

LAURA EARLS, PH.D.

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EDUCATION

- PhD** University of Delaware, History of American Civilization May 2023
Committee: Zara Anishanslin (advisor), Dael Norwood, Rebecca Davis, Amanda Herbert
Dissertation title: “Mundane Monstrosities: Gender, Reproduction, and Embodiment in the British Atlantic World, 1585-1815”
Qualifying exam fields: Atlantic World, ca. 1500-1820 (major field); American Women, Gender, and Sexuality, 1600-1900 (minor field); American Material Culture (minor field)
- MA** University of Delaware, History May 2019
Certificate in Museum Studies
- BA** Binghamton University, History (High Honors), Music May 2016
Summa Cum Laude
Minor in Japanese Studies
Thesis: “Defining Autonomy: Women Navigating Economic, Political, and Intellectual Spaces in Boston, 1770-1779”
Committee: Dael Norwood (advisor), Robert Parkinson

MUSEUM AND PUBLIC HISTORY EXPERIENCE

- Delaware Historical Society, Wilmington, DE** March 2024 – present
Director of the George Read II House & Gardens
- Duties include: Museum operations, directing interpretive vision, capital project coordination, collections care, marketing, administrative duties, staff supervision, and community advocacy at the George Read II House & Gardens in New Castle.
- Thing for Things: The History Podcast Where Things Happen and Stuff Matters**
Lead Researcher & Associate Producer January 2023 – present
- Under the supervision of Dr. Zara Anishanslin (2021 Mellon/ACLS Scholars and Society Program Fellow), I conduct research for a forthcoming podcast about material culture during the Age of Revolutions.
- Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library, Winterthur, DE** 2020 – 2021
Registration Department Graduate Assistant
- Duties included: database management (EMu), multimedia digitization, condition reporting for loans and collections objects

- Delaware Historical Society**, Wilmington, DE 2019 – 2020
Curator (Contract)
- I was brought in to conduct additional research, craft displays, write label copy and panels, and install the exhibit “Collecting Wilmington: Place, Perspective, and Memory.”
- Delaware Historical Society Research Library**, Wilmington, DE 2018 – 2019
Curatorial and Archival Graduate Assistant
- Duties included: preliminary research for “Collecting Wilmington: Place, Perspective, and Memory,” catalogued collections, database management (Cuadra Star), rehoused a collection for digitization
- Museum of the American Revolution**, Philadelphia, PA Summer 2018
Curatorial and Collections Intern
- Duties included: some research for the exhibit “Cost of Revolution: The Life and Death of an Irish Soldier,” meeting with outside experts, preliminary research for additional exhibitions, assisting with object accessioning and updating information in the museum’s database system (PastPerfect)
- New Castle Historical Society**, New Castle, DE Summer 2018
Collections Intern
- Edited PastPerfect files
- Nemours Estate**, Wilmington, DE 2017 – 2018
Graduate Assistant
- Duties included: evaluating historical consumer patterns at the estate, processing archival material, working with staff to revise interpretation materials, editing and updating museum database files (PastPerfect)
- Shaker Museum Mount Lebanon**, New Lebanon, NY Summer 2016
Tour Guide
- Gave 90-minute walking tours of the historic Shaker central ministry site at Mount Lebanon
- Schenectady County Historical Society**, Schenectady, NY Summer 2014
Collections Management Intern
- Created and edited database records for over 1,400 artifacts in the museum’s database system (PastPerfect)

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Publications

“‘by her needle maintain herself with reputation:’ Philadelphia Quaker Women and the Materiality of Piety, 1758-1760,” *Madison Historical Review*, Vol. 18, Spring 2021, pp. 34-59, <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/mhr/vol18/iss1/>.

“Defining Autonomy: Women Navigating Transatlantic Intellectual Connections in Boston, 1770-1779,” *Binghamton Journal of History*, Vol. 17, Fall 2016, pp. 37-62.

Public History Writing

“The solution to formula shortage isn’t calling for more breastfeeding,” *The Washington Post: Made by History*, May 18, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/05/18/solution-formula-shortage-isnt-calling-more-breastfeeding/>.

“Augmenting the Maternal Breast in the British Atlantic,” *Lady Science Magazine*, December 16, 2021, <https://www.ladyscience.com/features/augmenting-the-maternal-breast-2021>.

