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CCWH NEWSLETTER



Co-Presidents' Column: Finding Solidarity and Leaning Into Community

BY NIMISHA BARTON, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH AND JESSICA PILEY, TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN MARCOS

For scholars of women, gender, and sexuality, these are turbulent times, indeed. We find our research, and sometimes our very selves, under near constant attack. In times like this, there is value in asserting – and reasserting – who we are as an organization and what we stand for as a community.

As a professional organization, the CCWH was founded on the belief that the history of women, gender, and sexuality is integral to an accurate understanding of the past. That hasn't changed. Even more importantly, we remain a scholarly community that believes that these subjects -- as so many others -- are intrinsically worthy and important because all human beings are intrinsically worthy and important.

One way we've decided to live our mission is to join forces with other professional organizations in defense of our common values. Since the start of the year, the CCWH has signed on to a number of petitions including an AHA-OAH joint statement on Executive Order "Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling." More recently, in response to the attacks on scholars around the country, we've published our own Statement on Protecting Academic Freedom and Promoting Scholarship on Women, Gender, and Sexuality. We will continue to act in concert with other organizations fighting to uphold inclusive values, democratic processes, and human dignity for all.

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Relatedly, the CCWH has embarked on our own process to ensure that we operate in ways that align with our values. Part of that project is to evaluate our existing structures and organization, to identify gaps and build out procedural transparency. With that in mind, we circulated a letter at the start of the fall semester proposing an updated version of the distribution of volunteer duties and the structure of the Board that would ensure labor equity among the many volunteers on whom the CCWH relies. We thank members for their incisive feedback and encourage you to consider joining a new task force dedicated to creating a CCWH Operations Handbook. If interested, please reach out to Project Leads Elizabeth Everton (execdire@theccwh.org) and Einav Rabinovitch-Fox (membership@theccwh.org).

This fall, we are also launching a new initiative to spotlight a different women's history organization from across the nation each semester. In this newsletter, we begin with the Ruthe Winegarten Foundation for Texas Women's History and WyoHistory.org. Our goal is to highlight the work that historical organizations across the country are doing at a local level. We also hope to expose our community of scholars and researchers to archival holdings they may not have heard of. By partnering with local historical organizations, we aim to broaden our community and build solidarity with fellow scholars who are involved in the process of historical production outside of traditional academe. If you know of an organization that you think would be a good fit for this profile series, please reach out and let us know.

Along the same lines, we have partnered with Ms. Magazine to spread the word about the launch of the Ms archives. In this newsletter, author Lorissa Rinehart reveals the scope of the digital archival holdings and highlights a few of the ways that educators might incorporate the archives into their college classrooms. At a time when feminist scholarship draws increasing ire, we encourage our members to take a look and consider asking your librarian for a subscription for your own institution.

In closing, we encourage all our members to continue to make your voices heard. We've worked too hard for too many years to give up now.



Executive Director Column: Reflecting on Legacy

BY ELIZABETH EVERTON

For many of us, September marks the start of the busiest time of the year: from the rush of back to school to the cascade of holidays, these final months of the year give us little time to breathe. The tumult of new beginnings and the annual traditions marking the end of another year stymie rational thought. It is harder to sit and think and speak and write in a considered manner, much to the detriment of our deadlines; intellectuality gives way to impressions, to sensations and emotions, elicited by falling leaves, changes to the weather, and seasonal scents and sounds. Time spins backward and forward, with the exigencies of the present colliding with reflections on the past and hopes for the future.

It is in this frame of mind that I want to reflect upon legacy—what is a legacy, what it means to leave a legacy, and who gets to leave a legacy—inspired by Executive Board member Brigid Wallace’s remarkable gift to the CCWH. Brigid’s decision to offer a legacy gift to fund the Ida B. Wells Graduate Student Award is rooted in her passionate desire to ensure that the “people who want to write the story, write the story.” As Nimisha Barton and Jessica Pliley note in their profile of Brigid, this gift represents a link between multiple legacies: Brigid’s own legacy, the legacy of her friends and community members who are joining her in her gift, the legacy of the trailblazer Ida B. Wells, and the legacy of the CCWH as an organization.

As befits an organization dedicated to women’s history and women historians, the CCWH is proud of our history. From our founding in 1969 as the Coordinating Committee of Women Historians in the Profession, to our merging with the Conference Group on Women’s History in 1995, to the support and opportunity we offer our members today, we truly help women historians thrive. The legacy of the CCWH can be found in the dozens of scholars supported by our awards and the hundreds of members who have joined our organization in the more than half-century we have been in existence.

With 55 years under our belt, the CCWH feels solid, safe, and established. Looking back on the past years, however, and looking forward to an ever more uncertain future for the academy and for the pursuit of scholarship more generally, that sense of stability slips away. As a non-profit organization, we are dependent on members and friends to support our work through membership dues and especially through donations. It is through your generous support that we are able to offer prizes, including our new Sandra Trudgen Dawson Memorial Prize, and to support other initiatives. It's with this in mind that I'm happy to announce that we will be taking steps to make it easier for anyone who wishes to follow in Brigid's footsteps to do so by creating a legacy gift program for the CCWH. This program will make it easier for those who wish to include the CCWH in their estate planning through an unrestricted bequest or a bequest designed to support a specific award. Your gift can support scholars and the CCWH as we move through the next half-century. If you are interested in learning more, please reach out to me at execdire@theccwh.org. We will also be adding information about this new program to our website <https://theccwh.org> in the coming months.

Thank you for your support of the CCWH, and best wishes as we wrap up the year!



