absorbed in the world of letters and books and oblivious to the realities of life around him – family needs, service demands, and the mundane aspects of living—a world too many of us know too well.



However, writing doesn't have to be like this, and scholars come in many forms. Here at the CCWH, we started a "Virtual Writing Group" to answer our members' needs, who, especially in the last year, are struggling to find their "room of their own" to write.

Over 6 or 8 weeks, we will offer this 1.5-hour getaway, where people can work on their writing project, be it a dissertation, an article, a book chapter, or anything else you have in mind. [Stefanie Shackleton](#) leads the sessions. The writing sessions are our way to create a community and a working atmosphere, even if a virtual one,

like the one you might have found in the days when we still went to cafes and other shared working spaces. While writing itself is still somewhat an individual endeavor, at least you are not doing it alone. The virtual group allows you also to have causal questions such as "What word sounds better?" or "Is there a word for X?" to be answered quickly without entering a writing block.

According to Stefanie, many attendees appreciate the appointed dedicated writing time, which provides gentle accountability. There is a time to show up, people to see us, and the participants all understand that kids needing homework help or the surprise meeting might interrupt the writing flow. We're all there for the same reason, all sharing just a little in the struggle and supporting each other how we can.

Indeed, while the weekly writing group aims to create a writing routine and a designated time in your writing schedule, we recognize that it is not always possible to commit yourself to a set number of sessions. For this reason, we are also planning "Virtual Writing Weekend Retreats" over the summer.

We hope you'll take advantage of this new initiative and, as always,

invite you to be in touch with further ideas on how we can make your membership valuable. You are always welcome to write us at [membership@theccwh.org](mailto:membership@theccwh.org)

Writing doesn't have to be a solitary endeavor; it can be a tool to build community!

## Insights from the Field

### Public History

### Coordinator

### Elyssa B. Ford



Patricia Biggs completed her doctorate in history at Arizona State University and has served as an interpretive ranger at Manzanar National Historic Site in California for the past nine years. The site is one of ten American internment camps that the U.S. government used to detain over 100,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. She reflects on interpretation at that site within the context of political change and the COVID pandemic.

[Have you seen encouragement or pressure from the national level to change or adjust the narrative told at your site?](#)

In the nine years I have worked as an interpretive ranger at Manzanar National Historic Site, there has been no encouragement or pressure from the national level to change or adjust the narrative. I should clarify that it would be a difficult thing for anyone to adjust Manzanar's narrative, because there simply isn't "a narrative." Manzanar, as one of 10 sites that the U.S. Government used to unjustly incarcerate Japanese Americans during World War II, brings in as many different narratives and experiences as possible. The site's guiding interpretive theme is "One camp, ten thousand lives. One camp, ten thousand stories." Each person incarcerated or employed at Manzanar War Relocation Center in WWII had unique experiences, and reacted in unique ways. It is a broad human rights topic, and the more voices we can bring forth the more Manzanar meets its educational mission.

[What changes have you seen with your visitors and their interests, particularly as connected to contemporary social and political events within the U.S. and world?](#)

During my first two years at Manzanar, it seemed that visitors most often made comparisons of the treatment of Japanese Americans either to that of people in the Nazi concentration camps, or to the racial profiling of Muslims or Middle Easterners that occurred after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Both those analogies (even 2001) were enough in the past that visitors seemed comfortable with them. Beginning in January 2015 with the extremist attack on the Charlie Hebdo magazine office in Paris, and continuing with numerous other global acts of violence and growing anti-immigrant sentiments, the comfort of history seemed to fade. Visitors became more aware that racial/ethnic/nationalist violence and reactions to that violence are current issues. The lessons of Manzanar are increasingly relevant in this century.

[How has COVID impacted the work that you do?](#)

In March 2020, the Visitor Center closed due to safety concerns for staff and visitors. However, the square-mile site, with its three-mile driving tour and multiple walking paths, remained open. As an interpretive park ranger, I worked with colleagues to increase the educational materials available to visitors outside. We added brochures and map holders and created temporary outdoor exhibits. In the summer of 2020, our

facilities staff created viewing stations at the doors of two reconstructed buildings. Visitors can stand at the doorway and look into an early barracks apartment and the mess hall. Manzanar's cultural resources staff has continued its archaeology work on the site. They are excavating an area known as the Children's Village, where 101 orphans lived during World War II.

