

Robert D. Bland

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Education

Ph.D. (history), University of Maryland, April 2017

M.A. (education), University of Mississippi, June 2009

B.A. (history) Williams College, June 2007

Appointments

Assistant Professor, Department of History and Africana Studies, University of Tennessee, 2019-

Assistant Professor, Department of History, St. John's University, 2017-2019

Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Pittsburgh, 2016-17

Publications

Manuscript in Preparation

Requiem for Reconstruction: Black Counteremory and the Legacy of the Lowcountry's Lost Political Generation
(Under contract with University of North Carolina Press).

Articles in Preparation

Journal Articles

"Reconstructing the Past and Our Reconstruction Present: The Long Struggle to Teach Divisive Concepts," *Tennessee Law Review*, Special Issue on the Life and Work of Fran Ansley (forthcoming)

"'A Grim Memorial of Its Thorough Work of Devastation and Desolation': Race, Class, and Memory, in the Aftermath of the 1893 Sea Island Hurricane," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 18 (April 2018): 297-316.

"Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Sustaining a Culture of Excellence in the Twenty-First Century," *Journal of African American Studies* 17 (Summer 2013): 142-52, with Nia I. Cantey, LaKerri R. Mack, and Danielle Joy Davis

Book Chapters

"The Last Generation of Radical Republicans: Race and the Legacy of Reconstruction in the American South, 1877-1905," *The State of Black America: Progress, Pitfalls, and the Promise of the Republic*, ed., W.B. Allen (New York: Encounter Books, 2022)

Book Reviews

Review of Thulani Davis, *The Emancipation Circuit: Black Activism Forging a Culture of Freedom*, in *Journal of African American History* 109 (January 2024): 315-17.

Review of Adam H. Domby and Simon Lewis, eds., *Freedoms Gained and Lost: Reconstruction and Its Meaning*, in *Journal of the Civil War Era* (Fall 2022):

Review of Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow*, *Los Angeles Review of Book*, May 10, 2019.

Review of Millington W. Bergeson-Lockwood, *Race over Party: Black Politics and Partisanship in Late Nineteenth-Century Boston*, in *Journal of the Civil War Era* (May 2019): 663-66.

- Review of Paul E. Herron, *Framing the Solid South: The State Constitutional Conventions of Secession, Reconstruction, and Redemption*, in *Journal of Southern History* (June 2018): 768-70.
- Review of Tera W. Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock: Slave and Free Black Marriage in the Nineteenth Century*, *H-Net: South* (January 2018)
- Review of Bruce C. Baker and Carole Emberton, eds., *Remembering Reconstruction: Struggles over the Meaning of America's Most Turbulent Era*, in *Journal of American Ethnic History* (June 2018): 112-14.

Online Publications

- “Another Negro Riot”: The Press and Narratives of Racial Disorder during Reconstruction,” *Muster: The Blog of the Journal of the Civil War Era*, <https://www.journalofthecivilwarera.org/2020/08/on-riots-and-resistance-freedpeoples-struggle-against-police-brutality-during-reconstruction>, August 11, 2020.
- “Riot on the Combahee: Organized Black Resistance and the End of Reconstruction,” History of Protests and Riots Series, Department of History <https://history.utk.edu/riot-on-the-combahee-organized-black-resistance-and-the-end-of-reconstruction>, June 16, 2019.
- “The Revolution Started in Jackson,” <https://www.mtc.olemiss.edu/participant-blog/2017/10/10/the-revolution-started-in-jackson-by-dr-robert-bland>, November 15, 2017.
- “Muhammad Ali, Freedom Road, and the Legacy of Reconstruction,” African American Intellectual History Society, <http://www.aaihs.org/muhammad-ali-freedom-road-and-the-legacy-of-reconstruction>, June 28, 2016.

Fellowships

- University of Tennessee Humanities Center, Faculty Fellowship, 2021-2022.
- Summer Institute on the Visual Culture of the Civil War Era, National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Social History Project, July 2018
- Postdoctoral Fellowship, Carnegie Mellon University, 2017-18 (Declined)
- Ann G. Wylie Dissertation Fellowship, Graduate School, University of Maryland, Fall 2016 (Declined)
- Dissertation Fellowship, Department of History, University of Maryland, Spring 2016
- Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship (Honorable Mention), 2015-16
- Prospectus Development Grant, Department of History, University of Maryland, Summer 2012
- Graduate Fellowship, Department of History, University of Maryland, 2009-10, 2013-14
- Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, Williams College, 2005-06, 2006-07

