

**Curriculum Vitae**  
**Nancy J. Jacobs**

May 2026

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**PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS**

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Professor, Department of History, Brown University	2016–present
Elected Faculty Fellow, Institute at Brown University for Environment and Society	2014–present
Associate Professor, Department of History, Brown University	2003–2016
Associate Professor, Department of Africana Studies, Brown University	2003–2012
Benedict Distinguished Visiting Professor, Department of History, Carleton College	Spring 2014
Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of History, Brown University	2007–2011
Director, International Scholars of the Environment Program, Watson Institute	2008–2009
Assistant Professor, Departments of History and Africana Studies, Brown University	1996–2003
Visiting Assistant Professor, Departments of History, Carleton and St. Olaf Colleges	1995–1996
Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of History, Fort Lewis College	1994–1995
Associate Instructor, Department of History, Indiana University	1992–1993
Intern, Political Section, United States Embassy, Pretoria, South Africa	1986

**EDUCATION**

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<b>Ph.D.</b> in History	1995
Indiana University, Bloomington	
<b>M.A.</b> in African Studies	1987
University of California, Los Angeles	
<b>B.A.</b> in History and German	1984
Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan	

**MUSEUM AND ARCHIVAL CURATION**

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Design team leader, “The Bigodi Grey Parrot Museum,” Bigodi, Uganda.  
<http://greyparrotmuseum-uganda.org/>

"South African COVID-19 Diaries," 2024. Qualitative Data Repository. (Compiled with Lorato Trok).  
<https://data.qdr.syr.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.5064/F6BYXWYG>

## **PUBLICATIONS**

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### **Single-Authored Books**

- The Global Grey Parrot: How a Charismatic African Animal Became a Global Commodity.* Forthcoming Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 2027.
- Birders of Africa: History of a Network.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. (South African paperback issued by University of Cape Town Press, 2018), xvi +350 pp.
- African History through Sources, volume 1: Colonial Contexts and Everyday Experiences, c. 1850–1946.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. xv + 328 pp.
- Environment, Power and Injustice: A South African History.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. xii +300 pp. (《环境、权力与不公：一部南非史 Simplified Chinese translation, 2022).

### **Edited Books and Journal Issues**

- Environment, Power, and Justice: Southern African Histories* (with co-editors Graeme Wynn and Jane Carruthers.) Athens: Ohio University Press, 2022.
- Biography in Post-Apartheid South Africa: A Call for Awkwardness* (with co-editor Andrew Bank). Special issue on in *African Studies* 78 (2019).
- The Micropolitics of Knowledge* (with co-editor Andrew Bank. Special issue on in *Kronos: Southern African Histories* 41 (2015).

### **Book Manuscripts in Preparation**

- With co-editors Emily Wakild and Faisal Husain. "The Oxford Handbook of Global Animal History," Under contract Oxford University Press.
- With co-author Jennifer E. Johnson. "African History through Sources, volume 2: Sovereign States and Modern Developments, 1945–2015." Under contract Cambridge University Press.

### **Refereed Journal Articles**

- "Conviviality and Companionship: Parrots and People in the African Forests." *Environmental History*, 26 (2021): 647–670.
- "How Washington Okumu Became the Mediator Who Saved the 1994 South African Elections." *Southern African Historical Journal* 73 (2021): 288-317.
- "The Awkward Biography of the Young Washington Okumu: CIA Asset (?) and the Prayer Breakfast's Man in Africa." *African Studies* (Johannesburg) 78 (2019): 225-245.

“Herding Birds, Interspecific Communication, and Translation.” Special issue “Writing Animals into African History.” *Critical African Studies*, 8 (2016): 136-145. DOI: 10.1080/21681392.2015.1061791.

“Marriage, Ornithology, and Secret Intelligence in the Life of Rudyerd Boulton, an American in Africa.” *Kronos: Southern African Histories* special issue on “*The Micropolitics of Knowledge*.” 41 (2015): 271-297.

“The Intimate Politics of Ornithology in Colonial Africa.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48 (2006): 564–603.

“Latitudes and Longitudes: Comparative Perspectives on Cape Environmental History.” *Kronos: Journal of Cape History* 29 (2003): 7–29.

Republished in:

*Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Comparative Studies* 15 (2004): 1-25

Andrew Offenburger, ed., *South Africa and the United States Compared: The Best of Safundi, 2003–2004* (Safundi, 2005): 117–150.

Christopher J. Lee, Andrew Offenburger, eds. *Rethinking South Africa’s Past: A Safundi Reader on Comparative, Regional, and Transnational Connections, 1999-2024*:

“The Great Bophuthatswana Donkey Massacre: Discourse on the Ass and Politics of Class and Grass.” *American Historical Review* 108 (2001): 485–507.

“Grasslands and Thickets: Bush Encroachment and Herding in the Kalahari Thornveld.” *Environment and History* 6 (2000): 289–316.

“Environment, Production and Social Difference in the Kalahari Thornveld, c. 1750 – c. 1820s.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25 (1999): 347–373.

“The Flowing Eye: Water Management in the Upper Kuruman Valley, South Africa, c.1800–1962.” *Journal of African History* 37 (1996): 237–260.

**Referred Chapters in Books**

“The Global Passages of the Grey Parrot,” in *Globalizing Wildlife*, edited by Raf de Bont. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2026, 2505.