When Manzanar's Visitor Center is open (normally every day except December 25), I spend part of my day talking to visitors, giving school groups tours, or roving the site. In the past year, I have worked almost entirely from home, researching, writing, and designing interpretive exhibits. This week we installed three wayside exhibit panels near the historic entrance. It is the epicenter of a deadly standoff on December 6, 1942, between military police and Japanese Americans. Commonly mislabeled the Manzanar "riot," that night's events have been the most widely written about, and the most misconstrued, of anything that occurred at Manzanar during WWII.

What is your hope for the future with the NPS and with your site?

In the past several years I have seen NPS from the top down trying (not just talking about) increasing its outreach to historically marginalized groups. I hope that continues and gets stronger in the future. Manzanar, as an historic site, is different from many of the NPS sites that were established primarily for people to enjoy the outdoor beauty. But even those sites have been trying to share a more expansive human history, and that is a wonderful thing. I hope Manzanar continues its strong partnerships not only with Japanese Americans, but with the local indigenous peoples and with the Muslim communities that have been attending our annual pilgrimage.

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**"THE LESSONS OF MANZANAR ARE INCREASINGLY RELEVANT IN THIS CENTURY."**

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## Announcements

### COKIE ROBERTS FELLOWSHIP IN WOMEN'S HISTORY

The Cokie Roberts Research Fund for Women's History will support one to three annual fellowships for graduate students, journalists, historians or authors who perform new research to elevate women's history using the records held by the National Archives.

Recipients of the fellowship will perform original document research from the National Archives on women's history for a published article or essay appearing in a newspaper, magazine, website, book, or academic publication.

The application deadline is coming up on March 12, and more information is available here:

<https://archivesfoundation.org/cokiefund/#:~:text=TheCokieRobertsResearchFund,todonatetothefund>



### SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN HISTORIANS (SAWH)

#### A. Elizabeth Taylor Prize

The A. Elizabeth Taylor Prize is awarded annually for the best article published during the preceding year in the field of southern women's history. Articles published between January 1 and December 31, 2020 will be eligible for the 2021 competition. To submit, email the article as an attachment to [taylorprize@thesawh.org](mailto:taylorprize@thesawh.org). The deadline for submission is August 1, 2021.

#### Julia Cherry Spruill Prize

The Julia Cherry Spruill Prize is awarded annually for the best book in southern women's history, broadly construed. Only monographs with a copyright date of 2020 are eligible for the award in 2021. Entries must be written in English, but the competition is open to works published outside the U.S., and presses may submit as many of their eligible books as they choose. To nominate a book for the Spruill Prize, please contact Diane Miller Sommerville at [sommervi@binghamton.edu](mailto:sommervi@binghamton.edu) for the committee member's addresses. Entries must be postmarked no later than May 15, 2021.

#### Willie Lee Rose Prize

The Willie Lee Rose Prize is awarded annually for the best book authored by a woman. Only monographs with a copyright date of 2020 are eligible for the award in 2021. Entries must be written in English, but the competition is open to works published outside the U.S., and presses may submit as many of their eligible books as they choose. To nominate a book for the Spruill Prize, mail a copy of the publication to each committee member, postmarked no later than May 15, 2021.

More information is available here:

