
JUSTENE HILL EDWARDS

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CURRENT APPOINTMENT

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
2022- Associate Professor, Corcoran Department of History
2016-22 Assistant Professor, Corcoran Department of History
Specializations: African American History; History of American Slavery; History of American Capitalism.

EDUCATION

2015 **Princeton University, Princeton, NJ**
Ph.D. in History.
2010 **Princeton University, Princeton, NJ**
M.A. in History.
2008 **Florida International University, Miami, FL**
M.A. in African New World Studies.
2004 **Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA**
B.A. in Spanish.

PUBLICATIONS

Books

2024 [*Savings and Trust: The Rise and Betrayal of the Freedman's Bank*](#) (October 2024, W.W. Norton)
- Reviewed in *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Publisher's Weekly* (Starred Review), *The New Republic*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and *Jacobin*
- A *Publisher's Weekly* Best Nonfiction Book of 2024
- An Amazon Best History Book of October 2024
- An Amazon Best Business & Leadership Book of 2024
- An Aspen Institute Best Economy Book of 2024
- An AAIHS Best Black History Book of 2024

Inequality in America: A Concise History (In Progress, Under Contract, W.W. Norton).

- 2021 [*Unfree Markets: The Slaves' Economy and the Rise of Capitalism in South Carolina*](#) (April 2021, Columbia University Press, Columbia Studies in the History of U.S. Capitalism).

Book Chapters

“Slavery and Antislavery in the United States,” in Nicholas Guyatt, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of the United States* (Forthcoming, Oxford University Press).

“Teaching the Laws of Slavery, 1826-1865,” in *The History of Legal Education at the University of Virginia*, eds. Meggan Cashwell and Randall Flaherty (Forthcoming, University of Virginia Press).

Academic Articles

- 2023 [“‘This Slavery Business is a Horrible Thing’: The Economy of American Slavery in the Lives of the Enslaved.”](#) *Business History Review* 97, vol. 2 (Summer 2023): 307-334.
- 2017 [“Felonious Transactions: Legal Culture and Business Practices of Slave Economies in South Carolina, 1787-1860.”](#) *Enterprise & Society* 18, no. 4 (December 2017): 772-783.

Book Reviews

- 2023 *Only the Clothes on Her Back: Clothing and the Hidden History of Power in the Nineteenth-Century United States* by Laura F. Edwards on H-Net Material Culture.
- 2023 *Counterlife: Slavery After Resistance and Social Death* by Christopher Freeburg, in *The Journal of African American History* 108, no. 2 (April 2023), 337-338.
- 2022 *An Intimate Economy: Enslaved Women, Work, and the Domestic Slave Trade* by Alexandra Finley, in *The Journal of American Ethnic History* 41, no. 3 (Spring 2022).
- 2022 *The Ledger and the Chain: How Domestic Slave Traders Shaped America* by Joshua Rothman, in *The Journal of Southern History* 88, no. 1 (Feb. 2022), 152-153.
- 2021 *Savannah's Midnight Hour: Boosterism, Growth, and Commerce in a Nineteenth-Century American City* by Lisa L. Denmark, in *Business History Review* 94, no. 4 (2021), 861-864.
- 2019 *American Aristocrats: A Family, A Fortune, and the Making of American Capitalism* by Harry S. Stout, in *The Journal of Southern History* 85, no. 2 (May 2019), 423-424.
- 2016 *The Business of Slavery and the Rise of American Capitalism, 1815-1860* by Calvin Schermerhorn, in *Common Place* (Spring 2016).
- 2015 *Northern Men with Southern Loyalties: The Democratic Party and the Sectional Crisis* by Michael Todd Landis, in *Law and History Review* 33, no. 4 (November 2015), 1011-1013.

Popular Publications

- 2022 “The Freedman’s Bank Forum obscures the bank’s real history,” *The Washington Post*, October 27, 2022.
- 2022 “The Language of Blackness and Racial Identity in American History,” *The American Historian*, Spring 2022.

Digital Publications

- 2024 “Thenceforth and Forever Free: Teaching Reconstruction and the Reconstruction Amendments,” *Perspectives on History*, September 17, 2024.

FELLOWSHIPS

- 2024-27 Dean’s Research Fellowship, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Virginia.
- 2023-26 Mellon New Directions Fellowship, Mellon Foundation.
- 2022-23 Andrew Carnegie Fellowship, Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- 2019 Sesquicentennial Associateship, University of Virginia (Fall 2019).
- 2014-15 Consortium Dissertation Fellow, McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania.
- 2013-14 Quin Morton Teaching Fellowship, Princeton Writing Program, Princeton University.

