

working women and addressing the exploitative factory system. Rather than aligning with their own economic class, the Chace women focused on the concerns of working women and criticized class distinctions for prohibiting middle-class women from also identifying with working women. For these women, ties to working women superseded class loyalties. Richard McIntyre and Shannon McLaughlin discussed their work in progress, "The Slave Trade and the Transition to Capitalism in Rhode Island, 1790–1820." They are documenting the extent to which slave trade profits contributed to early capital accumulation and industrialization in Rhode Island.

Finally, an evening presentation of the documentary *Leather Soul* was followed by an informal discussion led by Milton Cantor and featuring Bob Quin, producer, Joe Cultrera, director, and John Stanton, scriptwriter.

"Clio, Canons, and Culture": A Report on the 1993 Organization of American Historians Conference

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As the conference title suggests, cultural analysis was the focus of the eighty-sixth annual OAH meeting. Especially noteworthy were the numerous panels that examined popular culture and focused on a broad range of peoples. For example, in "Work-in-Progress Roundtable on American Indian History," James Riding-In discussed Pawnee cultural change and continuity, as well as popular representations of the Pawnee as "the bad guys" in movies such as *Dances With Wolves*. The papers presented in "'Orientals,' Asians, and Asian Americans in American Culture," by Thomas Fujita and John Cheng, described stereotypes of Asians in comic books, movies, and popular novels during the first half of the twentieth century. Focusing on working-class Latino communities, Lorena Chambers, in "Work-in-Progress Roundtable on Latina History," analyzed the racial and sexual construction of beauty in newspaper advertising in Los Angeles in the late 1920s.

Although labor panels certainly included cultural analysis, the emphasis upon popular culture was less evident. Two significant exceptions to this included the presentations of Steven J. Ross in "Re-Imagining History: Alternative Visions of Class and Race in Film and Video," and Sumiko

Higashi in "Documentary Practices in American Media: Representations of Ethnicity, Class, and Gender," both of which focused on working-class representations in film.

Focusing almost exclusively on whites, European ethnics, and blacks, labor panels tended to be less inclusive than other conference panels. However, reflecting the general trend at the conference, many labor panels did either focus on women or incorporate gender analysis. One of these panels presented the evolution of and regional variations in "Domestic Cloth Production and the Gender Division of Labor in North America." In this session, the division between female spinners and male weavers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was examined. Adrienne Hood found that in western Pennsylvania the largely female-dominated craft of spinning cloth, while important to the early American economy, did not enjoy the status of the male-oriented craft of weaving. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich pointed to a similar phenomenon in early New England and asserted that contrary to popular assumption, household production was closely intertwined with the market economy. David-Thierry Ruddell showed that cloth production became important to the Quebec economy and noted, as did Ulrich, that women who spun cloth often found their skills provided an entrée into more prestigious areas of cloth production.

In a second panel, "Women's Work and Gender Identity," Lucy Eldersveld Murphy and Wendy Gamber focused on results of the gender division of labor within the millinery and dressmaking trades in nineteenth-century America. In his commentary, Thomas Dublin highlighted three important contributions by Murphy and Gamber: First, while the sexual division of labor segregated, it also provided expanded opportunities for women; second, women's work often created a positive work identification and culture and was not merely a way station before marriage; third, women worked as artisans, a fact largely overlooked by labor historians.

Panels that focused on the intersection of race and class in labor history included "Between Freedom and Slavery: Apprenticeship in the Upper South, 1650–1850" and "Race, Labor and Social Equality in the Jim Crow South." In the first panel, Christine Daniels, T. Stephen Whitman, and Stephanie Cole countered the static view of preindustrial work processes by tracing significant changes in the race, gender, and age of apprentices in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Maryland. The panel on the Jim Crow South shed important light on race and labor in early twentieth-century Alabama. Henry McKiven stressed that despite considerable (albeit shortlived) gains in employment, wage levels, and union membership by blacks in Birmingham's iron and steel industries, organized labor maintained its traditional ideology of white supremacy. This white supremacy was no doubt fueled by racial tension in local unions, the focus of Daniel Letwin's presentation. On a broader scale, Joseph McCartin analyzed the conjunction of race, labor, and political issues in World War I Birmingham and found that wartime labor reform aided organized labor and the construction of a short-lived interracial unionism.

Analysis incorporating race also was prominent in the symposium on two recent and important works in labor history. *The Wages of Whiteness* by David Roediger demonstrates the racism of European-American workers with regard to African Americans in the nineteenth century. As industrialism expanded, Roediger asserts, attacks on their work rules and living standards led workers of European descent to adopt the concept of “whiteness” to elicit both wage and psychological bonuses. Peter Linebaugh’s *The London Hanged* provides a fresh analysis of the changing class structure in eighteenth-century England, connecting these changes to English colonialism. As Robin Kelley noted, the English working class was transatlantic and “in color.” Equally fascinating is Linebaugh’s description of the criminalization of London’s poor on the basis of new laws against property crimes.

Also reflecting the important role of the state in working-class life, several labor panels explored the relationship between workers and the government. In the roundtable “Reconnecting the Political: Gender, Race, and the State,” panelist Lawrence Glickman examined how class, ethnicity, and gender affected the government definition and application of the “living” and “minimum” wages during the Progressive era. Pointed analysis of gender and the state came in the panel “Legal Discourse and Sexual Difference: Gender, Work and the State at the Turn of the Century.” For example, Lea VanderVelde demonstrated how gender structured legal discourses, showing that actresses—but not actors—seeking freedom from contractual obligations were enjoined from finding work elsewhere by judicial decisions bound with the rhetoric of fidelity.

On subjects as diverse as twentieth-century actresses and seventeenth-century apprentices, New England spinners and Alabama steel workers, this year’s OAH labor panels showcased a wide variety of presentations. While the picture presented was not as far-reaching as that of the conference in general, this breadth of focus ensured an illuminating and enriching experience for the labor historians in attendance.

Ninth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women

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The Ninth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, held at Vassar College, June 11–13, 1993, drew over 2,500 participants to hear 180 panels spread over eight sessions. Numerous scholars of labor and working-class history were in attendance, their presence providing further evidence to