Cultivating a Legacy by Ensuring the Story Gets Told: A Profile of Brigid Wallace

BY JESSICA R. PILEY AND NIMISHA BARTON

After receiving her second cancer diagnosis in five years, CCWH member Brigid Wallace began contemplating her legacy. Much of her life has been devoted to cultivating care, compassion, and community, most recently as a historian, educator, and the graduate representative on the CCWH's Board. She decided that one way she could ensure the greatest impact would be by offering a legacy gift to the CCWH to help fund the Ida B. Wells Graduate Student Fellowship that annually offers money to graduate students studying the intersection of race and gender. In many ways, Brigid's career mirrors the values that drove Ida B. Wells-Barnett: a dedication to community care, a fearless speaking truth to power, a pragmatic willingness to help, and a generosity of spirit.

Brigid's first career was in emergency medicine. She served as a health care provider in the embattled community of East Baltimore. She recalls that many in the predominantly poor and Black community felt abandoned by the system and remained suspicious of the health care establishment. Brigid committed herself to the daunting task of changing and narrowing the health care disparity gap in this underserved community.

But doing so meant challenging the traditional racialized and gendered hierarchies that defined much of medicine in the 1980s and 1990s. During the height of the HIV/AIDS crisis, when everyone feared this new mysterious epidemic, she once encountered an intern who, in a ridiculous abundance of caution, donned four pairs of gloves, three robes, and two face shields before entering the room of a patient who had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. Brigid swiftly intervened to stop him. After pointing out that the intern would not be able to do their job while wearing so much protective gear, she added that the young doctor's fear had overwhelmed his ability to care for the patient with respect and compassion. "You're going to make him feel sicker, because the way that you're dressed is telling him point blank you don't even want to be around him, so how are you going to take care of him?" she asked. And then she stepped in to help. She said, "I'm going to show you how to do this properly, or you need to find a new profession. It's hard, but ERs are important in the neighborhood." This insistence on care, compassion, and community defined her work as a health care provider for over 15 years and now also defines her work in the historical profession—as a researcher, educator, and as a community member.

At the age of 50, after she had long left healthcare behind for a second career in event planning, Brigid decided to pursue a history degree at Morgan State University, the storied HBCU where CCWH member (and former president?), Roselynn Terborg Penn once taught. After graduating and spending some time teaching young folks the importance of history and historical research within her local Baltimore community, she decided to enroll in the MA program at Lehigh University. According to Brigid, "I'm a historian, because I want to tell our story." At Lehigh, she has launched her innovative research into the life of a mixed-race woman as she navigated the shifting social terrains between the French Atlantic and Anglophone slave societies in the Caribbean and North America in the 18th and 19th centuries. Brigid's research complicates simple dichotomies between enslaved people of color and free people of color.



As she has been working on her MA, Brigid has been able to pull on her professional and personal experience in her role as an educator. "Every situation I have gone through enabled me to be sensitive and be aware of what my students are going through." Students look to her for help with assignments, help with their classes, help navigating the multiple demands on their time, help with success in all of its forms. As a Black educator teaching at a PWI institution, young women of color frequently approach her. "They were feeling very dismissed," she said. They felt as though "they were being pushed out, and I was able to help them navigate that space." Among other things, she did this by reminding them, "You don't let anybody tell your story."

Her mentorship extends well beyond the classroom. Brigid served as a graduate student representative for the Organization of American Historians and currently serves as the Graduate Student Liaison on the CCWH's Board of Trustees. In both capacities, she has expanded opportunities for graduate students to share their research and gain professional development by attending national conferences. For the CCWH, she organized two panels that featured the work of 19 graduate students for the 2025 American Historical Association meeting in New York City. These panels generated so much excitement that the CCWH saw the numbers of graduate students applying for CCWH membership increase significantly after the conference. These graduate students joined because Brigid spoke to their unique needs

By helping to support the Ida B. Wells Award, Brigid continues to put her values into practice. Brigid argues that with this award, and other awards that support African American history, "we see a way to push back on our voices, our legacy, our history being destroyed, being whitewashed. We have fought too hard. We need to tell our children that, yes, we are part of this American story. We are not outsiders. And if we have young people who want to continue in our footsteps as historians to tell this story, then we're going to help them do that, because that's what Ida B. Wells did." Brigid was also attracted to the way that the award offers unrestricted support for graduate students. "Academics forget that people have to live."

To compliment her own gift to the Wells fund, Brigid is working with her friends and other community members to raise additional monies for the Award. She considers this effort as part of a politics of resistance needed in the current moment. "I think you can make a greater impact," she notes, "when you mobilize the spaces that you actually live in." And one way she is doing that, is by fundraising for the Wells Award among the friends who organized and oversaw her care when she had her bone marrow transplant. "They put together a schedule, notebooks, logbooks with what medicines I had to take, who was going to visit me at the hospital, who was going to take me to the doctor." This community of care ensured Brigid's initial recovery. "Now, that same group is donating to the Ida B. Wells fund."

This is the first legacy award that the CCWH has accepted in recent history, and it is fitting that it will link the legacies of Brigid Wallace and Ida B. Wells together to ensure that Black stories will continue to be told and scholars of Black history will continue to be supported. "I'm not going to be written out of this story. I'm not going to let anybody define my story. I'm going to write the story." And with the CCWH, Brigid tells us, "we're going to make sure other people who want to write the story, write the story."



The Revolution Will Be Digitized: The new Ms. Magazine Archives offers a roadmap to a feminist future

BY LORISSA RINEHART, AUTHOR, CULTURAL PRODUCER AND PUBLIC SPEAKER

Bounding from newsstand to newsstand, Wonder Woman traversed the whole of the United States in the summer of 1972. Illustrated on the cover of the inaugural edition of Ms. magazine beneath the headline, “Wonder Woman For President,” her giant leaps announced the arrival of the revolutionary idea that women had a voice—and they would be heard.