AWARDS AND HONORS

- 2025 Shortlist, Mark Lynton History Prize, Columbia Journalism School and the Nieman Foundation.
- 2025 Harold F. Williamson Prize, Business History Conference.
- 2025 Finalist, Hagley Prize in Business History, Business History Conference.
- 2025 Porchlight Best Business Book of 2024, Narrative & Biography.
- 2023 Outstanding Researcher, Office of the Vice President of Research, University of Virginia.
- 2021 Outstanding Faculty Award, Office of Engagement, University of Virginia.
- 2017 Finalist, SHEAR Dissertation Prize, Society for Historians of the Early American Republic.
- 2017 Finalist, Herman E. Krooss Prize for Best Dissertation in Business History, Business History Conference.
- 2016 Finalist, C. Vann Woodward Dissertation Prize, Southern Historical Association.

GRANTS

- 2023 University of Virginia, Karsh Institute of Democracy, Arts & Sciences Faculty Summer Support Grant.
- 2022 University of Virginia, College of Arts & Sciences AHSS Research Grant.
- 2021 University of Virginia, College of Arts & Sciences Faculty Summer Stipend.
- 2020 University of Virginia, College of Arts & Sciences Faculty Summer Stipend.
- 2018 University of Virginia, Pavilion Seminar Course Grant.
- 2018 University of Virginia, College of Arts & Sciences Faculty Summer Stipend.
- 2017 University of Virginia, Page-Barbour Fund Award, Conference: “To Joy: A Symposium on Black Feminist Histories.”
- 2017 University of Virginia, College of Arts & Sciences Faculty Summer Stipend.

BOOK TALKS FOR *SAVINGS AND TRUST*

- 2024-25 New Dominion Bookshop; Fountain Bookstore; National Civil War Museum; American Ancestors; Howard University; Zinn Education Project; Jefferson-Madison Regional Library; Black History Museum of Virginia; Washington, DC Area Estate Planning Council; Museum of American Finance; University of Minnesota Law School; University of Michigan Law School; Detroit Public Library; Coastal Georgia Historical Society; Snug Bookstore (Baltimore, MD).

SELECTED PUBLICITY FOR *SAVINGS AND TRUST*

- 2025 “The Rise and Fall of the Freedman’s Bank,” *Skipped History*.
- 2025 “Savings and Trust: The Rise and Betrayal of the Freedman’s Bank,” *That Said* with Michael Zeldin.
- 2024 “Myth #3: Banks Don’t Care What Color You Are,” *Broke-ish* Podcast.
- 2024 “The Freedman's Bank & Economic Disparities Today,” *Fresh Air*, NPR.
- 2024 “How the Freedman’s Bank Failure Still Effects Black Americans,” *Marketplace*, NPR.
- 2023 “Save the Small Sums,” *With Good Reason*, Virginia Public Media.

INVITED TALKS

- 2025 “The Freedman’s Bank and the (Un)Making of Reconstruction,” The Lincoln Forum, Carthage College, Kenosha, WI.
- 2025 “The Freedman’s Savings Bank and Black Economic Futures: A Conversation with Justene Hill Edwards and Sandy Darity, Jr.,” Duke University, Durham, NC.

- 2025 “The Freedman’s Bank and the Making of Reconstruction Louisiana,” *A New Door for My People: Black Life in Reconstruction-Era Louisiana*, Historic New Orleans Collection and New Orleans Public Library. New Orleans, LA.
- 2024 “Draper Workshop – *The Rise and Fall of the Second American Republic*,” University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT.
- 2024 “Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism,” Concord Public Library, Concord, NH (Virtual).
- 2024 “Capitalism and Slavery in South Carolina,” Modjeska Simkins School for Human Rights (Virtual).
- 2024 “The History of Slavery in New England,” Ferguson Library, Stamford, CT (virtual).
- 2024 “Democracy, African American Women, and the Law,” The Links Inc., Charlottesville, VA.
- 2023 “The Failed Economic Promise of Freedom in Reconstruction America,” University of Georgia, Athens, GA.
- 2023 “‘A Bank of Our Own’: The Freedman’s Bank and the Challenges of Economic Equality in Reconstruction America,” Iberia African American Historical Society (Virtual).
- 2023 “The Failed Economic Promise of Freedom in Reconstruction America,” *History of Value in Nineteenth-Century America*, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.
- 2022 “Democracy, African American Women, and the Law,” The Links Inc., Charlottesville, VA.
- 2022 “Slavery, Capitalism, and Empire,” *Conversations in Black Freedom Studies*, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (Virtual).
- 2022 “Lives of the Unfree: Activism and Survival,” Virginia Festival of the Book, Charlottesville, VA.
- 2022 “Capitalism and Slavery in Colonial South Carolina,” Modjeska Simkins School for Human Rights (Virtual).
- 2022 “Slavery’s Capitalism in the Making of 19th-Century America,” University of North Texas Black History Month Lecture Series (Virtual).
- 2022 “Slavery, Race, and Capitalism in the Antebellum United States,” University of North Carolina – Charlotte, Capitalism Studies Seminar (Virtual).
- 2021 “The History of Voting Rights in America,” Bechtel Global Corporation (Virtual).
- 2021 “The Economy of the Freedman,” University of Iowa-College of Law (Virtual).

