

Rural Women's Studies Association 15<sup>th</sup> Triennial Conference  
May 15-19, 2024

*Gendered Advocacy and Activism, Shaping Institutions and Communities*

Hosted by Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, Arkansas, USA



Johnston, Frances Benjamin, photographer. Indian and black girls exercising with medicine ball, Hampton Institute. , 1899. [or 1900] Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2001703736/>.

The conference theme, “Gendered Advocacy and Activisms, Shaping Institutions and Communities,” explores recent challenges to civil rights in various locations internationally, in rural communities. Analyzing how historical activism rooted in rural areas can result in broader change on both regional and national levels, various presentations will emphasize the central role that women and individuals of all genders and sexualities have played and continue to play in shaping and reforming our institutions and communities.

The RWSA is an international association founded in 1997 to promote and advance farm and rural women's/gender studies from an historical perspective by encouraging research, promoting scholarship, and establishing and maintaining links with organizations that share these goals. The RWSA welcomes public historians and archivists, graduate students, and representatives of rural organizations and communities as conference participants and members, in addition to academic scholars from diverse fields, including sociology, anthropology, literature and languages, Indigenous Studies, and history.

**Location and Travel:** Conference sessions will take place on the Arkansas State University campus. We estimate that conference registration will cost \$150 US, with reduced rates available to students and low-income participants. A block of rooms will be available to conference participants at the [Embassy Suites by Hilton, Jonesboro Red Wolf Convention Center](#) in Jonesboro. Hotel rooms containing either 1 King-sized or 2 Queen-sized beds will cost approximately \$150 US per night (including taxes). If you would like to share a hotel room with other conference participants, we encourage you to post a roommate request on [this spreadsheet](#).

The closest airport is Memphis International Airport in Memphis, Tennessee (79 miles to Jonesboro, Arkansas). Ground transportation can be arranged from the airport.

**Arkansas State University** is located on land traditionally inhabited by the Quapaw. This community occupied this area for many generations before being forcibly removed and relocated to Oklahoma. Despite this injustice, the Quapaw managed to preserve many of the traditions essential to their cultural identity. Information describing the Quapaw traditions and beliefs can be found at <https://www.quapawtribe.com>. Acknowledging the theft of land and lives of indigenous peoples like those of the Quapaw, is a step toward decolonization. The continuance and preservation of these cultures and communities helps to reverse the erasure of original peoples. This is an acknowledgment of the structural racism and colonialism that is present in academia and society at large. Through empathy, cooperation, and action strides can be made to create a more equitable reality.

**Local Arrangements Committee:** Cherisse Jones-Branch

**Program Committee:** Cynthia Prescott (Co-chair), Tracey Hanshaw (Co-chair), Ashimolowo Olubumni, Oluwaseun Boye, Margaret Evans, Cherisse Jones-Branch, Tanya Watson, Catharine Wilson

Schedule at-a-Glance (All times are Central Daylight Time, GMT/UTC - 5h )

Wednesday, May 15

9:00-9:45 a.m. - Welcome Session

BREAK - 10:00-10:30 a.m.

10:30am-12:00pm - Concurrent Sessions

- 1: Violence and Exclusion
- 2: Individual Stories in Overlooked Communities

BREAK – 12:00-1:00 p.m.

1:00-2:30 p.m. – Concurrent Sessions

- 3: Dressing the East and West
- 4: Women’s Economic Power Around the World

BREAK - 2:30-3:00 p.m.

3:00-5:00 p.m. - SPECIAL EVENT – film screening and discussion: *Hillbilly* by Sally Rubin

5:00-6:30 p.m. – Opening Reception

Thursday, May 16

8:30-10:00 a.m. - Concurrent Sessions

- 5: The Archives, the Arts, and Activism
- 6: FarmHer and Female Power

BREAK - 10:00-10:30 a.m.

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- 7: Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, & Activism
- 8: Rural Black Women and Reimagining the Limits of Activism in the American South

12:00-2:00 p.m. - **SPECIAL EVENT** Luncheon and Keynote Speaker: Sarah Eppler Janda, Cameron University: "To Speak So Forthrightly as to Offend: Expressions and Consequences of Gendered Activism on the Prairie."

2:00-3:30 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions

- 9: Contraception Use and Misuse
- 10: Gender and Education

BREAK - 3:30-4:00 p.m.

4:00-5:30 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions

11: Home Demonstration, Women's Organizations, and Empowerment

12: Rural Women and Social Media

Friday, May 17

8:30-10:00 a.m. - Concurrent Sessions

13: Gender, Economy, and Community: Recent Books in Rural North American History

14: The Gatherers and Advocacy

BREAK - 10:00-10:30 a.m.