All at once, everywhere and for the first time, the fullness of women’s lives became undeniably visible in this glossy, well-designed and compellingly written magazine. The obstacles women faced and the victories they won were no longer erased, omitted or silenced but given the credibility of space and the gravitas of ink. More than 50 years later, the tectonic shift Ms. magazine catalyzed continues to shape America’s political and cultural landscape.

Even so, at Ms., responding to current events retained primacy over keeping historical records. Once published, articles frequently disappeared into personal magazine stacks or incomplete university archives. As a result, the full resonance of women’s voices in Ms. has yet to be heard. Until now.

This summer, Ms. is sending Wonder Woman once more on an epic journey. Though rather than space, the magazine will be sending this shero through time. Partnering with ProQuest’s powerhouse archive platform, Ms. is releasing more than 50 years of groundbreaking articles, thought-provoking essays and history-making journalism.

Writing the Future

The voices, connections and struggles that Ms. uniquely documented are powerfully relevant in the current fight for women’s rights. Yet for decades, the full impact of these stories remained latent and inaccessible. Now, with the release of its entire archive online to virtually anyone, anywhere, Ms. magazine’s historic reporting can be continuously reactivated within the contemporary discourse of feminism and the ongoing march towards gender equity.

Clarren notes, “As a writer of history, archives are everything. They are the basis and foundation of the creation of new work.”

For years, Karla Strand, the gender and women’s studies librarian at the University of Madison-Wisconsin, fielded requests for a complete archive of Ms. Now that it’s here, she says, “The Ms. archive is bound to have a significant positive impact on scholarship in women’s history, journalism, gender studies, women’s studies and feminist scholarship across the disciplines.”



Journalist and author Clara Bingham says her groundbreaking new book *The Movement: How Women's Liberation Transformed America 1963-1973* "would have benefited enormously if I could have had access to the Ms. digital archive. My book is an oral history, so I depended on first-person voice and direct quotes ... If the magazine's archive was digitized, it would provide a valuable record of the conversation on and about feminism in the '70s and '80s and beyond."

Moreover, the scope of Ms. travels well beyond the borders of America. As Brown University historian Keisha N. Blain recently pointed out, "One of the most exciting aspects of the archive is that it includes the perspectives of women from various racial and social backgrounds. While the magazine sheds light on the experiences of women in the United States, it also includes an array of articles on women living in various parts of the globe—and many of the writers of Ms. magazine were very much attuned to the global nature of their local and national struggles."

So, too, will the archive profoundly shape the pedagogical landscape of feminist and gender studies as Blain envisions incorporating the archive into her classes, noting that "the magazine featured a wide array of articles on what scholars refer to as 'second wave feminism' that would enrich my graduate course on Black transnational feminism. ... I also envision utilizing the archive in my undergraduate course on Black women's intellectual history. Students will be able to analyze articles written by some of the most influential Black women intellectuals of the 20th and 21st centuries, such as Angela Davis, Alice Walker and Toni Morrison."

Nneka D. Dennie, the president and cofounder of Black Women's Studies Association, likewise says she "can easily see the Ms. Magazine Digital Archive becoming a valuable teaching tool. In courses like Introduction to Black Women's History, for instance, my students analyze a variety of primary sources about Black women's labor, politics, ideas and activism from the 1700s to the present. We use a combination of recorded interviews, speeches and written documents like newspaper articles. Ms. magazine would be a perfect addition to that kind of class."

Looking back on Ms.' five decades of reporting from where the world stands now, it is easy to think we have not progressed very far, if at all. Yet, as ever, she who controls the past, commands the future.

Only by standing on the shoulders of giants can a new generation see past the present, and only by integrating the lessons of past struggles can they find the tools to build the world in which they wish to live. By bringing to light its historic reporting on thousands of people from all over the world and all walks of life who have for more than half a century worked and strove and fought for justice and equality, the Ms. Magazine Archive fundamentally shifts the balance of control over history and who has the ability to write the future. Because, like Wonder Woman's golden lasso, the Ms. Magazine Archive is capable of making history tell the truth about women's rights, once and for all.

Ask Your Librarian! We encourage feminist historians to ask your librarian about a subscription or free trial access through ProQuest. Find out more information at [The Ms. Magazine Archive](#) or contact Karon Jolna, Ph.D., Executive Director, Ms. Classroom at kjolna@msmagazine.com.



Public History Profile: WyoHistory.org

BY KYLIE L. MCCORMICK, PROJECT DIRECTOR, WYOHISTORY.ORG

WyoHistory.org encourages exploration of Wyoming and its past by building and maintaining an online encyclopedia of Wyoming history. Since its founding in 2010, WyoHistory.org has expanded beyond articles to publishing oral histories, lesson plans, field trips, and a blog. WyoHistory.org aims to be the primary source of online information about Wyoming history for the public, including teachers, students, tourists, public officials, history enthusiasts, and scholars.

WyoHistory.org was founded by Tom Rea, a former newspaper editor and author of several books on Wyoming history. In 2008 and 2009, a local school district commissioned Tom to write articles on Wyoming history with funding from a federal Teaching America History grant. While researching he realized how much unreliable and low-quality information was available online, so he set out to fix that by creating a free, accessible online encyclopedia. The website was designed by Steve Foster, owner of Purple Rivers Design and is currently managed by Kathy Bogan.

In October 2024, founder and editor emeritus Tom Rea handed the reins over to the new project director, Kylie L. McCormick. Kylie holds a master's degree in history from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her academic work focused on slavery and religion in the United States, but since returning home to Wyoming, she began exploring Wyoming's past.