“Introduction” (with co-authors Jane Carruthers and Graeme Wynn) in *Environment, Power, and Justice: Southern African Histories*, edited by Graeme Wynn, Jane Carruthers, and Nancy J. Jacobs. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2022, 1-52.

“The Anthropocene from Below” (with co-authors Danielle Johnstone and Christopher Kelly), in *World Histories from Below: Dissent and Disruption, 1750–present*, edited by Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton. London: Bloomsbury, 2016, 197-230.

“Africa, Europe and the Birds between Them,” in *Eco-Culture Networks and the British Empire*, edited by James Beattie, Edward Melillo and Emily O’Gorman. London: Bloomsbury, 2015, 92–120.

“Environment, Power, and Injustice: A South African History” (reprint of final chapter of *Environment, Power and Injustice: A South African History*), in *The New Imperial Histories Reader*, edited by Stephen Howe. London: Routledge, 2009, 219–228.

“The Colonial Ecological Revolution in South Africa: The Case of Kuruman,” in *South Africa’s Environmental History*, edited by Ruth Edgecombe, Bill Guest and Steven Dovers. Cape Town: David Philip, 2002.

### Non-Refereed Journal Articles

“Reaching Out from Lockdown: A Writing Group for Young Black South Africans” (with co-author Lorato Trok) in special issue, “Student Experiences of Covid-19 around the Globe: Insights from the Pandemic Journaling Project.” *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry*, 2024.

“Introduction: Biography in Post-Apartheid South Africa: A Call for Awkwardness” (with co-author Andrew Bank). *African Studies* 78 (2019): 165-182.

“American Evangelicals and African Politics: The Archives of the Fellowship Foundation.” *History in Africa* 45 (2018): 473-482.

“Introduction: The Micro-Politics of Knowledge Production in Southern Africa” (with co-author Andrew Bank). *Kronos: Southern African Histories* 41(2015): 11-35.

“Collaborative Research, Participatory Solutions: Research on Asbestos in Kuruman, South Africa” (with co-authors Sophia Kisting and Lundy Braun). *International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health* 10 (2004): 226–232.

### Other Writing

“Domination without Domestication in the Grey Anthropocene: Part I, The Great Acceleration.” *Germinate: Environmental History Review* October 2025. <https://g-ehr.com/special-feature/the-great-acceleration-domination-without-domestication-in-the-grey-anthropocene-part-1/>

Quarterly Presidential Columns, *ASEH News*, Spring 2023-Spring 2025. <https://aseh.org/Archived-Newsletters>

“Resources for Environmental Historians and Initiatives Supporting Environmental History,” *Network in Canadian History & Environment*, 26 April 2025. <https://niche-canada.org/2025/04/26/resources-for-environmental-historians-spring-2025/>

“South Africa’s First Election Was Saved by a Kenyan: The Fascinating Story of Washington Okumu, the Accidental Mediator,” *The Conversation*, 11 April 2024. [https://theconversation.com/south-africas-first-election-was-saved-by-a-kenyan-the-fascinating-story-of-washington-okumu-the-accidental-mediator-226658?utm\\_source=clipboard&utm\\_medium=bylinecopy\\_url\\_button](https://theconversation.com/south-africas-first-election-was-saved-by-a-kenyan-the-fascinating-story-of-washington-okumu-the-accidental-mediator-226658?utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=bylinecopy_url_button)

“The Boy and the Bird,” *Edge Effects*, March 3, 2023. <https://edgeeffects.net/portrait-multispecies-friendship/>

- “A Disturbing Pattern,” (by Twelve Woman Scholars), *Inside Higher Education*, August 27, 2021. [https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2021/08/27/entrenched-inequity-not-appropriately-citing-scholarship-women-and-people-color?fbclid=IwAR0t4S\\_jkhpOSo\\_BRP8F3i5NIFGkPSblqT7mTqFwGs4Ryluc8OEx0ffbW0M](https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2021/08/27/entrenched-inequity-not-appropriately-citing-scholarship-women-and-people-color?fbclid=IwAR0t4S_jkhpOSo_BRP8F3i5NIFGkPSblqT7mTqFwGs4Ryluc8OEx0ffbW0M)
- “Red Feathers on Grey Parrots,” (with co-author Simon Tamungang), *Winged Geographies*, February 2021. <https://www.wingedgeographies.co.uk/post/red-feathers-on-grey-parrots>
- “The Historian of Bifalone,” Congo Basin Institute Blog, University of California, Los Angeles, March 2018. <http://cbi.ucla.edu/the-historian-of-bifalone/>
- “A CHICKEN IS FLYING OUT OF THE NEST, WHICH FALLS AGAIN INTO THE NEST.” Project Atalanta, January 2018. <https://www.instagram.com/p/BfQraDIAIRf/?taken-by=projectatalanta>
- “Saturday Morning’s Politics of Seeing” Seeing the Woods Blog, the Rachel Carson Center, January 2018. <https://seeingthewoods.org/2018/01/29/saturday-mornings-politics-of-seeing/>
- “Birders of Kenya, 2016.” Yale Books Unbound. <https://yalebooks.yale.edu/2016/07/13/birders-of-kenya-2016/>