10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions

15: Advocating for Political Rights in Africa

16: Suffrage and Rural Political Power

12:00-2:00 p.m. **SPECIAL EVENT:**

SMART Reproduction Presentation

2:00-3:30 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions

17: Victimhood: Overcoming Stigmatization and Discrimination

18: "Everyday" Activism

BREAK - 3:30-4:00 p.m.

4:00-5:30 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions

19: Rural Black Women and Emancipation in the American South

20: Changing the Farm as the Farmer, Not the Farmer's Wife: Women Reckoning with the Multigenerational Family Farm

7:00-9:00 p.m. - **SPECIAL EVENT** – film screening: *Women's Work: The Untold Story of America's Female Farmers*—a documentary film by The Female Farmer Project™ along with KRCreative Strategies Studio

Saturday, May 18

10:00 a.m. –7:00 p.m. **Off Campus SPECIAL EVENT:** [NEA Cultural Expo](https://researchsolutionsinc.org/nea-cultural-expo) in downtown Jonesboro. Please see <https://researchsolutionsinc.org/nea-cultural-expo> for more information.

10:00 a.m.-11:30 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions

21: Social Reform and Resistance

22: Empowering and Connecting through Textile Work

12:00-2:00 p.m. - **SPECIAL EVENT**: Lunch and RWSA Business Meeting; the next Berkshire Conference

2:00-3:30 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions

23: From Penciled Notes to Table Talk: Exploring Rural Women's Voices in the Historical Record

24: Rural Childcare and Women in Agriculture: A Panel Discussion on the intersections between on-farm safety, farmer well-being, and farm viability.

BREAK -3:30-4:00 p.m.

4:00-6:00 p.m. - **SPECIAL EVENT** – Maria Cristina Moroles and Lauri Umansky: *Águila: The Vision, Life, Death, and Rebirth of a Two-Spirit Shaman in the Ozark Mountains: A Reading and Discussion*

Sunday, May 19

9:00-11:00 a.m. Field Trip: Visit the [Arkansas State University Farm–Agricultural Teaching and Research Center](#) Please RSVP when you register for the conference.

**Rural Women’s Studies Association 15<sup>th</sup> Triennial Conference  
May 15-19, 2024**

***Gendered Advocacy and Activism, Shaping Institutions and Communities***

Hosted by **Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, Arkansas, USA**

Welcome to the 15th Triennial Rural Women’s Studies Association Conference.

**Wednesday, May 15**

**9:00-9:45 a.m. - Welcome Session**

BREAK - 10:00-10:30 a.m.

**10:30am-12:00pm - Concurrent Sessions**

**Session 1: Violence and Exclusion**

Chair: Cameron Wimpy, Arkansas State University, USA

Mansi Bhagat, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, “The Transition of Marginalised Women in India and Their Challenges”

Lisa C. Childs, University of Arkansas-Fayetteville and Division of Agriculture, Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA, “Interracial Marriages and Family in Arkansas’ Ouachita Mountains, 1870-1920”

Berhanu Asfaw Weldemikael, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, “LGBTQIA+ in the Ethiopia Public Sphere”

**Session 2: Individual Stories in Overlooked Communities**

Chair: Sarah Potter, University of Memphis, USA

Nikki Berg Burin, University of North Dakota, USA, “‘This has made a wreck of both of our lives’: The Cultural Politics of Breach of Promise Incidents in Dakota Territory”

Donna L. Shelton, Arkansas State University, USA, and Essie Trice-Hewett, Arkansas, USA, “Daughters of the Delta: Gertha Trice and Women’s Activism in the Arkansas Delta”

BREAK – 12:00-1:00 p.m.

## **1:00-2:30 p.m. – Concurrent Sessions**

### **3: Dressing the East and West**

Chair: Sarah Lampert, University of South Dakota, USA

Elyssa Ford, Northwest Missouri State University, USA, “The Cowboy from West to East: Western Wear in Newspaper Advertisements”

Tracey Hanshew, Eastern Oregon University, USA, “A Bunch of Whiskers Proposing Laws to Censor Women’s Dress”

Cynthia Prescott, University of North Dakota, USA, “Camp Fire Girls and Cultural Appropriation”

Holly M. Kent, University of Illinois Springfield, USA, “‘We Don’t Chase Liquor or Cowboys’: Imagining and Marketing Rural Appalachian Style in Contemporary Fashion Culture”

### **4: Women’s Economic Power Around the World**

Chair: Diane McKenzie, University of Lethbridge, Canada

Samuel Umoh Uwem, University of Hradec Králové, Czech, and Umoh Adetola Elizabeth, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, “Market Women Leaders in Corridors of Power and Governance Nigeria Markets”

Jeannie Whayne, University of Arkansas, USA, “What do 21<sup>st</sup> Century Arkansas and Congolese Women Have in Common?”