In 2019, Kylie started a public speaking business, KLM Wyoming Historian, to share her research on [state symbols](#), [woman suffrage](#), [trail preservation](#), and [more](#). Though the topics are diverse, Kylie's research has primarily focused on the accomplishments of Wyoming women. Kylie began working as an assistant editor with WyoHistory.org in the fall of 2022. She now manages a small editorial team, Leslie and Robert Waggener. Leslie is also the Simpson Archivist with the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming. Robert is also a copy editor with the *Journal of Rocky Mountain Geology*.

WyoHistory.org is a great resource for women's history. We regularly publish articles on Wyoming's rich women's history, which are easily found on our [Women of Wyoming](#) topic page. Here you can find stories of women [homesteaders](#), [botanists](#), [politicians](#), and [much more](#). We recently published historian Jennifer Helton's research on Wyoming's first woman legislator, [Mary Bellamy](#), as well as her research showing that in 1870, Wyoming was likely the first place in the United States where [Black women voted](#).

WyoHistory.org has engaged in various high-profile public history projects. For instance, in celebration of the fact that Wyoming was the first government in the world to recognize universal woman suffrage, the state of Wyoming declared December 10, 2019, to December 10, 2020, as the "Year of Wyoming Women." To promote this history, WyoHistory.org creating a special topic page for [Woman Suffrage and Women's Rights](#), which contains articles on "Votes for Women in Wyoming Territory"; "Statehood and Women's Rights"; and "Women's Rights Pioneers."



Recently, WyoHistory.org adopted an orphaned oral history project, Women of Wyoming: Then & Now (WoW). This project was made possible by a grant from the Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund. For two seasons, WoW actively preserved and celebrated the voices of the everyday woman who has made a remarkable impact on the way Wyoming's history is to be understood. In this series, hosts Janelle Molony, Leslie Waggener, Linda Fabian and Sylvia Bruner discussed important Wyoming women, both living and historical. Interviewees were selected based on their contributions toward a diverse and otherwise unique female perspective on events, themes, or narratives related to state history. Guests included historians, archivists, researchers, activists, politicians, educators, media members, Tribal members, authors, women in agriculture, and more.

Another project of WyoHistory.org can be seen with a visit to the Wyoming State Capitol in Cheyenne. Over the course of a year and a half, Founder Tom Rea and Director Kylie McCormick wrote and edited text for a new exhibit in the Capitol Building. Kylie successfully defended her research on woman suffrage to the elected officials on the Capitol Exhibits Subcommittee, which approved the creation of Suffrage Hall. Suffrage Hall is a space dedicated to the women and men of Wyoming who fought to have women's citizenship rights recognized. The exhibit was officially unveiled during statehood day on July 10, 2025.

Scholars and historians interested in women's history can use WyoHistory.org as a resource and an opportunity. WyoHistory.org is always looking for new contributors and is proud to pay our authors for their work. Reach out to Kylie McCormick at editor@wyohistory.org to find out more about how to write for us. You can also [subscribe to WyoHistory.org's blog and monthly newsletter](#) to stay up to date with our latest projects and publications.



Kylie L. McCormick, Project Director, and Tom Rea, founder, at the Wyoming State Capitol Exhibit on July 10, 2025.



Public History Profile: The Ruthe Winegarten Foundation for Texas Women's History

BY NANCY B. JONES, PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS
RUTHE WINEGARTEN FOUNDATION FOR TEXAS WOMEN'S HISTORY

Before Ann Richards became governor of Texas, she and a group of like-minded activists in public life had ignited widespread public interest in the history of Texas women. A former social studies teacher, Richards long held that Texas history was mostly the story of what white men did outdoors. So Richards and her cohorts, inspired by the 1977 National Women's Conference in Houston, formed the Texas Women's History Project and produced the groundbreaking multicultural museum exhibition called "Texas Women: A Celebration of History: 1730-1980," in 1981. More than one million people saw it.

The exhibit's research director was Ruthe Winegarten, a long-time friend of Richards' from Dallas who had trained as a social worker and believed that ordinary people gained power by knowing their own history. Winegarten went on to write or co-write 20 books and other works, including a video history of women members of the Texas Legislature and a musical called "I am Annie Mae," about a Black Dallas housekeeper.

The Ruthe Winegarten Foundation for Texas Women's History (RWF) was founded in 2006 in her memory by women for whom she had been a mentor, friend, and inspiration to do women's history, whether independently or as academic historians. As a public history nonprofit, it encourages history professionals and practitioners to research, write, and publish about the history of Texas women across time, geography, and identity. That stories of "unknown" women are as important as those of the famous, that women are empowered by knowing their past, and that accurate and compelling historical information should be accessible to large audiences inspired the foundation's work. Our mission is to carry on her legacy, to encourage the study of women in Texas history, and to foster independent scholarship.

Over the last two decades, the RWF has won national and state recognition. It is a recipient of the State Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History as well as a winner of the Outstanding Public History Award from the National Council on Public History for its radio "Moments," brief recorded biographies and summaries of significant events and institutions related to Texas women.

The RWF sponsors the "Women in Texas History" book series with Texas A&M University Press. The series includes *Women in Texas History*, by Angela Boswell, the first comprehensive survey history of women; *Texas Women and Ranching*, ed. by Deborah H. Liles and Cecilia Venable; *Allie Victoria Tennant and the Visual Arts in Dallas*, by Light Townsend Cummins; *That Woman: The Making of a Texas Feminist*, by Nikki R. Van Hightower; *The Shimmering Is All There Is: On Nature, God, Science, and More*, by Texas writer Heather Catto Kohout; and *Tejanaland: A Writing Life in Four Acts*, by Texas poet and historian Teresa Palomo Acosta.