## Book and Film Reviews

- Archives of Times Past: Conversations about South Africa’s Deep History* by Cynthia Kros, John Wright, Mbongiseni Buthelezi, and Helen Ludlow, eds *African Studies Review* 2024.
- Residual Governance: How South Africa Foretells Planetary Futures* by Gabrielle Hecht, *H-Net Reviews*, 29 February 2024. <https://www.hnet.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=60082>
- The Herds Shot Round the World 1800-1900* by Rebecca Woods, *American Historical Review* 124 (2019):1859-60.
- Welcome to Greater Edendale: Histories of Environment, Health, and Gender in an African City* by Marc Epprecht, *African Studies Review* 62(2019): 43-45.
- An African Volk: The Apartheid Regime and Its Search for Survival* by Jamie Miller, *American Historical Review* 122(2018): 363-364.
- Ivory, Power and Poaching in Africa* by Keith Somerville, *Journal of African History* 59(2018): 131-132.
- “The Land Beneath our Feet,” directed by Sarita Siegel and Gregg Mitman, *H-Environment Roundtable Reviews* 7, 4(2017): 6-8.
- Life as a Hunt: Thresholds of Identity and Illusions on an African Landscape* by Stuart Marks, *African Studies Review* 60(2017): 242-244.
- “The Land Beneath our Feet,” directed by Sarita Siegel and Gregg Mitman. *Environmental History* 22 (2017): 332-336.
- Pioneers of the Field: South Africa’s Women Anthropologists* by Andrew Bank. *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa*. 2017.

- Women, Migration, and the Cashew Economy in Southern Mozambique, 1945-1975* by Jeanne Marie Penvenne. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 47 (2016): 35-36.
- “Horses and Human History in South Africa,” review of *Riding High: Horses, Humans and History in South Africa*, by Sandra Swart. H-Net Teviews, September 2011, <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=32129>.
- Washed with the Sun: Landscape and the Making of White South Africa*, by Jeremy Foster. *Journal of African History* 51 (2010): 267–269.
- Natures of Colonial Change: Environmental Relations in the Making of the Transkei*, by Jacob A. Tropp. *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 11, 2 (2010)..
- Butterflies and Barbarians: Swiss Missionaries and Systems of Knowledge in South-East Africa*, by Patrick Harries. *Environment and History* 16 (2010): 128–130.
- “Nation States as Building Blocks,” Review of *Africa since Independence*, by Paul Nugent. H-Net Reviews, April 2009, <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=24407>, republished in *Monthly Review* blog: <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2009/jacobs010609.html>.
- Canis Africanus: A Dog History of Southern Africa*, edited by Lance van Sittert and Sandra Swart. *South African Historical Journal* 60 (2008): 521–523.
- African Sacred Groves: Ecological Dynamics and Social Change*, edited by Michael J. Sheridan and Celia Nyamweru. *Journal of African History* 49 (2008): 478–479.
- Tourism in the New South Africa: Social Responsibility and the Tourist Experience*, by Garth Allen and Frank Brenna. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 39 (2006): 358–359.
- The Rise of Conservation in South Africa*, by William Beinart. *Environmental History* 10 (2005): 799–801.
- “Lived Environmental Knowledge,” review of *The Seed in Mine*, by Charles van Onselen, in anniversary forum “What Books Should Be Read More Widely in Environmental History?” *Environmental History* 10 (2005): 710–711.
- Re-Creating Eden: Land Use, Environment, and Society in Southern Angola and Northern Namibia*, by Emmanuel Krieker. *African Studies Review* 48 (2005): 159–161.
- The Politics of Evil: Magic, State Power, and the Political Imagination in South Africa*, by Clifton Crais. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 35 (2004): 176–177.
- African Environments and Social History*, edited by William Beinart and Joann McGregor. *South African Historical Journal*, 50 (2004): 269–271.
- Eroding the Commons: The Politics of Ecology in Baringo, Kenya 1890–1963*, by David Anderson. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 4 (2004): 403–405.
- Cutting the Vines of the Past: Environmental Histories of the Central African Rain Forest*, by Tamara Giles-Vernick. *Public Historian* 26 (2004): 111–112.
- Environmental Justice in South Africa*, edited by David A. McDonald. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30 (2004): 203–204.
- Wildlife and Warfare: The Life of James Stevenson-Hamilton*, by Jane Carruthers. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30 (2004): 185–187.

