

Susan J. Pearson
Department of History
Northwestern University
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EDUCATION

Ph.D. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Department of History, 2004

M.A. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Department of History, 1999

B.A. Oberlin College, Women's Studies, Phi Beta Kappa, Highest Honors, 1996

EMPLOYMENT

Professor, Department of History, Northwestern University, September 2022-present

Associate Professor, Department of History, Northwestern University, 2012-2022

Assistant Professor, Department of History, Northwestern University, September 2004-August 2012

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

The Birth Certificate: An American History (University of North Carolina Press, 2021)

- 2022 Order of the Coif Book Award, Order of the Coif

The Rights of the Defenseless: Protecting Animals and Children in Gilded Age America (University of Chicago Press, 2011)

- 2012 Merle Curti Award in Intellectual History, Organization of American Historians

ARTICLES

"Birth Registration and the Administration of White Supremacy," *Modern American History* 5 (July 2022): 117-141

"What's Time Got to Do With It?," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 15 (Fall 2022), special issue: Forum on Double Age in the History of American Childhood and Youth: 434-439

"'Facts Which Might Be Embarrassing': Illegitimacy, State Knowledge, and Vital Registration," in *Intimate States*, edited by Margot Canaday, Nancy Cott, and Robert Self (University of Chicago Press, 2021), 109-130

"The Arm of the Law: Anticruelty Organizations and Statebuilding in Gilded Age America," *The American Historian* 14 (November 2017): 38-45

"A New Birth of Regulation: The State of the State After the Civil War," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 5 (2015): 422-439

"'Age Ought to Be a Fact': The Campaign Against Child Labor and the Rise of the Birth Certificate," *Journal of American History* 101 (March 2015): 1144-1165

"The Secret to Success," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 11 (Fall 2014): 97-100

Susan Pearson and Kimberly Smith, "Developing the Animal Welfare State," in *Statebuilding From the Margins: Between Reconstruction and the New Deal*, edited by Carol Nackenoff and Julie Novkov (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 118-139

"Speaking Bodies, Speaking Minds: Animals, Language, History," *History and Theory* 52 (December 2013): 91-108

Susan Pearson and Mary Weismantel, "Does The Animal Exist? Toward a Theory of Social Life with Animals," in *Beastly Natures: Animals at the Intersection of Cultural and Environmental History*, edited by Dorothee Brantz (University of Virginia Press, 2010), 17-37

Translated and reprinted: "Gibt es das Tier? Sozialtheoretische Reflexionen," in *Tierische Geschichte: Di Beziehung von Mensch und Tier in der Kultur der Moderne*, edited by Dorothee Brantz and Christof Mauch (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2010), 379-399

"Animal Rights Activism," in *Speaking Out With Many Voices: A Documentary History*, edited by Heather Thompson (Prentice Hall, 2010), 51-61

"Infantile Specimens: Showing Babies in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of Social History* 42 (December 2008): 341-370

- *Best Article Prize, Society for the History of Children and Youth, 2007-2008*

"The Cow and the Plow: Animal Suffering, Human Guilt and the Crime of Cruelty," *Studies in Law, Politics and Society*; special issue, *Toward A Critique of Guilt: Perspectives from Law and the Humanities* 36 (2005): 77-10

BOOK REVIEWS

Review of Janet Davis, *The Gospel of Kindness: Animal Welfare & the Making of Modern America* (Oxford University Press, 2016), *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 16 (April 2017): 236-238

Review of Katherine S. Bullard, *Civilizing the Child: Discourses of Race, Nation, and Child Welfare in America* (Lexington Books, 2014), *American Historical Review* 119 (December 2014): 1706-1707

Review of Cecelia Tichy, *Civic Passions: Seven Who Launched Progressive America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2009), *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 69 (Fall 2010): 280-283

Review of T.J. Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Emergence of Modern America, 1877-1920* (Harper Collins, 2009), *Journal of American History* 97 (June 2010): 143-145