Research and Travel Grants

- Haines-Morris Grant, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Tennessee, Fall 2020
- National Endowment for the Humanities, South Carolina ETV, January 2020
- Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, Mellon Mays Fellowship Travel and Research Grant, Summer 2015
- Travel Grant, College of Arts and Humanities, University of Maryland, Fall 2014
- Samuel Merrill Graduate Student Research Award, Department of History, University of Maryland, Summer 2014
- Pre-Doctoral Research Development Grant, Social Science Research Council, 2013
- Graduate Studies Enhancement Grant, Social Science Research Council, 2012

Awards

Best Article Prize, Honorable Mention, *Journal of Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 2020 Memphis State 8 Paper Prize, University of Memphis Graduate Association for African American History Conference, 2016
Sterling Brown Class of 1922 Citizenship Prize, Williams College, 2007 Class of 1968 Scholar, Williams College, 2007
Washington Fellow, Institute for Responsible Citizenship, 2006

Papers Presented

Working Toward Justice on Difficult Ground: Symposium Honoring Prof. Fran Ansley, University of Tennessee Law School, April 2023.
“The Negro World: The Postbellum Black Press, The News South, and the Making of Racial Destiny,” The Nineteenth Century Press and the Civil War Conference, Chattanooga, TN, October 2022.
“More Good News from Nazareth: Republican Party Politics, Disfranchisement, and the Unmaking of the Black South,” Seminar on Friday Afternoon, Department of History, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, September 2022.
“Fighting for Reconstruction’s Legacy in the Late Nineteenth-Century Lowcountry,” Africana Studies Faculty Research Symposium, Africana Studies Week for 50th+ Celebration, Knoxville, TN, September 2022.
“Carrying the Anti-Slavery Banner South: Black Carpetbaggers, Northern Missionaries, and the Making of the Long Reconstruction,” American Historical Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, January 2022.
Organizer, “Bounce Music, LGBT Activism, and Black Futures: Hip Hop, Cultural Politics, and Post-Civil Rights New Orleans, Southern Historical Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 2021.
Organizer, “The Future of Lowcountry Studies,” Southern Historical Association, New Orleans, November 2021.
Panel Discussion on “the State of Black America,” Center for Urban Renewal Conference, Washington, D.C., October 2021
Organizer, “Criminalizing the Mountain South,” Symposium on Incarceration in Appalachia, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Spring 2021.
“Lowcountry Epistemologies and the Black Geography of Reconstruction,” Black Geographies Symposium, University of California, Berkeley, March 2020.
“The King of Beaufort’: Robert Smalls, Machine Politics, and the Battle over the Soul of Reconstruction,” The Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Charleston, South Carolina, October 2019.
Organizer, “Emancipationist Memory and Radical Freedom Dreams: New Directions in the African American Experience during Reconstruction,” Southern Historical Association, Birmingham, Alabama, November 2018.
“Forgetting Forty Acres and a Mule: Black Land Loss, Penn Land Services, and the Politics of Rural Life in the Post-Civil Rights Era, 1945-1980,” U.S. Intellectual History Society Annual Meeting, Dallas, Texas, November 2017.
“Folklore, Reconstruction, and Anti-Modern Regionalism in the Interwar Lowcountry,” American Historical Association Annual Meeting, Denver, Colorado, January 2017.
“Forgetting Forty Acres and a Mule: Black Land Loss, Reparations, and the Memory of Reconstruction in the Post-Civil Rights South,” African American Intellectual History

- Society Annual Meeting, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, March 2016.
- “The Myth of Robert Smalls and the Afterlife of Reconstruction in the South Carolina Lowcountry, 1878-1895,” Graduate Association for African-American History Annual Meeting, University of Memphis, February 2016.
- “‘Some Sort of Negro Paradise’: The South Carolina Lowcountry and the Spatial Politics of the Post-Reconstruction Public Sphere, 1876-1895,” Emerging Scholars Speakers Series, Pennsylvania State University, January 2016.
- “Help Me Be a Farmer and I Will Not Be a Problem”: St. Helena Island, Industrial Education, and the Battle over the Memory of the Penn School, 1900-1930,” African American Studies Seminar, Washington, D.C., October 2014.
- “The New South’s New Negro: The Search for Agricultural Citizenship in Postbellum Beaufort County, South Carolina,” Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History Annual Meeting, Memphis, Tennessee, September 2014
- “Through the Eye of the Storm: Disaster Relief and Political Power in the Aftermath of the 1893 Sea Island Storm,” Annual Meeting of the American Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Juan, Puerto Rico, November 2012.
- “Through the Eye of the Storm: Catastrophe, Race, and Memory during the Sea Island Storm of 1893,” Annual University of Maryland History Graduate Student Association Conference, February 2012.
- “The Persistence of Death and Imperial Violence in the Premodern World,” Graduate Conference on Engaging and Articulating Race, University of Victoria, British Columbia, June 2010.