<http://thesawh.org/prizes-and-fellowships/>

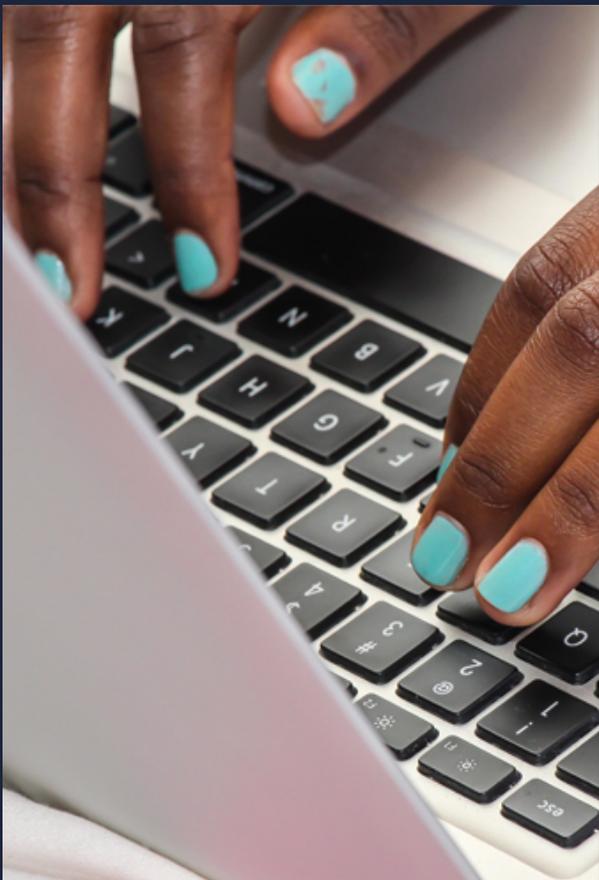
## Announcements

### CCWH VIRTUAL WRITING GROUP 2021

CCWH Virtual Writing Group  
Mondays, February 8-April 29, 2021

Registration is still open to our CCWH virtual writing group for interested members.

Meetings will be Mondays, 3 pm-4:30 pm EST/2 pm-3:30 pm CST, February 8th – April 29th, held in Zoom for an hour and a half for dedicated quiet writing time.



During each session, attendees will:

- Spend the first couple of minutes saying hello and deciding their goal for the day
- Have mics muted for the remaining time so everyone can stay focused
- Have cameras on (preferably, but not required) so we can see our friends working alongside us
- Be encouraged to use chat to help each other along the way, but are free to ignore it when we're concentrating

Once registered, you will be sent an email that includes the Zoom link and password that will be the same for each meeting of the session.

This group is open to all CCWH members with any kind of writing project. At this time, there is no limit on the number of members who can sign up for the group, but those who sign up are encouraged to attend through the entire eight weeks.

If you are interested, please register using this link:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSctWA-I3-OP1zedxuVLntMKJTF406vYoTnTpmn\\_yY2JhxZt9w/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSctWA-I3-OP1zedxuVLntMKJTF406vYoTnTpmn_yY2JhxZt9w/viewform)

Also, for those of you who need to renew your membership, you can still do it at

<https://theccwh.org/membership/>

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

# HAPPY WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH!

### Women's History Month Virtual Events



March 1-March 5: Virtual Film Screening, "Standing On My Sisters' Shoulders," University of Georgia.  
Information here: <https://iws.uga.edu/events/content/2021/iws-virtual-film-screening-womens-history-month-standing-my-sisters-shoulders>

March 3: Dr. Katherine Marino, "Feminism in the Americas," University of the Pacific.  
Information here:  
[https://calendar.pacific.edu/event/womens\\_history\\_month\\_talk\\_feminism\\_in\\_the\\_americas?utm\\_campaign=widget&utm\\_medium=widget&utm\\_source=University+of+the+Pacific](https://calendar.pacific.edu/event/womens_history_month_talk_feminism_in_the_americas?utm_campaign=widget&utm_medium=widget&utm_source=University+of+the+Pacific)

March 4: Dr. Joan Marie Johnson, "Race, Rights and the Woman Suffrage Movement: The Stories of Alva Vanderbilt Belmont, Irene Moorman and Rose Schneiderman," Vanderbilt University.  
Information here: [https://vanderbilt.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_miqVIMX7TOWGtpUl8mpPg](https://vanderbilt.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_miqVIMX7TOWGtpUl8mpPg)

March 9: Dr. Kristen R. Ghodsee, "On the Socialist History of International Women's Day," University of Kansas.  
Information here: <https://kristenghodsee.com/new-events/2021/3/9/womens-history-month-lecture-at-the-university-of-kansas>

## Announcements

### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH VIRTUAL EVENT

The Stories We Tell and the Objects  
We Keep: Asian American Women  
and the Archives, Harvard University.

Friday, March 5, 2021  
Online on Zoom

More Information here:  
<https://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/event/2021-stories-we-tell-objects-we-keep-conference-virtual>

The stories of Asian American women extend far beyond the geographic borders of the United States. Inspired by tales and objects from family history, their narratives often reflect the transnational nature of Asian American women's lives. Despite the importance of these narratives to expanding and complicating our understanding of war, migration, inequity, and difference, the accounts and perspectives of Asian American women have often been overlooked in formal records, and the tangible objects providing critical evidence of their histories have been ignored. This program will bring together Asian American activists and artists, including novelists, filmmakers, and photographers, to share the stories that inspire their craft and the objects they retain as part of their personal histories. "The Stories We Tell and the Objects We Keep" reflects the Radcliffe Institute's commitment to revealing complete, balanced, and diverse histories of women in America.



