

Society for the History of Women in the Americas (SHAW)

NEWSLETTER, JUNE 2023

Upcoming Seminars:

Richard Bell (University of Maryland) *Get Out: Streetcars and the Gendered Politics of Segregation in Jim Crow New York*. Tuesday 6 June 2023, 6-7pm (Zoom). Sign up via [Get Out: Streetcars and the Gendered Politics of Segregation in Jim Crow New York | Institute of Historical Research \(history.ac.uk\)](#)

Abstract: *She was shouting for someone to help her. She was wrestling for a better hold of the window frame so that he couldn't pull her outside and throw her on the ground. No one got up from their seats to stop him. Instead, they watched, all of them, mouths open, as if it were happening far away. The conductor was bigger, older, and stronger than she was, and he yanked and heaved at her until her grasp broke. But now she was grabbing at his coat. As she held on, she could see her friend, a woman he had already thrown out of this boxy, airless streetcar, pressed up against its side, her face a picture of horror and rage. She was screaming at him, begging him. Get your hands off her. "You'll kill her. Don't kill her!"*

The woman in this scene is Elizabeth Jennings, the twenty-five-year-old New Yorker who launched the first successful civil disobedience campaign in US history. On Sunday, July 16, 1854, Jennings, an African American school-teacher and choir-mistress, stepped onto a "whites only" streetcar on Third Avenue. She knew that the conductor would eject her and that none of the white passengers would help her. She knew that she was putting her dignity, safety, and her life on the line to assert her right to ride in the same car they did. Jennings was the first among a small army of young Black female New Yorkers to fight to forcibly desegregate their city, one close-packed trolley journey at a time. In the twelve years between her clash on that Third Avenue streetcar in 1854 and the end of the Civil War in 1865, Jennings and her fellow freedom riders turned New York's streetcars into battlegrounds. In a series of high-profile showdowns, they forced the city to ban policemen from any role enforcing streetcar segregation and compelled these private companies to integrate their networks, bringing an end to apartheid on urban transit in New York.

Why were streetcars the locus of such frequent and fraught attempts to police the color line in the Jim Crow North and why were Black women the drivers of this extraordinary campaign for civil rights? This paper seeks to answer these questions by examining the nexus of gender, technology, mobility, confinement, and racism at play in these charged encounters. It argues that the close quarters within city streetcars brought people from all walks and of both sexes into unusual proximity; that intra-urban mass transit decoupled passengers from their familiar neighborhood customs and practices; that Black women's pursuit of (and performance of) respectability met a blunt bludgeon of anti-Black corporate exclusion; and that the employment of working-class conductors to police the behavior of middle-class passengers produced explosive possibilities in which capitalism mobilized to thwart the slightest possibility of intersectional solidarity.

You are receiving this newsletter because you are/were a member of the Society for the History of Women in the Americas. If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, please email g.johnson6@newcastle.ac.uk. Please send notices of other announcements, calls for papers, prizes and competitions, and details of recent relevant publications to g.johnson6@newcastle.ac.uk.

Deadlines:

Harriet Tubman Essay Prize: 23 June 2023

<https://branchuk.wordpress.com/grants-and-prizes/branch-harriettubman-essay-prize/>

Peter J. Parish Memorial Fund: 1 July 2023

<https://branchuk.wordpress.com/grants-and-prizes/grants-for-postgraduate-research/>

News:

A reminder for your diaries that the **SHAW Annual Conference** will be held on July 7th at Manchester Metropolitan University – you can find the registration link in the attached programme.

Also coming up:

HOTCUS Annual Conference at Northumbria University, 21st - 23rd June 2023.

BrANCH Annual Conference at Oxford, 22nd – 24th September 2023 (see

<https://branchuk.wordpress.com/oxford-2023-22-24-september/>)

In other exciting news, **BrANCH are now accepting applications for travel grants through the Peter J. Parish Memorial Fund**. The deadline for applications is 1 July 2023. To be eligible, applicants must be either a PGR, or an ECR in precarious employment. Further details can be found via their website. <https://branchuk.wordpress.com/grants-and-prizes/grants-for-postgraduate-research/>

They are also accepting applications for the **Harriet Tubman Essay Prize** for the best undergraduate essay or research project by black, Asian, or other minority ethnic students based in the UK. There are three prizes of £500 and the deadline for submissions is 23rd June 2023. Further details can be found via their website. <https://branchuk.wordpress.com/grants-and-prizes/branch-harriettubman-essay-prize/>

BrANCA (British Association of Nineteenth-Century Americanists) are launching an exciting new **mentoring scheme for Early Career Researchers and postgrads** in the UK and Europe working on the long American C19 (both American and C19 broadly conceived). In this scheme, a member of the Steering Committee will read over and provide detailed feedback on a piece of writing (up to 8,000 words) that will in future be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. The aim will be to make the article as robust as possible; and to expand the network of readers for it. If you wish to submit some work under this scheme, please contact Ed Sugden (edward.sugden@kcl.ac.uk) in the first instance.

News – job opportunities:

The journal **American Nineteenth Century History**, which was established in 2000 and appears three times a year from Taylor & Francis, have put out a call for editors. To apply, please send a brief (no more than 5-page) c.v. and a 1-3 page letter of intent that discusses (a) your vision for the journal and (b) why this service would fit well with the current stage of your career, to BrANCH Chair Emily West (e.r.west@reading.ac.uk) by **Friday 1st September**.

