

*The newsmagazine of the American Historical Association*

# PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY

Volume 59: 8  
November 2021



## HISTORY OUTSIDE THE BOX

## Call for Proposals for the 136th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association

The AHA's annual meeting is the  
largest yearly gathering of historians  
in the United States.

All historians are welcome and encouraged to submit proposals. The AHA also invites historically focused proposals from colleagues in related disciplines and from AHA affiliated societies. The Program Committee will consider all proposals that advance the study, teaching, and public presentation of history.

The Association seeks submissions on the histories of all places, periods, people, and topics; on the uses of diverse sources and methods, including digital history; and on theory and the uses of history itself in a wide variety of venues.

We invite proposals for sessions in a variety of formats and encourage lively interaction among presenters and with the audience.

### Session Proposals

Sessions last for 90 minutes. Most sessions will be limited to four speakers plus a chair. The Program Committee will accept proposals for complete sessions only. We encourage organizers to build panels that bring together diverse perspectives.

### Poster Proposals

The meeting will feature a poster session to allow historians to share their research through visual materials. Proposals for single, individual presentations may be submitted as posters.

.....

The Program Committee welcomes proposals from all historians, whatever their institutional affiliation or status, and historians working outside the United States. With the exception of foreign scholars and those from other disciplines, all persons appearing on the program must be members of the AHA, although membership is not required to submit a proposal. All participants must register for the meeting when registration opens. The Association aspires to represent the full diversity of its membership at the annual meeting.

**Electronic submission only, by midnight PST on February 15, 2022**

Before applying, please review the annual meeting guidelines  
and more information at [historians.org/proposals](https://historians.org/proposals).

**Questions about policies, modes of presentation, and the electronic submission process?**

Contact [annualmeeting@historians.org](mailto:annualmeeting@historians.org).

**Questions about the content of proposals?**

Contact Program Committee chair Akin Ogundiran, Univ. of North Carolina at Charlotte ([Ogundiran@uncc.edu](mailto:Ogundiran@uncc.edu))  
and co-chair Molly Warsh, Univ. of Pittsburgh ([warsh@pitt.edu](mailto:warsh@pitt.edu)).



## FEATURES

### TEACH YOUR FAMILY ..... 15

*A Pandemic Assessment That's Here to Stay*

RACHEL MESCH, ALYSSA GOLDSTEIN SEPINWALL, AND ANNETTE JOSEPH-GABRIEL

### PLAYING WITH THE PAST ..... 18

*Teaching Slavery with Board Games*

PATRICK RAE



### ON THE COVER

We have all spent more time at home in the last 20 months than we ever imagined, leading historians to find ways to take history outside the box or classroom. Alexandra F. Levy describes how #HATM has created a community of historians chatting online about popular movies every Sunday night since 2018. During the pandemic, Rachel Mesch, Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, and Annette Joseph-Gabriel created and adapted the “Teach Your Family” assignment as an inspired twist on the student presentation. Finally, Patrick Rael uses history-inspired board games to encourage his students to keep “Playing with the Past.”

*Patrick Rael*

### 3 | FROM THE EDITOR

Townhouse Notes  
ASHLEY E. BOWEN

### 4 | LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### 7 | FROM THE PRESIDENT

Common Schooling and the Common Good  
JACQUELINE JONES

### 9 | FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Crisis and Opportunity  
JAMES GROSSMAN AND DANA SCHAFER

### 11 | NEWS

#HATM  
ALEXANDRA F. LEVY

### 22 | AHA ANNUAL MEETING

Disastrous Displacements  
MARGUERITE NGUYEN  
  
Abstract of the Presidential Address at the 2022 Annual Meeting  
JACQUELINE JONES

### 29 | AHA ACTIVITIES

New Faces at the AHA  
LAURA ANSLEY

### 31 | CAREER PATHS

A Winding Road to Finding My Niche  
EMILY JOAN ELLIOTT

### 34 | IN MEMORIAM

### 37 | AHA CAREER CENTER

### 40 | EVERYTHING HAS A HISTORY

Roses  
TARA MULDER

News magazine of the

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*Perspectives on History* (ISSN 1940-8048) is published nine times a year, monthly September through May, by the American Historical Association, 400 A St., SE, Washington, DC 20003-3889. 202.544.2422. Fax 202.544.8307. **World Wide Web:** [www.historians.org/perspectives](http://www.historians.org/perspectives). **Email:** [perspectives@historians.org](mailto:perspectives@historians.org) (editorial issues) or [ppinkney@historians.org](mailto:ppinkney@historians.org) (membership and subscription issues). *Perspectives on History* is distributed to members of the Association. Individual membership subscriptions include an amount of \$7.04 to cover the cost of *Perspectives on History*. Institutional subscriptions are also available. For details, contact the membership department of the AHA. Single copies of *Perspectives on History*—if available—can be obtained for \$8 each. Material from *Perspectives on History* may be published in *Perspectives* Online (ISSN: 1556-8563), published by the American Historical Association at [www.historians.org/perspectives](http://www.historians.org/perspectives). For information about institutional subscriptions, see [www.historians.org/members/subscriptions.htm](http://www.historians.org/members/subscriptions.htm).

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Periodicals class postage paid at Washington, DC, and at additional mailing offices.

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Postmaster: Send change of address to *Perspectives on History*, Membership Department, AHA, 400 A St., SE, Washington, DC 20003-3889.

## PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

*The American Historical Association is a nonprofit membership corporation founded in 1884 for the promotion of historical research, study, and education. The Association reserves the right to reject editorial material sent in for publication that is not consonant with the goals and purposes of the organization. The Association also assumes the right to judge the acceptability of all advertising copy and illustrations in advertisements published in Perspectives on History. Advertisers and advertising agencies assume all liability for advertising content and representation and will also be responsible for all claims against said publisher.*





ASHLEY E. BOWEN

## TOWNHOUSE NOTES

*My Meandering Path out of Academia*

I felt like a failure the year after I finished my PhD. Yes, I had accomplished something incredible and was immensely happy with my dissertation, the skills I learned in graduate school, and my decision to pursue a career outside the academy. At exactly the same time, I went through a divorce, worked several part-time jobs, and could not fathom how I was going to earn a living, let alone build a life after graduate school.

In the months it took me to land a full-time job, I worked as many as five part-time positions at once: guest curator at the National Library of Medicine (NLM), bookseller at an independent bookstore, freelance writer for various online outlets, freelance event planner for *Atlas Obscura*, and freelance archival researcher at the National Archives. Plus, I had to rebuild my personal life after divorce. Sustaining my friendships, jumping into new hobbies, maintaining family ties, and even beginning to date took on an urgency I hadn't anticipated.

Former colleagues asked, "So what are you up to now?" and I had no idea how to answer. I sensed that the question was about work, but that felt so far removed from the heady mix of personal and professional changes I negotiated daily. Since the NLM position was certainly the most prestigious and seemed the most serious, I often responded with "I'm working as a curator." That was true, to an extent, but it ignored that I was making rent by also working a retail job and leading events around DC. What sounded good—the title I thought my colleagues wanted to hear—didn't fully reflect the reality of my post-PhD life.

Ultimately, I was OK. Better than OK, actually. My NLM job became a full-time contract position, I stepped back from retail work, and I accepted only the freelance gigs that served my larger career goals. Still, for the months when I was cobbling together multiple paychecks, stressing about rent and health insurance, I kept feeling like I'd failed—at the career transition, at my post-PhD "real life,"

at being a historian. Even with the help of a skilled therapist, thankfully covered by my insurance, I found it hard to move past this feeling.

My guess is that this happens to many of us pursuing careers outside higher education. Career transitions are rarely linear, so we edit out the parts that are messy, exhausting, or confusing. We sometimes avoid talking about feeling like the goalposts moved, or no longer knowing whether the goalposts matter, or the rapid proliferation of goalposts. It's much easier for me to explain that I worked as a curator, then got a postdoc, then came to the AHA.

This is all to say that I feel an immense sense of relief and comfort whenever I read essays in our Career Paths series. Emily Joan Elliott's article "A Winding Road to Finding My Niche" in this month's issue is no exception. She is transparent about the time between defending her dissertation and beginning her current role as managing editor of a community news site. Like me, she took on a lot of different work while she looked for the right long-term, full-time job. I didn't imagine my year of part-time gigs as casting a wide net, but reading Elliott's article, I realized how this did in fact help me identify what I valued in my work and what specific skills I wanted to build a career around.

That year between completing my degree and starting a full-time job wasn't easy. In fact, it may have been among the hardest years of my life, made all the more difficult for my having no model for the struggle. It is my hope that the AHA's Career Diversity for Historians initiative, *Perspectives'* ongoing Career Paths series, and other resources mean that fewer people feel like this struggle is a sign of failure rather than tremendous personal, professional, and scholarly growth. **P**

*Ashley E. Bowen is editor of Perspectives on History. She tweets @AEBowenPhD.*





## TO THE EDITOR

In her September 2021 column, “Abstract and Ill Informed,” Jacqueline Jones misses the deep concern many historians have about the infiltration of critical race theory (CRT) into their craft. Rather than distinguish between facts and abstractions, the issue is better framed by looking beyond the use of a didactic tool set and into the study of history’s core purpose. We can all concede that institutional racism is an undeniable reality of the past, just as it is in the present and will be in the future. But beyond that reality, CRT takes history a critical step further. As a methodology, it proposes that the racist impact of a policy is *prima facie* evidence of an intent to perpetuate racism. In this framework, advances toward more enlightened outcomes are too easily distilled into one-dimensional struggles to overcome the racist institutions of the dominant race by the victims (and their “allies”) of minority races.

Such an approach risks taking any complex, multilayered historical subject and turning it into a perpetual, self-fulfilling blame machine. Institutions are the oppressors in history’s never-ending morality play, and members of minority groups are always its heroes. This replaces the core didactic purpose of exploring a multitude of historical narratives, requiring a supple focus on a potentially vast variety of societal and human causes and effects, with an inflexible diatribe against racist power structures. Not only is this simplistic; it is misleading and often causes entirely unwarranted self-reflection on an individual level (no, we are not all “racists” or “antiracists”). A simple truism will show why: The gradual abolition of slavery across the world in the 18th and 19th centuries cannot be attributed solely to how those acting on behalf of persecuted minorities finally managed to overcome their institutionalized oppressors. There were a host of complex factors spanning the evolving needs of modernity that cannot be woven snugly into a good-guys-versus-bad-guys narrative.

But if this is indeed how the AHA leadership believes the immutable “lessons of the past” should henceforth be framed—so that they are more easily learned in the present and applied in the future—it has fallen, like so many other institutions, into a calamitous groupthink culmination in its perception of its mission.

 DAVID WITUS  
*Mercer Island, Washington*

## JACQUELINE JONES RESPONDS:

I am gratified that my column has stimulated a discussion of critical race theory. However, I must take issue with the statement that CRT “proposes that the racist impact of a policy is *prima facie* evidence of an intent to perpetuate racism.” As I pointed out in the column, racist practices can flow from all sorts of motives, including moneymaking and keeping one’s job.



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## TO THE EDITOR

When my September 2021 issue arrived in the mail, “An Epidemic of Hostility” by James Grossman immediately caught my eye. I presumed that Grossman would make historically objective observations about the current abrasive social climate in the United States, fueled by political divisiveness, not least of which is whether to accept or forgo the COVID-19 vaccines currently on the market. Instead, to the already mammoth mountain of hostility, he added some of his own.

First, I don’t believe that historians, when communicating as historians, ought to express their opinion. While I agree with Grossman, for instance, that QAnon’s claims are indeed “absurdities,” I would never say that out loud when teaching a class, any more than I would say that Hitler, Stalin, and Vlad the Impaler were bad people. They were, but it’s not my place to say as a history professor, and I would not so opine as an AHA official if I were in that role.

Second, regarding vaccinations, it seems that Grossman hasn’t exercised enough care in drawing some conclusions. He presumes that vaccine hesitancy is solely a consequence of

antielitism and ignores renowned immunologists, pharmacologists, and virologists who are skeptical. There are ample testimonies of experts who have made their vaccine hesitancy public. In related concerns, some health experts have discouraged societal lockdowns and contend that most masks are not effective at preventing the spread of COVID.

Moreover, a study of vaccine hesitancy between January and May conducted by Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh using self-reported data collected through Facebook revealed that, when classifying respondents by education level, the most hesitant group (or second-most, depending on the version of the data) is PhDs, which is no surprise: after all, they’ve devoted their professional lives to not rushing to judgment until they’ve exhausted the empirical evidence.

There is a great deal more to vaccine skepticism than rash, reflexive, antielitist mistrust of authority. The conspiracy theorists to whom Grossman refers are not a figment of his imagination. But many, if not most, vaccine skeptics agree with much information relayed by “the elites” too.

CONSTANTINOS E. SCAROS  
*Tarpon Springs, Florida*

## Recently Published Online in *Perspectives Daily*



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### Family and History Mix during a Fulbright Year

Naaborko Sackeyfio-Lenoch

A Fulbright year in Ghana enabled one historian to balance her research life with her family life, living and learning about the country that was both her subject and homeland.