Anupama Saxena and Akash Tawar, Guru Ghasidas Central University, India, “Women Empowerment through ‘Gauthans’: A Case Study of Flagship Project of a State Government in India from Perspective of Women Empowerment”

BREAK - 2:30-3:00 p.m.

3:00-5:00 p.m. - **SPECIAL EVENT** – *Hillbilly* film screening and discussion session

5:30-6:30 p.m. - Opening Reception

Thursday, May 16

**8:30-10:00 a.m. - Concurrent Sessions**

**5: The Archives, the Arts, and Activism**

Chair: Katherine Jellison, Ohio University, USA

Kerri L. Bennett, Arkansas State University, USA, “Silenced Stories: Uncovering Women Writers in the Mississippi Delta”

Kimberly Hieb, West Texas A&M University, USA, “The Amarillo Philharmonic Club and Women Composers of the Texas Panhandle”

Elissa Stroman, Texas Tech University, USA, “From the Dugout to the Concert Hall: Women’s Work Cultivating Classical Music in Lubbock, Texas, 1890 to 1930.”

**6: FarmHer and Female Power**

Chair: Jodey Nurse, McGill University, Canada

William V. Scott, Texas Tech University, USA, “Stolen Moments from the Ernst Farm: Letters to a Texan in the CCC”

Morgan Wilson, University of Notre Dame, USA, “Farm to Table-Bringing a 19<sup>th</sup> C. Farm Woman from the Archive to an Audience”

Mary Curtin, Caroline Murphy, and Una Woods, University of Limerick, Ireland, and Christine Cross, Napier Business School, Edinburgh, Scotland, “Gaining Ground? An Examination of Female Ownership and Participation in Farming in Ireland”

BREAK - 10:00-10:30 a.m.

**10:30am-12:00pm - Concurrent Sessions**

**7: Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, & Activism**

Chair: Nikki Berg Burin, University of North Dakota, USA

Ajibola Oluwakemi Taiwo, Ogun State Ministry of Information and Strategy, Nigeria, “Curbing Domestic Violence in Abeokuta: Successes and Failings”

Captain Lilian Tugume, Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs, Uganda, “Rethinking Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights of Adolescent Girls and Young Women Living in Rural Areas in Africa”



## **8: Rural Black Women and Reimagining the Limits of Activism in the American South**

Chair: Cherisse Jones-Branch, Arkansas State University, USA

Beatrice J. Adams, College of Wooster, “Mothers of the Struggle: Black Mothers and the Civil Rights Generation.”

Allison Mitchell, University of Virginia, “The Foot Soldiers: Patricia Stephens Due and the Congress of Racial Equality’s Voter Education Campaign in North Florida.”

Brooke A. Thomas, University of Alabama, “‘We Understand that federal funds are Available:’ the AKA Mississippi Health Project, Mississippi Midwives, and the New Deal.”

Pamela Walker, Texas A&M San Antonio, “I am not going to stop until I am a registered voter: Rural Black Women and the Mississippi Movement After Freedom Summer.”

### **12:00-2:00 p.m. - SPECIAL EVENT Luncheon and Keynote Speaker:**

Sarah Eppler Janda, Cameron University, USA, "To Speak So Forthrightly as to Offend: Expressions and Consequences of Gendered Activism on the Prairie."

### **2:00-3:30 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions**

#### **9: Contraception Use and Misuse**

Chair: Sankeev Acharya, Arkansas State University, USA

Justina Licata, Indiana University East, USA, “When the Local Becomes International: How Bangladeshi Feminists Campaign against Norplant Impacted the International Women’s Health Movement”

Ashimolowo Olubunmi, Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta, Nigeria, “Female Agriculture Undergraduates Perception and use of Contraceptives in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria”

Akanle Florence Foluso, Ekiti State University Ado Ekiti, Nigeria, “A Human Right Approach to Sexual and Reproductive Health of the Hearing Impaired Adolescents in Developing Countries”

## **10: Gender and Education**

Chair: Sara Egge, Centre College, USA

Alejandra de Arce, National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET), Argentina, “Women Agronomists and Rural Extension Policies (Argentina, 1910-1970)”

Megan Birk, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, USA, “Campus Babies and Modern Motherhood”

Michelle McCain, Western Governors University, USA, “Black Students Perceptions with PWI Online Instruction”

BREAK - 3:30-4:00 p.m.