“Success to America.” *Museum of the American Revolution: Read the Revolution*, August 2018, <http://www.amrevmuseum.org/read-the-revolution/history/success-america>

“The Great Stone Barn and the Shakers: Intersections of Architecture and Utopia.” *UpstateHistorical*, December 2017, <http://www.upstatehistorical.org/items/show/6>

INVITED TALKS, MEDIA, AND OUTREACH

Interviewee. “History Matters: Laura Earls discusses new role as director of the Read House & Gardens.” Delaware Public Media. July 12, 2024. <https://www.delawarepublic.org/show/the-green/2024-07-12/history-matters-laura-earls-discusses-new-role-as-director-of-the-read-house-gardens>.

Panelist. Alumni Career Panel, Museum Studies & Public Engagement, University of Delaware, May 1, 2024.

“The True Demon Barber(-Surgeon) of Fleet Street: A Case Study in the University of Delaware Libraries,” HIST 135: Introduction to Latin American History Guest Lecture, University of Delaware, November 17, 2021.

PRESENTATIONS

“‘They give to Statues, Passion, Life & Thought’: The Lovell Sisters & the Business of Waxwork Exhibitions in the Eighteenth Century,” Society for Historians of the Early American Republic (SHEAR), July 18-21, 2024.

“‘a Woman chain’d down upon a Table:’ Anatomical Models and Gendered Obstetric Knowledge in the British Atlantic World,” International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies 16th International Congress for Eighteenth-Century Studies, July 3-7, 2023.

“‘a Woman chain’d down upon a Table:’ Anatomical Models and Gendered Obstetric Knowledge in the British Atlantic World,” American Association for the History of Medicine Annual Meeting, May 11-14, 2023.

“‘To make or frame curious Figures in Wax-work:’ Nostalgia and the Miniature in Eighteenth-Century Women’s Work,” The History of Women, Gender, & Sexuality Seminar at the Massachusetts Historical Society, January 26, 2023.

“‘a Woman chain’d down upon a Table:’ Anatomical Models and Gendered Obstetric Knowledge in the British Atlantic World,” The Social Lives of Things: Brown University History Graduate Student Association Annual Conference, October 14, 2022.

“‘they could hardly persuade themselves they were not human Creatures:’ Women Waxwork Sculptors and Reproduction in the British Atlantic World,” American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies 52nd Annual Meeting, March 31, 2022.

“‘occasioned by the rash Wish of a poor beggar Woman!:’ Mrs. Salmon, Motherhood, and the Monstrous Materiality of Wax,” Means and Meaning of Materiality in the Zoom Age Workshop, Graduate Symposium, Department of Art & Archaeology, Princeton University, March 24, 2022.

“‘To make or frame curious Figures in Wax-work:’ Nostalgia and the Miniature in Eighteenth-Century Women’s Work,” James A. Barnes Graduate Student History Conference, Temple University, March 19, 2022.

“‘their Affections are alienated from the Mothers who bore them, and their Minds are ill turned:’ Monstrosity and the Materiality of Maternity in the Atlantic World,” British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Postgraduate and Early Career Researcher Seminar Series, August 26, 2021.

“‘The Whales and the Bees: Wax, Monstrosity, and Breastfeeding in the Atlantic World,’” Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Spring 2021 Lecture Series: Objects as Cultural Artifacts, May 5, 2021.

“‘They are greatly Diligted with puppets:’ The Materiality of Wax and the Body in Atlantic Encounters,” Materializing Race: An “Unconference” on Objects and Identity in #VastEarlyAmerica, August 24-25, 2020.

“‘rude and inartificial:’ Waxwork Figures in the British Atlantic World, 1733-1779,” Popular Culture Association National Conference, April 15-18, 2020. Paper accepted, conference canceled due to COVID-19.

“‘rude and inartificial:’ Waxwork Figures in the British Atlantic World, 1733-1779,” James A. Barnes Graduate Student History Conference, Temple University, March 20-21, 2020.

“Dolls on Display: Girlhood Representations of Power in the Atlantic World, 1577-1789,”
Graduate Exchange Program in Visual and Material Culture, Queen Mary University of London
and the University of Delaware, September 12-13, 2018.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

***Making Her Mark: A History of Women Artists in Europe, 1400-1800* Exhibition Study Day**

Baltimore Museum of Art

October 23, 2023

Description: Supported by a grant from the Kress Foundation, advanced graduate students and early career professionals who study early modern women and materiality gather to study and discuss an exhibition co-organized by the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Center for Women’s History Early Career Workshop

New-York Historical Society

October 8, 2021 – May 20, 2022

Description: Doctoral candidates and recent PhDs who study American women’s and gender history meet once a month to discuss their writing with each other and senior scholars from the Center’s Scholarly Advisory Board.

