

Whitney Barlow Robles

Department of History
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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Visiting Scholar, Department of History, Dartmouth College, 2023–Present

Lecturer, Department of History, Dartmouth College, 2022–2023

Postdoctoral Fellow, Society of Fellows, Dartmouth College, 2019–2022

EDUCATION

Ph.D. American Studies, Harvard University, 2019

Secondary Field Certificate: Science, Technology, and Society

A.M. History, Harvard University, 2019

B.A. American Studies, Yale University, 2011

Distinction in the major, *magna cum laude*

PUBLICATIONS

Books

2028 *Specimania: Life, Death, and Love in the Museum* (Timber Press, a Hachette imprint)

2023 *Curious Species: How Animals Made Natural History* (Yale University Press)

- Finalist for the Huntington Library’s biennial Shapiro Book Prize
- Finalist for the George Perkins Marsh Prize from the American Society for Environmental History
- Shortlisted for the Kenshur Prize for Best Book in Eighteenth-Century Studies
- Honorable Mention for the Lois P. Rudnick Book Prize from the New England American Studies Association

Peer-Reviewed Articles

2025 “The Anonymous Animal: (Not) Naming and (Not) Knowing in the Anthropocene.” *Animal History* 1, no. 3 (2025): 1–26.

- 2024 “On Nonhuman Agency.” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 54, no. 3 (Winter 2024): 305–321.
- 2021 “The Rattlesnake and the Hibernaculum: Animals, Ignorance, and Extinction in the Early American Underworld.” *William and Mary Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (January 2021): 3–44.
- Winner of the 2021 Ronald Rainger Early Career Award in History of the Earth and Environmental Sciences from the History of Science Society
- 2017 “Atlantic Disaster: Boston Responds to the Cape Ann Earthquake of 1755.” *The New England Quarterly* 90, no. 1 (March 2017): 7–35.
- 2014 Daan Witters, Bing Sun, Stefano Begolo, Jesus Rodriguez-Manzano, Whitney Robles, and Rustem F. Ismagilov. “Digital Biology and Chemistry.” *Lab on a Chip* 14 (2014): 3225–3232.

Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters

- 2026 Whitney Barlow Robles and Kristoffer Whitney. “The Beautiful and the Damned: Historical Insect Perspectives on Climate Change.” In *A Historian’s Handbook for Saving the World: Responding to the Global Climate Emergency*. Ed. Alexandra Hui and Emily Pawley. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, circa 2026.
- 2023 “Squid: Natural History as Food History, c. 1730–1860.” In *Natural Things in Early Modern Worlds*. Ed. Mackenzie Cooley, Anna Toledano, and Duygu Yildirim. New York: Routledge, 2023.
- 2017 “Flatness.” In *The Philosophy Chamber: Art and Science in Harvard’s Teaching Cabinet, 1766–1820*. Ed. Ethan W. Lasser. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Art Museums and Yale University Press, 2017.

Web-Based Academic Publications

- 2023 “Archives and Counter-Archives.” Culture & Animals Foundation. October 10, 2023. <https://cultureandanimals.org/archives-and-counterarchives/>.
- 2021 “Science for the History of Science: An Imperfect Tool.” *Uncommon Sense* (Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture blog). March 3, 2021. <https://blog.oieahc.wm.edu/science-for-the-history-of-science-an-imperfect-tool/>.
- 2021 “Breadfruit.” “Ladyfish.” “Squid Beak.” “Salt.” *The Kitchen in the Cabinet: Histories of Food and Science*. Entries for Digital Exhibition. <https://kitcheninthecabinet.com/>.
- 2018 “Natural History in Two Dimensions.” *Commonplace: The Journal of Early American Life* 18, no. 1 (Winter 2018). <http://commonplace.online/article/vol-18-no-1-robles/>.
- Winner of the 2018 Bowdoin Prize from Harvard University (Graduate Essay in the Natural Sciences)
 - Named Best Historical Reenactment in *Bunk’s* Best American History Reads of 2018
- 2017 “A Naturalist in Historian’s Clothing.” *The Junto: A Group Blog on Early American History*. November 27, 2017. <https://earlyamericanists.com/2017/11/27/inspiration-roundtable-guest-post-by-whitney-barlow-robles-naturalist-in-historians-clothing/>.