The RWF also publishes the "Temple Classics in Women's History" reprint series, which includes the document collection *Citizens at Last: The Woman Suffrage Movement in Texas*, ed. by Ruthe Winegarten and Judith N. McArthur; *A Texas Suffragist: Diaries and Writings of Jane Y. McCallum*, ed. by Janet G. Humphrey; *The Art of the Woman: The Life and Work of Elisabet Ney*, by Emily Fourmy Cutrer; and *Women of the Range: Women's Roles in the Texas Beef Cattle Industry*, ed. by Elizabeth Maret.

Finally, the RWF provides researchers with financial support. Most notably, the organization offers the annual Ellen Clarke Temple Research Fellowship in Texas Women's History (\$1,000) for the best proposal for research in the history of women in Texas. Three most recent winners include Laura Narvaez for "She Who Controls the Meetings: Addressing Intersectional Issues in Chicana-Led Conferences in Texas, 1971-1977," Bernadette Pruitt for "Black Women Historians in the Texas Academy," and Lilia Raquel Rosas for "Tejana Historias: Indigenous Indentations and Transfrontera Transformations through a Visual Chronology," among others.

You can learn more about the organization - including how to donate historical materials and personal papers to historical collections throughout Texas -- by visiting <https://www.womenintexashistory.org>;



Membership Announcements

The membership committee is looking for a new Assistant Membership Coordinator!

Responsibilities include processing and tracking new and renewed memberships, and supporting membership activities. Estimated time commitment: 5-10 hours/month, 12 months/year.



RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2026

We will soon begin to process membership for 2026.

Don't wait to renew your membership!

Renew your membership at <http://theccwh.org/membership/>

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



Susannah Gibson, *The Bluestockings: A History of the First Women's Movement*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2024. 338 pp. 978-1324106999.

REVIEWED BY TINA M. KIBBE, LAMAR UNIVERSITY

Elizabeth Montagu's salons began with an elaborate breakfast, the "long table, draped in the finest white linen, heaved with endless cups of gold, silver and delicate porcelain, each filled with exotic treats from faraway lands" (10). It was here that Montagu hosted a variety of guests, including writers, artists, and philosophers, at her magnificent London home, with the hope of fostering intellectual discourse to rival the salons of Paris. In *The Bluestockings: A History of the First Women's Movement*, Susannah Gibson explores the emergence of women's salons in 18th-century London, mainly through the life of Montagu, who hosted gatherings that became pivotal in the early women's liberation movement. Montagu's salons challenged societal norms that confined women to domestic roles. Despite barriers such as limited education and societal disdain for educated women, figures like Montagu and her contemporaries fostered a space for women to assert their intellectual capabilities.

The Bluestockings provides a compelling account of how a vibrant group of 18th-century women and their allies used the salon as a crucible for reshaping both intellectual life and societal norms. Centering on the formidable Montagu and her contemporaries, such as Hester Thrale Piozzi and Frances Burney, the book's main argument is that these salons were not mere social amusements but pioneering institutions that catalyzed women's intellectual empowerment, challenged deeply ingrained gender roles, and laid the groundwork for later feminist advances. Gibson contends that Montagu's Bluestocking salons were transformative in the history of women's rights; not through overt rebellion, but through the quiet, persistent creation of spaces in which women's intellect could flourish alongside men's. As Gibson notes, "They were the only place where women and men could converse on intellectual topics as equals" (4). In an era when society dictated that women remain within the narrow confines of domesticity and subservience, the salons offered a radically different vision: intellectual achievement, lively discourse, and a reimagining of female possibility.

The book details how Montagu's salons uniquely allowed women and men to converse as equals on topics like literature, history, philosophy, art, and science, which were activities conventionally seen as the preserve of men. Seats of honor were awarded for "wit, wisdom or learning" rather than social status or gender, which was virtually unheard of elsewhere in polite society (2). One supporting theme in *The Bluestockings* is the celebration and nurturing of women's talents: Montagu reveled in giving "pride of place" to accomplished women such as Elizabeth Carter, Hester Mulso Chapone, and Hannah More, whose learning, wit, and argumentation were valued and admired (2). The salons thus functioned as an informal university and a launching pad for women whose abilities were otherwise stifled or mocked by the dominant culture. In addition, Gibson highlights the importance of the Bluestocking friendships that were "crucial to their success," noting that while relationships with men "demanded a woman's time, a woman's duty, a woman's obedience," friendships with women "gave inspiration, comfort, support and joy" (221).



Gibson shows that, given the severe reputational risks facing intelligent, outspoken women, Montagu was acutely aware of the need for respectability. She carefully curated her gatherings to avoid any suspicion of impropriety by serving tea instead of alcohol, eschewing gambling, and refocusing discussion on literature rather than contentious political topics. These safeguards, argues Gibson, allowed Bluestockings to push boundaries without risking social exile. The salons fostered a unique female sorority and camaraderie, mitigating the customary isolation of intellectual women. The book demonstrates how, within this sphere, the “learned lady,” so often a target of derision, became not only acceptable but aspirational. Montagu’s house is repeatedly described as the heart of an intellectual community, with the Bluestockings “forming a very numerous, powerful, compact phalanx, in the midst of London” (49, 15). Her contemporaries described Montagu herself as “the finest genius and finest lady” and as “brilliant as diamonds, solid in judgement, critical in talk” (27).

The Bluestockings is a highly readable study of how a handful of determined women reshaped their world. Gibson demonstrates that effective change can sometimes occur through persistence, negotiation, and the gradual establishment of new norms, rather than open insurrection. Throughout the book, the author blends social history, biography, and literary analysis. Vivid descriptions of the spectacular homes and gatherings immerse the reader in both the physical space and the emotional tenor of the salons. By shining a light on Elizabeth Montagu and her circle, the book makes a persuasive case for remembering and learning from the generations of women who laid the groundwork for future progress by daring to imagine and inhabit a bigger life. The Bluestockings is an excellent read for both college students and general audiences.