## Graduate Student Representative Jacqueline Allain

“No matter how rocky your program feels in the moment, you can finish,” said Jes Malitoris in her opening remarks at a panel discussion on non-tenure-track careers for historians hosted by the Department of History at Duke University. Malitoris graduated with a Ph.D. from the department in 2019 and now works as Exhibits Manager at Duke University Press. She, alongside alumni Ashley Rose Young ('17), the Historian of the American Food History Project at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History (NMAH), and Heidi Scott Giusto ('12), owner of Career Path Writing Solutions, had come to talk to current graduate students about careers beyond the professoriate. For my first CCWH column, I am going to relay some of the insights that they shared.

All three speakers started by explaining their career trajectories. In her sixth year of graduate school, Malitoris realized that she did not want to pursue a tenure track career, so she started searching for internships that would give her new

experiences. She obtained an internship at Duke University Press. This internship led to two temporary jobs at Duke University Press, after which the press offered her a permanent position. Malitoris enjoys working at an academic publishing house because it allows her to stay involved in



academic life. “My history graduate work is fundamental to who I am and how I look at the world,” she explains. As a graduate student, Malitoris had wide-ranging interests and had a difficult time deciding on a field. In her current career, she can stay abreast of developments in various fields. She finds it meaningful and satisfying to support the work of other scholars.

Like Malitoris, Young first began as an intern and then secured a position shortly after that. Young entered graduate

school with a very firm idea of what she wanted to research: public food culture in New Orleans. Young always wanted to do something involving education. Throughout her graduate school career, she seized myriad opportunities to pursue internships in different fields to help prepare her for a wide range of professions — all centered on education in some way. In her final year, she obtained an internship at the NMAH, which eventually helped her land a permanent position with the museum. Young loves her job so much that she even turned down a tenure track job offer, which she had applied for while working at the NMAH. She enjoys working with the public through museum programming and exhibitions and is currently revising her dissertation into a book manuscript.

Shortly after she finished her Ph.D., Giusto started Career Path Writing Solutions, a consulting service that helps clients with job searches and resume writing. As a graduate student, Giusto worked as a tutor at Duke's Writing Studio. She found that she loved working with writers individually, and so semester after semester, she turned down Teaching Assistant positions to continue working at the Writing Studio. Her job as a tutor is what led her to decide on consulting as a

career. Giusto emphasizes that it is possible to become a successful entrepreneur without any formal business training. When she first decided not to pursue a tenure track job, Giusto assumed she had to leave teaching behind. But she has found that she still gets to teach through her current position, which she finds satisfying.

Young and Giusto agree that attitudes toward alternative academic career paths have changed since they began graduate school. They report having felt concerned about speaking openly about careers outside of academia for fear of being looked down on by professors and peers. Today, the culture in higher education is more accepting of alternative academic career paths.

The main takeaways I took from the panel are as follows:

- If your university has a career center, visit it! All three panelists describe the Duke Career Center as having provided them with valuable advice, such as how to write a resume, which is entirely different from a curriculum vitae.
- There is nothing to be ashamed of in pursuing an alternative academic career—don't let anyone make you feel bad about casting your net wide or for simply not being interested in a tenure track career.

- Take advantage of a wide array of internship opportunities. You never know what you might end up loving, and internships can lead to jobs.

## Whitney Leeson



The CCWH Catherine Prelinger Award is a scholarship of \$20,000 awarded to a scholar of excellence. This award, named for Catherine Prelinger, a former CCWH president, and nontraditional scholar, enhances the work of a contemporary scholar whose academic path has not followed the traditional path of uninterrupted study, moving from completed secondary, to undergraduate, then graduate degrees, followed by a tenure-track faculty position. This year's winner of the Prelinger is Aimee Loiselle, a modern U.S. historian and women's studies scholar, educator, researcher,

and writer. She has a diverse array of publications (nonfiction and fiction), extensive experience with various archives, and over twenty years as an educator involved in teaching and student retention.

Below is an interview with Aimee Loiselle by Whitney Leeson about her current work and future plans.