### The Classicists in the History Department

Evan Jewell

As many ancient historians move out of classics departments, they should celebrate the unique disciplinary and interdisciplinary strengths they bring to history departments.

### From PhD to Policy

Brandon Kirk Williams

How do you get from a history PhD to a postdoc in cybersecurity? Brandon Kirk Williams shares his path.

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JACQUELINE JONES

## COMMON SCHOOLING AND THE COMMON GOOD

*A Historian's View of the Public School System*



I come from a family of proud public school supporters. I attended public elementary, junior high, and high schools and then went to the University of Delaware for a BA and the University of Wisconsin–Madison for a PhD—so I had 22 consecutive years of public schooling! My mother taught as a substitute teacher and as an English instructor at a local public community college. She was a mainstay of our local parent-teacher association. My father was active in public school board politics at the school, district, and state levels, eventually serving as president of our state's board of education.

My father's commitment made an impression on me at an early age. He was rarely home in the evenings. After a full day of work as an accountant, he came home for dinner and then went back out to some kind of school board meeting, which might last well into the night or the early hours of the morning. He took seriously the idea that ordinary citizens should assume responsibility for public education. At the same time, I think he relished the debates that were part of school board politics—arguments over competing policies and priorities leavened with the inevitable personality conflicts.

I believe that the public school system is a common good, a foundation of informed citizenship and economic well-being that should be accessible to all children regardless of where they live or the income of their parents. Polls consistently show that Americans support their local public schools; even with all their failings, they remain anchors of community and civic responsibility.

As a college student, I became interested in the history of the property tax as a means of funding public schools. It was a terrible idea from the start, giving rise to wildly unequal districts—ones in affluent areas with high property values and ones in poor areas with fewer taxable resources. Local control of schools is an American tradition, but our hypersegregated residential patterns tend

to solidify insidious patterns of inequality. Alternative ways of funding public schools—through state appropriations or a lottery, for example—have not eliminated the wide disparity in the resources available to schoolchildren depending on where they live. Parents in affluent districts can still hold auctions and other fundraisers that enhance a school's budget, enabling a school to hire more teachers, offer art and music education, fund field trips, purchase computer equipment, and so forth.

The public school system is a common good, a foundation of informed citizenship and economic well-being that should be accessible to all children.

In graduate school, I delved into the history of the origins of American public education. Massachusetts's Horace Mann and other early supporters of tax-supported public schools aimed to create a "common" system—that is, one common to children all over the country. In an era of high rates of residential mobility, these reformers wanted to ensure that a student could finish second grade in Boston and start third grade the following year in Cincinnati. Yet this system of schooling was uneven and discriminatory from the beginning. Reformers hoped to instruct schoolchildren in the responsibilities of citizenship and hoped to inculcate in children of the laboring classes the self-discipline required of factory work. Black children did not fit into either of these aims; as adults, they would be pushed to the margins of citizenship and excluded from machine work until well into the 20th century. State-mandated systems of segregation systematically denied Black and other minority schools the resources they needed to provide a decent education for their children.

Since the beginning, the public system has had its critics, for legitimate, as well as suspect, reasons—parents deemed schools too secular or too Protestant, too lacking in rigor, or too “diverse” (often code for too many low-income students or students of color). Some parents went outside the public system to seek a different kind of schooling for their children—with religious or denominational schools, private academies, and homeschooling.

A passion for public education is commendable, but the use of schoolchildren as political pawns is not.

One way to denigrate public schools has been to label them “government schools,” a derogatory term suggesting these schools are the product of a collective, or socialistic, impulse—one that takes money from taxpayers (even childless ones) and uses that money to educate children whose parents might not be able to pay for private schools. (The term has gained currency in libertarian and conservative circles—an early adopter was economist Milton Friedman in the 1950s—and continued with Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos in the Trump administration.) According to this line of reasoning, schooling should be a product of the market rather than dependent on taxpayer funding for a “common” system. Those who hold this view favor starving the public schools of adequate funding in the hope that concerned parents will turn to private schools out of sheer frustration.

Schools have always been cultural battlegrounds, whether over the issues of evolution, racial integration, gender roles, dress codes, standardized testing, sports and other extracurricular activities, student privacy, or school prayer. However, the so-called culture wars have assumed a new intensity in 2021. Mask and vaccine mandates (or the lack of them) have generated strong feelings. So, too, has the nature of history education. Again, disputes over curricular matters are not new—white teachers in the former Confederate states objected to textbooks authored by “Yankees” who lauded the outcome of the Civil War, for example—but today, controversies over race, “divisive concepts,” and the meaning of the American Revolution are nationwide in scope. State legislatures and local school boards have entered the fray. We hear of school board sessions and legislative hearings laced with profanity and punctuated by fisticuffs, prompting the installation of metal detectors outside meeting places.

Many Americans remain focused on the national level of politics, yet there is compelling evidence that the real battleground over cultural issues has shifted to the local level. In some cases, national groups are coordinating local attacks on K–12 history faculty determined to teach truth over myth, fact over fiction. These teachers and the administrators who support them remain vulnerable to the demands of misinformed parents and school board members. Reportedly, as many as 165 local and national groups seek to influence school policy related to curricular matters, and at least some have as their aim the delegitimizing of public education altogether. A passion for public education is commendable, but the use of schoolchildren as political pawns is not.

Given this distressing situation, what is a historian to do? Perhaps teachers in your area are open to inviting other, specialized historians into the classroom, either to discuss a topic or to guide a group of students through a primary document. Teachers, parents, and school board members might want to consult Learn from History, a coalition of the AHA and more than two dozen other organizations that aims to combat disinformation and support efforts of educators to maintain the scholarly integrity of their US history courses. School board meetings and other venues provide opportunities for those knowledgeable about history to counteract various misapprehensions about the past. Of course, the ultimate commitment, in terms of contributing time and energy, would involve running for the local school board, in the process paying tribute to two cherished American ideals—citizen participation in local public education affairs and an unfailing quest for the truth, no matter where it may lead us. **P**

*Jacqueline Jones is president of the AHA.*



JAMES GROSSMAN AND DANA SCHAFFER

## CRISIS AND OPPORTUNITY

*New AHA-NEH Grants for Small History Organizations*

The past 18 months have been challenging for small history organizations. They have faced disruptions to normal activities, whether gatherings, services, or educational programming; financial difficulties at institutions of higher education and nonprofits have led to layoffs and a decline in support for professional development and other discretionary expenditures; and many organizations (large and small) have begun to engage the long-overdue reckoning with the implications of a past shaped by systemic racism. Adaptation, however, has generated exciting new ideas and innovative new ways of thinking about what we do and how we do it. These crises have also created opportunities to rethink programming, expand audiences, and experiment with ways to extend the work of history organizations in different directions.

A recently awarded grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) American Rescue Plan: Humanities Grantmaking program will enable the AHA to provide \$2.5 million in support of dozens of small history-related organizations adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. As we look toward a postpandemic future, these grants, ranging from \$10,000 to \$75,000, will fund short-term projects that explore new ideas or build on experiments initiated during the pandemic—from virtual programming or online publications to using new technologies or expanding audiences and accessibility.

We have structured our program to encourage proposals for ambitious new initiatives as well as smaller projects that address particular problems that have arisen as a result of the pandemic. To qualify for these grants, an organization's maximum annual budget cannot exceed \$750,000. We will divide eligible organizations into three broad categories for proposals and evaluations: membership associations, site- or location-based institutions, and history and humanities departments at historically Black and tribally controlled colleges and universities (HBCUs and TCCUs).



Many of these entities face comparable challenges as they move toward new ways of thinking about both their missions and their core activities. Most have transitioned from in-person to online or hybrid (itself a term that has spawned as much ambiguity as innovation) events and instruction. They are working to appeal to more diverse constituencies. HBCU and TCCU departments, like their counterparts elsewhere in higher education, are competing for institutional resources and seeking to build enrollments. All these small organizations are making the case for their status as an “essential” resource, whether to new public audiences, students, parents, or university administrations.

A recently awarded NEH grant will enable the AHA to support dozens of small history-related organizations.

Associations of humanities scholars have been especially affected by cutbacks in members' funds for professional development and research activities. In addition to significant membership declines, many of these associations have lost thousands of dollars in revenue because of canceled conferences, forfeited hotel deposits, and cancellation penalties. In-person conferences will continue to be imperiled by scholars' declining institutional travel budgets, whether in higher education or other settings, along with lingering travel hesitancy even as COVID-19 dangers slowly diminish. Pandemic conditions have led to experimentation with online meetings, but the long-term sustainability of these models remains unclear. Organizations are learning what they *can* do and will need resources to continue these experiments. But they also will need to nourish debate about what they *should* do, in terms of mission, ethical and intellectual imperatives, and institutional sustainability. The AHA hopes these grant resources can help generate new ideas about what is

possible and facilitate debate over what is desirable as organizations experiment and find ways to maintain the best aspects of their current programming.

A second category of eligible institutions will be site- and location-based organizations, including history museums, historic houses, archives, historical societies, and history-focused nonprofits. The pandemic has disrupted revenue-producing activities, drastically reduced their visitorship, and in some cases forced a suspension of operations. At the same time, many of these institutions have begun to reconsider their responsibilities to diverse communities and question whether interpretive frameworks are consistent with current scholarship. The AHA's grant program offers funding to support an increase in the accessibility of online resources, broaden constituencies, plan for the sustainability of operations, and imagine the future.

In addition to supplying funds, the AHA hopes to cultivate community and mutual consultation among grantees.

History and humanities departments at HBCUs and TCCUs are the third category of eligible applicants. Many of these chronically underresourced institutions responded to the pandemic by focusing on job-oriented disciplines, such as pharmacy and engineering. This has led some HBCU history departments to request AHA support in internal struggles for resources. Recent surveys and focus groups organized by the AHA and the American Philosophical Association emphasized the need for funding streams at HBCUs. We look forward to proposals shaped by the priorities and interests of history faculty thinking about new departmental initiatives, collaborations with other disciplines, or partnerships with off-campus entities.

Having already called on their reserve funds during the pandemic, many associations, site-based organizations, and HBCU and TCCU history departments lack adequate resources to plan for future operations in a changed landscape. These grants will enable them to research and assess that shifting terrain, as well as implement initiatives that will sustain their work, increase accessibility, and instigate change.

In the wake of last summer's protests against racial injustice, history organizations are facing a long-overdue

racial reckoning, requiring them to understand their pasts and to rethink who they are, who they serve, and how to reach and support broader constituencies. The AHA's grant program encourages collaboration between HBCUs and TCCUs and history organizations that are either geographically proximate or capable of digital initiatives. Partner institutions, such as historic houses, museums, and associations, would benefit from HBCU and TCCU faculty and student engagement in reimagining how their institutions might broaden and connect with local constituencies. Rather than fund organizations to encourage their collaboration with HBCUs and TCCUs, our program will enable HBCUs and TCCUs to shape the priorities of such collaborations with their own proposals.

In addition to supplying funds, the AHA hopes to cultivate community and mutual consultation among grantees. As part of this program, representatives from participating organizations will gather online to learn from one another and generate collaborations that will, hopefully, extend beyond the grant period. The AHA will host two virtual workshop series as part of its mission to provide opportunities for professional and organizational development and networking. The first workshop series will bring together similar organizations. The second will include all grantees pursuing similar projects with different approaches. Our goal is to encourage long-term connections that identify and respond to the new needs of entities that are essential to the work of historians but are perhaps too small to take risks or lack the resources to implement the creativity of their staff and volunteers.

The AHA is grateful to the NEH for enabling us to mobilize public resources for the promotion of historical work, historical thinking, and the presence of history in public life. Visit [historians.org/sharp-grants](https://historians.org/sharp-grants) for more information about eligibility and how to apply. Proposals will be accepted through December 14, 2021, for projects beginning as early as April 1, 2022. Recipients will be announced by March 1, 2022. The AHA will host applicant-support webinars and will be available during the application period to assist with questions regarding the application. **P**

*James Grossman is executive director of the AHA; he tweets @JimGrossmanAHA. Dana Schaffer is deputy director of the AHA.*

ALEXANDRA F. LEVY

## #HATM

*Historians at the Movies Builds a Community, One Film at a Time*

### It all started with Nicolas Cage.

In July 2018, Jason Herbert, a doctoral candidate in history at the University of Minnesota, wanted to watch the 2004 film *National Treasure* with some friends—online. He tweeted from his account @HerbertHistory, “National Treasure is on Netflix again. I feel like we as historians owe it to America to jointly watch this film and live tweet it together.”

Little did Herbert know that this tweet would start a phenomenon. To make it easy for the historians tweeting along while watching *National Treasure*, Herbert created the hashtag #HATM, short for “Historians at the Movies.” At the appointed time, historians tuned in to watch Cage steal the Declaration of Independence while laughing at and bemoaning the movie’s antics together on Twitter. As Joanne Freeman (Yale Univ.) put it at the time, “THEY PUT FRICKIN’ LEMON JUICE ON THE DOI.”

The HATM community had so much fun that July evening that they asked Herbert to continue selecting films and gathering historians to live-tweet from their couches. The next week, historians tuned in for *Lincoln*. Then *Marie Antoinette*. Then *Trading Places*. With that, Herbert told *Perspectives*, “we were off to the races.”