Tamika Y. Nunley, *At the Threshold of Liberty: Women, Slavery, & Shifting Identities in Washington, D.C.* The University of North Carolina Press, 2021. 272 pp. 978-1469662220.

REVIEWED BY SHARON M. GALLAGHER, TEACHING PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AT PENN STATE BEHREND

Tamika Y. Nunley's *At the Threshold of Liberty: Women, Slavery, & Shifting Identities in Washington, D.C.* is an important, engaging, and meticulously researched text about 19th-century African American women in Washington, D.C. It centers on these women's experiences of "self-making" by organizing their stories into six chapters: slavery, fugitivity, courts, schools, streets, and government.

Evidence of this work's significant contribution to existing scholarship is undeniable. Reviews by fellow scholars attest to its importance: "the first comprehensive history of Black women in the nation's capital" (Snyder 300); "the first study of African American women living in Washington, D.C., from the city's founding through the Civil War" (Wood 378); "paradigm-shifting. . . By not limiting their words and actions to resistance, the author contends that 'self-definition' and 'navigation' were 'critical processes and strategies that black women employed in their quest for liberty' (3)" (Green 508); and ". . . this study charts new ground in the study of slavery, freedom, and emancipation in the Atlantic world" (Brimmer 211).

Additionally, Nunley's "treatment breaks sharply from the recent work on the light-complexioned enslaved women prized as 'fancy pieces' and on the refugee women congregated in wartime contraband camps. Despite the inherent 'vulnerability to violence, exploitation, criminalization, and venereal disease,' Nunley does not find victims, but women making choices (158)" (Reidy 271). This work received the Letitia Woods Brown Memorial Book Prize from the Association of Black Women Historians, the Pauli Murray Book Prize from the African American Intellectual Historical Society, and the Mary Kelley Prize for best book published in women, gender, or sexuality in the Early American Republic.

As someone who has only recently begun working within the realm of 19th-century American history, it is challenging for me to add further to the experts' assessment of Nunley's original contribution to this important area of scholarship. Instead, I will focus on the value of *At the Threshold of Liberty* from a non-expert's perspective. Primary research requires patience, determination, and discipline. The extensive scope of Nunley's documented research reflects this. She accumulated a great deal of knowledge; however, knowledge is most useful when a scholar shares it in an organized and engaging manner with a diverse range of audiences, and here, Nunley also excels.

Nunley's focus on self-making, one-word chapter titles, and the chronological order within each chapter effectively organize the experiences of the women she researched, presenting their extensive range within their corresponding chapters. She includes their names at every opportunity. Nunley's research uncovered that "In 1800, the District had 14,093 inhabitants, of which 4,027 were African Americans. Only 483 were listed as free people; the remaining 3,544 black inhabitants were enslaved" (17). Nunley follows these numbers with names and the stories connected to them, like



Edith Fossett, who served as Thomas Jefferson's cook in Washington, D.C., for eight years, separated from her husband at Monticello (18). A few pages later, Milly, Charity, Celia, Sarah Ann, Jemina, Fanny, Priscilla, Kate, Hannah, Ann, Mary, Louisa, Gracy, Esther, Molly, and Mary all appear (30). Later, the reader meets Sukey, the woman whom Dolley Madison relied upon for everything (35-37). This skillful weaving of women's stories into the historical account appears throughout the book, giving the research the humanity essential for non-scholarly readers to make connections with the text while allowing them to learn about a previously unknown aspect of U.S. history. This learning widens their scope of understanding and prompts thoughtful reflection.

This sentiment in Nunley's conclusion is particularly poignant:

The experiences of black women offer insights into the ways that our assumptions prevent us from fully understanding the scope of liberty's reach and deficiencies. We risk forgetting that these women thought about this idea repeatedly even as they imagined, washed, cried, ironed, hummed, cooked, laughed, nursed, killed, and suffered (193-94).

The reader, regardless of their familiarity with U.S. history, is compelled to notice the names of the women whom Nunley makes visible as she shares their stories after nearly 200 years. Their stories resonate even with the non-expert reader. The book engages this audience, which not only presents an opportunity to learn that history is about multiple perspectives but also to experience first-hand that "scholarly" does not mean that only scholars well-versed in the field may read and benefit from the book. When I finished it, I decided to incorporate it in my first-year writing class this fall because Nunley's writing style is so accessible to students. Her scholarly research and the way she conveys it to an audience are excellent examples for college writers. The subject also provides both learning and research opportunities for students to develop their curiosity and passion for the field.



Call for Reviewers and Books for Review

KARLA J. STRAND, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, REVIEWS EDITOR

Have you been thinking about writing a book review? Now's your chance!
The CCWH wants you to contribute a review of a recently published book in women's history.

Reviews are usually 600 to 800 words, and deadlines are flexible. I will provide you with a copy of the book from the publisher. Reviews are published in the upcoming newsletter and online.

I'd like to call attention to several books published by members of The CCWH that we'd like to have reviewed:

- *An Efficient Womanhood: Women and the Making of the Universal Negro Improvement Association*, by Natanya Duncan, UNC Press, 2025.
- *Gender, Separatist Politics, and Embodied Nationalism in Cameroon*, by Jacqueline-Bethel Tchouta Mougoue, University of Michigan Press, 2020.
- *The Mackerel Years: A Memoir of War, Hunger, and Women's History in 1980s Mozambique*, by Kathleen Sheldon, Africa World Press, 2024.
- *Music for the Kingdom of Shadows: Cinema Accompaniment in the Age of Spiritualism*, by Kendra Preston Leonard, 2019.
- *Soong Mayling and Wartime China, 1937-1945: Deploying Words as Weapons*, by Esther T. Hu, Lexington Books, 2024.