Review of Erica Fudge, *Brutal Reasoning: Animals, Rationality, and Humanity in Early Modern England* (Cornell University Press, 2006), in *Journal of British Studies* 47 (January 2008): 167-168

Review of Diane L. Beers, *For the Prevention of Cruelty: The History and Legacy of Animal Rights Activism in the United States* (Ohio University Press/Swallow, 2006), in *Journal of American History* 94 (June 2007): 246-247

Review of Katherine C. Grier, *Pets in America: A History* (University of North Carolina Press, 2006), in *Kentucky Historical Register* 104 (Fall/Winter 2006): 796-797

ENCYCLOPEDIA ENTRIES

Susan Pearson, "Better Baby Contests," in *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, edited by William Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 115

HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS AND PRIZES

Order of the Coif Book Award, Order of the Coif (awarded for *The Birth Certificate*)
Distinguished Lecturer, Organization of American Historians, 2016-2019
Fellow, University of Connecticut Humanities Institute, 2018-2019 (declined)
Fellow, Kaplan Institute for the Humanities, Northwestern University, 2018-2019 (declined)
Charles A. Ryskamp Research Fellowship, American Council of Learned Societies, 2014-2015
National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, 2012-2013
Kluge Fellow, Library of Congress, 2012-2013 (declined)
Merle Curti Award in Intellectual History, Organization of American Historians, 2012 (awarded for *The Rights of the Defenseless*)
Andrew W. Mellon Short-term Research Fellowship, Massachusetts Historical Society, 2010
Visiting Scholar, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2008-2009 (declined)
Best Article Prize, Society for the History of Children and Youth, 2007-2008
Lane Humanities Professor, Northwestern University, Winter Quarter 2007
Dissertation Completion Fellowship, University of North Carolina, 2003-2004
Future Faculty Fellow, University of North Carolina, Summer 2003
Mellon Fellowship for Dissertation Research in Original Sources, Council on Library and Information Resources, 2002-2003
Mellon Foundation Research Fellow, Historical Society of Pennsylvania & Library Company of Philadelphia, 2002
Mowry Award, Department of History, University of North Carolina, 2002
Clifford Prize for Graduate Research, Department of History, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, 2001.

BOOK TALKS

“The Birth Certificate: An American History”

- New Books Network, podcast, December 27, 2021
- American Political History Seminar, UC Berkeley, February 4, 2022
- Global Lunchbox, Northwestern University, February 11, 2022
- Memorial Hall Library, Andover, Mass., February 17, 2022
- Cleveland Public Library, April 16, 2022

PROFESSIONAL TALKS

“What’s in a Document? Birth Registration and Identity in American Law and History,” University of Rochester History Department, November 3, 2022

“What’s in a Document? Birth Registration and Identity in American Law and History,” Hendricks Lecture in Legal History, Washington and Lee School of Law, Lexington, Virginia, April 8, 2022

“Birth Registration and the Administration of White Supremacy,” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, held virtually, April 2021

“Prodigious Fecundity: Race, Reproduction, and Vital Registration,” Northwestern-University of Wisconsin Symposium in Nineteenth Century United States History, Northwestern University, May 18, 2018

“Facts Which May Be Embarrassing: Illegitimacy and the Uses of Vital Registration,” *The Intimate State: Gender, Sexuality, and Governance in Modern US History*, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, February 9-10, 2018

Panelist, Roundtable “Putting Children First,” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 6, 2017

“Birth Certificates as Forms of Knowledge in the United States,” 4th Annual Alfred F. Young Keynote Address, Northern Illinois University History Graduate Student Association Conference, November 4, 2016

“Fact and Fiction on the Birth Certificate,” Chicago-Area Legal History Workshop, American Bar Foundation, October 5, 2016

“Age Ought to Be a Fact: The Campaign Against Child Labor and the Rise of the Birth Certificate in the United States,” May 19, 2016, School of Professional Studies, Northwestern University

Panelist, Plenary Session: Making Public the Most Private: Children Families, and Household as a Challenge to Historians, Southern Association of Women’s Historians Conference, Charleston, South Carolina, June 12, 2015