- Between the Sea and the Lagoon: An Eco-Social History of the Anlo of Southeastern Ghana c. 1850 to Recent Times*, by Emmanuel Akyeampong. *Environmental History* 7 (2002): 692–693.
- Science and Society and Southern Africa*, edited by Saul Dubow. *African Studies Review* 45 (2002): 59.
- Reviewing the Southern African Environment: A Media Handbook*, edited by M. Chenje. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 27 (2001): 867–868.
- State of the Environment in the Zambezi Basin 2000*, edited by M. Chenje. H-Net Reviews project, December 2001, <http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=h-safrica&month=0112&week=c&msg=07XgXuFojPLlqG6CW7Sj2g&user=&pw=>.
- Green Land, Brown Land, Black Land: An Environmental History of Africa, 1800–1990*, by James McCann. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33 (2000): 16–18.
- A Most Promising Weed: A History of Tobacco Farming and Labor in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890–1945*, by Steven Rupert. *African Studies Review* 42 (1999): 170–171.
- The Lie of the Land: Challenging Received Wisdom on the African Environment*, edited by Melissa Leach and Robin Mearns. H-Net Reviews, January 1999, <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/logs/showlog.cgi?list=h-africa&file=h-africa.log9901a/16&ent=0>.
- The Practice of Smallholder Irrigation: Case Studies from Zimbabwe*, edited by Emmanuel Manzungu and Pieter van der Zaag. *African Studies Review* 41 (1998): 151–152.
- Freedom in Our Lifetime: The Collected Writings of Anton Muziwakhe Lembede*, edited by Robert Edgar and Luyanda ka Msumza. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 31 (1998): 226–228.
- “An Unequal Triangle,” review of *Cotton, Colonialism and Social History in Sub-Saharan Africa*, edited by Allen Isaacman and Richard Roberts. H-Net Reviews, June 1997, <http://hnet2.msu.edu/reviews/revlist.cgi?list=H-Africa>.
- State Power and Black Politics in South Africa, 1912–51*, by Paul Rich. *Journal of African and Asian Studies* 32 (1997): 311–313.
- Making Race*, by Ian Goldin *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 22 (1989): 334–335.

## **HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, AND RESEARCH GRANTS**

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|---------|--|
| 2023    | Hutchins Family Fellow, Hutchins Center for African and African American Studies Research, Harvard University. (Spring Semester Residency) |
| 2022    | Affiliated Scholar, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Department III, Berlin. (September and October residency).            |
| 2022    | Fellow, National Humanities Center, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina (declined).   |
| 2022-23 | Richard B. Salomon Faculty Research Award, Brown University.   |
| 2020    | Academic Writing Fellowship, Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center (postponed due to COVID-19; declined in 2021).                         |
| 2019    | Engaged Course Development Grant, Swearer Center at Brown University.  |
| 2018    | Carson Fellow, Rachel Carson Center, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität.   |
| 2017    | Seed Research Grant, Institute at Brown for Environment and Society.   |

- 2016 Pembroke Center, Seed Grant for Animal Studies Working Group (Lead PI).
- 2016 Cogut Center Faculty Fellowship, Brown University.
- 2015 Brown University, President’s Award for Excellence in Faculty Governance.
- 2003- Brown University Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Departmental Research Award (annually).
- 2011 Harriet W. Sheridan Award for Distinguished Contribution to Teaching and Learning.
- 2009 Edith Goldthwaite Miller Faculty Fellow, Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women, Brown University.
- 2007 National Science Foundation Grant for “Empire and Science: Contact, Authority, Collaboration.” \$23,000. (Lead PI: Lou Ratté, The Hill Center for World Studies).
- 2006–2009 Henry Luce Foundation Grant for “Land Use Change: Designing and Implementing New Global Environmental Curricula.” \$550,000. (Lead PI 2006–08: Steven Hamburg, Watson Institute for International Studies).
- 2005 Best of WebCT Award for “Twentieth-Century Africa” course website
- 2004 Brown University Humanities Center working group grant for “Historicizing Post-Colonial Africa.”
- 2004 Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program at Brown University Outstanding Mentors Award.
- 2003–2004 Postdoctoral Fellowship, Program in Agrarian Studies, Yale University
- 2001 Alice Hamilton Prize for Best Article Outside Environmental History, American Society for Environmental History.
- 2001 Wriston Grant from Brown University for course preparation.
- 2000 Richard B. Salomon Faculty Research Award Brown University.
- 1997–1998 Social Science Research Council/American Council of Learned Societies International Postdoctoral Fellowship.
- 1997 American Historical Association Bernadotte E. Schmitt Grant for research in European, African and Asian history.
- 1994 Indiana University College of Arts and Sciences Second Semester Fellowship.
- 1990–1991 Fulbright-Hays Fellowship for dissertation research in Great Britain and South Africa.
- 1990 FLAS - Yale University African Studies Center to study Zulu (summer).
- 1988–89 FLAS - Indiana University African Studies Center to study Tswana.
- 1989–90 FLAS - Indiana University African Studies Center to study Tswana.
- 1984–85 Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, Title IV (FLAS) - UCLA African Studies Center to study Zulu

## **PRESENTATIONS**

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### **Invited Lectures and Seminars**

“The Global Grey Parrot,” Research Methods in History Seminar, Calvin University 13 February 2026.

“Apartheid,” History Dept Colloquium, Calvin University, 11 February 2026.

“The Global Grey Parrot,” Anthropology 0700, “Conservation and Climate Change,” University of Pittsburgh, 1 April 2025.

“The Global Grey Parrot,” History 250/305, “African Environmental History,” Clark University, 20 March 2025.

“Parrot Territories: Rethinking More-than-Human History, Conservation, Care, and Colonial Legacies,” Tieranatomisches Theater, Berlin 12 December 2024.

“The Past, Present, and Future of Animal History,” ANAMED (Koç University Research Center for Anatolian Civilization), Istanbul, 17 May 2024.

“The Global Grey Parrot,” Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, Alumni Reading, Harvard University, November 6, 2023.

“The Making of the Cage Bird Class,” Max Planck Institute for the History of Science Department III, October 5, 2023.

“The Global Grey Parrot,” History Research Group, Department of Politics and Society Aalborg University, Denmark, October 2, 2023.

