ABSTRACTS (continued)

The unearthing of black women’s stories from their marginalization in American, African American, Southern, and Women’s history has opened a new, yet entirely familiar world of historical inquiry with black women squarely positioned at its center. These stories elucidate black women’s historical struggles against both sexism and racism, and further illuminate their civil, political, and educational activism in ways that demonstrate that, despite their historical marginalization, black women were more often than not leaders in critical community uplift efforts, rather than mere followers.

A Place Where Women Can Feel Valued  
Melissa Walker/Converse College

The small group of women historians gathered at the Southern Historical Association meeting in Louisville in 1970 aimed to raise the status of women in the historical profession nationally and within the Southern Historical Association. They also sought to encourage scholarship on women. And though it was not a stated goal of the fledgling organization, the women who founded the informal caucus that became the Southern Association for Women Historians undoubtedly sought the support and encouragement of other women historians. As the organization evolved, it became an essential vehicle for women historians and historians of women to connect with scholars who shared and encouraged their interests and helped advance their careers. Historian Elizabeth Jacoway said, “I think that the fact that [the SAWH] is so wildly successful speaks to the need . . . women . . . feel to have a place where they can go . . . and feel that they are valued.” This talk explores the evolution of the SAWH’s work in mentoring young scholars and nurturing the field of women’s history, through organizational records, published interviews with the early SAWH leaders, and the testimony of current SAWH members.

The Birth of History  
Glenda Gilmore/Yale University

In the 1970s and 1980s, historians of the U.S. South witnessed the consolidation of the new field of southern women’s history. Of course, some historians had written about women in the South prior to that time, most often as biographical treatments of particular women and sometimes to note women’s contributions to aspects of the southern experience. However, from 1965 to 1990, a pioneering generation of historians of southern women reconceived of women’s roles in the South, wrote pioneering monographs, and trained a robust generation of graduate students. At a time when the percentage of women who earned the PhD increased exponentially, this new field helped to assure a place for them in the academy and in public discourse.
SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27

4 pm

Introduction
William A. Link, Richard J. Milbauer Professor of History, University of Florida

Barbarians at the Doorbells: Tales from the Archives
Catherine Clinton, Denman Chair of American History, University of Texas-San Antonio
Chair: Elizabeth Jacoway / Independent scholar

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28

10 am

Cultivating the Confederacy: How Historians of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Have Reshaped the Civil War
Michele Gillespie, Presidential Endowed Professor of Southern History and Dean of the College, Wake Forest University
Chair: Constance Schulz / University of South Carolina

12 pm / Lunch with graduate students

2 pm

“Can the Sistas Get Some History Too?”: Transformations in Southern Black Women’s History
Cherisse Jones-Branch, James & Wanda Lee Vaughn Endowed Professor of History, Arkansas State University
Chair: Pippa Holloway / Middle Tennessee State University

4 pm

A Place Where Women Can Feel Valued
Melissa Walker, George Dean Johnson Jr. Professor of History Emerita, Converse College
Chair: Louise Newman / University of Florida

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29

9 am

The Birth of History
Glenda Gilmore, Peter V. & C.Vann Woodward Professor of History, Yale University
Chair: Lauren Pearlman / University of Florida

10:30 am

Closing Session
Chair: Catherine Clinton / University of Texas-San Antonio

ABSTRACTS

Barbarians at the Doorbells: Tales from the Archives
Catherine Clinton / University of Texas-San Antonio

The great expansion of southern women’s history over the past half century has been fueled in part by the pioneering archival projects launched by women historians and other specialists. These specialists have created collections and launched guides to resources: to create pathways into established libraries, archives, and collections—to advance research and writing in the field. At the same time, this leap forward was undertaken during a period of relative indifference if not downright resistance to such interventions. The way in which southern women’s history has created an opportunity for including women in American historical movements, most particularly the civil rights movement, has been transformative. By applying pressure in a positive and persistent manner, historians and activists pushed ahead, and created the framework for southern women’s history to flourish. Southern women’s history has emerged from the shadows and become a significant, central aspect of understanding historical change, particularly in late twentieth century social movements.

Cultivating the Confederacy: How Historians of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Have Reshaped the Civil War
Michele Gillespie / Wake Forest University

Over the last three decades the scholarship of historians of women, gender and sexuality has transformed our understanding of the Confederacy and the Civil War. With the publication of the field-defining anthology Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War (1992) edited by Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, successive generations of scholars have depicted the varied ways in which women, whether enslaved, working class, or elite, fashioned new identities for themselves and launched telling political critiques across the wartime South. This exciting work puts women at the battle scene, as nurses, spies, soldiers, prostitutes, laundresses and refugees, even as it explores the ways women on the home front fought wars within their households to keep their social status, ideological beliefs, and soldier sons alive.

“Can the Sistas Get Some History Too?”
Transformations in Southern Black Women’s History
Cherisse Jones-Branch / Arkansas State University

The ways in which southern women’s history has developed over the past half century have been nothing short of exciting. One of the most significant and exciting changes in the field has been the ever increasing production of scholarship on southern black women’s history.

(continued on back page)