“Sentiment and Savagery: Blurring the Boundary Between Animals and Children in United States History,” Lehigh University Humanities Center, January 29, 2015

“Registering Birth: Population and Personhood in United States History,” Lehigh University History Department, January 29, 2015

“Animals and Children First,” Chicago Humanities Festival, October 12, 2013

“Not by Reputation Alone: Race and Documentation,” Mellon Sawyer Seminar, “Race, Across Time and Space,” University of Pennsylvania, September 20, 2013

“Speaking Bodies, Speaking Minds: Animals, Language, and History,” History and Theory Conference, Wesleyan University, March 29-30, 2013

“‘The Baby’s Birthright’: The Progressive-Era Campaign for Birth Registration,” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 19, 2012

“Documentary Proof: Evidence of Age and the Campaign Against Child Labor,” Labor History Seminar, Newberry Library, March 16, 2012

“Of Persons and Populations: Registering Birth in Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts,” Workshop on the Comparative History of Civil Registration, St. Johns College, Cambridge University, September 7-10, 2010

“‘The Dove Has Claws’: Anticruelty Reform and Masculine Sentimentalism in Gilded Age America,” Seminar on Women and Gender, Newberry Library, May 15, 2009

“Out of Emotion Comes Action: Sympathy, Suffering, and the Transformation of the Liberal State,” Project on the Rhetoric of Inquiry, University of Iowa, April 3, 2009

“The Rights of the Defenseless: Sentimental Liberalism in Gilded Age America,” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Seattle, Washington, March 26-29, 2009

“A Right to Childhood: Children and the Logic of Liberalism,” *The Humanities and the Family*, Institute for the Humanities, University of Illinois-Chicago, March 13-14, 2009

- “Sentiment and Savagery: Linking Animals and Children in Nineteenth-Century America,” Plenary Address, Symposium on Animals and Children, British Animal Studies Network (London, England), April 26, 2008
- “The Rights of the Defenseless: Protecting Animals and Children in Gilded Age America,” Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies Conference: The Emergence of Human Rights, Marquette University, April 5, 2008
- “Speaking Bodies, Speaking Minds: Debates about Animal Language in Nineteenth-Century America,” Intellectual History Seminar, University of Notre Dame, September 7, 2007
- “Out of Emotion Comes Action: Sympathy, Suffering, and the Transformation of the Liberal State,” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 30, 2007 (Panel Organizer, “The Afterlife of Feeling: Sentimentalism after the Civil War,” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 30, 2007)
- “‘The Arm of the Law’: Protecting Animals & Children in Gilded Age America,” Legal History Seminar, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Law School, February 5, 2007
- “Of Sinners, Moral Idiot and Sadists: From Christian to Criminological Concepts of Cruelty in the United States,” American Historical Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia, January 7, 2007
- “‘The Arm of the Law’: Protecting Animals & Children in Gilded Age America,” Chicago Legal History Seminar, American Bar Foundation, September 21, 2006
- “The Inalienable Rights of the Beasts: Organized Animal Protection and the Language of Rights in America, 1865-1900,” Fourth Annual Law and Humanities Junior Scholars Workshop, University of Southern California Law School, June 6, 2006
- “Are Animals Ever More than Symbols? Toward a Theory of Social Life with Animals,” Animals in History, German Historical Institute, University of Cologne, May 19-21, 2005 (joint presentation with Mary Weismantel, Department of Anthropology, Northwestern University)
- “‘The Unequivocal Physiognomy of Pain’: Animal Pain and Animal Rights in the Nineteenth-Century Animal Protection Movement,” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Hartford, CT, October 16-19, 2003
- “‘The Unequivocal Physiognomy of Pain’: Animal Suffering, Human Guilt and the Crime of Cruelty,” Guilt: A Conference on Law and Humanities, University of New England, June 14, 2003
- “‘Something More than Mere Property’: Animal Protection, Anticruelty Laws, and the Problem of Intent,” Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, Pittsburgh, PA, June 5-8, 2003 (Panel Organizer, “Rights and Remedies in Animal Law,” Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, Pittsburgh, PA, June 5-8, 2003)
- “Making Babies Better: Pediatric Professionalization and the Standardization of Childhood,” Mid-Atlantic American Studies Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 23, 2002 (Panel Organizer, “Charting Children: Testing, Standardization, and Normalcy in Measuring America’s Youth,” Mid-Atlantic Studies Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 23, 2002)
- “Progressive Reform and the Marketing of Childhood,” Border Subjects IV: Growing Up (Post)Modern, Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois, October 7-8, 1999