Additional suggestions of recent books to choose from:

- *Abortion Pills: US History and Politics*, by Carrie N. Baker, Amherst College Press, 2025.
- *Access: Inside the Abortion Underground and the Sixty-Year Battle for Reproductive Freedom*, by Rebecca Grant, Avid Reader Press, 2025.
- *Blackbirds Singing: Inspiring Black Women's Speeches from the Civil War to the Twenty-first Century*, by Janet Stewart Bell, The New Press, 2024.
- *Black Woman on Board: Claudia Hampton, the California State University, and the Fight to Save Affirmative Action*, by Donna J. Nicol, University of Rochester Press, 2024.
- *Black Women Taught Us: An Intimate History of Black Feminism*, by Jenn M. Jackson, Random House, 2024.
- *A Body of One's Own: A Trans History of Argentina*, by Patricio Simonetto, University of Texas Press, 2024.
- *Chicana Liberation: Women and Mexican American Politics in Los Angeles, 1945-1981*, by Marisela R Chavez, University of Illinois Press, 2024.
- *Embodied Histories: New Womanhood in Vienna, 1894-1934*, by Katya Motyl, Univ. of Chicago Press, 2024.
- *Have You Got Good Religion? Black Women's Faith, Courage, and Moral Leadership in the Civil Rights Movement*, by Annemarie Mingo, University of Illinois Press, 2024.
- *In the Shadow of Liberty: The Invisible History of Immigrant Detention in the United States*, by Ana Raquel Minian, Viking, 2024.



- *Intrepid Girls: The Complicated History of the Girl Scouts of the USA*, by Amy Erdman Farrell, University of North Carolina Press, 2025.
- *Just Pills: The Extraordinary Story of a Revolution in Abortion Care*, by Rebecca Kelliher, Beacon Press, 2025.
- *Looking Through the Speculum: Examining the Women's Health Movement*, by Judith A. Houck, Univ. of Chicago Press, 2024.
- *Mae Mallory, the Monroe Defense Committee, and World Revolutions: African American Women Radical Activists*, by Paula Marie Seniors, University of Georgia Press, 2024.
- *The Missing Thread: A Women's History of the Ancient World*, by Daisy Dunn, Viking, 2024.
- *Night Flyer: Harriet Tubman and the Faith Dreams of a Free People*, by Tiya Miles, Penguin, 2024.
- *The Rise and Fall of the Second American Republic: Reconstruction, 1860-1920*, by Manisha Sinha, Liveright, 2024.
- *The Rocks Will Echo Our Sorrow: The Forced Displacement of the Northern Sami*, by Elin Anna Labba, University of Minnesota Press, 2024.
- *Schooling the Nation: The Success of the Canterbury Academy for Black Women*, by Jennifer Rycenga, Univ. of Illinois Press, 2025.
- *A Seat at the Table: Black Women Public Intellectuals in US History and Culture*, edited by Hettie Williams and Melissa Ziobro, Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2023.
- *A Short History of Trans Misogyny*, by Jules Gill-Peterson, Verso, 2024.
- *To Advance the Race: Black Women's Higher Education From the Antebellum Era to the 1960s*, by Linda M. Perkins, University of Illinois Press, 2024.
- *Vagabond Princess: The Great Adventures of Gulbadan*, by Ruby Lal, Yale University Press, 2024.
- *Who Is a Worthy Mother?: An Intimate History of Adoption*, by Rebecca Wellington, University of Oklahoma Press, 2024.
- *The Women's Revolution: How We Changed Your Life*, by Muriel Fox, New Village Press, 2024.
- *50 Years of Ms.: The Best of the Pathfinding Magazine That Ignited a Revolution*, edited by Katherine Spillar, Knopf, 2023.

Please contact me at reviews@theccwh.org if you are interested in reviewing one of the titles above, you'd like to suggest a book to review that's not included here, or if you're a CCWH member and you've recently published a book - we'd like to announce it and get it reviewed!



General Announcements Continued

The Ticket That Might Have Been...President Chisholm (1973): Representative Shirley Chisholm makes an historic run for the Democratic presidential nomination, the first woman and Black person to run for president, together with Texas state senator Sissy Farenthold as her running mate.

Welfare Is a Women's Issue (1972): "I'm a woman. I'm a Black woman, I'm a poor woman. I'm a middle-aged woman. And I'm on welfare. In this country, if you're one of those things, you count less as a human being. If you're all of those things, you don't count at all."

"Life on the Global Assembly Line" (1981): *Ms.* exposes the exploitation of women in U.S. sweatshops, South Korean textile factories and Ciudad Juarez *maquiladoras*.

Date Rape: The Story of an Epidemic and Those Who Deny It." (1985): *Ms.* uncovers prevalence of sexual assault against college women and commissions one of the first national studies of date rape.

The Nature of the Beast (1992): Sexual harassment takes center stage in Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas' hearings. Anita Hill speak out in *Ms.*

The Women of Black Lives Matter (2015): *Ms.* features the women at the activist forefront of #BlackLivesMatter. Their commitment to an intersectional framework makes this movement different from twentieth century civil rights efforts.

The #MeToo Movement: In recent years, *Ms.* has been instrumental in covering the #MeToo movement, which has brought widespread attention to sexual harassment and assault.

Anti-Abortion Terrorism (Spring 2025): *Ms.* investigates how anti-abortion extremist groups succeeded in blocking an all-term abortion clinic from opening its doors in the city of Beverly Hills - in California, an "abortion sanctuary" state.