Congratulations on winning the Catherine Prelinger Award and receiving the Lerner-Scott Prize for the best doctoral dissertation in U.S. women's history. These are two remarkable accomplishments in the same year. Can you describe the contribution your work, "Creating Norma Rae: The Erasure of Puerto Rican Needleworkers and Southern Labor Activists in a Neoliberal Icon," makes to our understanding of working women's interactions with global capital?

This project does not simply recover Crystal Lee Sutton, the inspiration for the movie *Norma Rae* (1979), but reevaluates the context in which she worked and organized, expanding it beyond the South to the U.S. Atlantic, including Puerto Rico. By employing a transnational framework and a cross-disciplinary lens, *Creating Norma Rae* questions the centrality of white southern mill workers in labor histories, emphasizes the significance of migrating women of color in a long history of global supply chains, and interrogates how culture shapes the neoliberal political economy.

I bring together tools from women's labor history, history of capitalism, and cultural history to explore the larger industrial and union circumstances that led to the contested production of Norma Rae and the cultural work the film did to reconstitute a narrow notion of the white American working class. I argue that U.S. government offices and textile and garment enterprises incorporated women of the New South and Puerto Rico into manufacturing in distinct yet interrelated ways at the turn of the twentieth century. Colonial women workers played an important part in U.S. economic ambitions and the labor movement. Despite these complicated globalizing conditions, a fascination with poor white southerners led popular media to focus on Crystal Lee, a millhand in North Carolina and member of the Textile Workers Union of America (TWUA) in the early 1970s. My detailed study of Norma Rae shows how popular culture works to rearticulate familiar meanings and obscure disconcerting global complexities due to its own reliance on gendered and racialized narratives. I emphasize the importance of capitalist mechanisms in the arena of cultural politics, especially regarding questions of who contests and shapes the visibility and meanings for "worker."

[How will the Prelinger scholarship help enhance your work on the history of women's labor?](#)

I am extremely grateful for the exhilarating infusion the Prelinger Award brings to my work. The acknowledgment of my research from admired scholars carries a special confirmation because I studied as a nontraditional graduate student and became an older junior scholar. The funds also offer an amazing opportunity to travel for more research. Much of my scholarship on Puerto Rican needleworkers and their northeastern migrations in the late twentieth century relies on small archives, regional collections, and oral histories. I am excited to dig for more of these resources, take trips throughout New England, and record more interviews. The award will accelerate the research, moving the project toward publication on a shorter timeline.

With limits at many academic presses on the number of images allowed in monographs, I also hope to ensure the resulting book contains the images necessary to enhance its argument about popular culture. Ultimately, the funds will allow me to focus on polishing the book manuscript without the pressure of wondering if I might need to take an extra temporary or contingent position to meet the needs of my household.

[If you had the opportunity to remake the 1979 movie \*Norma Rae\* who would you cast in Crystal Lee Sutton's role and why?](#)

Sally Field did a great job with the script she received in 1978, and she was the right age for the part. But Field had a famous persona as a spunky, cute, petite woman, which she brought to Norma Rae. This celebrity dominated the film and its reception. If a production team remade the movie in 2021, I would pick someone who brings Crystal Lee's more solid presence and focused determination to the part. Kathleen Turner or Cate Blanchett would have been phenomenal, but Crystal Lee was 33 years old during her peak union activism. Emma Stone might be a good age-appropriate choice.

[What one or two changes would you make to update the script in light of your work analyzing how Hollywood professionals shaped the story to suit their commercial ambitions?](#)

The most important script revision would be to depict the TWUA membership drive before Norma appears in the movie. Black workers, building on the civil rights labor activism of the 1960s, pushed into segregated southern mills and fueled years of unionizing.

Crystal Lee discovered these membership drives and became a vocal and vibrant organizer. Joseph Williams, a black mill hand who joined the union in Roanoke Rapids before Crystal Lee, would become a main character introduced with the white TWUA organizer who arrived to launch the drive. Norma would enter the movie after three or four scenes with black workers. The other major revision would be to carry the movie past the union certification vote, onto the efforts to force J.P. Stevens into fair collective bargaining. Rather than one white woman sparking one mill to vote union, Norma would be a dedicated participant expanding a regional, interracial labor campaign across many mills.