Popular Writing (Selected)

- 2025 “The Age of Wonder Meets the Age of Information.” *JSTOR Daily*. January 8, 2025. <https://daily.jstor.org/the-age-of-wonder-meets-the-age-of-information/>.
- 2024 “Will the Sun Ever Set on the Colony?” *History News Network*. February 13, 2024. <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/will-the-sun-ever-set-on-the-colony>.
- 2023 “Den of Snakes.” *Slate*. December 3, 2023. <https://slate.com/human-interest/2023/12/timber-rattlesnakes-new-hampshire-endangered-den.html>.
- 2023 “My 3 Greatest Revelations.” *Nautilus*. November 27, 2023. https://nautil.us/my-3-greatest-revelations-6-449438/?_sp=66cb4e13-aeef-4ea6-807f-b22cdd869fb2.1701101827026.
- 2023 “In the Eye of the Serpent.” Yale Books Blog. November 17, 2023. <https://yalebooks.yale.edu/2023/11/17/in-the-eye-of-the-serpent/>.
- 2023 “Curious Species.” *Natural History*. November 2023.
- 2012 “Calling All Senses: Why Flavor Is Not Just a Matter of Taste.” *Rotunda* 37, no. 4 (2012): 7–9.
- 2012 “‘Punk Eek,’ 40 Years Later.” *amnh.org*. May 21, 2012.
- 2012 “Refining a Theory: Plate Tectonics in the 21st Century.” *Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory Alumni and Friends News* (Spring 2012): 7–9.
- 2012 “As Firefly Numbers Seem to Slide, Researchers Ponder Effects on Ecosystems.” *amnh.org*. May 4, 2012. <https://www.amnh.org/explore/news-blogs/on-exhibit-posts/as-firefly-numbers-seem-to-slide-researchers-ponder-effects-on-ecosystems>.
- 2012 “Nabokov’s Type: *Lysandra cormion*.” *Rotunda* 37, no. 2 (2012): 4.
- 2012 “Notes on Planning Ahead.” *The Last Word on Nothing*. May 1, 2012. <http://www.lastwordonnothing.com/2012/05/01/guest-post-notes-on-planning-ahead/>.
- 2011 “The Physics of Cat Tongues.” *Yale Scientific*. April 3, 2011. <http://www.yalescientific.org/2011/04/the-physics-of-cat-tongues/>.

TEACHING

Instructor of Record

- 2023 “Reading Artifacts: The Material Culture of Science.” Department of History, Dartmouth College. Spring Term.
- 2023 “Scientific Revolutions and Modern Society.” Department of History, Dartmouth College. Winter Term.
- 2022 “Reading Artifacts: The Material Culture of Science.” Department of History, Dartmouth College. Spring Term.
- 2021 “Reading Artifacts: The Material Culture of Science.” Department of History, Dartmouth College. Spring Term.

Teaching Fellow

- 2017 “Tangible Things: Harvard Collections in World History.” Laurel Thatcher Ulrich and Sara J. Schechner. Department of History, Harvard University. Fall Term.
- 2017 “The Great Experiment: A History of the United States.” Jill Lepore. Department of History, Harvard University. Spring Term.

AWARDS, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

Prizes and Honors

- 2025 Finalist for the Shapiro Book Prize (for exceptional first monographs in American political, social, intellectual, or cultural history) for *Curious Species: How Animals Made Natural History*, Huntington Library
- 2025 Finalist for the George Perkins Marsh Prize (best book in environmental history) from the American Society for Environmental History for *Curious Species: How Animals Made Natural History*
- 2024 Shortlisted for the Kenshur Prize for Best Book in Eighteenth-Century Studies for *Curious Species: How Animals Made Natural History*, Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Indiana University Bloomington
- 2024 Honorable Mention for the Lois P. Rudnick Book Prize for *Curious Species: How Animals Made Natural History*, New England American Studies Association
- 2021 Ronald Rainger Early Career Award in History of the Earth and Environmental Sciences for “The Rattlesnake and the Hibernaculum: Animals, Ignorance, and Extinction in the Early American Underworld,” History of Science Society
- 2020 Finalist (Top 3), SHEAR Dissertation Prize, “Curious Species: How Animals Made Natural History, 1700–1820”
- 2018 Bowdoin Prize for “Natural History in Two Dimensions,” Graduate Essay in the Natural Sciences, Harvard University (\$10,000)
- 2018 Hakluyt Society Essay Prize for “‘A Different Species of Resistance’: When Corals Became Animals and Animals Had History” (£500)
- 2018 Best Historical Reenactment for *Commonplace* essay, “Natural History in Two Dimensions,” *Bunk’s* Best American History Reads of 2018 (bunkhistory.org)
- 2018 Finalist (Second Place), Gene Wise–Warren Susman Prize for “The Lost Serpent: Enchanting Rattlesnakes in the Revolutionary Atlantic,” American Studies Association