Three years, hundreds of films, and tens of thousands of tweets later, the HATM community is still going strong. To Herbert’s knowledge, HATM has

become the longest-running community watch party on social media. Every Sunday evening at 8:00 p.m. ET, this community logs on to Twitter, starts the film selected by Herbert, and enjoys the chatter. Many participants watch with their partners, and some turn it into a family movie night with their kids. Historians have also started offshoots in Australia (#HATMAus) and the United Kingdom (#HATMUK).

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party on social media.

HATM is a passion project for Herbert, who is currently putting the final touches on his dissertation. The weekly event has offered Herbert some unique opportunities. Although he is a scholar researching the intersection of Indigenous history and environmental history, Netflix asked him to provide Twitter commentary on *The King*, a film about medieval knights. He gave himself a crash course on the subject and, though the topic was far outside his specialty, found the event rewarding. Thanks to his HATM experiences, Herbert has come to realize that he is, at heart, a public historian.

Herbert expressed amazement at the continued growth of the HATM community and the connections forged among the participants. “What keeps me

going—what keeps this thing going—is the fact that people enjoy it. The community is the most important thing. It’s the sense of togetherness that we’ve been able to create.” Herbert usually opens a HATM night on Twitter with a few questions, including asking what everyone’s snacking on, which gets the conversation rolling.

He tries to offer a balance of films, from serious to lighthearted, covering different time periods and places. “The most important thing to me when I choose films is diversity,” he said, especially “the diversity of experiences and the diversity of people represented on-screen.” He compared watching a film to conducting research in the archive. “Part of going to the archive is sussing out stories that maybe don’t appear in the archive as well. We can take a film and say, ‘Well, wait a second. This movie has a bunch of people like *this*, but where are the people like *that*? Where are women’s voices? Where are the voices of color? Who’s not being represented?’ Which is always a question we’re asking, as historians.”

Robin Mitchell (California State Univ., Channel Islands), a participant and past co-host, noted, “Jason has created a unique community. Those of us who study race and gender can add to films that may not, on the surface, lend themselves to those conversations.”

“Sometimes we handle controversial films and topics, attempt to put them in historical perspective, and critique them,”



explained frequent participant Rachel Gunter, professor of history at a community college in North Texas. “Several films have been heavily critiqued for their gender or racial stereotypes. Some films lead us to discuss the history of filmmaking itself.”

Herbert noted that the films that generate feelings of nostalgia tend to provoke the most interest and commentary. Viewers hearken back to the first time they watched *Star Wars*, screamed at the screen during *Alien*, or experienced *Beauty and the Beast* with their children. But even films that elicit nostalgia encourage thoughtful conversation.

Many historians contribute to the insights the social media watch party has become known for. Herbert will

sometimes ask a historian ahead of time to co-host or serve as a “featured tweeter” who can offer background information or historical perspectives on the film. Other times, people will volunteer to co-host if they have expertise relevant to the film.

Herbert remains mindful that co-hosting takes time and energy. But it also helps scholars highlight their work and “engage with a broad audience about representations of a historical moment,” explained Jazmine Contreras (Goucher Coll.).

Contreras has co-hosted HATM three times. “Each time was a fantastic educational experience. As a memory scholar, I spend a lot of time thinking about the creation of historical narratives and why the public understands events in a particular way. Films are integral to shaping the

American popular imagination. HATM gives scholars and nonscholars alike a chance to participate in knowledge production, to shape and reshape popular understandings of a film.”

Participants have also brought HATM into their classrooms. When Mitchell co-hosted a viewing of *Daughters of the Dust*, several of her students participated. “As a result of that event,” Mitchell said, “history students have come back for other films. What strikes me is that they will participate, even engaging with historians they respect. They feel they have a space to do that, as colleagues. It has been a confidence builder for them.”

HATM offers students a fresh way to examine history and popular culture, as well as



You don't have to wait in line for a ticket at HATM. Just press play at 8:00 p.m. ET every Sunday and follow along with the hashtag on Twitter.

Russell Lee/Library of Congress, 2017789014. Public domain

the unique opportunity to engage with historians from every field and rank. “It’s been a great way to have students introduce themselves to scholars and participate in discussion in a relaxed and low-stakes environment,” observed Contreras, who has offered students extra credit for participating.

Similarly, other historians and history teachers have found that HATM encourages student and instructor engagement with the broader historical community. For Kristalyn Marie Shefveld (Univ. of Southern Indiana), “the #HATM community reflects nuances of the historical profession, from grad students to senior professors, taking time to come together and deconstruct a film.” HATM has helped her students “learn how to use films in their own K–12 classrooms, as models for discovery of additional sources, and how to react to popular media.” Participants also often share relevant resources for the classroom. After HATM watched the PBS documentary series *Reconstruction*, Gunter “created a viewing guide that several other HATM participants asked to use as well.”

HATM is not just for historians. The weekly watch party has built connections to larger communities and encourages historical thinking when watching any film, not just films about the past. Political scientists and sociologists frequently participate. Sometimes other groups join in spontaneously, like when archaeologists chimed in during conversations on the *Indiana Jones* films; at other times, Herbert will reach out ahead of time when a film might be of interest for another discipline. When HATM watched *Jaws*, viewers were joined by fishery biologists, who shared their knowledge of sharks and the sea. Herbert has been contacted by people in other fields who are interested in setting up their own version of HATM, like Science or Religion at the Movies.

Nonhistorians who follow historians on Twitter sometimes turn on their own

televisions and join the fun. And occasionally, actors and writers affiliated with a film may see the tweets and jump in the conversation. Gloria Estefan, Lou Diamond Phillips, Gloria Reuben, Jeffrey Wright, the writers of *National Treasure*, and others have contributed. Herbert noted, “The audience gets a huge thrill out of” seeing celebrities use the #HATM hashtag.

In addition to having a good time, HATM participants play a beneficial role in public engagement with the past.

In addition to having a good time, HATM participants play a beneficial role in public engagement with the past. In 2019, Evan Axelbank, a television journalist in Tampa, Florida, who hosts the podcast *Axelbank Reports History and Today*, reported on Herbert and the HATM phenomenon. As a history buff, he has continued to follow HATM on Twitter. “To have the experts explain a movie, or explain how a story has been told, is tremendously valuable for me and all the other nonhistorians out there.” He went on, “I tell stories about history through pop culture. Movies are not just recaps of historical events; they are representations of how we think of those historical events, given the times that the movies are made in. Pop culture often makes stories way too neat. Historians at the Movies strips away that neatness and brings reality back into it.”

In March 2020, when COVID-19 brought normal life to an abrupt halt, HATM was in a unique position as an ongoing social media watch party with a dedicated following. With families quarantined at home, professional and college

sports canceled, and not much else to do in the evenings but watch television, Herbert increased HATM gatherings from one to three nights per week. This pace continued only for a couple of months, but it offered a respite for exhausted historians to connect with one another and forget about the state of the world, at least for a little while.

Gunter, like many participants, has found HATM “to be an excellent way to connect with other historians and history teachers throughout the pandemic. HATM has allowed us to continue discussing both our own work as well as how our insights as historians change the way we view films. It was a way to come together when we were isolated in a way wholly unfamiliar to us.”

Above all, Herbert says, HATM “is about sharing things that we all love: movies and history and movies about history. Ultimately, it’s about sharing time, creating community, and having fun.”

So follow along each week with #HATM. Watch the films you love, or tune in for ones you haven’t seen before. Learn something from your fellow HATM participants. And share in the joy of history, film, and social media bringing a community together, one film at a time. **P**

*Alexandra F. Levy is digital communications coordinator at the AHA. She tweets @AlexandraFL21.*

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RACHEL MESCH, ALYSSA GOLDSTEIN SEPINWALL, AND ANNETTE JOSEPH-GABRIEL

# TEACH YOUR FAMILY

*A Pandemic Assessment That's Here to Stay*



A twist on the traditional class presentation, Teach Your Family worked against the isolation of the pandemic by giving students tools for engaging with those around them.

*Obi Onyeador/Unsplash*

THERE'S A LOT we won't miss about Zoom teaching, with its endless tango of muting and unmuting. But as it becomes safer once again to build intellectual community the old-fashioned way, there are pedagogical lessons we will take with us from our online classrooms. Over the last 18 months, many of us rethought not only the way we teach but also how we assess our students. Confined in our Zoom boxes, we learned to think outside the box, often taking inspiration from fellow educators struggling in similar ways.

In March 2020, Rachel was several weeks into Yeshiva University's spring semester, teaching a class on 19th-century Parisian literature and visual culture. Channeling Baudelaire, Zola, and Manet, students in a typical term take stock of their own urban surroundings, allowing firsthand experiences to heighten their understanding of complex texts and images. But a final paper based on an urban excursion was no longer possible—no more crowds, for one thing! At the same time, a traditional paper felt out of the question: students were anxious and struggling to concentrate.

That's when Rachel had an idea. Why not acknowledge the change? Students now lived off campus, often with their families, in circumstances less than ideal for traditional written projects. If their classrooms had moved to their homes, why not make those homes into classrooms? Rachel asked students to choose one of the class topics to teach someone in their family—broadly defined—and then provide evidence of their lesson, either by recording it or by providing testimonials from a family member or roommate, along with the lesson plan or PowerPoint they had designed and used. Students shared videos of parents and siblings curled up on the couch, listening to a proudly delivered lecture. One student created a Lego model of Paris; girlfriends and roommates recorded effusive reactions.

While the idea started as a pandemic substitute for a lengthier essay, its lasting pedagogical value soon became clear. A twist on the traditional class presentation, Teach Your Family asked students to think not only about conveying information but also about the different means by which to do so effectively. The assignment had potent metacognitive aspects, guiding students to reflect on what they had learned and why it mattered. Many came away with an enhanced appreciation of course content, making them more likely to retain it long-term. And students felt a profound sense of accomplishment at a time when such feelings were scarce.

As faculty across the country turned to the internet for support in reconfiguring their courses for a stay-at-home world, Alyssa read a Twitter thread about Rachel's experiment at

Yeshiva. Alyssa taught in a very different environment at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM); where most of Rachel's students are from a similar background, with college-educated parents, Alyssa's students range in age from 18 to 80 and include first-generation Latinx students and active-duty marines.

Alyssa was thrilled to discover that Teach Your Family worked just as well at her institution—though she realized she would need a paper option for students who did not have someone at home to teach or for those who preferred writing. A few weeks after Rachel's experiment, Alyssa incorporated Teach Your Family into her Women and Jewish History class at CSUSM. For students whose families knew little about the topic, the assignment was particularly empowering. And it was meaningful for family members as well, creating a new way to connect during those sequestered, stir-crazy early months of the pandemic.

If their classrooms had moved to  
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homes into classrooms?

Like Rachel's, Alyssa's guidelines were flexible. But she added in more scaffolding to ensure that students planned an idea well before the deadline and received appropriate feedback on whether their lesson (and the evidence they planned to submit) was too ambitious or needed more detail. Students were required to draw on specific course readings or films and show a mastery of selected themes in their lesson. Otherwise, their choices were as wide as the syllabus and their imaginations. They could focus exclusively on historical material or use it to make connections to the present. Topics ranged from Holocaust poetry by women survivors, to stereotypes of Jewish women on 20th-century US television, to dietary laws. One women's studies major assembled her multigenerational family—including her grandma, her girlfriend, and her dog—for a lesson about American Jewish women's activism. Another taught his lesson on Mother's Day, focusing on comparative Jewish motherhood in the Sephardi diaspora and among Ashkenazi Jews during the Holocaust; he linked this material to all that his mother does for him.

Both Rachel and Alyssa continued with Teach Your Family in the fall of 2020. In Alyssa's Revolutionary Europe (1789–1899) course, one student designed a lesson for her husband comparing income inequality in 19th-century France with the contemporary United States, while another taught her

younger sister about women in the French Revolution, complete with a postlesson quiz. The assignments forced Alyssa's students to become more than passive consumers of information. Rather than memorize material or respond to questions selected by their instructor, students had to decide which themes were most important for people outside a classroom, delve deeper into subjects than a traditional syllabus might allow, and deliver more meaningful results than a paper that only their instructor would read. Students reported that conversations continued after the lessons, fostering lifelong learning within their households.

### Conversations continued after the lessons, fostering lifelong learning within their households.

In Alyssa's Haitian History class, students made even more connections to the present; some Mexican American students drew parallels between their parents' lives and those of Haitian migrants. Students picked a range of topics they thought would seem vital and relevant to their listeners. One student gave a multimedia lesson to his musician father about Haitian Vodou music; another taught her teenage children about the differences between stereotypes of "voodoo" and Vodou itself. Several students taught their families about the historic Haitian migration from Brazil to Tijuana and San Diego in 2015–16, and about Haitians who were forced to build new lives in Mexico when the United States closed its border to them in September 2016.