News from our Affiliate Organizations

Association for Women in Slavic Studies

Nominations Being Accepted for the Following 2025 AWSS Prizes and Awards. Prizes and Awards due September 1, 2025

- Mary Zirin Prize for Independent Scholars of Slavic Studies
- AWSS Patricia Herlihy Graduate Research Prize
- AWSS Outstanding Achievement Award
- AWSS Graduate Essay Prize
- AWSS Undergraduate Prize
- AWSS Travel Awards: Rolling submissions



News from our Affiliate Organizations Continued

The Coalition for Western Women's History

CWWH-WHA Graduate Student Conference Grant

Thanks to a generous donation from former WHA President and Coalition co-founder Dr. Elizabeth Jameson, the CWWH created a fund to support graduate student conference attendance. The Coalition offers a CWWH-WHA Conference Grant for CWWH graduate student members who are registered to attend the annual WHA Conference. This grant continues the Coalition's commitment to supporting graduate students whose research and teaching interests in the history of the North American West engages in the analysis of women, gender, and sexuality. The deadline for the application and letter of reference is September 30.

The National Collaborative for Women's History Sites

The National Collaborative for Women's History Sites has released a draft response to Executive Order 14121. You can read the response: <https://ncwhs.org/news/executive-order-14121/>

Organization of American Historians

Submissions are now being accepted for [2026 awards and prizes](#) sponsored and co-sponsored by the Organization of American Historians. The OAH confers a variety of awards, prizes, fellowships, and travel and research grants annually in recognition of scholarly and professional achievements in the field of American history.

OAH annual awards include book awards and prizes, professional excellence and service awards, awards for current and recent graduate students, international residencies, article and essay awards. Please review the [awards and prizes submission policy](#) which contains important information regarding deadline policies and other requirements.

Rural Women's Studies Association

The Rural Women's Studies Association will hold its triennial conference in 2027 at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND, USA. It will be a joint conference with the [Agricultural History Society](#). Stay tuned for more information.

The Society for the History of Women in the Americas

The Society for the History of Women in the Americas hosted its conference on July 11, 2025. Stay tuned for more information about the 2026 conference.

Teaching American Studies Network: Call For Expressions Of Interest For Lead And Steering Group Members - British Association For American Studies

The Teaching American Studies Network (TASN) was founded in 2020 and is the only UK-based scholarly network focused on HE pedagogical practice in American Studies. With over 100 active members, the network has organised a range of teaching-related events, workshops and conferences, both in person and online, and has supported several of its members to successful achievement of Fellowship and Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.



News from our Affiliate Organizations Continued

TASN has also worked to embed the recognition of teaching excellence and pedagogical practice in American Studies in the UK through close collaboration with the British Association for American Studies. The TASN Lead is an ex officio member of the BAAS Development and Education Subcommittee, and TASN has worked closely with BAAS to establish the first Teaching Awards in American Studies in the UK. BAAS has also provided a range of financial and administrative support to assist TASN to carry out its activities. Now that TASN is firmly established, it is an excellent opportunity for a new Lead to take the network into its next phase.

We are looking for a new Lead (or co-Leads) for the Teaching American Studies Network. The role requires attendance at BAAS subcommittee meetings (4 per year), liaising with steering group members, and the organisation of networking events and other activities. As a national strategic leadership role, it may be particularly well suited to those on teaching-focused contracts seeking to enhance their career progression.

We are also seeking to add new members to our steering group, which guides the network's activities and supports the network Lead.

Please note that these are voluntary roles, with no remuneration.

Please send expressions of interest, along with a short biography, to lydia.plath@baas.ac.uk by 15 September 2025.

If you have any questions about the role, the network, or the steering committee, please contact Dr Lydia Plath.

Western Association of Women Historians

The Western Association of Women Historians will hold its next conference in Sacramento, California, April 23-25, 2026.

The call for papers can be found here: https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/257197ca-d142-48c8-a592-932ed972fb68/downloads/2d4fe903-6a36-42a1-a609-9984cb5d0583/2026%20CFP%20Sacramento_pdf%20for%20print.pdf?ver=1755129784500

Deadline: October 15, 2025

What sort of sessions will the Program Committee consider?

Traditional Panels:

- themed panels with 3-4 presenters, a chairperson, and commenter
- preference will be given to fully formed panels
- graduate students are welcome but panels formed entirely of students are discouraged -- WAWH encourages interested students to use panel formation as an opportunity to network with and include more advanced scholars.
- For more information and the submission process, see the Traditional Panels page.



News from our Affiliate Organizations Continued

Roundtables:

- 4-5 participants + chairperson
- present, discuss, and interact with the audience on a single topic, theme, or issue
- For more information and the submission process, see the Roundtables page.

Workshops:

- an interactive & practical deep-dive into a subject
- proposals should include explanation of the topic to be workshopped as well as the interactive component(s)
- topics may include but are not limited to: publishing, activist organizing, public history, pedagogy, non-academic careers, social media for writers -- Get creative!
- For more information and the submission process, see the Workshops page.

Novelties:

- Do you have an innovative, out-of-the-box idea for a session? Pitch it!
- For more information and the submission process, see the Novelties page.

Individual Papers:

- Preference will be given to complete panels but individual papers will be placed on panels if space and relevancy permits.
- Before submitting an individual paper, try networking through the WAWH collaboration spreadsheet. Your future fellow panelists might be looking for you!
- For more information and the submission process, see the Individual Papers page.

Graduate Student Posters:

- research-based poster presented by someone enrolled in an accredited postbaccalaureate program
- all posters accepted for display will be automatically entered into the Mary Elizabeth "Betsy" Perry Graduate Student Conference Poster Prize contest.
- For more information and the submission process, see the Graduate Student Posters page.