Delaware Public Humanities Institute (DELPHI)

Center for Material Culture Studies, University of Delaware

May 26 – June 4, 2020

Description: This series of workshops helped participants write and speak about their academic research for public audiences.

British Design History, 1530-1930

Winterthur Museum and University of Delaware

Winterthur, DE and London, England

January 14 – February 4, 2019

Description: This course is required for MA students in the Winterthur Program and is open to graduate students in other departments by application only. We studied British material culture through the Winterthur Museum’s collections before embarking on a two-week field study in England.

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

***Making Her Mark* Exhibition Study Day Fellowship**

Samuel H. Kress Foundation

2023

William H. Williams Award

Given for outstanding scholarship in American history, 1607-1865
History Department, University of Delaware

2023

Robert L. McNeil Jr. Fellowship (Short-Term) Historical Society of Pennsylvania and Library Company of Philadelphia	2022
John C. Carson Fellowship for the History of Medicine (Short-Term) The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens	2022
Graduate Research Travel Fund Award Center for Material Culture Studies, University of Delaware	2022
Bassett-Ferguson Fellowship History Department, University of Delaware	2021
COVID-19 Relief Dissertation Writing Grant Center for Material Culture Studies, University of Delaware	2021
Delaware Public Humanities Institute (DELPHI) Center for Material Culture Studies, University of Delaware	2020
Edward Ezell Fellowship History Department, University of Delaware	2018
Edward Alexander Internship Award University of Delaware	2018
Amy M. Gilbert Prize for Excellence in History Binghamton University	2016

EXHIBITIONS AND CONSULTING

Consultant. *Remaking Our Maps*. Transforming Lives: A Writing Mentorship Program for Incarcerated Citizens. Summer 2023.

Co-curator. *Collecting Wilmington: Place, Perspective, and Memory*. Delaware Historical Society, Wilmington, DE. 2019 – 2022.

Contributor. *Open for Business: Photography, Trade, and Self-Image, 1870–1950*. Winterthur Museum, Garden, and Library, Winterthur, DE. September 10, 2019 – January 5, 2020.

Contributor. *Cost of Revolution: The Life and Death of an Irish Soldier*. Museum of the American Revolution, Philadelphia, PA. September 28, 2019 – March 17, 2020.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Delaware, Newark, DE 2022

History Department Instructor of Record

- HIST 105 – U.S. History to 1865 (Fall 2022)

University of Delaware, Newark, DE 2020 – 2021

History Department Teaching Assistant

- HIST 135 – Introduction to Latin American History (Fall 2021)
- ARTH 201/HIST/MSST 203 – Introduction to Museums (Spring 2020)
- MSST 402/602 – Archives and Paper Collections: Curatorship and Management (Spring 2020)

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Collections Volunteer November 2023 – February 2024

Marshall Steam Museum & Friends of Auburn Heights

- Conducted inventory in CatalogIt

Collections SWAT (Collections AID) 2018 – 2019

University of Delaware Museum Studies Program

- Delaware Historical Society (January 2019): Rehoused paper collections
- Rockwood Park and Museum (January 2018): Edited PastPerfect files and organized collections storage

SERVICE

University of Delaware, Newark, DE 2020 – 2023

History Department Graduate Student Mentor – “Historians Helping Historians”

University of Delaware, Newark, DE 2021 – 2022

Center for Material Culture Studies – Co-Convener, Methods in Material Culture Graduate Student Working Group

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Association for State and Local History

Museum Council of Greater Philadelphia

American Association for the History of Medicine

American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies

American Historical Association

Phi Beta Kappa

Phi Alpha Theta – National History Honor Society

Mu Phi Epsilon – Professional International Music Fraternity

Phi Sigma Iota – International Foreign Language Honor Society

SKILLS AND LANGUAGES

Collections Management: PastPerfect, EMu, Cuadra Star, CatalogIt

French: Intermediate reading and writing, limited speaking proficiency

Japanese: Intermediate reading and writing, limited speaking proficiency