- 2021 “Slavery’s Capitalism and the Fraught Promise of Liberty in Revolutionary America,” Inquire Capitalism Research-In-Progress Luncheon, University of Florida Department of History (Virtual).
- 2021 “Juneteenth: A History,” Bechtel Global Corporation (Virtual).
- 2021 “Unfree Markets: The Slaves’ Economy and the Rise of Capitalism in South Carolina,” University of Oxford Early American Republic Seminar, University of Oxford (Virtual).
- 2021 “Capitalism, the Racial-Wealth Gap, and the Afterlife of American Slavery,” University of New Hampshire Lecture Series on “Confronting the Racial Wealth Gap,” (Virtual).
- 2021 “Capitalism in the Economic Lives of Enslaved People,” Alexandrian Society, Virginia Commonwealth University (Virtual).
- 2021 “Race and the Capitalist History of America’s Universities,” Drexel University (Virtual).
- 2020 “Race and Inequality in America,” New Canaan Library, New Canaan, CT (virtual).
- 2020 “The History of Slavery in New England,” New Canaan Library, New Canaan, CT (virtual).
- 2020 “Money, Capital, and Slavery in America,” Midland School, Los Olivos, CA.
- 2018 “The Slaves’ Economy in Capitalist Perspective,” University of Delaware History Workshop.
- 2017 “Slavery, Cotton, and the Slaves’ Economy in the Antebellum South,” University of North Carolina, Charlotte.
- 2017 “Carry on a Traffic with the Negroes”: The Politics and Legalities of the Slaves’ Economy in Late-Antebellum South Carolina,” University of Maryland Early American Seminar Series.
- 2017 “‘Felonious Transactions’: Legal Culture and Business Practices of Slave Economies in South Carolina, 1787-1860,” Herman E. Krooss Dissertation Prize Panel, Business History Conference.
- 2016 “The Law of Slave Economies in Antebellum South Carolina,” Harvard University-Brown University Comparative Slavery Working Group, “Slaves and the Law: Comparative Questions and Approaches,” Brown University.
- 2016 “The Trade Between Bond and Free”: The Slaves’ Economy and Plantation Profitability in Antebellum South Carolina,” McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA TALKS AND LECTURES

- 2025 “The Freedman’s Bank and the (Un)Making of Reconstruction,” Nau Center for Civil War History Signature Conference.
- 2024 “Follow the Money: How Taxation & Banking has Affected the Racial Wealth Gap,” *More Than the Score*, Office of Engagement.
- 2024 “Savings and Trust: The Rise and Betrayal of the Freedman’s Bank,” Nau Center for Civil War History.
- 2022 “Race and Religion in the Anthropocene,” Religion, Secularity, and Public Life.
- 2022 “Slavery’s Expansion in the Jeffersonian Imagination,” Summer Jefferson Symposium.
- 2022 “The Freedman’s Bank and the Challenges of Black Economic Equality in Reconstruction America,” Corcoran Department of History Works-in-Progress Colloquium.
- 2021 “Unfree Markets: The Slaves’ Economy and the Rise of Capitalism in South Carolina,” Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Virginia.
- 2021 “Unfree Markets: The Slaves’ Economy and the Rise of Capitalism in South Carolina,” Early America Seminar/Civil War Seminar.
- 2021 “Race and Capitalism in American Society,” Anti-Racism Workshop, University of Virginia Multicultural Student Services (Virtual).
- 2021 “The Evolving Language of Slavery and Race in American History (and Historiography),” University of Virginia Library (Virtual).
- 2020 “Thomas Jefferson and William Short: The Politics of African-American Property Ownership as Freedom,” Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Virginia (virtual).
- 2020 “Slavery and Capitalism in Modern Perspective,” The Virginia Club of New York (virtual).
- 2020 “Enslaved on Grounds: Slavery at the University of Virginia,” Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, Charlottesville, VA.
- 2020 “Jefferson, Land, and Liberty,” Summer Jefferson Symposium, University of Virginia (virtual).
- 2019 “Violence, Accounting, and Slaves with Money in South Carolina,” University of Virginia, Movement and Directions in the History of Capitalism Workshop.
- 2017 “Properties of Property,” Political Thinking at the Margins Conference.
- 2016 “‘Negroes Publicly Cabaling in the Streets’: Law, Regulation, and the Slaves’ Economy in Colonial South Carolina,” Early America Seminar.