“Reproducing Reproduction,” Greenhouse for Environmental Humanities, Stavanger University, Norway, September 22, 2023.

“Historical Points on the Grey Parrot’s Compass,” Globalizing Wildlife Seminar, Maastricht University, April 19, 2023.

“Parrots and Plantations: The More-than-Human Early Modern Atlantic and its Aftermath, Shelby Cullom Davis Center, Department of History, Princeton University, March 3, 2023.

“Not an Ornithologist but the Bird Expert, Nonetheless: Jali Makawa of Central Africa,” African Scientists in Colonial and Postcolonial Contexts, 1800-2000, Royal Society, London, October 22, 2022.

“Conviviality and Companionship: Parrots and People in the African Forests,” Vital Geographies Seminar, Cambridge University, May 6, 2021.

How Washington Okumu ‘Saved’ Mandela’s Election,” History Section Seminar, Eastern Michigan University, 22 October 2020.

“The South African Elections of 1994: Experience, Simulation, Research,” Keynote to Brown University Crisis Simulation Model United Nations meeting,” March 1, 2019.

“Apartheid Israel?” Introduction to viewing of “Roadmap to Apartheid,” organized by BrownDivest, February 27, 2019.

Animals and Environment” MAS in Applied History seminar at the University of Zurich, February 8, 2019.

“Teaching Early Modern Southern African History,” Center for the Study of the Early Modern World, Brown University, December 17, 2018.

“The Many Africas of the Grey Parrot,” Nature and Culture Seminar, Hall Center for the Humanities, University of Kansas, December 7, 2018.

“Washington Okumu and the Miracle of South Africa’s 1994 Elections,” Walter Rodney Seminar, Boston University, October 9, 2018.

“Human Livelihoods and the Survival of the Grey Parrot: A Survey of Vernacular Knowledge in Cameroon,” Rachel Carson Center Works in Progress Seminar. August 22, 2018.

“The Many Africas of the Grey Parrot,” Africa at Noon, University of Wisconsin at Madison African Studies Center, April 18, 2018.

“Why the Grey Parrot,” University of Bamenda, Cameroon. November 3, 2017.

“The Remarkable Life of Washington Okumu,” Watson Institute Africa Initiative, Brown University, October 12, 2016.

“Birders of Africa: Politics of a Network,” *Art of Judgement*, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, June 2, 2016.

“Birders of Africa: Politics of a Network,” Departement Geschichte, University of Basel, May 30, 2016.

“Animal Studies and African Studies in Conversation,” opening keynote at *African Environments and their Populations*, April 23, 2016. Georgetown University Department of History.

“The Anthropocene from Below,” *World History from Below: Dissent and Disruption, 1750–Present*, Workshop, University of Illinois, February 11–14, 2015. (Remote participation.)

“Herding Birds, Interspecific Communication, and Translation,” Colloquium, History Department, Carleton College, May 26, 2014.

“Vernacular Birding across Time and Space, in Africa,” *Global Environmental History: A Symposium*, Center for Historical Interpretation, University of Illinois, March 6–7, 2014.

“Birders in the Cape Colony: Names, Imperialism, and Networks,” *Globalizing Histories of Science, Technology, and Medicine*, Workshop, New York University, Abu Dhabi, May 20, 2013.

“Writing a History of Birders (and Birds) of Africa,” *Building the Extended Society*, Symposium, Mellon Sawyer Seminar on Animal Magnetism, Brown University, April 26, 2013.

“Naming the Birds of the Cape Colony: Vernacular Knowledge, Scientific facts, and Imperialism,” *Conversations in History*, Seminar, Department of History, Boston University, March 27, 2013.

“The Traditions and Networks of Birding in Africa,” *Environmental and Agricultural History*, Seminar, MIT, March 15, 2013.

“Servant to Science: The Aspiration, Frustration, and Defiance of Saul Sithole of the Transvaal Museum,” Invited lecture, *Science, Technology & Society Program*, University of Michigan, January 23, 2012.

“Birders of a Feather: Stories of People, Birds, and Other People in Africa,” *African History and Anthropology*, Workshop, African Studies Center, University of Michigan, January 24, 2012.

“Jali Makawa of the Livingstone Museum,” Invited lecture, Livingstone Museum, Livingstone, Zambia. October 19, 2011.

“Respectability, Defiance, and Science in a Segregated Life: Saul Sithole of the Transvaal Museum,” *South African and Contemporary History*, Seminar programme, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, South Africa, October 11, 2011.

“Rudyard Boulton and the Atlantica Research Station in Harare: An American Dream of Science and Conservation in Africa,” Invited lecture, Birdlife Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe, October 7, 2011.

“Africa, Europe, and the Birds between Them,” EnviroThursday Lecture Series, Macalester College, February 25, 2010.

“Africa, Europe, and the Birds between Them,” Zugunruhe Lecture Series, Bell Gallery, Brown University, February 9, 2010.

“Cosmopolitan Science, Respectability, and Defiance in a Segregated Life: Saul Sithole of the Transvaal Museum,” *History of Knowledge and Transnational History: Theoretical Approaches and Empirical Perspectives*. International conference, University of Basel, September 11, 2009.

“A Comparative Commentary,” in final session, *Terrestrial Environments and Their Histories in Modern India*, Workshop, South Asian Studies Council, Macmillan Center, Yale University, May 2, 2009.