[Can you tell our members about your work with the Reproductive Justice History Project at Smith? In what ways will organizers and activists use the digital toolkit of women's stories you are helping create?](#)

The RJ History Project aims to make history an accessible, productive, and exciting tool for women's organizing. We envision its use for organizing, training, outreach, and fundraising. Smith College has

committed to such "history-into-action partnerships of scholars and activists" that integrate lessons from women's past into current issue campaigns and strategy development. The content team writes 1200-word chapters on RJ topics across 400 years of U.S. history. RJ organizations can use these chapters with our corresponding curriculum or with their own implementation activities: to connect their organizers with a historic solidarity, to learn about the effectiveness or limits of various tactics, to understand how specific breakthroughs or achievements happened, to educate their clients and community members, to oppose restrictions on women's access to reproductive healthcare, and to raise awareness with potential funders.

Women of color activists developed the RJ framework in the 1990s as they questioned the "reproductive rights" approach of many national organizations. That approach emphasizes the legal right to birth control and abortion healthcare without challenging the economic and social obstacles to such healthcare for low-income women. RJ also addresses the coercive ways birth control and sterilization have been pushed onto women of color and

women with disabilities and raises larger issues related to childrearing and reproductive labor, such as indigenous lands, food insecurity, clean water, housing, and environmental contamination.

[Your recent publications include several fiction pieces. I suspect that short stories are like children, and it is impossible \(or, at least, unwise\) to pick a favorite. That said, do you have a particular short story you like to recommend to readers encountering your work for the first time?](#)

[My] personal website lists my fiction with links to the pieces available online. "Nina" is the first short story I wrote where readers can see a developed creative voice, and I am proud of "The Things You Take, The Things You Leave" and "Souvenirs." If readers want to hear an audio interpretation, The Drum has a recording of me reading "Three Women Wishing for a Boy."

# 2020 CATHERINE PRELINGER AWARD WINNER

Aimee Loiselle, University of Connecticut

Book Manuscript project,  
“Creating Norma Rae:  
Southern Labor Activists  
and Puerto Rican  
Needleworkers Lost in  
Reagan’s America”



Aimee Loiselle’s personal website:  
<http://www.aimeeloiselle.com/>

The link to the story “Nina”:  
<http://www.squarelake.com/Four/Loiselle.htm>

The link to the audio recording of “Three Women Wishing for a Boy”:  
[https://www.drumlitmag.com/sounds/f/Issue\\_1-dot-\\_May\\_2010/](https://www.drumlitmag.com/sounds/f/Issue_1-dot-_May_2010/)

Dear members,

We have started a new guest column in which we feature posts by leaders (past and present) of various women's history organizations in the U.S. and beyond, such as the Southern Association for Women Historians (SAWH). We are pleased to feature the below inaugural column by

Dr. Jennifer Ritterhouse, 2020 SAWH President.

Jacqueline-Bethel Mougoué, Newsletter Editor

### **Jennifer Ritterhouse, Professor of History at George Mason University and SAWH President in 2020**

*We are likely to acknowledge that white middle-class women have had a different experience from African American, Latina, Asian American, and Native American women; but the relation, the fact that these histories exist simultaneously, in dialogue with each other, is seldom apparent. . . . This reflects the fact that we have still to recognize that being a woman is, in fact, not extractable from the context in which one is a woman -- that is, race, class, time, and place.*

I first encountered these wise words from Elsa Barkley Brown's 1992 essay "What Has Happened Here?: The Politics of Difference in Women's History and Feminist Politics" during my first year of graduate school. I took the idea of relational difference to heart and have always tried to keep the final sentence quoted above in mind as I research, write, and teach. Within the last year, though, I've found myself needing to revise it in an important way. Drafting an essay about "intersectional southerners" and region as a category of analysis, I realized I needed to add some crucial words to make my point: "that being a woman [or a man or non-binary] is, in fact, not extractable from the context in which one is a woman [or a man or non-binary]--that is, race, class, time, and place."

Founded in 1970 at a meeting of the Southern Historical Association, for fifty years the Southern Association for Women Historians (SAWH) has provided a supportive professional network primarily for White women studying the American South. Black women historians were a vital, visible presence from the organization's adolescence, if not its infancy, as suggested by the fact that Darlene Clark Hine, Barbara J. Fields, Thavolia Glymph, and Barkley Brown all gave keynote addresses or served as SAWH presidents or both before the organization celebrated its first twenty-five years. Nevertheless, the SAWH has long needed to work—and perhaps has not always worked hard enough—to make it clear that the "southern" in its name does not prioritize White-southern subjects or scholars. Inclusivity is a fundamental SAWH goal.