RECENT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2025 “The Plight of Black Economic Life in Civil War America,” The Americas’ Civil Wars Era: Diverse Histories, The Huntington Library and Gardens, Pasadena, CA.
- 2025 “Benevolence, Thrift, and the Landscape of Saving in Black America, 1800-1861,” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- 2024 “The Republic at 250,” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.
- 2024 “Black Childhoods, Intellectual History & Repair: A Discussion,” African American Intellectual History Society Annual Conference, Charlottesville, VA.
- 2024 “Black Majority in the Age of Black Lives Matter,” American Historical Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA.
- 2023 “Authors Meet Readers: Property, Civil Rights, and Power in the Nineteenth Century,” American Society for Legal History Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.
- 2022 “Reinventing Sources: Using Legal Sources,” Business History Conference Mid-Year Meeting (Virtual).
- 2021 “‘The Thrift of the Colored People’: The Freedman’s Bank and the Challenges of Black Economic Equality During Reconstruction,” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting (Virtual).
- 2018 “Enslaved Women, Money, and the Law in Antebellum South Carolina,” Society for the Historians of the Early American Republic Annual Meeting, Cleveland, Ohio.
- 2017 “Slave Economies in the Rhetoric of Plantation Capitalism in South Carolina, 1830–1860,” Southern Historical Association Annual Meeting, Dallas, TX.
- 2016 “Black Markets: The Slaves’ Economy and Plantation Capitalism in South Carolina, 1820-1860,” Histories of Capitalism, 2.0, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

CONFERENCE PANEL MODERATOR/DISCUSSANT

- 2025 “Multinational Enterprises and the Politics of Labor in the Twentieth Century,” Business History Conference, Atlanta, GA.
- 2025 “Haggling Over Markets,” PEAES @ 25, Library Company of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.
- 2022 “The Business of Slavery,” Business History Conference (Virtual).
- 2021 “Perspectives on Purchasing Freedom,” Society for Historians of the Early Republic Annual Meeting (Virtual).
- 2021 “Neglected History: Lives of Enslaved Laborers on the Monticello, Montpelier and Highland Plantations,” Scottsville Library (Virtual).

2020 “Slavery on the Economic and Legal Fringes of 19th-Century America,” Business History Conference, Charlotte, NC.

SELECTED MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

2021 Panelist, “Lincoln’s Dilemma,” Apple TV+.

2020 Panelist, “Access to Wealth: Challenging Perceptions” on “Racism: Challenging Perceptions,” Virginia Public Media/PBS.

2019 Interview on “History vs. Podcast,” Mental Floss.

2018 Interview on “Lucy Worsley: America’s Biggest Fibs,” BBC.

2017 Interview on “Truth, Power, and Politics with Neal Conan.”

TEACHING PORTFOLIO

University of Virginia

African American Women’s History
African American History to 1865
African American History to 1877 (graduate)
American Slavery
American Slavery and the Law
Capitalism and Slavery (undergraduate and graduate)
Inequality in America
Slavery & Emancipation in the United States (Graduate)

DOCTORAL COMMITTEE SERVICE

- Katie Wu, University of Virginia, In Progress.
- Eitan Marshall-Pinko (Advisor), University of Virginia, In Progress.
- Cathryn Perini (Advisor), University of Virginia, In Progress.
- Bethany Bell (Co-Advisor), University of Virginia, In Progress.
- Musa Azimli, University of Virginia, In Progress.
- Carrington OBrion (Advisor), University of Virginia, In Progress.
- Matthew Grace (Co-Advisor), University of Virginia, In Progress.
- Jeremy Nelson, University of Virginia, 2025.
- Jake Calhoun (Advisor), University of Virginia, 2024.
- Brianna Frakes, University of Virginia, 2023.

- Joseph Foley, University of Virginia, 2023.
- Daniel Sunshine, University of Virginia, 2022.
- Ian Iverson, University of Virginia, 2022.
- Amanda Gibson, College of William & Mary, 2021.
- Lauren Haumesser, University of Virginia, 2018.
- Melissa Gismodi, University of Virginia, 2017.