“Liberal Ornithology: The Collaboration of Con Benson and Jali Makawa in British Central Africa,” *Northern Rhodesia in the 1950s*, Workshop, African Studies Centre, Leiden University, September 26, 2008.

“Winged Networks: Bird Migration and Science between Europe and Africa,” *Indigenous Environments: African and North American Environmental Knowledge and Practices*, Workshop funded by the Mellon Foundation, Bowdoin College, New Brunswick, Maine, April 4, 2008.

“Winged Networks: Bird Migration and Science between Europe and Africa,” *Empires and Science*, Workshop, The Hill Center for World Studies, Windsor, Connecticut, March 30, 2008.

“Winged Networks: Bird Migration and Science between Europe and Africa,” *Projections*, Journal lecture series, Department of Urban Planning, MIT, March 11, 2008.

“Avian Flyways: Long-Distance Communication and Flights of Fancy,” Invited lecture, Department of Anthropology, Cologne University, January 16, 2008.

“Avian Flyways: Routes to and from Central Africa within the Twentieth-Century World,” *Central African Routes & Transport: A Workshop on the Socio-Cultural Interplay between People, Migration, and Technology c. 1000–2007*, African Studies Centre, Leiden University, October 13, 2007.

“A Web-Based Course on Twentieth-Century Africa,” Invited lecture, Department of History, University of Pretoria, May 25, 2006.

“Servants to Science: African Assistants in Twentieth-Century Field Science,” Invited lecture, African Studies Centre, University of Cape Town, April 19, 2006.

“An Ornithologist and His Subaltern: The Research Collaboration between Leslie Brown and Njeri Kicho,” Invited lecture, Department of Anthropology, University of Pretoria, February 21, 2006.

“Violence, Structure, and Agency in South Africa in 1961: A Commentary on the Choices Program Unit *Freedom in Our Lifetime: South Africa’s Struggle*,” Workshop for teachers, Choices Education Program, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, July 21, 2004.

“Flocking Together: Ornithologists and Research Assistants in Early Twentieth-Century Africa,” Seminar, Program in Agrarian Studies, Yale University, April 16, 2004.

“A Bird’s Eye View of Colonial South Africa: Indigenous Knowledge, Natural History, and Scientific Ornithology,” Rodney seminar, African Studies Center, Boston University, September 29, 2003.

“Eyeing the Kalahari: Environmental Considerations in Separate Development,” *Landscapes and Timescapes: Rethinking Environmental History*, Workshop, University of California, Irvine, March 15, 2003.

“Integrative Learning in a Service-Learning Project on Asbestos in South Africa,” *Twenty-first Century Liberal Arts Education*, Regional Forum, Greater Expectations Initiative, Association of American Colleges and Universities, Babson College, Wellesley, Massachusetts, October 11, 2002.

“Asbestos and Environment in South Africa: The Limits of Litigation” (with Lundy Braun), *International Environmental Health*, Colloquium, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, April 10, 2002.

“The Great Bophuthatswana Donkey Massacre: Discourse on the Ass: Politics of Class and Grass,” Invited lecture, Hendrix College, March 27, 2000.

“The Great Bophuthatswana Donkey Massacre: The Politics of Class and Grass,” Council on African Studies Lecture Series, Yale University, April 21, 1999.

“Racial Categories in South Africa: Past and Present,” in panel on *Race around the World*, General Education Forum, Connecticut College, February 5, 1999.

### **Conference Presentations**

Roundtable participant, “Crossing the Species Boundary: What Animal History Can Do For African History,” African Studies Association, Atlanta Georgia, 22 November 2025.

Discussant, “Global Environmental History Initiatives: Crises in Localities,” Plenary Session, Association of Asian Environmental History, 29 September 2025. (Remote.)

Roundtable Plenary Participant, “Environmental History in the 21st Century: Geopolitics, Planetary Crises, and Academic Institutions,” SOLCHA (Latin American Society for Environmental History), 26 July 2025.

Discussant, “Fascination with Wild Animals,” From Menageries, to Zoos, to Everything in Between: Can We Envision a New Breed of Zoo? Workshop at Brown University, 15 March 2025.

“Transdisciplinarity and Silences within Environmental History: Introductory Remarks,” World Congress of Environmental History, 21 August 2024.

“The Psittacine Plantationocene,” British Animal Studies Network, 19 May 2023.

“The Grey Parrot as Space Traveler,” Blue Sky: Agility and the Possible in a Warming World Symposium, Brown University, 12 April 2019.

“The Making of the Cage Bird Class,” American Society for Environmental History, 11 April 2019.

“The Atlantic Grey Parrot,” North American Conference on British Studies, Providence, 26 October, 2018.

“Captive Care: Commercial Parrot-Breeding Aviaries in South Africa,” Annual meeting, American Society for Environmental History, Riverside, March 16, 2018.

“The Awkward Biography of Washington Okumu,” South African Historical Association, Johannesburg June 22, 2017.

“Primary sources and a flipped classroom,” African Studies Association, Washington, DC, December 3, 2016.

“Congolese Environmental Knowledge in the Archive of James Chapin,” American Society for Environmental History, April 2, 2016.

“For Imperial Science and an Honorable Self: The Value of Specimen Collecting in Central Africa,” Second World Congress of Environmental History, Guimaraes, Portugal, July 10, 2014.