Only recently have I grasped that the SAWH may have something of a "woman problem" in addition to its "southern problem." We want to mentor graduate students, but what are we visibly offering to scholars who are gender fluid themselves or generationally cognizant of the need to recognize the gender fluidity of others? Although a change in the organization's name is probably not in the offing, the officers and Executive Council did think through and approve new wording for the SAWH website that I hope will be another step toward achieving the sensitivity to difference within a framework of inclusiveness that Barkley Brown taught me to aspire to nearly thirty years ago. Here, from [thesawh.org](http://thesawh.org), is what the SAWH wants to be and to do as we begin our next fifty years:

*The Southern Association for Women Historians (SAWH) supports the study of women's and gender history of the American South. The organization welcomes as members all who are interested in these fields, and we value individuals and their differences including race, economic status, gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age, and ability status. The SAWH especially appreciates the work of public historians, archivists, independent scholars, and those in alt-academic positions, in addition to those teaching in colleges and universities. Although most SAWH members study the South, whether from within or beyond the region, the organization also encourages historians in any field of study who live in the southern states to find a home and support network within the SAWH.*

## Book Reviews

**Karla Strand**

**Book Review Editor**

If you are a CCWH member and have recently published a book or have suggestions for books for review, please be in touch with Karla Strand at [karlajstrand@gmail.com](mailto:karlajstrand@gmail.com).

Please visit the CCWH website for a list of books we have for review.

*A Historical Guide to World Slavery*, Seymore Drescher and Stanley L. Engerman, editors, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, xxiv + 429 pp., ISBN: 0-19-512091-4

Dr. Kelley Fanto Deetz

Visiting Scholar, Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies, University of California, Berkeley

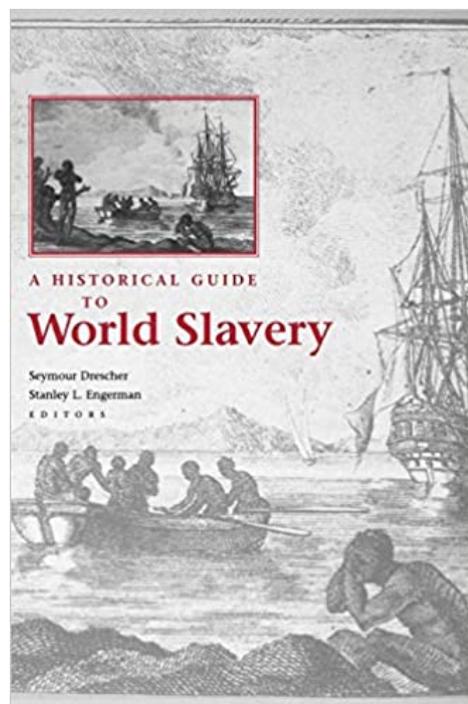
In 1998, editors Seymore Drescher and Stanley L. Engerman put together *A Historical Guide to World Slavery*, a lengthy volume of essays contextualizing the history of enslavement throughout the world, and through time. This was a massive undertaking, executed with broad introductory contributions from over 100 scholars.

This volume aims to “explore patterns of relationships and production, or to elucidate long-term changes and cumulative effects” (viii). Explicit is the intent to showcase and measure the impact of mass cumulative social processes over individual events or persons. Thus, this extensive work is an excellent starting point, a foundational grounding to overlay the extensive people-focused, event-centric, and more recent scholarship upon.

Drescher and Engerman include a well-written and succinct introduction, entitled “The Problem of Slavery,” written by David Brion Davis, which sets the stage for the vast breadth of information to follow.

A global and historical system, slavery has a long-standing relationship with labor. The birth of capitalism and conquest rapidly changed the system that existed in other forms before, into one that has consumed the modern ideas about race, class, and human rights. What follows is a series of short essays that cover broad ranges of subtopics, such as anti-slavery literature, Caribbean agriculture, family, and Roman law. The illustrations throughout the volume are exceptional. These primary sources (paintings, drawings, and engravings) provide excellent visual references and act as themselves a gateway to exploring the vast number of digital archives that have since been curated and published online. The geographical and chronological boundaries are expansive in this work, and provide a true world lens for the study of comparative slavery.

