

Elise Burton

History in the Making: Tradition, Exclusion, and Black Women's Resistance in Cultural Heritage Institutions

American cultural heritage institutions, such as libraries, archives, and museums, have often excluded or erased Black women from their collections. Beginning with the origins of these institutions, this work critically examines the traditional methods of storing information, highlighting how they uphold white supremacy and distort our understanding of the past and of “public” knowledge. I then focus on the alternative preservation practices Black women have developed in response, such as at-home collecting, oral history traditions, and critical fabulation. The final section highlights how Black women have also reshaped and reclaimed traditional cultural heritage institutions, through both individual and collective preservation practices. In this paper, I seek to answer a challenging question: whose history are we learning when we enter one of these spaces? I argue that we must reconsider what counts as legitimate historical preservation and redefine what constitutes a museum, archive, or library

Cassie Handler

Creative Thought Matters? The Functionality of Skidmore College as a Radical Experiment

Educational institutions have long been social movement incubators, promoting the free exchange of social ideas. Skidmore College is no different. What does set Skidmore apart, as this thesis suggests, is the way in which the school was founded and the ideals involved in that founding. I argue throughout this paper that Skidmore was not just a radical place, but the founding of the school itself was a radical act. This paper discusses the radicalism of Skidmore College through various social movements of the past and present. This is the story of Skidmore's involvement in the Women's Suffrage movement of the early twentieth century, the various ways in which Skidmore students protested in favor of Civil Rights for African-Americans, the protests to Skidmore's lack of diversity in hiring practices, the movement to convince the college to divest from South Africa

because of the apartheid laws that the country had in place at the time, the exploration of Skidmore Coalition for Palestine, and finally, the unionization efforts of the residential advisers (RAs) and non-tenure track faculty. I use these movements to talk about the progressive legacy of Skidmore's founder Lucy Scribner and the ways in which the college has strayed from the radical ideas on which it was founded.

Sophie Kelleher

Mutilating the Mind, Body, and Spirit: Sterilization and Lobotomy in a Post-Eugenics America

The American Eugenics Movement of the early twentieth century infected the systematic structure of institutions like prisons, asylums, and hospitals. Long after eugenics lost credibility as a science, its echoing ideology lingered within these institutional spaces in the controversial practices of forced sterilization and lobotomies, body-mutilating surgeries that were performed primarily on women. The story of how these operations targeted marginalized populations throughout the twentieth century (and in many cases into the twenty-first) reveals that, regrettably, eugenics is still a part of our societal framework. This paper examines how women were coerced economically, legally, and psychologically to undergo these mutilations, and it provides disturbing insights into how these dubious medical operations were (and still are in some cases) foisted on unsuspecting women by "New Eugenicists" who rationalize their discriminatory practices by camouflaging them as protections for compromised patients.

Katie Steele

What's Scariest Than a Teenage Girl? Girlhood in American Contemporary Theater

Girlhood is a time of one's life filled with pressures and expectations from society. Girls are often overlooked, and their feelings are rarely taken seriously. They are told that they should act a certain way and if they do not, they are forced into isolation by their peers. Forcing girls to fit into these boxes often causes them to lash out. There is an emerging genre in

American Contemporary theater that explores these reactions, the so-called "Girl Play." This paper examines two Girl Plays, *I'm Gonna Marry You Tobey Maguire* by Samantha Hurley and *Horse Girls* by Jenny Rachel Weiner. In these plays, the characters are backed into corners by societal expectations, and we see how far they will go in order to escape them. The playwrights intend in these plays to inspire larger conversations about how society treats teenage girls. This paper examines what societal expectations are affecting teenage girls today, what these plays are saying about their reactions, and whether or not the playwrights communicate these feelings effectively. I argue that the theater is the perfect venue for dramatizing and resolving these conflicts, both for playwrights and actors. The stage also serves as a unique platform for allowing audience members, particularly those who have experienced girlhood, to confront their "inner teenager," and, in the process, to heal from any lingering resentments they might be feeling about the ways in which they were isolated and constrained in their formative years.

Hope F. Wahrman

Refusal of Refuge: Immigration Policy, Jewish-American Identity, & the Holocaust

Jewish culture in the United States encompasses a wide range of racial identities, denominational beliefs, and political views. The federal government, however, has viewed Jews as a monolithic and generally undesirable subculture and throughout its history has created barriers that made entry and integration into the United States difficult and painful. In 1924, for instance, Congress passed the xenophobic and exclusionary Johnson-Reed Act, a law that made it more challenging over the following decade for Jews to escape Hitler's Germany and may have cost millions of lives during the Holocaust. Despite these challenges, Jewish-Americans have made a wide variety of political and artistic contributions to American society. In this paper, I challenge the homogenous view of Jews in the United States by tracing the diversity of the Jewish-American immigrant experience in my own family. On my paternal side, my grandfather survived the Holocaust and arrived as a refugee in the United States in 1949. His experiences of America in the mid-twentieth century were markedly different from those of my maternal great-grandfather, whose family had been established for several generations in America and whose war years

were consumed by running a small business and aiding an interned Japanese family. In tracing the two sides of my family tree, my goal is to show that while many American Jews in the mid-twentieth century dealt with challenges to their advancement, their individual situations (location, income, and background) determined the particular form that such opposition took. Ultimately, my family's history is a reminder that it is inappropriate (and perhaps even dangerous) to generalize about the Jewish experience in the United States.

Ashley Wilkerson

“We Came from Your Future”: *Planet of the Apes* Sequels and the American Apocalypse

This paper explores the *Planet of the Apes* franchise which consists of five films which were released from 1968 to 1973. Scholars have paid a good deal of attention to the moderate liberalism of the first two films-- *Planet* (1968) and *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* (1970)--pointing out how the tense mood of the late Sixties informed the production histories and climates of reception for the films. Critics have largely ignored the final three films, however, presuming that, because all five movies were released within a small window of time, the same politics of production and reception pertained. This presumption ignores three things: 1) that not all five films were directed by the same individual or written by the same screenwriters; 2) that the years between 1968 and 1973 were among the most volatile in recent American history; and 3) that the climate of reception for all the films was not static; in fact, the political and cultural mood of the nation had shifted substantially between 1968 and 1973. The third film, *Escape from the Planet of the Apes* (1971), heightened the tone of the franchise's cultural critique considerably, while the final two films, *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes* (1972) and *Battle for the Planet of the Apes* (1973), became harsher still, intensifying the handling of racial injustice, the feminist movement, and federal government corruption to create a drearier message than even the first two film; namely, that American bigotry would be a leading cause in the coming apocalypse. I believe that movie scholars should demonstrate a greater sensitivity to the distinctions between and among these films, especially the last three, since doing so would allow the *Apes* franchise to serve as a more subtle instrument for understanding the significant changes that occurred during

the relatively collapsed time frame marked by Richard Nixon's election in 1968 and by fall from grace in 1973.