“Naming the Birds of the Cape Colony: Vernacular Knowledge, Scientific Facts, and Imperialism,” Annual meeting, American Society for Environmental History, Toronto, April 5, 2013.

“Racial Paternalism in Crisis: One Aging Ornithologist and the Decolonization of the Congo,” 55th annual meeting, African Studies Association, New York, Philadelphia, November 30, 2012.

“Africa, Europe, and the Birds between Them,” Pan-African Ornithological Congress 13, Arusha, Tanzania, October 16, 2012.

“Jali Makawa: Life of a Servant Savant,” Pan-African Ornithological Congress 13, Arusha, Tanzania, October 16, 2012.

“Europe, Africa, and the Birds between Them,” Northeast Workshop on Southern Africa (NEWSA), Burlington, Vermont, April 9, 2010.

“Regions and Islands in the Continental History of Africa” (paper read in absentia) Roundtable meeting, American Historical Association, San Diego, January 9, 2010.

“Why Might a Man Hunt Birds for Whites? Central African Precedents to Scientific Collecting,” *Science, Technology, and the Environment in Africa*, 2009 Africa Conference, University of Texas, Austin. March 27, 2009.

“Servants to Science: African Assistants in Twentieth-Century Ornithology,” Northeast Workshop on Southern Africa (NEWSA), Burlington, Vermont, October 18, 2008.

“The Animated Atlas of African History: A Web-Based Teaching Tool,” African Studies Association, 50th annual meeting, New York, NY, October 20, 2007.

“The Animated Atlas of African History: A Teaching and Reference Tool,” (with Giovanna Roz and Rolando Rolando Peñate), American Association for History and Computing, Annual meeting, April 21, 2007.

“Two Subalterns and Their Ornithologists,” African Studies Association, 48th annual meeting, Washington, DC, November 18, 2005.

“Empire, Science and Environment,” Roundtable, Northeast Conference on British Studies, Tufts University, Boston, Massachusetts, November 15, 2003.

“Environmental Perspectives on Segregation,” African Studies Association, 46th annual meeting, Boston, November 1, 2003.

“Colonialism, Natural History, and Indigenous Knowledge in Southern Africa: A Bird’s Eye View,” Northeast Workshop on Southern Africa (NEWSA), Burlington, Vermont, September 6, 2003.

“European Ornithology and Indigenous Knowledge in Southern Africa,” American Society for Environmental History, Annual meeting, Providence, March 29, 2003.

“Race and Environment in South Africa,” American Society for Environmental History, Annual meeting, Denver, March 22, 2002.

## **SERVICE**

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### **Executive Boards and Professional Organizations**

President, American Society for Environmental History, 2023-2025

Vice President/President Elect, American Society for Environmental History, 2021-2023.

Webinar series co-organizer and moderator, “Race and the Environment,” American Society for Environmental History, October-November 2020.

Chair, program committee, American Society for Environmental History, Ottawa 2020.

Chair, editorial search committee for *Environmental History*, 2016-2017.

Executive board, American Society for Environmental History, 2008–2011.

Program committee, African Studies Association meeting, Baltimore 2013.

Program committee, World Environmental History Congress, Copenhagen, 2009.

Workshop organizer, “Empire and Science: Contact, Authority, Collaboration,” Brown University, Providence, March 2008.

World Convention liaison committee, American Society for Environmental History, 2006.

Co-chair of local arrangements committee, American Society for Environmental History meeting, Providence, 2003.

Program committee, American Society for Environmental History meeting, Providence, 2003.

### **Editorial Boards**

*Gender, Colonialism, and Science: A Cross-Cultural Compendium of Primary Sources* (Routledge), 2023-

*Environmental History*, 2019-2024

*International Review of Environmental History*, 2015–  
*South African Historical Journal*, 2010–  
*African Historical Review* (formerly *Kleio*), 2004–  
Choices Program advisory group, Brown University, 2014–2018  
African Studies Series, Cambridge University Press, 2007-2015  
*Kronos: Journal of Cape History* (later, *Kronos: Southern African Histories*), 2006-2016

### **External Graduate Examiner**

Doctoral advisory committee, Ghent University, 2026.  
Doctoral, Department of History, Rhodes University (South Africa), 2019  
MA, Department of History, University of the Western Cape, 2015  
Doctoral, Department of History, University of Stellenbosch, 2013  
Doctoral, Department of History, University of Leiden, 2006  
Course, Department of Historical Studies, University of Cape Town, 2004

### **Brown University, Departmental**

Member, History Department junior colleague review, tenure, and promotion committees, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2013, 2015,  
Chair, search committees in Africana Studies and History Departments, 2004, 2012, 2014  
Member, search committees in Africana Studies and History Departments, 1996, 2001, 2008, 2015  
Member, planning and priorities committee, History Department, 2000–2002, 2007–2011  
Member, chair's advisory executive committee, History Department, 2008–2009.  
Member, History Department ad hoc committee for the external review, 2008  
Member, History Department committee on undergraduate concentration, 2003–2004