As Alyssa and Rachel tweeted enthusiastically about their students' projects—and consulted with each other about what was working and what was not—instructors at different institutions and grade levels began asking for their assignment guidelines and adapting them for other programs. Annette incorporated the assignment into her French literature and culture courses at the University of Michigan; in her *Black Girlhood in French Cinema* course, a student watched films with her mother and focused her Teach Your Family lessons on the racial dynamics of mother-daughter relationships in French film. Another student discussed racism in the French educational system with her brothers, who are themselves teachers. In-class reports highlighted productive tensions between the foreign and the familiar. Students identified similarities between their local contexts and the worlds inhabited by the films' Black French protagonists, grappling with ideas that remained untranslatable: the varied meanings of Black and *noir* across space and time. Students found audiences and interlocutors among roommates

and siblings even when they did not agree with one another. As students struggled with the isolation of socially distant learning, and the blurred boundaries between home and school, their Teach Your Family assignments became a semester-long reminder that their voices and expertise mattered both within and beyond the classroom.

Teach Your Family was also implemented by several high school history teachers who learned about it on Twitter, where Rachel, Alyssa, and Annette continued to share results. These included Amy Manlapas (Paideia School), who used it in her US History and Global Middle Ages classes. Amy gave her students a lesson-plan format to follow, allowed them to choose a topic, and then met with students to discuss their proposals. She notes, "We had a great time—one student figured out they wanted to be a teacher afterwards, which was super exciting."

In reflecting on whether to keep Teach Your Family after the pandemic, we each found that what had begun as an expedient substitute for research papers or exams had become a high-impact practice: engaging students' critical and metacognitive faculties, reinforcing the material, and making students more invested in the learning process. As a collaborative project, Teach Your Family worked against the isolation of the pandemic by giving students tools for engaging in meaningful dialogue with those around them, which often meant relatives. But the assignment is adaptable to roommates and friends, even neighbors or colleagues, creating opportunities for enriching all kinds of relationships. Students' spirited debates and generative conversations modeled lessons we hope to impart with every course: that intellectual inquiry is never confined to the classroom and that the past remains relevant in the present. For these reasons, even as we transition back to in-person learning, we plan to continue assigning Teach Your Family, sharing the results, and watching this experiment evolve as others adapt it. **P**

*For an example assignment sheet, please visit the AHA's Classroom Materials web page.*

*Rachel Mesch is professor of English and French at Yeshiva University; she tweets @RachelMesch. Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall is professor of history at California State University San Marcos; she tweets @DrSepinwall. Annette Joseph-Gabriel is associate professor of French and Francophone studies at the University of Michigan; she tweets @AnnetteJosephG.*



PATRICK RAE

# PLAYING WITH THE PAST

*Teaching Slavery with Board Games*



In classes on transatlantic slavery and abolition, board games can spark rich, productive discussions about Atlantic colonization.  
*Patrick Rael*

**WE LIVE IN** a golden age of board games. Every year, this multibillion-dollar industry produces thousands of new titles that feature a plethora of subjects and further develop the principles of game design. Many feature historical themes. For example, *Castles of Burgundy* lets players plan medieval towns; *Ticket to Ride* challenges them to develop networks of steam railroads; and *7 Wonders* challenges them to build, well, you guessed it.

Can such games offer new ways to engage history in the college classroom? Thinking of games as *representations* of history may provide the key. This is the way I approach a more familiar classroom medium, historically themed films. Both media can consider the past trivially or with great seriousness. And teaching with either requires thinking not just about the past that is depicted but about how the medium of depiction itself operates.

Board games offer a range of additional benefits to students of history. On the most basic level, playing games enhances students' fluency with historical basics—the who, what, where, and when of a particular history. On a more advanced level, games permit players to imagine changing historical outcomes. They invite discussions of counterfactuals and contingency, resisting the teleology and determinism that are so common to looking backward in time. Finally, the skills required of playing board games cover the entire range of Bloom's taxonomy of learning, from the acquisition of trivia-like information to the metacognition associated with iterating strategies.

Games represent their subjects by combining *theme*, or what a game says it is about, and *mechanics*, or how the game is played. That *Clue* is a mystery game is evident from its title, graphics, and rules. It mirrors this theme in its mechanics, which direct players to search rooms and question one another. New media scholar Ian Bogost labels this unique quality of games *procedural rhetoric*, or the practice of using processes persuasively. Thus, games about collecting art often have auctions involved, while those about elections often require players to vote. Game artist Brenda Romero, riffing on Marshall McLuhan's memorable phrase, proclaims that "the mechanic is the message."

Exploring how this works in historically themed games requires some planning. Most instructors will want to experiment with one or two games per semester, selecting titles related to course learning goals and investigating connections between present and past. Dedicated game "labs" function like film screenings, ensuring ample time to play. I am careful to pick games that are short enough to learn and

play in the time available but rich enough to make claims worth exploring. Supporting assignments ask students to apply primary and secondary readings to the game's theme and to reflect on their experience of play, just as we might with films.

For several years, I have effectively used board games in my classes on transatlantic slavery and abolition. Slavery is an inescapable feature of the popular historical game theme of European colonization, but it can be challenging to confront in class. As with studying films depicting slavery, I begin teaching these games by discussing our own relationship to the material. Where, if anywhere, do students see themselves or their histories represented in the game in question? How might this representation of slavery's history inform today's discussions of race and marginality? What concerns should we bring to bear in examining popular culture's depiction of the past? Such questions remind us that while playing historically themed games is likely to teach students something about what happened and why, there may be even more pedagogical value in analyzing them as representations of the past bound by the constraints of their medium and its conventions.

Games represent their subjects by combining *theme*, or what a game is about, and mechanics, or how the game is played.

*Puerto Rico* (2002), an iconic modern board game central to my course, enables rich, productive discussions about Atlantic colonization. In this game, players compete to grow plantation crops, which help them buy buildings that boost their plantations' output and value. Activating plantations and buildings requires colonists, supplied each turn by ships from afar. Critics claim that the game obscures the troubled histories behind its theme. They note that enslaved people, represented by small brown tokens, are referred to as "colonists" and that it neglects the consequences of colonization for Indigenous societies. The game, designed to invoke a generic Caribbean setting, misses the island's unique experience with slavery, as well as the monumental role sugar played in the region. Players hoping to learn much about Puerto Rico's actual history will be disappointed. The game's defenders argue that *Puerto Rico*'s plantation theme is "pasted on" to a game that never claims to faithfully simulate the history of Caribbean slavery. Its mechanics could be ported to a wide range of historical or imaginary realms.

Instead of thinking of this game as a history teacher, my students and I approach it for its significance in the present moment. While thinking about what it means to depict European colonization without slavery, we reflect on how values have changed to consider anew the neglected histories of the marginal. Where else in our entertainment culture do we see similar work of contesting memory? As an instance of historical representation, *Puerto Rico* raises many questions for classroom consideration, all enriched by understanding the island's actual history.

Games seeking more accurate representations of the colonial past depict slavery directly. In *Struggle of Empires* (2004, 2020), in which players represent European powers expanding their colonial influence, practicing slavery makes some colonies cheaper to claim, but practicing slavery alone cannot win the game. Other games tempt players to engage in slavery by offering early benefits only to punish the practice as the game progresses. In *Colonial: Europe's Empires Overseas* (2011), enslaved people are treated as a "cheap" resource early in the game, but once one player's economy develops sufficiently, those who trade slaves suffer diplomatic penalties, making it harder to wage war. In *Endeavor: Age of Sail* (2009, 2018), enslaved people likewise begin early in the game as a cheap asset that is lost when a specific economic threshold is reached. The game penalizes slavery's practitioners with negative points at game end.

There may be even more pedagogical value in analyzing games as representations of the past.

In tempting players to engage in slavery, the mechanics of these games offer an argument that combines two interpretations of abolition. On the one hand, they deliver a structural narrative of slavery's end: the practice fueled European expansion only to be rendered obsolete by the economic development it helped create. At the same time, in punishing the use of slavery, the games mirror the moral perspective of the abolitionists themselves, who argued that their successful diffusion of new values swelled "the torrent which swept away the slave trade." In discussions after we play, students identify tensions in our own popular understandings of this history. This, in turn, prepares them to encounter the historiographical debate between Eric Williams, who stressed economic factors in ending slavery, and Seymour Drescher, who prioritized the ideological component.

This ambiguous interpretation of abolition reminds us that, like films, games convey value-laden depictions of the past. These three games relegate slavery to a marginal position in history, acknowledging it while permitting players to avoid it. Students may wonder whether this oblique approach sufficiently confronts players with the historical reality. Slavery is incidental in these games, but it did not feel incidental to those caught in its maw. Yet neither are we likely to want games that faithfully simulate slavery's cruelty and violence. How, then, do we begin to define our values about how games should or should not represent difficult moments in our past? As is so often the case in classroom discussions involving subject experience, reaching definitive conclusions may be less essential than clearly defining the nature and range of our concerns.

*Freedom: The Underground Railroad* (2012) avoids some of these problem by asking players not to practice slavery but to undermine it. Assuming avatars as Black activists and white abolitionists, players work together to help enslaved people flee from the US South to Canada, all the while encountering historical events and raising money. The game's cooperative mechanics, which require players to work together against the game system, make a powerful argument about the challenges of collective action in social movements. Yet at the same time, enslaved people, represented by cubes, enjoy no agency, becoming literal pawns in the hands of their benevolent allies. Unlike the previous examples, *Freedom* was intended for classroom use. The game's publisher even offers a teacher's manual to help facilitate its use in educational spaces.

From *Puerto Rico*, which depends on slave-grown crops but never mentions slavery, to *Freedom*, which lets players fight against it, these titles illustrate a range of ways board games can engage the history of slavery. This happens not simply through historical themes announced on boxes, boards, and bits but also through the messages delivered through their mechanics. Games, like all media, deliver their interpretations through their form as much as through their content. Understanding both hones our students' capacity to critically encounter the history that is so pervasively represented in popular culture. **P**

*Patrick Rael is professor of history at Bowdoin College.*



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## DISASTROUS DISPLACEMENTS

*Vietnamese Americans in New Orleans East*

In Eric Nguyen's 2021 debut novel, *Things We Lost to the Water*, a bayou in New Orleans East acts as a record of the local Vietnamese refugee community. It holds the objects and organisms of everyday life, including soda cans, plastic bags, even a pet frog named Toto, and harbors the stress, despair, and desires of life in the city that the community shares only with this space. In this novel, the first published by a Vietnamese American from New Orleans, the bayou serves as an archive of one of the densest Vietnamese American communities in the country.

Nguyen shines a light on a community of Vietnamese who arrived in New Orleans after the Vietnam War, when Louisiana accepted 1,000 refugees and resettled them in the city. Many originally came from the North Vietnamese villages of Phat Diem and Bui Chu, Catholic areas with a history of anticolonial leadership, trained militias, and political autonomy. When the State of Vietnam was divided at the 17th parallel in 1954, these parishes' bishops led migrations of Catholics and Buddhists who wanted to resettle in the South and helped to reestablish their Catholic subparishes from the North. Philip Hannan, archbishop of New Orleans, spearheaded the resettlement effort in Louisiana, traveling to Fort Chaffee in Arkansas in 1975 and bringing refugees back to be resettled by the Archdiocese of New Orleans and Catholic Charities.

New Orleans East, where 30 percent of the population is Vietnamese American, is so far on the outskirts that it is not uncommon to hear many New Orleanians say that they have never been to this part of the Crescent City. Yet thousands of Vietnamese Americans have lived within a one-and-a-half-mile radius in a neighborhood called Village de l'est since 1975. Saturday-morning markets, South Vietnamese flags, and streets bearing names such as Saigon Drive dot the geography, while Mary Queen of Vietnam Church (MQVN) serves as a community anchor, offering masses in Vietnamese, English, and Spanish.

Vietnamese Americans in New Orleans East have experienced multiple forced displacements: in Vietnam, across the Pacific Ocean, and along the Gulf coast. Their experiences of colonialism, war, and environmental disasters (which, if not man-made, are the products of human decisions) have provided the foundations for grassroots activism in the community. This longer history of collective forced migration contextualizes this community's transplantation to New Orleans East and repeated displacements due to disaster in their new home. Some Vietnamese refugees would refer to the evacuation during Hurricane Katrina as their third experience of forced displacement—only, this time, there was hope of returning.

New Orleans East is so far on the outskirts that it is not uncommon to hear New Orleanians say that they have never been there.

When the first refugees arrived in 1975, two decades after their initial displacement from North Vietnam, residents and leaders at local and state levels disagreed over their resettlement. The press described some longtime residents and community leaders as worried that refugees would become permanently dependent on government aid, compound the challenges of a recession, and exacerbate already-tense race relations. Some Black residents expressed concern that resources they felt should have gone to their communities were being directed to these newcomers, while others pointed out that African Americans and Vietnamese were both victims of imperialism and should find a way to work together. Local Vietnamese-language publications of the early 1980s reveal pointed efforts to cultivate leadership within the community, correct erroneous information about refugees, and foster ties with other communities of color.

Despite these tensions, Vietnamese resettlement in New Orleans happened. Catholic Charities placed Vietnamese in the

Versailles Arms apartment complex in New Orleans East. Housing was available there because a brief period of development in the 1960s, centered on the construction of a NASA plant, did not result in an anticipated boom and demand for housing. By the time Vietnamese arrived, the area was associated with blight and existed in obscurity next to the more iconic areas of the city, such as the French Quarter and Garden District.