MASTER’S THESIS ADVISING

- Cassondra Hanna, “Remembering the First Black College: An Extended Life of Avery College,” 2023.
- MaDeja Leverett, “An Exploration of Enslaved Girlhood Through the Stories of Harriet Jacobs and Her Family,” 2022.
- Jessica Hernandez, “A Visual Aesthetics of Black Internationalism, 1915-1944,” 2022.
- Michelle Colbert, “‘A Blight on Our State’: Politics and Place in the Making and Remaking of Georgia’s Stone Mountain,” 2021.

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS ADVISING

- Madeline Barber, “Two Face of Christianity: The Utilization of Religion to Justify and Condemn American Slavery,” Program in Political and Social Thought, 2025.
- Cheyenne Butler, “Enslaved Women’s Gynecological Resistance and the Law in Antebellum Virginia,” Distinguish Majors Program, Department of History, 2024.
- Alexa Walsh, “Democracy’s College in the Old Dominion: The Origins of Virginia Community College System,” Distinguish Majors Program, Department of History, 2022.
- Rebecca Alemayhu, “Doing the Work: Black Women’s Leadership in Houston’s Civil Right Movement, 1944-1965,” Program in Political and Social Thought, 2021.
- Deanna Knox, “The Life of a Jezebel: Sexual Exploitation of Enslaved Women in the Antebellum South,” Distinguish Majors Program, Department of History, 2018.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Scholarly Organizations

2024-25 2025 Annual Meeting Program Committee, Business History Conference.

- 2024- Advisory Council Member, Program in Early American Economy and Society (PEAES), Library Company of Philadelphia.
- 2023- Member, Committee on Minorities, Southern Historical Association.
- 2023-25 Chair, DEI Committee, Business History Conference.
- 2022-23 2023 Annual Meeting Program Committee, Southern Historical Association.
- 2022- Advisory Board Member, John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History, University of Virginia.
- 2021-24 Trustee, Business History Conference.
- 2021-24 K. Austin Kerr Prize Committee Member, Business History Conference.
- 2021-22 Program Committee, Society for Historians of the Early American Republic.

University Press Service

- 2025- Series Editor, Series on the History of U.S. Capitalism, Columbia University Press.
- 2023-26 Editorial Board Member, University of Virginia Press.

Academic Journals

- 2023- Editorial Board Member, *The Journal of the Civil War Era*.
- 2023- Editorial Board Member, *Enterprise & Society: The International Journal of Business History*.

Peer Reviewer

- 2024 Article Reviewer, *Modern Intellectual History*.
- 2024 Book Manuscript Reviewer, University of North Carolina Press.
- 2024 National Endowment for the Humanities, Grant Reviewer, Media Projects (World History).
- 2024 Book Manuscript Reviewer, Palgrave MacMillan.
- 2023 Article Reviewer, *LABOR: Studies in Working-Class History*.
- 2022 Article Reviewer, *Journal of Women's History*.
- 2022 Article Reviewer, *Journal of the Civil War Era*.
- 2022 Fellowship Reviewer, Chateaubriand Fellowship Program, Embassy of France in the United States.
- 2022 Manuscript Reviewer, University of Virginia Press.
- 2021 Hensch Postdoctoral Colloquium Manuscript Reviewer, American Antiquarian Society.
- 2021 Manuscript Reviewer, University of Chicago Press.
- 2021 External Honors Examiner, Department of History, Swarthmore College.
- 2019 Manuscript Reviewer, Cambridge University Press.

2017 Article Reviewer, *The William & Mary Quarterly*.

Nonprofit Organizations

2025- Board Member, Shockoe Institute, Richmond, VA.

2019- Trustee, Midland School, Los Olivos, CA.

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

2024-25 Steering Committee.

2021-22 Faculty Search Committee Member, History of Africa to 1900.

2020-2023 Faculty Advisor, Bridge to the Doctorate Program.

2017-18 Faculty Search Committee Member, Modern Europe.

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

2022-24 Consulting Historian, “Modeling a Racial Caste System: Algorithmic Exposure of Virginia’s Jim Crow Laws.”

2020 Mellon Humanities Fellowship, Institute of the Humanities and Global Culture, Selection Committee Member

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2021-23 Consulting Historian, USS Constitution Museum.

2015-16 National History Center, Program Coordinator – Historians on the Hill, Washington, DC.

LANGUAGES

Spanish (Proficient)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Business History Conference

Organization of American Historians

Society for Historians of the Early American Republic

Southern Historical Association