Teaching Awards

- 2017 Harvard University Certificate of Distinction in Teaching (for “Tangible Things: Harvard Collections in World History”)
- 2017 Harvard University Certificate of Distinction in Teaching (for “The Great Experiment: A History of the United States”)

Research Grants and Fellowships

- 2023 Tom Regan Visiting Research Fellowship, NC State University Libraries and the Culture & Animals Foundation
- 2021 Round 2 Venture Funding, Dartmouth College Society of Fellows and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (for digital humanities project *The Kitchen in the Cabinet: Histories of Food and Science*)
- 2020 Round 1 Venture Funding, Dartmouth College Society of Fellows and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (for digital humanities project *The Kitchen in the Cabinet: Histories of Food and Science*)
- 2019 Eccles Centre Visiting Fellowship, The British Library
- 2018 American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Fellowship, Boston Athenaeum
- 2018 Fothergill Research Award, Bartram Trail Conference
- 2018 Deakin-Royce Graduate Research Fellowship in Australian Studies, Harvard University
- 2017 Michael Kraus Research Grant, American Historical Association
- 2017 Baird Society Resident Scholar, Smithsonian Institution Libraries
- 2017 Jay T. Last Fund Research Fellowship, American Antiquarian Society
- 2017 Jacob M. Price Visiting Research Fellowship, The William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan
- 2017 Travel Grant, The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University
- 2017 Travel Fellowship, Linda Hall Library
- 2017 Summer Research Grant, The Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History
- 2017 National Science Foundation Travel Grant, History of Science Society Meeting
- 2016 Jens Aubrey Westengard Fellowship, Harvard University
- 2016 GSAS Summer Pre-Dissertation Fellowship, Harvard University
- 2016 National Science Foundation Travel Grant, American Society for Environmental History Conference
- 2015 Research Fellowship, Consortium for History of Science, Technology and Medicine
- 2015 Graduate Student Seed Grant, Center for American Political Studies

Grant Writing Experience

- 2014 Grant Writer and Manager, “Chemistry to Enable Global Monitoring of Influenza,” Caltech Innovation Initiative (awarded \$250,000)
- 2013 Grant Writer and Manager, “Digital Single-Molecule LRS Diagnostics on SlipChip,” DARPA (awarded \$15,500,000)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2021 Curator, *The Kitchen in the Cabinet: Histories of Food and Science*, <https://kitcheninthecabinet.com/>
- Awarded best digital undergraduate project by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies as part of their conference *The Americas Online: Thinking Digitally About Early America*
- 2016 Curatorial Fellow, Harvard Art Museums, *The Philosophy Chamber: Art and Science in Harvard's Teaching Cabinet, 1766–1820*
- 2012–2014 Scientific Editor and Writing Advisor, California Institute of Technology
- 2011–2012 Editorial Assistant, American Museum of Natural History
- 2011 Exhibition Editorial Assistant, American Museum of Natural History, *Dinosaur Discoveries: Ancient Fossils, New Ideas*

SERVICE

- Long-Term Fellowship Committee, Folger Shakespeare Library
- Manuscript Reviewer (*Environmental History*, *Archives of Natural History*)
- Final Round Judge, National Young Naturalist Awards, American Museum of Natural History