## **4:00-5:30 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions**

### **11: Home Demonstration, Women’s Organizations, and Empowerment**

Chair: Linda M. Ambrose, Laurentian University, Canada

Adrien Lievin, University Lille, France, “Home Demonstration, Rural Education, and Women’s Political Empowerment in Appalachia, 1911-1945”

Peggy D. Otto, Western Kentucky University, USA, “Doing it Their Way: How Farm Women Resisted Early Extension Curriculum and Shaped Their Own Clubs”

Margaret Thomas Evans, Indiana University East, USA, “Activism and Advocacy in Three Women’s Organizations in New Zealand”

### **12: Rural Women and Social Media**

Chair: Locardia Chitombo, Zimbabwe

Kacey Lee Klein, University of California Davis, “Socialism in ‘Trump Country:’ A ‘Yallternative’ View”

Edith Chinelo Onuama and Michael Okpara, University of Agriculture, Nigeria, “Appraising Social Media Advocacy for Gender Equality in Nigerian Rural Communities”

Friday, May 17

**8:30-10:00 a.m. - Concurrent Sessions**

**13: ROUNDTABLE—Gender, Economy, and Community: Recent Books in Rural North American History**

Moderator: Debra Reid, The Henry Ford

Discussants:

- Katherine Jellison, Ohio University, USA, *Amish Women and the Great Depression* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2023)
- Jodey Nurse, McGill University, Canada, *Cultivating Community: Women and Agricultural Fairs in Ontario* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022)
- Steven D. Reschly, Truman State University, USA, *Amish Women and the Great Depression* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2023)
- Pamela Riney-Kehrberg, Iowa State University, USA, *When a Dream Dies: Agriculture, Iowa, and the Farm Crisis of the 1980s* (University Press of Kansas, 2022).

**14: The Gatherers and Advocacy**

Chair: Tracey Hanshew, Eastern Oregon University, USA

Susan G. Aquino and Zenaida M. Agngarayngay, Mariano Marcos State University, Philippines, "Spatio-Temporal Analysis in Seaweed Gathering and Marketing in Selected Coastal Areas in Ilocos Norte Philippines"

Zia Rahman and Maisha Tabassum Anima, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, "Empowerment through Dissent: The Mobilization of Theme Rural Women in Bangladesh - A Case Study of Sylhet's Tea Garden Workers Movement against Wage Inequality"

Taaja El-Shabazz, Brown University, USA, "A Child's Place: Working Mothers as Homemakers and the Cotton Plantation as a Site of New Deal"

BREAK - 10:00-10:30 a.m.

**10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions**

**15: Advocating for Political Rights in Africa**

Chair: Salina Makana, University of Memphis, USA

Ogunlami Serifat Abolanle, Ogun State Government, Nigeria, "Empowering Rural Women in Ogun State, Nigeria for a Fulfilled Life"

Oladotun E. Awosusi, University of Fort Hare, South Africa, “Gendered Activism and Refugee Protection in Post-Apartheid South Africa”

Oluwaseun Boye, International Breweries PLC, Nigeria, “Rights and Roles of Women in Politics”

### **16: Suffrage and Rural Political Power**

Chair: Elyssa Ford, Northwest Missouri State University, USA

Sara Egge, Centre College, USA, “Making Citizens in Rural America: Marietta Bones, Deputy Clerk of Court”

Jennifer Helton, Ohlone College, USA, “Grassroots Women’s Suffrage Activism in the Rural American West”

Diane McKenzie, University of Lethbridge, Canada, “Do You Consider Yourself a Feminist?”

**12:00-2:00 p.m. SPECIAL EVENT: SMART Repro** presentation with Brittany Scott, Christina Ballard, and Dr. Jerica Rich, assistant professor of Animal Science. **SMART Repro** is a woman owned business in Jonesboro, Arkansas, that is a USDA-inspected and approved small ruminant semen and embryo collection facility. The center is dedicated to showcasing the decades-long work of American sheep and goat producers to the international market and is one of only three such facilities in the world. The Panel will discuss the impact of their services, particularly on rural women's economics outside of the United States.