*A Historical Guide to World Slavery* was published in 1998, at a point when the study of slavery, particularly in relation to the African Diaspora, was becoming ever more popular in the academy. The archaeological excavation and media blitz of the African Burial Ground in New York City, Colonial Williamsburg’s slavery programs, and David Eltis’ Slavery Database, which was then an Excel file, and



is now a state-of-the-art interactive website, were some of the projects that helped ignite the interest of scholars and the public alike. This volume was incredibly timely in 1998, and for the most part has held up with significant integrity.

It is also the timing of this publication that, to no fault of its own, lacks some of the more significant intellectual pursuits of the systems of slavery. The 2000s brought forth significant numbers of work that further illuminated topics such as the intersections of gender, class, and race, brought in more interdisciplinary scholarship, and pushed scholars to read against the archive. The intention to avoid focusing on individuals or events is striking, but allows for the reader to find historical context, regional and systematic differences, to then overlay a biography, or a monograph upon. With an overreliance on Google, the 21st century needs a go-to scholarly resource for the study of slavery, and this is it.

This encyclopedic text is filled with some of the most influential scholars of slavery in the world. The bibliographies, the contributors, and the ways in which the entries are organized and presented provide a striking and valuable introduction to the study of world slavery. Basic questions related to comparative slavery can be answered with this text. The accessibility of this multifaceted book makes it well suited for a popular audience, or for anyone who wants an encyclopedic reference at hand.

## Announcements

### **Calls for Applications, 2021 Sara A. Whaley Book Prize**

The National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) is proud to announce that the application process for the 2021 Sara A. Whaley Book Prize is now open. Thanks to a generous bequest from Sara A. Whaley, NWSA will offer an annual \$2,000 Sara A. Whaley book award on the topic of women and labor. This prize honors Sara Whaley, who owned Rush Publishing and was the editor of Women's Studies Abstracts. Each year NWSA will award a book prize (\$2,000) for a monograph that addresses women and labor from intersectional perspectives.

Copies of Electronic Books must be received by June 15, 2021. Please visit the NWSA Submittable site to submit an application:

<https://nwsa.submittable.com/submit/188274/2021-sara-a-whaley-book-prize>

Please email any questions to [nwsaoffice@nwsa.org](mailto:nwsaoffice@nwsa.org)

### **Call for Articles, FACH (*Family and Community History*)**

*Family and Community History* publishes three times a year with Taylor and Francis and is currently looking for submissions on local, family, and community history (quite widely defined) from the medieval period onwards. We encourage submissions from early-career researchers, doctoral candidates, and independent scholars as well as established academics. We also accept shorter pieces from 4000 words upwards. You may have an article you are considering submitting for publication or you may have an idea for a special edition and may wish to curate with us. If you would like more information, see the journal's website here: <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/yfch20/current> and/or email [mark.rothery@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:mark.rothery@northampton.ac.uk)

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Want to spread the words about calls for papers, prizes, fellowship applications, job postings, and other opportunities? Want to announce your book, article, or award?

Email [execdir@theccwh.org](mailto:execdir@theccwh.org) to have your announcement published in the newsletter, on the CCWH website, or on our social media.

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### **Carol Gold Best Article Prize**

Jessica Brannon-Wranosky, Ph.D., Chair

### **Nupur Chaudhuri First Article Prize**

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### **CCWH/Berkshire Conference Graduate Student Fellowship**

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### **Ida B. Wells Graduate Student Fellowship**

Rafaela Acevedo-Field, Ph.D., Chair

### **Rachel Fuchs Memorial Award**

Natanya Duncan, Ph.D., Chair

52: 1 SPRING 2021

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Insights: Notes from the CCWH is published quarterly, on or around March 1 (Spring), June 1 (Summer), September 1 (Fall), and December 1 (Winter.) We invite CCWH members and affiliates to share professional news, including 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 or Executive Director no later than two weeks prior to publication (e.g., for the Spring issue, no later than February 15). The material should be sent to [newsletter@theccwh.org](mailto:newsletter@theccwh.org) or [execdir@theccwh.org](mailto:execdir@theccwh.org).

If you have any questions about whether the material is appropriate for the newsletter please contact the Newsletter Editor or the CCWH Executive Director.