TALKS AND PODCASTS

Invited Lectures, Seminars, and Podcasts

- 2025 “Curious Species: How Animals Made Natural History.” Guest Visit for Course “The Idea of Environment” (DES 3348) with Abby Spinak. Graduate School of Design, Harvard University. Cambridge, MA. November 4.
- 2025 “Snake Talk Podcast: How Rattlesnakes Made Natural History.” The Orianne Society. September 19. <https://snake-talk.simplecast.com/episodes/how-rattlesnakes-made-natural-history-pFPj9B3c>.
- 2025 “To Know a Whale.” Guest Lecture for Course “Summer Tomes” (English 65) with Rebecca Clark. Department of English, Dartmouth College. Hanover, NH. July 10.
- 2025 “The Collector’s Paradox.” Minnesota Colloquium for the History and Philosophy of Science, Technology, and Medicine. University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, MN. January 31.
- 2025 “The Collector’s Paradox.” Guest Lecture for Course “An Animal History of Science” with Kat Poje. Department of Environmental Studies, New York University. New York, NY. January 24.
- 2024 “Curious Species: How Animals Made Natural History.” American Philosophical Society. Philadelphia, PA. December 10.
- 2024 “Unlocking the Cross-Disciplinary Potential of Arstor on JSTOR.” JSTOR. Virtual Webinar. November 19.

- 2024 “Curious Species: How Animals Made Natural History.” American Antiquarian Society. Virtual Program. October 1.
- 2024 “Curious Species: How Animals Made Natural History.” New Books Network Podcast. September 13. <https://newbooksnetwork.com/curious-species>.
- 2024 “Curious Species: How Animals Made Natural History.” Hamilton College. Clinton, NY. April 5.
- 2023 “A Gravid Pursuit: Secrets in Rattlesnake Country.” Seminar on Environmental and Agricultural History. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Cambridge, MA. December 1.
- 2022 “Museums as Archives, Objects as Documents.” Guest Visit for Course “Archival Research and the Production of History” (History 10.2) with Naaborko Sackeyfiolenoch. Department of History, Dartmouth College. Hanover, NH. July 18.
- 2022 “Curious Species: How Animals Made Natural History.” Faculty of History. University of Cambridge. Cambridge, UK. May 18.
- 2021 “Museums as Archives, Objects as Documents.” Guest Visit for Course “Archival Research and the Production of History” (History 10.2) with Paul Musselwhite. Department of History, Dartmouth College. Hanover, NH. July 19.
- 2020 “Rattlesnakes, Ignorance, and the Early American Underworld.” Program in Native American Studies. Dartmouth College. Hanover, NH. February 26.
- 2019 “Rattlesnakes, Extinction, and Myth.” Bartram Trail Conference. Montgomery, AL. October 26.
- 2019 “Sleight of Hand: A Reverse Natural History of Raccoons.” Boston Athenæum. Boston, MA. June 25.
- 2018 “The Lost History of Rattlesnakes.” Museum of Comparative Zoology Seminar Series. Harvard University. Cambridge, MA. November 14.
- 2018 “Natural History in Two Dimensions.” STS Circle. Harvard University. Cambridge, MA. September 10.
- 2017 “Flatness.” Gallery Talk in Philosophy Chamber Conversations Series. Harvard Art Museums. Cambridge, MA. September 9. Available as a podcast at <https://soundcloud.com/harvardartmuseums/philosophy-chamber-conversations-whitney-barlow-robles-on-flatness>.
- 2012 “Putting Words in the Birds’ Mouths: The Role of Women in the Nature Fakers Controversy.” John Burroughs Nature Writing Conference & Seminar Series. Oneonta, NY. June 4.

Panels and Workshops Organized

- 2021 “The Nonhuman in Human History.” Omohundro Institute Virtual Coffeehouse. Co-hosted with Strother Roberts. July 27–August 31.
- 2018 “Animals in the Early Modern Atlantic World.” American Historical Association Meeting. Washington, DC. January 5.

2017 “Animals in the Early Modern Atlantic World.” History of Science Society Annual Meeting. Toronto, ON. November 11.

Conference and Workshop Presentations

2024. “The Collector’s Paradox.” Insect Humanities Working Group. Consortium for History of Science, Technology and Medicine. Philadelphia, PA.

2024 “Preservation and Destruction in Early Modern Collections.” American Philosophical Society’s “Making Nature: The Labor of Natural History” Conference. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. June 7.

2023 “Stillness and Secrets in Rattlesnake Country.” History of Science Society Annual Meeting. Portland, OR. November 12.

2022 “Knowing Raccoons from Early America to the Anthropocene.” History of Science Society Annual Meeting. Chicago, IL. November 19.

2022 “Knowing Raccoons from Early America to the Anthropocene.” Harriettefest. Cambridge, MA. April 29.