### **2:00-3:30 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions**

#### **17: Victimhood: Overcoming Stigmatization and Discrimination**

Chair: Jaein Lee, Arkansas State University, USA

Sheetal Arya, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, “Gender and Geopolitics: A Case Study of Indo-Pak Border”

Nkiru Christiana Ohia and Joshua Ogueri Okpara, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, “Gender Differentials in the Stigmatization and Discrimination against Inmates of Leper Settlements in South East Nigeria”

#### **18: “Everyday” Activism**

Chair: Kelly Houston Jones, Arkansas Tech University, USA

Meighan Mantei, Carleton University, Canada, “‘I learned to Pick my Battles’: Girls’ Everyday Resistance in Oil Country”

Allison Upshaw, Stillman College, USA, “reFraming: Dramatic Narratives of African American Female Landowners in Alabama’s Black Belt”

Valandra, University of Arkansas, USA, “Before They Had Bootstraps: A Case Study of Intergenerational Black Women’s Activism in Rural Arkansas, 1880-1944”

BREAK - 3:30-4:00 p.m.

**4:00-5:30 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions**

**19: Rural Black Women and Emancipation in the American South**

Chair: Cherisse Jones-Branch, Arkansas State University, USA

Kimberly Green, Independent Scholar, USA, “Black Women in DeValls Bluff: Agency from the Western Sanitary Commission within an Arkansas Civil War Contraband Camp”

Kelly Houston Jones, Arkansas Tech University, USA, “Rural Black Women’s Political Roles in Emancipation Celebration”

Kelly McMichael, American Public University, USA: “Breaking the Chains of Matrimony: An Examination of Divorce Among Female Former Slaves in Tennessee after the Civil War”

**20: Changing the Farm as the Farmer, Not the Farmer’s Wife: Women Reckoning with the Multigenerational Family Farm**

Chair: Sydney Giacalone, Brown University, USA

Participant #1—This farmer lives in Georgia and will speak about her experience engaging in genealogy research regarding her family’s history as enslavers, collaborative work toward racial reconciliation and descendant reparations in her community, and the beginning of transition of her family’s farm toward regenerate practices.

Participant #2—This farmer lives in Iowa and will speak about her transition from conventional to sustainable farming, and activism within the immigrant and environmental justice spaces of agriculture.

Participant #3— This fourth generation farmer will speak as the second generation in her family to run their previously-industrial regenerative farm, and the particular experience of her identity that has informed this transition.

**7:00-9:00 p.m. - SPECIAL EVENT** – film screening: *Women’s Work: The Untold Story of America’s Female Farmers*—a documentary film by The Female Farmer Project™ along with KRCreative Strategies Studio

**Saturday, May 18**

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**21: Social Reform and Resistance**

Chair: Cynthia C. Prescott, University of North Dakota, USA

Lynn Byall Benson, University of Massachusetts Boston, USA, “Outlaws with Agency: Bonnie Parker and 1930s Gun Moll Culture in the Southwestern United States”

Pamela J. Snow Sweetser, Independent Scholar, USA, “Genuine Advocacy, Selective Equity: Middle Class, Evangelical White Women and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union Movement in a Dry State, Aroostook County, Presque Isle, Maine, 1851-1934

**22: Empowering and Connecting through Textile Work**

Chair: Holly M. Kent, University of Illinois Springfield, USA

Kacie Hopkins, York University, Canada, “Visual Research: Grounding in Stitches”

Hillary Loomis, Southern Illinois University, USA, “Work-songs, Wool Waulking, and Wild Women, Earliest accounts of Female Powered Cloth-Fulling in Scotland”

**12:00-2:00 p.m. - SPECIAL EVENT:** Lunch RWSA Business Meeting and the next Berkshire Conference

**2:00-3:30 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions**

**23: From Penciled Notes to Table Talk: Exploring Rural Women’s Voices in the Historical Record**

Chair: Shelly Lemons, McKendree University, USA

Tanya Finchum, Oklahoma Oral History Research Center, “Dust, Drought, and Dreams Gone Digital: Oklahoma Women in the Dust Bowl Oral History Project”

Steven Kite, University of Arkansas-Fort Smith, USA, “There and Back Again: A Historian's Tale”

Shelly Lemons, McKendree University, USA, “A Place at the Table: Hidden ‘Conversations’ in the Historical Record”

**24: Rural Childcare and Women in Agriculture: A Panel Discussion on the intersections between on-farm safety, farmer well-being, and farm viability.**

Chair: Nicole Gwishiri

Florence Becot, National Farm Medicine Center, National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety, Marshfield Clinic Research Institute, Marshfield, Wisconsin, USA

Shoshanah Inwood, The Ohio State University, Ohio, USA

Nicole Gwishiri, Women for the Land Southeast Program Manager, American Farmland Trust, Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Gabrielle Roesch-McNally, Women for the Land Director, American Farmland Trust,

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**Thank you to our sponsors for their generous support which made this conference possible.**

Arkansas State University:  
College of Agriculture, Research and Technology Transfer  
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