The Vietnamese community profoundly changed the Gulf coast's social and cultural landscape. Before Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005, Vietnamese were often portrayed in media and scholarship as self-isolating and unwilling to assimilate. Interest in them revolved around their "traditional" dress, culture, and gardens, which were cultivated behind homes or near the bayou. But after Katrina made landfall on August 29, 2005, Vietnamese Americans began to appear prominently in press coverage of the city. By early December, about 600 Vietnamese Americans had returned.

In 2007, their rate of return and rebuilding reached 90 percent—the highest of any community of color in New Orleans, as well as an outcome underpinned by their history of collective forced displacement and rebuilding. But when the Bring New Orleans Back Commission unveiled its plans for redeveloping the city, New Orleans East was deemed uninhabitable, at risk of becoming a "shantytown" and slated as future "green space." Father Vien Nguyen, former pastor of MQVN, stated, "The map ended. Right on our border. That's exactly how we felt all along. We were never on the map."

This neglect was repeated in February 2006, when New Orleans mayor Ray Nagin used emergency powers to grant Waste Management of Louisiana a permit to operate the Chef Menteur landfill as a dump site for Katrina trash. The landfill lies next to Versailles and links to key water sources. In consultation with environmental attorney Joel Waltzer, MQVN Community Development Corporation (MQVNCDC) and Vietnamese



During Mardi Gras, New Orleans East locals can enjoy a king cake from Dong Phuong Bakery.

*Marguerite Nguyen*

American Young Leaders Association (VAYLA), two non-profits that emerged after the hurricane, filed a lawsuit against Waste Management of Louisiana, alleging that the landfill constituted an “open dump” in violation of federal law. While the landfill remained open, feeding the billion-dollar waste business, the community continued to mobilize across generations and with Black neighbors to protest at city hall and, later, the landfill site, causing trucks filled with debris to turn around. A court order finally closed the landfill on August 15, 2006, but numerous landfills and illegal dump sites in the area remain.

### After Katrina, Vietnamese Americans began to appear prominently in press coverage of the city.

But hurricanes have not been the only cause of displacement for this community. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill on April 20, 2010—the largest oil spill in US history, the result of an explosion on a rig operated by BP—exacerbated existing problems, given that before Katrina, one in three area Vietnamese Americans made their living in the fishing industry. Together, these disasters resulted in tainted food sources, complicated insurance claims processes that many Vietnamese-language speakers could not maneuver, and destroyed livelihoods. The powerful oil industry, tied to spills, wetland loss, and threatened ecosystems, is directly responsible for the environmental issues that the state continues to face.

At the same time, Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil spill created urgent situations that led to increased Vietnamese American grassroots activism and civic engagement in New Orleans East. In addition to MQVNCDC and VAYLA, nonprofits including VEGGI Farmers Cooperative formed to serve Southeast Asian American, Black, and Latinx communities, as well as rural farmers and fishers. Through programs such as employment training, linguistic assistance with filing claims and citizenship tests, and innovative farming techniques, their offices help these communities survive in unpredictable times. Grassroots activism in New Orleans East has also contributed to Vietnamese American visibility in public office. Republican Joseph Cao, who became the first Vietnamese American to serve in the US Congress in 2009, and Democrat Cyndi Nguyen, currently a member of New Orleans City Council, both trace the start of their political careers to community work in eastern New Orleans.

Today, Vietnamese Americans’ presence in New Orleans East is perhaps most prominently defined in the media by their

participation in local foodways. Before Katrina, Vietnamese diasporic farming was seen as an outmoded way of life that would soon die out. After, its aquaponics innovations and collective ethos have been looked to as possible models for sustainable practice. Produce and bread from New Orleans East source many of the area’s famous restaurants. Dong Phuong Bakery was awarded a 2018 James Beard Foundation America’s Classics award and makes what many consider one of the city’s best king cakes. The food and culture shows at MQVN’s annual Tet festival attract people from around the region.

Yet along with Vietnamese American civic and political engagement, these culinary practices are often co-opted into narratives of Vietnamese American resilience. Resilience has become an expectation, rather than an explanation of cultural and political history, providing exploitive “feel-good” stories for a sinking city. Public discourse often heralds Vietnamese American activism in model-minority terms, where rebuilding as survival becomes minority achievement against the odds. This tendency muddies the day-to-day vulnerability of Vietnamese American, Black, and Latinx communities and obscures the impacts of structural racism and industry self-interest in the area’s marginalized populations. New Orleans East is still underserved and neglected by the state, experiencing environmental racism, food insecurity, and transportation and housing injustice.

On August 29, 2021, the 16th anniversary of Katrina, Hurricane Ida made landfall in Louisiana. Areas outside New Orleans, including New Orleans East, were severely flooded. The city’s residents recount Ida’s haunting, howling winds, which severely damaged the power grid. As this goes to press, many are still trying to figure out how to get by during these still-hot times as federal aid lags, as it has time and time again.

Toward the end of *Things We Lost to the Water*, a character named Huong tries to navigate Hurricane Katrina, and her struggle loops her back to her vulnerability as a refugee after the Vietnam War. Nguyen writes, “She doesn’t know where she is. South, north, Uptown, Mid-City—with all the water, she can’t tell where anything is anymore. She closes her eyes and tries to remember what it had been like before. . . . She remembers staring out the back of the boat, pinpoints of starlight illuminating the land until it was gone. . . . Huong held out her hand to the sea—a gesture of grasping or waving goodbye.” Vietnamese American New Orleans East attests not to the transcendent power of resilience but to the fact of ongoing precarious life and displacement trauma for many in Louisiana today. **P**

*Marguerite Nguyen is associate professor of English at Wesleyan University.*



JACQUELINE JONES

## ABSTRACT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT THE 2022 ANNUAL MEETING

*“Historians and Their Publics, Then and Now”*

A look at the annual AHA presidential addresses reveals an ongoing debate within the discipline about the ways historians should—or should not—communicate to general audiences. Related to this broad outreach effort is the AHA’s role in promoting or resisting narratives that erase the histories of women and people of color. Today, the democratization of the historical enterprise—from blogs to at-home DNA tests—has broadened the reach of professional and nonprofessional historians alike, while inspiring a backlash among those who see an inclusive account of the nation’s past as

dangerous or unpatriotic. Future historians will assess whether these developments represent a welcome and growing appreciation for the study of history or the triumph of a view of the past that promotes fiction over fact, myth over truth. **P**

*The presidential address will take place on Friday, January 7, 2022, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the Sheraton New Orleans’ Grand Ballroom C.*

*Jacqueline Jones is president of the AHA.*



## Hotel and Rate Information

	SINGLE	DOUBLE	TRIPLE	QUADRUPLE
<b>1 New Orleans Marriott (hdqtrs.)</b> 555 Canal St.	\$179	\$199	\$219	\$239
<b>2 Sheraton New Orleans</b> (co-hdqtrs.) 500 Canal St.	\$179	\$199	\$219	\$239
<b>3 JW Marriott New Orleans</b> 614 Canal St.	\$184	\$204	\$224	\$244
<b>4 Hotel Monteleone</b> 214 Royal St.	\$169	\$169	\$199	\$209

Rates are subject to hotel occupancy tax and will be honored three days before and three days after the official meeting dates of January 6–9 based on availability. Information on booking a room at the discounted rate is available at [historians.org/hotels](http://historians.org/hotels).



## Annual Meeting Update

The situation regarding the pandemic remains uncertain, and we are aware that you might not yet know whether you will feel comfortable traveling. There is still time for you to make a final decision. We expect that it will be safe for most participants to attend the meeting in person, and that the majority of sessions will take place in the conference hotels as planned. To ensure safety, attendees will be required to affirm that they are vaccinated against COVID-19. The city of New Orleans is well vaccinated and has stringent safety measures in place; visit [historians.org/health-and-safety](https://historians.org/health-and-safety) for the latest health and safety information.

We will offer options for presenters who are not comfortable meeting in person, including the option for sessions to move to an online format if members are not able to present in person. Online sessions will not take place at the same time as the in-person meeting but will be scheduled at a later date (to be determined). Please be patient as we review our options. We will be in touch with additional information, including when and how session participants should contact us about online presentations, as we finalize our plans.

## Dates and Deadlines

<b>NOVEMBER 2</b>	Program mailed to members.
<b>DECEMBER 10</b>	Last day to make hotel reservations through the housing service. Subsequent reservations taken on a space-available basis at the convention rate.
<b>DECEMBER 15</b>	Last day for preregistration pricing.
<b>DECEMBER 15</b>	Deadline to submit registration refund requests.
<b>JANUARY 6, 2022</b>	Annual meeting opens at 11:00 a.m. at the New Orleans Marriott and Sheraton New Orleans. Exhibit Hall opens Friday, January 7, 2022, at 9:00 a.m.

## Meeting Registration

Take advantage of reduced rates by preregistering for the conference. Make sure your membership is up to date so you can enjoy member pricing at each level. Register online at [historians.org/myaha](https://historians.org/myaha).

	MEMBER		NONMEMBER	
	PREREGISTRATION	AFTER DEC. 15	PREREGISTRATION	AFTER DEC. 15
Attendee	\$183	\$220	\$298	\$358
Speaker	\$183	\$220	\$183	\$220
Student	\$84	\$101	\$128	\$155
Un-/Underemployed	\$45	\$56	\$140	\$168
Retired	\$87	\$106	\$149	\$180
K-12 Teacher	\$65	\$78	\$125	\$150
Bring your Graduate/ Undergraduate/K-12 student discount	<b>For members only.</b> Add students to your registration for only \$15 each (\$30 onsite). Bring as many high school, undergraduate, and graduate students as you want for only \$15 each!			

Advance registration must be completed by midnight EST on December 15, 2021. Thereafter, onsite rates will apply. Everyone attending the meeting is expected to register. Admission to the Exhibit Hall requires a registration badge. **Special note for speakers:** All US-based historians presenting on AHA sessions must be AHA members, and all participants must register.



## SPECIAL OFFER

AHA members can bring students to #AHA22 for only \$15 each



AMERICAN  
HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION

135th ANNUAL MEETING  
**NEW ORLEANS**  
JANUARY 6-9, 2022

### BENEFIT TO STUDENTS

- Networking at special receptions and meetings for graduate students, undergraduate students, minority historians, and more
- Panel and poster presentations on every field and specialization
- Workshops for teaching and career development
- Exhibit Hall filled with the latest books, journals, databases, and digital tools

**Share all that the annual meeting has to offer with your high school, undergraduate, or graduate students!**

Registered attendees who are AHA members can register their students for only \$15 each (\$30 after December 15). This special pricing will be available with registration, beginning in mid-September. There is no limit on the number of students you can bring.

Information about the 2022 annual meeting is available online at **[historians.org/annual-meeting](https://historians.org/annual-meeting)**.



LAURA ANSLEY

## NEW FACES AT THE AHA

*Meet Liesl M. Greider, Claire Vanderwood, Alana Venable, and Rebecca L. West*

The AHA is pleased to welcome four new staff members: Liesl M. Greider as meetings and virtual events assistant, Claire Vanderwood as program assistant in the academic and professional affairs department, Alana Venable as research and publications assistant, and Rebecca L. West as operations and communications assistant.

**Liesl M. Greider** joined the AHA in October as meetings and virtual events assistant. She grew up in Beach Park, Illinois. While attending Roanoke College in Virginia, a semester spent in Washington, DC, interested her in living long-term in the nation's capital. Greider graduated in May 2021 with a BA in history and French, with a public history concentration.

"I think what draws me to history is how it is simultaneously unchanging and evolutionary," Greider told *Perspectives*. "We make it new every day by interpreting it through new lenses." Previous internships at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, the Belgian/Luxembourgish Fulbright Commission, and Phi Beta Kappa got her interested in working for a nonprofit like the AHA. As meetings and virtual events assistant, Greider is excited to learn from AHA members about their expertise. She said, "The AHA works closely with historians who are experts in their fields, and I consider it a great joy to listen to and learn from these sorts of people."

Outside work, Greider enjoys knitting, listening to French podcasts, and bike riding. "I get outside as often as I can to chase beautiful light, whether it be golden hour or a rain-bow," she said.

After graduating from George Washington University with a BA in history in May 2021, **Claire Vanderwood** joined the AHA as the program assistant with the academic and professional affairs department. Vanderwood hails from Toronto, Canada. A US history course and a trip to Washington, DC, during high school led Vanderwood to



Liesl M. Greider

fall in love with the subject and city. She applied to GWU specifically to study US history and so she could return to DC. "My favorite part of doing history is tapping into the things that are untouched—new angles, new evidence," she told *Perspectives*.

She has held internships at Historica Canada, where she worked on several projects, notably the Memory Project, and at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Her position at the AHA builds on those experiences. "Working in academic and professional affairs gives me a view into the different pathways I could take," she said, including possibly entering a PhD program in the future.

Since graduation, Vanderwood has been picking up some new hobbies. She has been learning to cook, working on perfecting her homemade salad dressings, and learning to



Claire Vanderwood



Alana Venable



Rebecca L. West

like fish. She also enjoys working out and has recently started weight lifting at home.