2021 “The Kitchen in the Cabinet: Histories of Food and Natural Science.” History of Science Society Annual Meeting. New Orleans, LA. November 19.

2021 Roundtable Participant. “Animals and the Environment in the Early Republic.” Society for Historians of the Early American Republic (SHEAR) Annual Meeting. Philadelphia, PA. July 15–18.

2020 “‘Curiosities never before known in this Part of the World’: Rattlesnake Kinship and Reproductive Rarities.” Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Genders, and Sexualities. Baltimore, MD. May 28. [Cancelled due to COVID-19]

2019 “The Kitchen in the Cabinet: Natural History as Food History.” Natural Things Conference: Collection and the History of Science in the Age of Global Empires. Hamilton College. Clinton, NY. April 9.

2018 “The Lost Serpent: Enchanting Rattlesnakes in the Revolutionary Atlantic.” American Studies Association Meeting. Atlanta, GA. November 9.

2018 “The World Builders: Centering Corals in Early American Natural History.” Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture Meeting. Williamsburg, VA. June 15.

2018 “‘Little More Room Than a Drawing’: Flattening Animals and Reconstructing Craft Practice in the British Atlantic, 1740–1820.” American Historical Association Meeting. Washington, DC. January 5.

2017 “The Flounder and the Ray: Flattening Natural History in the Eighteenth Century.” History of Science Society Meeting. Toronto, ON. November 11.

2017 “‘A Different Species of Resistance’: Early American Animal Frameworks.” Lenses and Contacts: Framing Early America. McNeil Center Biennial Graduate Student Conference. Philadelphia, PA. October 6.

- 2017 “Mixed Media: Flattening Sea Life in Eighteenth-Century Natural History.” Water History Conference. Grand Rapids, MI. June 14.
- 2017 “Curious Species: How Animals Made Natural History, 1700–1820.” Colonial Society of Massachusetts Graduate Student Forum. Boston, MA. May 19.
- 2016 “‘Liberty Rendered Him Insolent’: Raccoon Pet-keeping as a Laboratory in Early America.” Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture Meeting. Worcester, MA. June 25.
- 2016 “Paper Fishes: Flattening Life at Eighteenth-Century Harvard.” Joint Atlantic Seminar for the History of Biology. Cambridge, MA. April 2.
- 2016 “Appendix to an Earthquake: Revising Disaster in Eighteenth-Century New England.” American Society for Environmental History Meeting. Seattle, WA. March 31.
- 2015 “Dormant Bears, Latent Capital: Biovaluing the Tardigrade.” Society for Social Studies of Science (4S) Meeting. Denver, CO. November 13.
- 2015 “Creatures, Compressed: Illustration-like Specimens in Harvard’s Philosophy Chamber.” Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) Meeting. Moscow, ID. June 27.

PRESS

- 2023 Featured in “Whitney Barlow Robles Is the 2023 Tom Regan Research Fellow.” *Culture & Animals Foundation*. June 15, 2023. <https://cultureandanimals.org/whitney-barlow-robles-is-the-2023-tom-regan-research-fellow/>
- 2023 Featured in “The Libraries announces Whitney Barlow Robles as the Tom Regan Visiting Research Fellow for 2023.” *NCSU Libraries News*. June 8, 2023. <https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/news/main-news/libraries-announces-whitney-barlow-robles-tom-regan-visiting-research-fellow-2023>
- 2023 Featured in “Chronicling Curious Species.” *Harvard GSAS NEWS*. May 31, 2023. <https://gsas.harvard.edu/news/chronicling-curious-species>.
- 2017 Featured in Peter Neill, “The Flattened Ocean.” *HuffPost*. July 5, 2017. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-flattened-ocean_us_595d31b0e4b0cf3c8e8d55a0.
- 2017 Featured in “A Late Discovery from the Philosophy Chamber.” *Index*. January 20, 2017. <https://www.harvardartmuseums.org/article/a-late-discovery-from-the-philosophy-chamber>.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Historical Association
 American Society for Environmental History
 History of Science Society
 Society for Social Studies of Science

National Council on Public History
Organization of American Historians
American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies
Society for Historians of the Early American Republic
American Studies Association
Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture
The Hakluyt Society

LANGUAGES

Spanish (proficient)
German (reading knowledge)