

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

NEWSLETTER, MARCH 2024

Upcoming seminar

The next seminar in our series will be on 5th March 2024 at 6pm. Kaisha Esty (Wesleyan University) will present “‘I had resolved that I would be virtuous, though I was a slave’: Enslaved Women, Feminine Virtue and the Sexual Economy of US Slavery.” This is a free, online event. Follow this link to book - <https://www.history.ac.uk/events/i-had-resolved-i-would-be-virtuous-though-i-was-a-slave-enslaved-women-feminine-virtue-and>

This paper traces the powerful currency of notions of feminine virtue among enslaved women in the antebellum US South. Early nineteenth-century white American ideas of ‘female virtue’ were limited to white womanhood and legitimized US white supremacist and patriarchal imperialism. Exploited for their reproductive and productive labour, enslaved women were denied the assumption of feminine virtue. Rather, they were positioned at the centre of slavery’s sexual economy. Yet, enslaved women developed a transnational and multifaceted understanding of feminine virtue that they enlisted and pass down to their daughters as a form of subversion. This article argues that enslaved women’s concerns with and actions around virtue reveals a strategy through which they struggled for sexual autonomy.

Kaisha Esty is an Assistant Professor of African American Studies, History, and Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Wesleyan University. She is a historian of slavery and its aftermath, sexuality, empire, and Black womanhood in the nineteenth-century. Dr. Esty is working on her first book project, titled, *Weaponizing Virtue: Black Women and Intimate Resistance in the Age of U.S. Expansion*. She is the author of the article, “‘I Told Him to Let Me Alone, That He Hurt Me’: Black Women and Girls and the Battle Over Labor and Sexual Consent in Union-Occupied Territory,” originally published in *Labor: Studies in Working Class History*. This article won the Association of Black Women’s Historian’s Letitia Woods Brown Article Prize in 2022. Dr. Esty has forthcoming work appearing in the *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* and *Slavery & Abolition*. Her research has been supported by the Sherman Emerging Scholar Series, the Warren and Beatrice Susman Fellowship, the American Historical Association, the African American Intellectual History Society, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Dr. Esty earned her BA and Masters in American Studies at the University of Nottingham in the UK. She holds a Ph.D. in African American and women's and gender history from Rutgers University.

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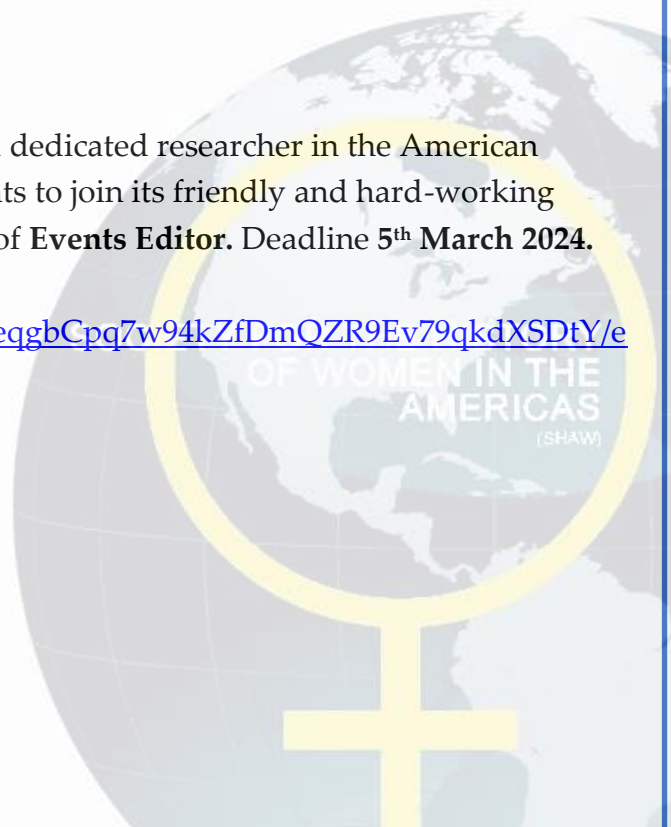
Opportunities and CFPs:

American Nineteenth Century History journal's new editors invite new manuscripts to be considered for publication, with particular encouragement towards doctoral students. More information can be found at this link: https://baas.ac.uk/news-and-events/2023/11/american-nineteenth-century-history-new-editors/?utm_content=bufferc2922&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

BrANCH have opened their CFP for their annual conference, to be held **4th-6th October 2024** at **Madingley Hall, Cambridge**. They welcome proposals on any aspect of 19th century US history. These can include 20-minute papers, whole panel sessions, and also panels in alternative formats such as roundtable discussions and poster presentations. Send your proposal and a one page CV by **March 22nd** to the conference secretaries, Emily West and Liz Barnes at branch19conference@gmail.com. More information here: <https://www.branch.org.uk/events>

Digital BAAS 2024 – registration is open for the **BAAS 2024 conference**, which will be held entirely online, **10th-12th April 2024**. Digital BAAS will be held entirely on Discord, an interactive online server that offers opportunities for networking, socialising, and sharing ideas informally, as well as more formal research-sharing. Attendees will be able to listen to panels, chat with colleagues, and form new connections all in one space! Register here - <https://baas.ac.uk/conferences/digital-baas-2024/>

USSO (U.S. Studies Online) is seeking a passionate and dedicated researcher in the American Studies community with experience in supporting events to join its friendly and hard-working editorial team. They are recruiting for the exciting role of **Events Editor**. Deadline **5th March 2024**. More information can be found here - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RZKxvbWNCtveqgbCpq7w94kZfDmQZR9Ev79qkdXSDtY/edit>



SHAW Steering Committee 23-24:

CHAIR

Dr. Olivia Wright (Leeds Beckett University)

Olivia is an interdisciplinary scholar of the United States based at Leeds Beckett University. Her research explores how different communities have historically used cultural tools and artistic expression to navigate and theorize various manifestations of confinement—both physical sites, such as prisons, psychiatric facilities and reformatory schools, and the various racial, gendered, and socioeconomic confinements that impact upon society more broadly. Her current book project, *Caged Sister: Women's Prison Zines in the United States*, is the first study to collect, analyse, and theorise the long history of collective writing from women's prisons, and is grounded in an analysis of over fifty different publications and nearly 1,000 individual issues gathered through original archival research.

Co-SECRETARY

Dr H  l  ne Charlery

H  l  ne is an Associate Professor at the University of Toulouse Jean Jaur  s. H  l  ne specializes in American Studies and Film and Television Studies. More specifically, her recent research has focused on contemporary black women filmmakers, aesthetics, and distribution strategies. Her research is grounded on the theoretical background developed by the black feminist scholarship. H  l  ne brings a wealth of experience to the role and will help expand SHAW's reach into Europe and help to cultivate existing and new connections.

Co-SECRETARY

Dr Rachell S  nchez-Rivera

Rachell is a scholar from Cambridge University, and her interests lie in Eugenics, Racism, Reproductive Justice, Historical Sociology, Sociology of Health and Illness, Critical Race Theory, Disability Studies, Gender, and Queer/Cuir Theory. Her first book, *What Happened to Mexican Eugenics: Racism and the Reproduction of the nation* is currently under review with Cambridge University Press. Her current project focuses on *The Cultural Politics of Reproduction in Latin America* (alongside Dr. Rebecca Ogden, University of Kent). Rachell is a tech guru and plans to record some / all our seminar series and make them available on YouTube to further broaden our reach.

TREASURER

N.B. The post of treasurer is still available, if you are interested, please contact Olivia Wright to discuss the role.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE EDITOR

Gabrielle Tymk  w

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

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: @emmaroseda

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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.

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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).

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



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