**Alana Venable** comes to the AHA from the tidewater region of Virginia. Originally from Newport News, she graduated from William & Mary in May 2020, where she majored in history with a minor in public health. A History of Pandemics and Science class showed her how fascinating an interdisciplinary approach to history could be. “Looking at cross-disciplinary approaches between history and science,” she told *Perspectives*, “helps explain things in a way that history alone can’t do.” Venable carried that insight forward into her own research interests, where she brought together histories of African Americans and public health.

What draws me to history  
is how it is simultaneously  
unchanging and evolutionary.

Her time at William & Mary also introduced Venable to scholarly communication and publishing. Working as an office assistant at the Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture (OI) also helped convince Venable that she should major in history. At the OI, she learned about book publications and digital history. After college, Venable worked as a research assistant for L.L. Lee and Associates, where she helped create a website for the Faith Journeys in the Black Experience, 1619–2019, conference. This site brought scholarly conference papers and historical context to today’s Black religious communities in Virginia. She returned to the OI in 2021 as an editorial assistant, before joining the AHA in July.

In her free time, Venable loves to cook, bake, and read. She has recently turned to crafts. She said, “I’m not good at knitting,

so embroidery was the next step!” In her reading, she has been focusing on catching up on books by Black authors, such as *Thick* by Tressie McMillan Cottom.

**Rebecca L. West** comes to the AHA after four and a half years at the American Academy of Audiology, where she worked while completing degrees from Northern Virginia Community College and George Mason University. West majored in cultural studies, which allowed her to combine her enthusiasm for history classes with other subjects. Asked what her favorite classes were, she pointed to courses on museum practices, Native American history, and the history of baseball. At the AHA, “all the work connects back to things I’m passionate about,” West told us. “I like being able to work with others who love history and getting to work on projects geared toward advancing it.”

At the academy, West divided her time between advocacy and working with student membership groups. Between that position and an internship with Let America Vote, she learned that she was especially passionate about advocacy work, something she now gets to do at the AHA. “I love advocacy, as a practice,” she said. “Teaching students how to advocate and be involved was a great opportunity.”

Outside work, you will probably find West hiking. She also loves reading and often tries to theme her reading to her hikes. A summer hiking trip to Bedford, Virginia, inspired her to pick up Alex Kershaw’s *The Bedford Boys: One American Town’s Ultimate D-Day Sacrifice*, which tells the story of the local soldiers who were some of the first to land on the Normandy beaches. West is also planning to apply to MA programs in history soon. **P**

*Laura Ansley is managing editor at the AHA. She tweets @lmansley.*

EMILY JOAN ELLIOTT

## A WINDING ROAD TO FINDING MY NICHE

*Putting a PhD to Work in Local News*

Less than two years after defending my dissertation on Soviet history at Michigan State University (MSU), I traded research in the former Soviet archives for Freedom of Information Act requests, department colloquia for school board and city council meetings, in my new career as a managing editor for a local news publication. As a high school student, I had wanted to become a journalist, but my college career steered me toward earning a history PhD. Now here I was, a journalist, and little did I know that my experiences digging for answers and focusing on disparities between migrants and Muscovites would be the perfect training for managing a local news publication.

After defending in May 2019, I decided to keep one foot in academia while exploring other career options in a variety of fields. My experiences in grad school made me qualified for a variety of positions, and at one point in early 2020, I juggled five part-time jobs before settling on journalism for my career path. I realized that I had specific hard skills—the ability to teach, research, and write well—coupled with soft skills like balancing collaborative and independent work. I cast a wide net when applying for jobs, and each position allowed me to better understand what I actually liked as I searched for a second career.

That May, my teaching experience parlayed itself into my first post-PhD job: a position running an after-school program through a local literacy coalition. While I was used to coming up with lesson plans and teaching in a more hands-on way, it was a new challenge to teach children ages 5 to 12. What I found most rewarding was mentoring my teen assistants and working with them to help the younger children, but I learned that classroom management is very different with young children versus the young adults I taught at MSU.

Even though I was leaning toward leaving academia, I also took on two adjunct positions—one in the fall of 2019 at Kalamazoo College and the other in the spring of 2020 at

MSU. I initially felt ambivalent about taking on adjunct work as I searched for my career beyond academia, but in retrospect, it was a good thing. While I thought teaching was my passion, my experiences in the after-school program and adjuncting helped clarify that I enjoyed mentoring students more. Research was my true academic love, and writing—particularly breaking down complex ideas into understandable narratives—was my biggest strength. These realizations helped me refocus my job search.

What I found most rewarding was mentoring my teen assistants and working with them to help the younger children.

Casting a wide net yielded listings for a variety of jobs and helped me identify what I really enjoyed doing. Yes, filling out application after application was difficult, but quickly, I found a rhythm. I realized that I did much better when applying to smaller places where someone read every application that came in. I had a lot to offer employers, but I was still learning how to get around HR digital algorithms that sort through applications. Some interviews were duds. I still shudder when I think of the small history organization that asked whether I had a man at home to support me if hired for their underpaid on-call position.

My job search outside academia also allowed me to find employment at places where both the mission and the work were meaningful to me. As I scoured the Michigan Nonprofit Association's job board, I came across an ad for tour manager for Building Matters Ann Arbor. I was drawn to the company's mission of seeking equity in a gentrifying community while also offering history tours. I ultimately did not get the job, but the founder remembered me and my interests and sought me out to perform research that would form the basis of tours.



By January 2020, I found work that relied heavily on my research and writing skills. I started as a reporter at large for East Lansing Info, took up a position as an editorial assistant for the Historical Society of Michigan, and enjoyed my short stint as a freelance researcher for Building Matters Ann Arbor.

It was frustrating at first to realize that perhaps I could have landed these nonacademic jobs with a bachelor's degree, but earning a doctorate gave me experience that helped me move through the ranks quickly in my new positions. At the Historical Society of Michigan, which publishes two history-focused magazines, I moved from editorial assistant to special sections editor in less than five months. I know that some of the tasks that I completed and skills that I used while writing my dissertation helped me land and excel at my job there. I remember at my interview being asked whether I understood copyright and getting

permission to republish photos. I had done that (in Russian) for my dissertation.

At the historical society, I realized that *teaching* writing had been just as important as writing my dissertation, particularly since the main part of my job was editing work initially written by others. When I worked with students on writing, I was teaching them to make an argument clearly and persuasively or to tell a story. Similarly, when I was editing, my job was not to rewrite a story to make it the one I thought was best or most compelling. My job was to fact-check, tighten writing, and make the text adhere to specific style guides, all while maintaining the author's voice.

A soft skill that really helped me excel there was my ability to balance individual work—editing and writing articles—with collaborative work. Alongside colleagues, I helped to decide which stories to accept and include in an issue, wrote article



As managing editor at East Lansing Info, Emily Joan Elliott likens her role to being a "dean of reporters."  
Emily Joan Elliott

titles, and consulted on where to find photos and experts for fact-checking.

I worked as a freelance reporter for East Lansing Info throughout my time at the Historical Society of Michigan, where the skills I learned in graduate school were essential as I moved from freelance reporter to managing editor. As a reporter, I found that my research skills, including knowing where to look for information, really paid off. I filed Freedom of Information Act requests, quickly read through the information provided, and pulled out the most important points. I was comfortable cold-calling people for interviews and knowing which questions to ask and how, something I had done during my dissertation research in Moscow, Russia. Obviously, the work I produce for East Lansing Info is dramatically shorter than a dissertation—most articles average 800 to 1,200 words—but I knew how to foreground an argument and back it up with supporting evidence.

As a reporter, I found that my research skills, including knowing where to look for information, really paid off.

Soon enough, I was putting in 60 to 70 hours a week combined as special sections editor for the Historical Society of Michigan and managing editor for East Lansing Info. While I enjoyed my time with the historical society, I knew East Lansing Info was the place for me since it allowed me to do the things I enjoyed most, like digging into my own research and writing up what I found on a quick turnaround.

I sometimes describe my job as managing editor as “dean of the reporters.” I meet with our publisher regularly to discuss which stories we need to pursue and then assign them to reporters. I edit their articles and prepare them for publication. I hold office hours where I can meet with and mentor young reporters and learn from those who have been in journalism longer than me. My job is a mix of the things I liked about academia, such as flexible hours and doing work that I find meaningful, and new things that I find exciting—namely, the ability to change the topics that I report on on a weekly and sometimes even daily basis.

There is also unglamorous administrative and managerial work that comes with my position. I have developed a resources page for our reporters, respond to countless emails, keep track of the Freedom of Information Act requests we

make, and determine our publication schedule. The list goes on and seems to grow with each passing month.

A huge perk of my job as managing editor is that I still get to do reporting. In my journalism, I’ve been able to focus on a topic that was at the heart of my academic research: social disparities and their implications. My articles cover racial disparities in the city’s governmental workforce and health care inequities. My work doesn’t result in immediate change, but like academic research and discussion, it can spark conversations and influence social change.

Part of what I like about East Lansing Info is how it differs from other news organizations. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and in addition to providing the news, we serve our community in other ways. Nearly every day, readers use our contact form to ask questions about navigating problems that they are facing. During the pandemic, for example, I helped some of our readers understand and navigate the process of registering for vaccines. Being able to give back to the community makes my work feel more meaningful to me since I feel that I am making my small corner of the world a better place.

After two years and a winding search, I have found my niche. Sometimes, I find myself missing work that focuses on Russia, but perhaps the next act in this play will merge these two interests. **P**

*Emily Joan Elliott is managing editor of East Lansing Info, a local online news publication. She tweets @elliottemilyj.*



## Graham A. Cosmas

1938–2021

Military Historian

Graham A. Cosmas passed away on March 18, 2021. He was a distinguished historian of the US military, one of the best of his generation, and a friendly, generous, brilliant individual.

Graham was born on August 8, 1938, in Weehawken, New Jersey, to George and Jean Carter Cosmas. He attended elementary, junior high, and high school in Leonia, New Jersey. After two years at Columbia College, he transferred to Oberlin College and received his BA in history in 1960. He went on to earn an MA in 1962 and a PhD in 1969 at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. His dissertation, supervised by Richard N. Current, was on the US Department of War during and immediately after the Spanish-American War. A junior faculty member, Edward M. Coffman, provided much assistance and remained a close friend thereafter. Graham taught at the University of Texas at Austin until 1971, when he joined the University of Guam history department. The same year, he published his dissertation as *An Army for Empire: The United States Army in the Spanish-American War* (Univ. of Missouri Press, 1971). The book received strong reviews and has remained the standard work on the subject for the past 50 years.

When he returned from Guam in 1973, Graham could not find another teaching position. He worked as a salesman in a shoe store and contemplated going to night school to obtain a degree in accounting. Instead, he accepted an unexpected job offer from the US Marine Corps History and Museums Division in Washington, DC, and reported for work in December 1973.

Thus began Graham's long and productive career as an official historian for the US military. He spent five and a half years with the US Marines, followed by 21 years with the US Army Center of Military History, and 11 years with the Joint History Office. In these roles, Graham was the lead author of *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: Vietnamization and Redeployment, 1970–1971* (US Marine Corps, 1986) and *The Medical*

*Department: Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations* (US Army Center of Military History, 1992) in the US Army in World War II series. He also was the sole author of two volumes in the US Army in Vietnam series: *MACV: The Joint Command in the Years of Escalation, 1962–1967* (2006) and *MACV: The Joint Command in the Years of Withdrawal, 1968–1973* (2007). In 1984–85, Graham served as the General Harold Keith Johnson Chair at the US Army Center of Military History, which allowed him to teach students at the US Army War College.

Graham's final position was as deputy director of the Joint History Office, located at the Pentagon. Less than two months into the job, he and his colleagues survived the 9/11 attack. The historians spent the next year in temporary quarters, initially without working computers or access to records; many archival documents were damaged because of water, mold, and mildew. But Graham showed grace under pressure on the day of the attack and in the difficult months afterward.

Graham's primary assignment as deputy director was to prepare the three-part *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1960–1968*, which he did despite the trauma and disruption caused by the attack. Jack Shulimson, a close friend from Marine Corps history, prepared part 1 for publication in 2011, while Graham focused on parts 2 and 3, published in 2012 and 2009, respectively. By the time of his retirement in 2011, Graham had written or co-written six major official histories during a career of over 30 years.

Graham was very generous with his time outside the office. He was active in the Society for Military History, serving 27 years as treasurer and winning the 1999 Victor Gondos Award for his contributions to the organization; the DC-based Military Classics Seminar, of which he served as president in 2000–01; and the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Alexandria, Virginia, where for many years he was captain of ushers. In his spare time, he liked to play war games, and at the time of his death, he had a collection of over 300 hand-painted military miniatures. He will be missed.

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Edgar F. Raines Jr.  
*US Army Center of Military History (emeritus)*





## Emil J. Polak

1936–2021

Historian of Europe;  
AHA Life Member

Emil J. Polak, professor emeritus of history at Queensborough Community College of the City University of New York, died at his Long Island home in Sayville, New York, on April 8, 2021, at age 84. A specialist in the history of medieval rhetoric, Polak was best known for his published inventories of medieval manuscripts that contained treatises and formularies on the *ars dictaminis* (the art of letter writing) and the *ars aregandi* (secular oratory).