Staging the Archive, Project Assistant

(further information can be found in the attached flyer)

“Staging the Archive is a collaborative and interdisciplinary project which explores new ways of engaging with and presenting the work of early twentieth century Black theatre makers in Britain. It focuses on a collection of plays by Black theatre makers held in the [Lord Chamberlains Plays Collection](#) at the British Library.

We are looking for a project assistant to contribute to this project through providing research assistance and administrative support.

As a project assistant, you will have at least an undergraduate degree in an arts and humanities discipline such as History, Drama or Performing Arts. You will also have some experience of working with archival resources, and excellent interpersonal communication skills.

The post-holder will work to a maximum of 410 hours/11 weeks between June and September 2023 at [Grade 6 at the University of Leeds](#). Specific periods of work will be determined by the Project Lead in accordance with the needs of the project. Flexible working is possible and much of the work will take place remotely. The project assistant will need to be able to get to the British Library at St. Pancras, London, on a regular basis to spend time researching in the Lord Chamberlains Plays Collection.”



SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY
OF WOMEN IN THE
AMERICAS
(SHAW)

SHAW Steering Committee 22-23:

CHAIR

Dr Marie Molloy

Marie is a Senior Lecturer in American History at Manchester Metropolitan University. Her research examines race, class, and gender in the nineteenth-century American South. Her first monograph examined *Single, White Slaveholding Women in the Nineteenth-Century American South* (University of South Carolina Press, 2018) and her co-edited book with Dr Laura Sandy, *The Civil War and Slavery Reconsidered: Negotiating the Peripheries* was published in 2019. She is currently working on a book length project on adultery across the colour line in the slaveholding south. Dr. Molloy is a passionate advocate of equality, diversity, and inclusion, and in her role as the History, Politics and Philosophy Lead for Schools and Widening Participation, she has organised several conferences and events for secondary schools on these themes. She is also book review editor for *Women's History Review*.

m.molloy@mmu.ac.uk

SECRETARY

Dr Mara Keire, University of Oxford.

TREASURER

Dr Sinead McEneaney

is a Senior Lecturer and Staff Tutor in the Department of History at the Open University, Milton Keynes. She has spent most of her career teaching US and broader American history, especially around the themes of race, gender and political change in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Broadly speaking, she is a historian of the period we like to call 'The Sixties', with a focus on developments in the United States. Her current project considers life writing by women activists within the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. How does writing one's own story allow women to assert control over, and subvert, narratives of the past? How do these women shape their stories for a public audience? How do these stories act as extensions of protest and activism? She first joined SHAW in 2011, and became a member of the steering group in 2013. She has held the positions of Secretary and Chair, and is now the Treasurer.

sinead.mceneaney@open.ac.uk

EARLY CAREER REPRESENTATIVE

Dr Emma Day

Emma is a Research Fellow in American History at the Rothermere American Institute, University of Oxford. Specialising in the histories of gender, sexuality, activism, and disease in the twentieth century United States, she completed her PhD in History at Oxford in 2020 and her first book, *In Her Hands: Women's Fight Against AIDS in the United States* is forthcoming from the University of California Press in August 2023. Her work has also appeared in *Modern American History*, *Theatre Annual: A Journal of Theatre and Performance of the Americas*, *Working Papers in Critical Disaster Studies: Historical Approaches to Covid-19*, and the *Washington Post*. She is the early career representative of SHAW and lives in London with her partner and whippet. emma.day@rai.ox.ac.uk / Twitter:

@emmaroseday

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE EDITOR

Gabrielle Tymków

Gabrielle is an MA History graduate from the University of Plymouth, where she specialised in African American History of the early 20th century. In 2020, Gabrielle was the recipient of the Maureen Attrill Bursary from the The Box Museum, looking at the history of the Plymouth Porcelain collection and its connection to colonialism in the late 1700s. Gabrielle is currently the ceramics technician at the University of Plymouth and continues her studies as an independent researcher.

gabrielle.tymkow@plymouth.ac.uk

POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE

Genevieve Johnson-Smith

Genevieve is a PhD candidate in the history department at Newcastle University, working on a project around fugitive abolitionism, emancipatory activism and anti-slavery radicalism in the UK, particularly Wales. She has carried out extensive research on forced and coerced Indigenous sterilisation and remains dedicated to this very important work. She contributed a chapter to the collective *Sacred Bundles Unborn* (2021) and has also contributed her research and writing to the BBC history/comedy podcast *You're Dead To Me*. She is the postgraduate representative of SHAW and a member of the Northern Bridge EDI group.

g.johnson6@newcastle.ac.uk / Twitter: @GenevieveJS_

OFFICERS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO

Prof. Kate Dossett

Kate is Professor of American History at the University of Leeds where she researches and teaches Black cultural histories, women and gender history. Her most recent book is *Radical Black Theatre in the New Deal* (2020).

k.m.dossett@leeds.ac.uk

Prof. Hélène Charlery

Hélène is an Associate Professor at the University of Toulouse-Jean Jaurès (France). Her research focuses on the representation and staging of gender and race identities in contemporary American films and television series, with an emphasis on intersectionality and black feminist film theories. Her research has also recently addressed Ava DuVernay's civic and artistic activism in films, television series and documentaries.

For any general SHAW enquiries please email shawsociety@gmail.com or visit the SHAW website at <https://shawsociety.net>.