Invited Talks and Media Interviews

- Roundtable: Birth of a Nation, Journal of The Gilded Age and Progressive Era Podcast, June 25, 2024.
- “Reconstruction and the Legacy of Black Writing in the United States,” Black Literature as Liberation Symposium, The Bottom Bookstore, Knoxville, TN, February 2024.
- “Robert Smalls and the Struggle for Progressive Era Republican Party,” Theodore Roosevelt Symposium, Dickinson State University, Dickinson, North Dakota, October 2023. “The Grim History of the Courthouse in Jason Aldean’s New Music Video,” News Interview, NBC News, July 2023
- “Juneteenth in Historical Context,” University of Tennessee system, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, June 2023
- “History of Soul Food, News Interview, WATE, February 2023.
- Panelist and Discussant, Community Conversation on *Homegoings*, McClung Museum, Knoxville, TN, March 2023
- Roundtable on *The Recovered Life of Isaac Anderson*, Society of Civil War Historians Biennial Meeting, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, June 2022.
- “The Other Madisons: Interview with Bettye Kears on The Lost History of a President’s Black Family,” University of Tennessee Libraries, December 8, 2021
- “Community Conversations with Tearsa Smith,” WATE, August 2020 Video Interview, “Resistance and Reconstruction,” Ranger Chat on Reconstruction, August 2020
- Podcast, “Emancipation Days,” Black in Appalachia, August 2020
- “The Past and Future of Memphis Politics,” Conversation with TN-09 Congressional candidate, Corey Strong, July 2020
- Lecturer, “The Long Emancipation in America,” Institute for Responsible Citizenship, July 2020
- Lecturer, “The Great Migration and United States History,” Teaching with Primary Sources

Workshop, Knoxville, Tennessee, February 2020
 Lecturer, “The Reconstruction Amendments and American History,” Knox County Public Schools Social Studies Workshop, Knoxville, TN, February 2020
 Panelist, “SSRC-Mellon Mays PhD Professional Development Conference,” SSRC- Mellon Mays, New York, New York, February 2017
 Lecturer, Civil War and Reconstruction Teachers’ Seminar, Gilder Lehrman Institute, Newark, NJ, June 2017
 Lecturer, African American History from Reconstruction to the Civil Rights Movement, Gilder Lehrman Institute, Bronx, NY, May 2017
 Interviewer, A Conversation with Jeanne Theoharis on *A More Beautiful and Terrible History*, St. John’s University, Queens, NY, March 2017
 Lecturer, The Murder of Fred Hampton, St. John’s University, Queens, NY, February 2017
 Silencing the Past: Confederate Statues and American Memory, St. John’s University, Queens, NY, September 2017
 Panelist, “History Haunts Us: John Henry and the Memory of Reconstruction,” August Wilson Center, Pittsburgh, PA, February 2017
 Panelist, “When Will Black Lives Matter,” Bolin Legacy Weekend, Williams College, April 2016
 Guest lecturer, “Why Reconstruction Mattered,” The Black Man Can Institute, American University, Washington, DC, February 2015
 Panelist, “Recent Scholarship on Space and Place in Africana Studies,” Emerging Scholars Conference in Africana Studies, Gettysburg College, February 2013
 Panelist, “Mellon Mays Undergraduate Forum on Navigating Graduate School,” Williams College, March 2010.

Teaching Experience

Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Tennessee, 2019-Present.
 The Blues and Black America
 History of the New South
 The Rise and Fall of American Slavery
 United States History since 1877
 History of African American Women
 The Great Migration and African American Urban History
 Assistant Professor, Department of History, St. John’s University, 2017-Present
 African American History 1
 African American History 2
 Emergence of a Global Society
 History of the New South (graduate seminar) United States History since 1877
 Civil War and Reconstruction
 African American History (Graduate Seminar)
 Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Pittsburgh, 2016-17
 Afro American History 1
 Afro American History 2
 20th Century African American Women’s History
 Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution (undergraduate research methods)
 Instructor, Department of History, University of Maryland, Fall 2013
 Race and Popular Culture in the United States after the Civil Rights Movement
 Instructor, Institute for Responsible Citizenship, Washington, DC, Summer 2013-2015, 2021-23