Polak earned his BA in medieval Latin at the New York State College for Teachers in 1957 and his MA and PhD at Columbia University, where he was mentored by John Hine Mundy and Paul Oskar Kristeller. While studying at Columbia, Polak taught at Brooklyn College, Saint John's University, and the former Staten Island Community College before joining the Department of History at Queensborough Community College in 1967. In 1962–63, Polak was one of the first recipients of the American Academy in Rome's Prix de Rome in Post-Classical and Humanistic Studies, conducting research as a fellow at the academy for his doctoral thesis on the work of the 13th-century master of rhetoric Jacques de Dinant, published as *A Textual Study of Jacques de Dinant's Summa Dictaminis* (Droz, 1975).

Inspired by Kristeller, who would remain a lifelong colleague and friend, Polak then embarked on a project to catalogue studies of the *ars dictaminis* and the *ars aregandi* produced between the 11th and 17th centuries held in manuscript collections around the world. Over the next two decades, Polak examined more than 3,600 manuscripts in over 900 archives and libraries in more than 36 countries, with support from foundations including the National Endowment for the Humanities, Renaissance Society of America, American Council of Learned Societies, Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, and PSC-CUNY Research Award Program. This exhaustive research was inventoried in three volumes of *Medieval and Renaissance Letter Treatises and Form Letters*, published by Brill: *A Census of Manuscripts Found in*

*Eastern Europe and the Former USSR* (1992); *A Census of Manuscripts Found in Part of Western Europe, Japan, and the United States of America* (1994); and *A Census of Manuscripts Found in Part of Europe: The Works on Letter Writing from the Eleventh through the Seventeenth Century Found in Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, and Italy* (2015). In 1994, Polak organized a panel at the annual meeting of the Medieval Academy of America commemorating the work of the scholar Helene Wieruszowski, the proceedings of which he edited as *A Medievalist's Odyssey: Helene Wieruszowski, Scholar* (Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2004).

Reviewers have hailed Polak's census volumes as sources, in themselves, for the transmission of the medieval rhetorical tradition and its influence on Renaissance humanism. "Blessed is the scholar," wrote John Monfasani in 1997, "who leaves to future generations a work that will not be redone, but only updated." Polak's learning made him a valued contributor to the Columbia Seminar on Medieval Studies and the Renaissance Society of America. In 2001, he earned wider notice when profiled in a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, "The Art of Letter Writing Has an Archivist, and He Doesn't Do E-mail." In 2003, Polak was awarded Queensborough's highest honor, the President's Award for Excellence in Faculty Scholarship.

Polak's joy in the archives was communicated in every class he taught at Queensborough and in correspondence with an international network of fellow scholars, now preserved in the archives of Columbia University. Such leisure time as Polak enjoyed was spent with his beloved wife, Patricia Leuzzi Polak, who predeceased him. He will always be fondly remembered by colleagues at the City University of New York who valued his erudition, sly humor, and boundless enthusiasm for archival research.

Elizabeth A. R. Brown  
*Brooklyn College and the Graduate  
Center, CUNY (emerita)*

John Monfasani  
*State University of New York, Albany*

Aithné Bialo-Padin, Edmund Clingan,  
Clarence J. Hall Jr., Emily Sohmer Tai,  
and Gilmar Visoni  
*Queensborough Community College, CUNY*



## Yü Ying-shih

1930–2021

Historian of China

Yü Ying-shih, Gordon Wu '58 Professor of Chinese Studies emeritus and professor emeritus of East Asian studies and history at Princeton University, died on August 1, 2021, in Princeton, New Jersey.

Born on February 20, 1930, in Tianjin, China, Yü studied Chinese history under Ch'ien Mu in Hong Kong in the early 1950s. He came to the Harvard-Yenching Institute in 1955 and received a PhD in history from Harvard University in 1962, with a dissertation supervised by Yang Lien-sheng. Yü taught at the University of Michigan, Harvard, Yale University, and Princeton, where he retired in 2001.

During his long scholarly career, Yü discussed issues spanning some 2,500 years of Chinese history. He is best known for studies of Confucianism. He asserted that as a religion, it had shown an open, flexible, and inclusive character that contrasted sharply with the exclusivity found in Christianity and Islam. Yü argued that Dao (the Way) and history constitute respectively the inside and outside of Chinese civilization, and he held that in late imperial China, the idea of democracy found its most sympathetic audience among Confucian elites. He challenged Max Weber's theory that modern capitalism was rooted in the Protestant ethic, claiming that indigenous capitalism arose in the Ming-Qing period and was energized by Confucian scholars' inner-worldly asceticism. His study of Chinese intellectual history included the distinctives of morality and knowledge in the 12th-century philosophy of Zhu Xi, the popular reorientation of Confucian culture in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, and the rise of Qing Confucian intellectualism in the 18th century.

In his research, Yü sought to explain how Confucian-inspired Chinese civilization must be understood on its own terms, even as it engaged Indian Buddhism in the early imperial period and European cultures from the 16th century. His comparative studies and methodology vigorously challenged traditional historians' lack of speculation on the *longue durée* of Chinese history and substantially rejected the methods and

claims of standard accounts from the People's Republic of China. Instead, Yü argued that we must embrace historical humanism and oppose historical determinism. Consequently, his works have prompted scholarly inquiry in China that transcends the ideological constraints that have often restricted historical study there since the 1950s. Beyond its influence on the discipline of history, his scholarship offered revisionary accounts that were taken seriously by a variety of intellectuals in mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Yü's lifetime pursuit of a cultural China and advocacy for Chinese democracy is summed up concisely in his fond rephrasing of Thomas Mann: "Where I am, there is China!"

Yü's teaching focused on guidance, and he expected students to find the answers themselves. According to one student, "When you were thirsty, he would point where the well is, but he would not force your head down to drink." On the other hand, he was skillful at writing sharp and accurate comments on students' seminar reports to stimulate their further thinking. Yü hardly used notes when he was lecturing, as if everything flowed out of his mind naturally, like a person effortlessly playing melodies on the violin.

From his first book, *A New Trend in Modern Civilization* (Freedom Press, 1953), through his final article, "Confucian Culture vs. Dynastic Power in Chinese History" (*Asian Major*, 2021), Yü published 59 scholarly monographs and more than 400 articles, mostly in Chinese. He regarded Chinese intellectuals as his main audience and, since the 1970s, typically wrote book-length studies in Chinese and then presented these findings in a more concise format in English. His penetrating insights, rendered in a classical prose style, have made his works exemplars of modern historical writing in the Chinese-speaking world. Yü has been honored with an array of awards, including the 2006 Kluge Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Study of Humanity from the Library of Congress and the 2014 Tang Prize in Sinology from Taiwan.

In the style of a true Confucian gentleman, Yü composed traditional poetry and practiced calligraphy; his accomplishments in both areas were held in high esteem among his peers.

He died peacefully in his sleep, leaving behind his wife, Monica Shu-ping Chen Yü, and two daughters. He is buried in Princeton Cemetery alongside his parents.

Shao Dongfang

*Library of Congress (writing in a personal capacity)*

*Photo courtesy Wang Fan-sen, Academia Sinica*

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## UNITED STATES



### COLORADO

#### UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO COLORADO SPRINGS

Colorado Springs, CO

**Assistant Professor of 20th-Century History of the US in the World.** The History Department at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (<https://history.uccs.edu>) invites applications for a tenure-track assistant professorship of US history, specializing in the 20th-century history of the US in the world to begin in August 2022. Open to all applicants but preferred subfields are military, economic, environmental, and/or Indigenous histories. Teaching load is 3/2, meaning that in regular fall and spring semesters, the faculty member will teach three (3- to 4-credit) courses one semester and two (3- to 4-credit) courses the other semester. Courses will be taught at both the undergraduate and graduate (MA) levels. Courses may be offered face-to-face or online/hybrid per needs of the department. ABDs may apply, but candidates must submit evidence of the receipt of the PhD degree by June 2022. Applications must be submitted at <https://cu.taleo.net/careersection/jobdetail.ftl?job=22732>. All applications received by December 20, 2021, will be guaranteed consideration. Semifinalist interviews via Zoom will commence after January 24, 2022.



### CONNECTICUT

#### YALE UNIVERSITY

New Haven, CT

**Assistant/Advanced Assistant Professor of 20th- to 21st-Century Italian Studies.** The Department of Italian Studies seeks to appoint an assistant or advanced assistant professor in 20th- to 21st-century Italian studies, to begin in July 2022. Specific area of concentration open; native or near-native proficiency in Italian and English. Please contact search committee chair, Prof. Jane Tylus ([jane.tylus@yale.edu](mailto:jane.tylus@yale.edu)), or chair's assistant, Ann DeLauro ([ann.delauaro@yale.edu](mailto:ann.delauaro@yale.edu)), with any questions. Preferred candidates will have a strong publication record and evidence of broad teaching experience at a variety of levels. PhD or equivalent international degree must be in hand by June 1, 2022. Applicants should submit a letter of application, CV, three letters of recommendation, and statement of research interests, teaching, and diversity by November 1, 2021, to ensure consideration to <http://apply.interfolio.com/94621>. Yale University is an AA/EOE. Yale values diversity among its students, staff, and faculty and strongly welcomes applications from women, persons with disabilities, protected veterans, and underrepresented minorities.



### GEORGIA

#### EMORY UNIVERSITY

Atlanta, GA

**Assistant Professor/Associate Professor/Full Professor of East Asian History.** The Department of History at Emory University is seeking applications for an open-rank tenured or tenure-track position in East Asian history. We are particularly interested in applicants who

specialize in the history of Japan and/or Korea and/or who bring a global or transnational perspective to their research and teaching. Specialists in all time periods will be considered. The successful applicant will teach courses and provide mentorship at the undergraduate and graduate levels, including directing undergraduate honors projects and PhD dissertations, as well as participate in the activities of the History Department, the East Asian Studies Program, and the university as a whole. Applicants should submit a letter of application, a CV, a short (chapter- or article-length) writing sample, three letters of recommendation, and a statement reflecting upon their experience and vision regarding the teaching and mentorship of students from diverse backgrounds. Emory is using Interfolio's Faculty Search to conduct this search. Applicants to this position receive a free Dossier account and can send all application materials free of charge. Apply to <http://apply.interfolio.com/92749>. Review of materials will begin September 30, 2021. Applications received up to 30 days after review begins will be given full consideration. The appointment will begin on September 1, 2022. PhD must be in hand by the appointment start date. Inquiries can be directed to the search committee chair, Tonio Andrade, at [eastasia.search@emory.edu](mailto:eastasia.search@emory.edu). Emory University is committed to student and faculty diversity, equity, and inclusion and is an AA/EOE. We welcome nominations of, and applications from, women, members of underrepresented groups, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities, as well as others who would bring additional diversity to the university's research and teaching endeavors.

#### Open Rank Position in African American Studies.

The Department of African American Studies at Emory University invites applications for an open-rank tenured or tenure-track position in African American studies with a focus on race and education. We are particularly interested in scholars working on the anthropology, history, or sociology of African American education who deploy ethnography, archival methods, oral histories, participatory and community-based research, or related qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The new hire will teach two courses per semester, including departmental surveys, specialized upper-level undergraduate seminars, and graduate courses as the department plans to expand to offer a PhD beginning in 2023. Emory University is committed to student and faculty diversity, equity, and inclusion and is an AA/EOE. We welcome nominations of, and applications from, women, members of underrepresented groups, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities, as well as others who would bring additional diversity to the university's research and teaching endeavors. All applicants must have a demonstrated commitment to teaching and mentoring a diverse student body. Candidates must hold a PhD in a relevant discipline/field by the time of appointment. Review of applications will begin November 1, 2021. Applications received up to 30 days after review begins will be given full consideration. At this stage, we ask applicants to submit a cover letter, a CV, a 20- to 25-page writing sample, the names and contact information of three references, and a list of potential undergraduate and graduate courses.

## AD POLICY STATEMENT

Most job discrimination is illegal, and open hiring on the basis of merit depends on fair practice in recruitment, thereby ensuring that all professionally qualified persons may obtain appropriate opportunities. The AHA will not accept a job listing that (1) contains wording that either directly or indirectly links race, color, national origin, sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, ideology, political affiliation, age, or disability to a specific job offer; or (2) contains wording requiring applicants to submit special materials for the sole purpose of identifying the applicant's race, color, national origin, sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, ideology, political affiliation, veteran status, age, or disability.

The AHA does make an exception to these criteria in three unique cases: (1) open listings for minority vita banks that are clearly not linked with specific jobs, fields, or specializations; (2) ads that require religious identification or affiliation for consideration for the position, a preference that is allowed to religious institutions under federal law; and (3) fellowship advertisements.

The AHA retains the right to refuse or edit all discriminatory statements from copy submitted to the Association that is not consistent with these guidelines or with the principles of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The AHA accepts advertisements from academic institutions whose administrations are under censure by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), but requires that this fact be clearly stated. Refer to [www.aaup.org/our-programs/academic-freedom/censure-list](http://www.aaup.org/our-programs/academic-freedom/censure-list) for more information.