COMMENTARY

Commentator, "New Voices," American Society of Legal History preconference on the History of the Administrative State, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 4, 2021

Commentator, "Documenting Identity in the Atlantic World, 1600-1800," American Society for Legal History, November 13, 2020

Commentator, "Uses and Abuses of the Common Man Mythology: Race, Gender, and Anti-Intellectualism in the United States," United States Intellectual History Society Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, November 11, 2018

Commentator, "Race, Disability and the Vote," Legal History Roundtable, American Bar Foundation, Chicago, Illinois, May 11, 2018 (paper by Rabia Belt)

Commentator, "Who is a Child?," Writing History Through Children, Northwestern University, October 5-6, 2018

Commentator, "Gender, Reproduction, and Democratic Citizenship," United States Intellectual History Society Annual Meeting, Dallas, Texas, October 28, 2017

Commentator, "The Politics of Personal Histories: Naming Practices and Family Reckonings in the United States," Women and Gender Studies Seminar, Newberry Library, February 19, 2016 (papers by Kirsten Femaglich and Francesca Morgan)

Commentator, Labor History New Book Symposium: Jonathan Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life*, Newberry Library, November 9, 2013

Chair, "The Revolutionary Legacy in the 1850s Writings of Melville, Douglass, and Delany," Society for the History of the Early American Republic Annual Meeting, Springfield, Illinois, July 18, 2009

Commentator, "Defecation Fictions: Circulation and the Invisible Economy of the Prison Camp," Labor History Seminar, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois, December 15, 2006 (paper by Scott Nelson)

Commentator, "How I suffered: Industrial Violence and the Remaking of Working-Class Childhood, 1880-1930," Labor History Seminar, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois, November 11, 2005 (paper by James Schmidt)

Commentator, "Factories for Turning Out Criminals: Convict Labor, Torture, and the Invisible World of Prison Punishment in New York, 1860-1900," Labor History Seminar, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois, November 12, 2004 (paper by Timothy Gilfoyle)

PUBLIC-FACING HISTORY

Radio Appearance, "The Humble Birth Certificate is a Powerful Document," *Sunday Extra*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation Radio National, August 6, 2022

"Oklahoma's Ban on Birth Certificates Isn't Just Cruel. It's Ahistorical," *The Atlantic*, May 6, 2022

Radio Appearance, "Life Stages: Birth," *Civics 101 Podcast*, New Hampshire Public Radio (2019)

"Birth Certificates Have Always Been a Weapon for White Supremacists," *Washington Post*, September 11, 2018

Radio appearance, "A History of Manufacturing in 5 Objects," *BackStory* (2016)

Radio appearance, "The Beasts Within: Domesticated Animals in America," *BackStory* (2013)

Radio appearance, "Young Americans: A History of Childhood," *BackStory* (2013)

Chicago Metro History Fair, Judge

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Chair, Merle Curti Prize Committee (for the best book in US intellectual history), Organization of American Historians, 2018

Best Article Prize Committee, *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 2018-2020

Program Committee, United States Intellectual History Society Annual Meeting, 2018

Faculty Advisor, Social Sciences Research Council, Dissertation Proposal Development Workshop, 2017-2018

Founder (2005) and Editor (2005-2009), H-Animal, an H-Net Listserve

External reviews for: *Journal of American History*; *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*; *Law and History Review*; *Law and Social Inquiry*; *Journal of Southern History*; *Nineteenth-Century Studies*; *Journal of Policy History*; *Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences*.