The American Revolution and Its Aftermath
Reconstruction: The Era of Citizenship
Online Teaching Assistant (with Professor Elsa Barkley Brown), University of Maryland, Spring 2013
Women in the Civil Rights Movement
Instructor, W. E. B. Du Bois Scholars Institute, Princeton University, Summer 2011, Summer 2012
African American History to 1865
African American History since 1865
Teaching Assistant, Department of History, University of Maryland, 2010-13, Spring 2015
Interpreting American History: Beginnings to 1865
Interpreting American History: From 1865 to the present
Teaching Assistant (with Professor Ira Berlin), Gilder Lehrman Institute Summer Seminar for Secondary School Teachers, University of Maryland, Summer 2010
Comparative Slavery
High School Social Studies Teacher, Jackson, MS, Public Schools, 2007-09
International Baccalaureate History of the Americas
United States Government
Economics
Mississippi Studies

PhD. dissertation committee, University of Tennessee

David Strickler, In Progress

Camren Murray, In Progress

Kiana Rubish, In Progress

Roraig Finney, In Progress

Kyle Vratarich, "Distinguished Scoundrel?: General Orville Elias Babcock, the Scourge of the Grant Administration, Department of History, 2025

Emily Harrison, "Being Otherwise: (Re)charting the Alternative Movements, Spaces, and Networks of Marginalized Women in the Urban Spaces of Early Twentieth-Century American Fiction, Department of English, 2025

Rachel Bryan, "Bone Tired: Resisting Labor in Southern Women's Fiction," Department of English, 2023

Tess Evans, "From Native Ground to Underground: Political and Rival Cultural Landscapes at the Arkansas Post, 1686-1850," Department of History, 2020

MA thesis committee, University of Tennessee

Annamaria Haden, "Atomic Cows: The Alamogordo Herd at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, 1945-1965," Department of History, 2023

Service

Departmental Service.

Assessor, Graduate Student Skills Assessment, History Department, September 2023

Chair, Curriculum Committee, Africana Studies Department, 2023-24

Appointed member, Graduate Committee, History Department, 2023-24

Mentor, Summer Bridge Program, History Department, May 2023

Chair, Program Committee, Africana Studies Department, 2022-2023

Appointed member, Bylaws Committee, Africana Studies Department, 2022-23

Organizer, Klein Lecture, History Department, Spring 2023
50th Anniversary+ Committee, Africana Studies, Fall 2022
Heads Advisory Committee, Department of History, 2022-23
Organizer, Charles and Emma Jackson Memorial Lecture, History Department,
Fall 2020
Africana Studies Search Committee, Chair Search, Africana Studies, 2020-2021
Africana Studies Minor Planning Committee, St. John's University, 2018-2019
Graduate Student Representative, African American History Job Search, History Department,
University of Maryland, 2013-14
Graduate Student Representative, US and the World Job Search, Department of History,
University of Maryland, 2012-13
Graduate Student Representative (elected), Graduate Committee, Department of History,
University of Maryland, 2012-13
Dean's Diversity Task Force, College of Arts and Humanities, University of Maryland, 2011-12
Department of History Representative, College of Arts and Humanities Graduate Committee,
University of Maryland, 2011-12

University Service

Advisory Board, McClung Museum, 2024-
Provost's Junior Faculty Advisory Committee, 2022-23
Taskforce on Naming, Office of Diversity and Engagement, Spring 2021
Commission for Blacks, Office of Diversity and Engagement, 2020-2021
Frederick Douglass Day Planning Committee, 2021-2024
Co-Organizer, Haines-Morris Lecture series on Mass Incarceration in Appalachia, College of Arts
and Sciences, Spring 2020

Service to the field

Associate editor, *Journal of the Civil War Era*, 2024-
Research Grant Committee, Society for the Gilded Age and Progressive Era Historians,
October 2023.
Faculty Review Committee, National Endowment for the Humanities, July 2023
Programming Committee, Society of Civil War Historians, 2023-24
Article Reviewer, *Louisiana History*, October 2022
Editorial Board, *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 2022-25.
MacArthur Grant Reviewer, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Summer 2021.
Lesson planner, Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History, Summer 2021
Panel Reviewer, National Endowment for the Humanities, Summer 2021
Conference Planning Committee, Southern Historical Association, 2020-21
Advisor, Black in Appalachia Podcast, National Endowment for the Humanities Grant

Professional Memberships

African American Intellectual History Society
American Historical Association
Association for the Study of African American Life and History Organization of American
Historians
Society of Civil War Historians

Society of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era
Southern Historical Association