For further details on best practices in hiring and academic employment, see the AHA's Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct, [www.historians.org/standards](http://www.historians.org/standards); Guidelines for the Hiring Process, [www.historians.org/hiring](http://www.historians.org/hiring); and Policy on Advertisements, [www.historians.org/adpolicy](http://www.historians.org/adpolicy).



Candidates' cover letters should include a discussion of their experience and vision regarding the teaching and mentorship of students from diverse backgrounds. All application materials should be submitted via Interfolio: <https://apply.interfolio.com/93805>. Inquiries can be directed to the chair of the search committee: Professor Walter C. Rucker, [wrucker@emory.edu](mailto:wrucker@emory.edu).



## UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK

College Park, MD

**Associate/Full Professor of US Immigration History.** The Department of History at the University of Maryland invites applications for a full-time, tenured position focused on 20th/early 21st century Asian or African diasporic immigration to the United States at the rank of associate or full professor. The successful candidate will work closely with the University of Maryland's Center for Global Migration Studies and will be expected to contribute to campus initiatives on immigration. The starting date for this position is August 2022, contingent upon funding. We especially seek those who approach immigration history from a global and/or transnational perspective. We will consider any applicants who focus on history since 1900, but with a particular interest in work that explores the post-1965 period. The successful applicant will have a strong research record, the ability to teach undergraduate and graduate courses and advise students, and a strong commitment to interdisciplinary and collaborative research and teaching. For best consideration, submit a complete application online by November 15, 2021. The application should include a letter describing approach to immigration studies, research interests, and teaching interests and experiences; CV; a sample of scholarly research; and contact information for three people who will submit letters of reference. Inquiries may be sent to the chair of the search committee, Professor Julie Greene, at [jmg@umd.edu](mailto:jmg@umd.edu). Applications must be made online to <https://ejobs.umd.edu/postings/86020>. We seek candidates whose research, teaching, and service have prepared them to contribute to diversity and inclusion. Applicants are asked to summarize their past or potential contributions to diversity in a Statement of

Contributions to Diversity or as part of the cover letter. Contributions might include leadership in teaching, mentoring, research or service towards building an equitable and diverse scholarly environment and/or increasing access or participation of individuals from historically underrepresented groups. The University of Maryland, College Park actively subscribes to a policy of equal employment opportunity, and will not discriminate against any employee or applicant because of race, age, gender, color, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, national origin, or political affiliation. We strongly encourage applications from racial and ethnic minorities, and other individuals who are underrepresented in the historical profession, across race, color, religion, national origin, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation and identity. Minorities and women are encouraged to apply. This search is contingent upon the availability of funds.



## OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Columbus, OH

**Assistant Professor of African American and Women's Studies.** The Ohio State University invites applications for a joint tenure-track assistant professor position in the Departments of African American and African Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies to start August 15, 2022. The position is partially funded by Ohio State's Global Arts and Humanities Discovery Theme, a significant faculty hiring investment in key thematic areas in which the university can build on its culture of academic collaboration to make a global impact. The departments seek candidates whose research and teaching focus on the intersections of health, wellness, race, gender, disability, class, and/or sexuality with a particular emphasis on equity in the lived environment. We invite interdisciplinary scholars who approach the study of health and wellness through intersectional, transnational, and/or Indigenous lenses. We are especially interested in candidates whose scholarship and teaching examines social equity, anti-Blackness, racial and gender disparities in health outcomes, LGBTQIA+ communities, disability studies, or the crisis of public health. We seek candidates who complicate understandings of health and

wellness and whose expertise strengthens OSU's commitment to Medical and Health Humanities and Arts. An ideal candidate would be a scholar who is grounded in interdisciplinary Black Studies methodologies as well as feminist methodologies who can offer introductory, intermediate, advanced upper division seminars, and graduate seminars in African American and African Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. We welcome applicants from a wide range of disciplines and interdisciplinary who are imaginative, innovative, and collaborative scholars. OSU is committed to developing a cohort of scholars invested in the study of health equity. Departments and units across the campus will be hiring in this area over the next few years. We look forward to building cross-disciplinary and cross-campus collaborations as well as the formation of equitable community partnerships. Qualifications: Candidates must have their PhD in hand by August 1, 2022. Candidates with graduate training in African American and African Studies and/or Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies are preferred. Appointment is contingent on the university's verification of credentials and other information required by law and/or university policies, including but not limited to a criminal background check. Ohio State University campus is located in Columbus, the capital city of Ohio. Columbus is the Midwest's fastest-growing city and the nation's 14th largest city. Columbus offers a diverse array of welcoming neighborhoods and a vibrant arts and culture scene. Additional information about all that the Columbus area has to offer is available at <https://visit.osu.edu/experience>. A complete application consists of a cover letter; CV; a writing sample; a diversity statement that should articulate your demonstrated commitments and leadership in contribution to diversity, equity, and inclusion through research, teaching, mentoring, and/or outreach and engagement; and contact information for three referees. (Referees will be contacted at a later stage in the application review). The application deadline is November 1, 2021. Inquiries may be directed to Amber Williams via email at [Williams.5449@osu.edu](mailto:Williams.5449@osu.edu). Apply at <https://academicjobsonline.org/ajob/jobs/19641>. The Ohio State University is committed to establishing a culturally and intellectually diverse environment, encouraging all members of our learning community to reach their full potential. Over the next few years, The Ohio

State University is committed to welcoming 350 new faculty hires, many of which will contribute to growing our role as a premier research university equipped to answer and interrogate the critical domestic and global societal challenges that deter equality and inclusion. We are responsive to dual-career families and strongly promote work-life balance to support our community members through a suite of institutionalized policies. The university is a member of the Ohio/Western Pennsylvania/West Virginia Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC). The Ohio State University is an EOE. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation or identity, national origin, disability status, or protected veteran status.



## REED COLLEGE

Portland, OR

**Tenure-Track Position in East Asian History and Humanities.** The Department of History at Reed College invites applications for a tenure-track position in East Asian history and humanities. We anticipate making the appointment at the assistant professor level. The successful candidate will teach a variety of East Asian history courses of their own creation, and contribute to Reed's interdisciplinary Humanities program with initial appointment in Chinese Humanities (<https://www.reed.edu/humanities/hum231-232/>). Teaching duties also include advising year-long senior theses. Candidates should have received their PhD by August 2022. Reed College is a small, distinguished undergraduate institution with a strong liberal arts curriculum, committed to excellence in teaching and scholarship. Reed also believes that cultural and intellectual pluralism is essential to the excellence of its academic program. In your cover letter, please describe the ways in which your past and current teaching, scholarship, mentorship, and/or community service have supported values of diversity and inclusion. Please also convey the ways in which your work at Reed will support the commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion articulated in the College's diversity and anti-racism statements (<http://www.reed.edu/diversity/>). An EOE. Reed values diversity and encourages applications from underrepresented

groups. Completed applications should be received by November 8, 2021, to be guaranteed consideration. To apply, submit a cover letter that addresses both research and teaching interests, a CV, and three letters of recommendation to David Garrett, Chair, East Asian History Search Committee, at <http://apply.interfolio.com/95546>.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia, PA

**Assistant Professor of Asian American History.** The Department of History at the University of Pennsylvania seeks to fill a tenure-track assistant professor position with a focus on Asian American history. This hire is part of a multi department, multi-position initiative in Asian American studies. We especially encourage applications from candidates with scholarly expertise in one or more of the following: diaspora and empire; a history of postwar

migration from Asian countries; and/or Asian American experience in a multiracial context. The successful candidate for this position will present strong evidence of excellence in research and teaching, and is expected to have the PhD in hand by the start date (July 1, 2022). In addition to contributing to teaching at the undergraduate and graduate level and mentorship in the Department of History, the new faculty member is expected to play an active role in the Penn Asian American Studies Program (<https://asam.sas.upenn.edu/>). Interested candidates should apply online at <http://apply.interfolio.com/94518>. Submit a letter of application, CV, research and teaching statements, and three confidential letters of recommendation. Review of applications will begin on December 27, 2021, and will continue until the position is filled. For questions, please contact the chair of the search committee, Professor Eiichiro Azuma at [azu@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:azu@sas.upenn.edu). The Department of History is strongly committed to Penn's Action Plan for Faculty Diversity and Excellence and to establishing a more diverse faculty (for more information, see <http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v58/n02/diversityplan.html>).

[upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v58/n02/diversityplan.html](http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v58/n02/diversityplan.html)). The University of Pennsylvania is an EOE. Minorities/women/individuals with disabilities/protected veterans are encouraged to apply.

**Assistant Professor of the History of Sexuality.** The School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania invites applications for a tenure-track position in the history of sexuality at the assistant professor rank. The successful candidate will be appointed in the Department of History and will be centrally involved in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (GSWS) Program. They will teach undergraduate and graduate courses in History and the GSWS Program, with the normal course load being two courses per semester. We welcome candidates working in the post-1800 period on any geographical and topical area. We seek applicants who embrace innovative methods and critical perspectives on sexuality; engage with questions of race, ethnicity, empire, and colonialism; take interdisciplinary approaches; and/or study global/transnational materials. This position is part of a

cluster of appointments in sexuality, gender, and/or queer studies, and candidates should have a strong interest in interacting with scholars from other disciplines whose research lies in this broad area of inquiry. The PhD is expected at the time of the appointment (July 1, 2022). Applicants should submit their materials online at <http://apply.interfolio.com/94511> and include a letter of application, a CV, a writing sample (article or dissertation chapter), a teaching statement, and three confidential letters of recommendation. Review of applications will begin November 15, 2021, and continue until the position is filled. The School of Arts and Sciences is strongly committed to Penn's Action Plan for Diversity and Excellence and to creating a more diverse faculty (for more information, see <http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v58/n02/diversityplan.html>). The University of Pennsylvania is an EOE. We encourage applications from women, BIPOC scholars, LGBTQ scholars, scholars with disabilities, and/or protected veterans.

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TARA MULDER

## ROSES

Roses in the ancient Mediterranean were symbols of religious devotion, erotic desire, and luxury. They were used in incense and aphrodisiacs, garlands and perfumes, wines and food. They were also an important medicinal ingredient. The juice from rose petals was used as a rinse for sores in the mouth and gums. Whole flowers, consumed in wine, were taken for stomachaches and diarrhea. A mixture of rose oil and butter was injected as a clyster into the anus as a remedy for dysentery.

More than anywhere else, though, the rose appears as a medicinal ingredient in ancient Mediterranean gynecological writings. Decoctions of rose were used in sitz baths for inflammation, vaginal and uterine ulcers, and uterine hemorrhage. Dried rose petals and leaves made a remedy for thrush. Metrodora, a Byzantine medical writer, advised the use of roses in pessaries, plaster, clysters, and ointments for cervical inflammation, vaginal fluxes, conception, contraception, and abortion.

As a medical historian and an herbalist myself, I can imagine Metrodora gathering her rose petals. Every summer, I harvest *Rosa rugosa*, the “beach rose” (pictured). The flowers are white and pink, single rows of five wrinkly petals around a cluster of bright yellow stamens. I grip the velvety petals lightly, tug gently, and release microscopic oils in a cloud of sharp, wild fragrance, leaving yellow centers bare amid green leaves. I dry them on screens and scoop them, lighter than air, into glass jars. I macerate them in almond and olive oil to make rose oil.

In his *Medical Materials*, the first-century-CE Greek medical writer Dioscorides describes the involved process of making rose oil: Macerate the petals of 1,000 roses in oil overnight. The next day, strain the oil and reinfuse with the petals from 1,000 more roses. Repeat seven times.



Needless to say, rose oil was an expensive commodity because of both the materials and the labor required to produce it. Even today, it takes vast quantities of petals to make small amounts of rose essential oil.

Dioscorides and Metrodora would never have seen (or smelled) the *Rosa rugosa*, a Japanese import to Europe in the 19th century. But the genus *Rosa* is very old. Fossil records of roses from more than two million years ago have been discovered in both the Pacific Northwest (where I live) and eastern Europe. As far as scholars can tell from literary sources and material records, the ancient Mediterranean herbalists likely would have been working with *Rosa gallica* or its variety the *Rosa damascena*, both of which are renowned today for their scent, as well as their culinary and medicinal uses. Ancient Greek scientific writer Theophrastus also mentions *R. canina*, *sempervirens*, *centifolia*, and *dumetorum* as species that were available in the third century BCE.

My experience as an herbalist enriches my work as a scholar and a teacher. This past year, teaching online during the COVID-19 pandemic, I ran a monthly activity called “Stuck at Home in Ancient Rome.” I sent my students ingredient lists and even mailed them materials—including rose petals. We gathered on video calls to make recipes from the ancient Mediterranean. Via Zoom, students made their own ancient Roman face cream. The sensual smell, sight, and feel of rose petals brings the medicine of the ancient world alive for me and my students.

*Tara Mulder is assistant professor of teaching in classical studies at the University of British Columbia. She tweets @tarasdactyls.*

*Photo: Tara Mulder*



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# Racism, Activism, *and* Integrity in College Football



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**Donald Spivey** is Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Miami and Special Advisor to the President on Racial Justice. He is the author or editor of ten books, including the award winning *If You Were Only White: The Life of Leroy "Satchel" Paige*.



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## *The Bates Must Play Movement*

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