### **Brown University, Elected Faculty Governance**

Chair, Tenure, Promotion, and Appointments Committee (TPAC), 2026-27  
Vice Chair, Tenure, Promotion, and Appointments Committee (TPAC), 2025-26  
Member, Tenure, Promotion, and Appointments Committee (TPAC), 2024-  
Member, University Faculty Executive Committee (FEC), 2004–2007, 2018-21  
Vice Chair, Chair, Past Chair, Committee for Faculty Diversity and Equity (CFED), 2012–2014  
Member, Nominations Committee, 2008–2011

### **Brown University, Undergraduate Advising**

Science and society concentration, 2014–2019

First year and sophomore, 1999–2001, 2004–2013

History Department concentration, 1998–2007, 2019-present

### **Brown University, Other Service (Selected)**

Member, Academic Code Committee, 2017-2019

Member, Fulbright application advisory committee, 1999, 2001, 2013, 2014

Member, Selection committee for Undergraduate Award for Excellence in Library Research, 2012

Member, Selection committee for Harriet W. Sheridan Award for Distinguished Contribution to Teaching and Learning, 2012

Faculty study leader, Brown University Travelers, 1998, 2011, 2017

Member, Resident Faculty, Faculty Fellow Program, 1996–2010

Consultant, “Choices for the 21st Century Education Project,” Watson Institute for International Studies, 2000, 2002–2003, 2009

### **Community**

Instructor, BELLS (Brown's faculty-teaching-in-prison initiative at the Rhode Island Adult Correctional Institution Men's Medium-Security Prison), 2012–2018

Faculty advisor and organizer for a South African-American research project on asbestos in South Africa. Report submitted to the South African Parliament 2001

United Nations observer for the South African elections, 1994

## **TEACHING**

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### **Undergraduate**

Apartheid and After

Subsistence and Extraction in African History to 1900

More-than-Human Histories of Africa/African Environmental History)

Africa since 1950

Animal Histories

Animal, Vegetable and Mineral

The Anthropocene

An Avian Introduction to Animal Studies

Birding Communities

Colonial Africa

Continental Histories

Eastern African History

The History of the Anthropocene

History Undergraduate Honors Workshops (three semester sequence)

More-than-Human Histories of Africa

South African Life Histories

South Africa since 1990

Southern African History  
Twentieth-Century Africa  
West African History

## Graduate

Environmental History  
African History  
Race and Species  
Theory and Practice of History

## RECENT INTERVIEWS AND MEDIA

- “Calvin Stories in the World” panel conversation, Calvin University 12 February 2026.
- “Elections that ‘Shook the World’ – Mandela’s Election in South Africa 1994” Interview, *Observations Podcast*, 26 August 2025.
- Jack Salter, “The Grey Parrot Museum: Showcasing the Grey Parrot,” *Africa Outlook*, 25 August 2025.
- Srijana Mitra Das, “Colonialism Impacted Africa’s Animals – It Disrupted Traditions of Respectful Distance,” *Times Evoke* (Times of India), 8 June 2025.
- Gaya Gupta, “The History behind Trump’s Focus on White South African Farmers,” The Washington Post, 21 May 2025.
- Li Zhou, “Why Trump Is So Obsessed with White South Africans,” The Huffington Post, 24 May 2025.
- “Trump’s White Genocide Claims Explained,” Australian Broadcasting Corporation News Daily, 27 May 2025.
- “Faces of Brown Research,” 29 March, 2024.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgF8T-XWku8>
- Brenda Subilhaga, “For this Brown University scholar, grey parrot trade offers a peek into both human and environmental history,” News from Brown, 29 February 2024. <https://www.brown.edu/news/2024-02-29/grey-parrots>
- Nick Dall, “Massacre of the Bop Burros,” *The Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), 9 July 2023. <https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/opinion-and-analysis/insight/2023-07-09-massacre-of-the-bop-burros/>
- Podcast interview, “Grey Parrots with Nancy Jacobs,” Histories of Science in Africa. <https://hsia.podcasts.library.columbia.edu/podcast/gray-parrots-with-nancy-jacobs/>
- Betsy Sherman Walker, “The Lessons Birds Can Teach Us,” Audubon Society Rhode Island Blog, August 2022, <https://asri.org/news-events/2022/the-lessons-birds-can-teach-us.html>

Podcast interview “Birders of Africa with Professor Nancy Jacobs,” by Shoba Narayan.  
<https://www.birdpodcast.com/2021/11/21/nancy-jacobs/>

Alina Kulman, “Bird by Bird,” *Brown Alumni Monthly*, September-October 2021.  
<https://www.browنالumnimagazine.com/articles/2021-08-19/bird-by-bird?fbclid=IwAR2CzpmZVXgVQAY8LtITMlDmikfCloN2I6PXiPvnLVO2O0p-NlrGj9mkfUI>

Jill Kimball, “Gamifying the Scramble for Africa,” *News from Brown*, July 7, 2021.  
<https://www.brown.edu/news/2021-07-07/chan>

Nancy Averett, “Meet Jali Makawa, Whose Expertise Proved Vital for Western Ornithologists,” *Audubon*, April 15, 2021. <https://www.audubon.org/news/meet-jali-makawa-whose-expertise-proved-vital-western-ornithologists>.

## **LANGUAGES**

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German: Fluent reading with dictionary  
Afrikaans: Competent reading with dictionary  
Zulu: Rudimentary  
Tswana: Rudimentary

## **MEMBERSHIPS**

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American Historical Association  
American Society for Environmental History  
African Studies Association

*Prepared 6 February 2026*