

**Rebecca Stiles Onion**  
Curriculum Vitae

**PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS**

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2016-present Staff writer, Slate.com  
2012-present History writer. Slate.com  
2013-present Visiting scholar, Ohio University Department of History  
2012-2014 Postdoctoral Fellow, Philadelphia Area Center for History of Science

**EDUCATION**

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Ph.D, American Studies, University of Texas at Austin  
Defended: November 13, 2012  
Dissertation: "How Science Became Child's Play: Science and the Culture of American Childhood, 1900-1980"

M.A., American Studies, University of Texas at Austin, May 2007  
Thesis: "Sled Dog Stories: Discourses of Domestication, Race, and Work in Alaska, 1867-1925"

B.A., American Studies, Yale University, cum laude, with distinction, May 2000

**PUBLICATIONS**

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**Books:**

*Innocent Experiments: Childhood and the Culture of Public Science in the United States.* Under contract with the University of North Carolina Press; scheduled for publication in 2016.

**Refereed Journal Articles:**

"Writing a 'Wonderland' of Science: Child-Authored Periodicals at the Brooklyn Children's Museum, 1936-1946." *American Periodicals*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2013), 1-21.

"Picturing Nature and Childhood at the American Museum of Natural History and the Brooklyn Children's Museum, 1899-1930." *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Fall 2011), 434-469.

"Reclaiming the Machine: An Introductory Look at Steampunk in Everyday Practice." *Journal of Neo-Victorian Studies* 1:1 (Autumn 2008), 138-163.

**Book Chapters:**

"Environmental Health, Biological Risk, and Medical Display: The Individualist Etiologies of

BODY WORLDS,” in *The Anatomy of Body Worlds*, ed. Thora Jespersen et. al (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008), 55-65.

“Sled Dogs of the American North: On Masculinity, Whiteness, and Human Freedom,” in *Animals and Agency*, ed. Sarah MacFarland and Ryan Hediger (Leiden: Brill Academic, 2009), 129-156.

### **Review Essays:**

“Graphic Histories,” *Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences*, Vol. 45, Number 4, 621-629.

### **Book Reviews:**

Review: Pamela Riney-Kehrberg, *The Nature of Childhood: An Environmental History of Growing Up in American since 1865*. *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Spring 2015), 62.

Review: Analisa Leppanen-Guerra. *Children’s Stories and “Child-Time” in the Works of Joseph Cornell*. *The Lion and the Unicorn*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (September 2012), 308-311.

Review: Sally Kohlstedt, *Teaching Children Science: Hands-On Nature Study in North America, 1890-1930*. *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Fall 2011), 518-520.

Review: Nelson Lichtenstein, ed., *American Capitalism: Social Thought and Political Economy in the Twentieth Century*. *E3W Review of Books*, Vol. 9 (Spring 2009), 38-39.

Review: Documentary Film: “King Corn.” *Green Theory & Praxis: The Journal of Ecopedagogy*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2008), 122-124.

### **Manuscripts in Process:**

“Enlightenment and Danger: Science, Play, and the Material Culture of 20<sup>th</sup>-Century American Boyhood.” Commissioned essay for forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of History and Material Culture*. Submitted October 2014.

### **Online Academic Writing:**

“Honey, You’re Scaring the Kids.” *Appendix Journal*, July 22, 2014 (<http://theappendix.net/issues/2014/7/honey-youre-scaring-the-kids>).

“Audi, Cartier, Louboutin, Escala: Fifty Shades, Pinterest, and the Fantasy of Luxury.” *In Media Res*, September 28, 2012 (<http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/imr/2012/09/28/audi-cartier-louboutin-escala-fifty-shades-pinterest-and-fantasy-luxury>).

“Teaching the *Hunger Games* in the Undergraduate American Studies Classroom.” Blog of the *American Studies Journal*, June 22, 2012 (<http://amsjournal.wordpress.com/2012/06/22/on->

[teaching-teaching-the-hunger-games-in-the-undergraduate-american-studies-classroom/](#)).

### **Other Publications:**

Lead blogger for Slate.com's history blog, The Vault ([http://www.slate.com/blogs/the\\_vault.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_vault.html)), November 2012-present.

Freelance writer on history and culture, with recent bylines in Aeon Magazine, the Boston Globe's Ideas section, The Boston Review's website, Lapham's Quarterly's Roundtable blog, and the Virginia Quarterly Review.

### **SCHOLARLY HONORS AND PRIZES**

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2016	Writer in Residence, History Department, University of Massachusetts Amherst
2015	HRA New Professional Travel Award, National Council for Public History
2013	Departmental Nominee, Outstanding Dissertation Award, University Co-Op, University of Texas at Austin
2012	Winner, Nathan Reingold Prize, for original graduate student essay on the history of science and its cultural influences. Given by the History of Science Society
2012	Honorable Mention, Neil Sutherland Award, Best Article in the History of Childhood and Youth. Given by History of Childhood and Youth Group, Canadian Historical Association
2011	Winner, Graduate Research Award, University Co-Op, University of Texas at Austin
2008	Winner, Outstanding Thesis Award, University Co-Op, University of Texas at Austin
2008	Travel Award to attend University College Dublin Clinton Institute Summer School, given by University of Texas at Austin Department of American Studies

### **FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS**

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2012-2014	Postdoctoral Fellowship, Philadelphia Area Center for History of Science
2010-2011	William S. Livingston Graduate Fellowship, University of Texas at Austin
2011	Summer Research Grant, Department of American Studies, University of Texas at Austin
2011	Research Grant, Friends of the Princeton University Library
2011	Shin Pond Summer Retreat Program Fellowship, Humane Society of the United States
2010	Robert A. Heinlein Online Archives Research Grant
2010	Chemical Heritage Foundation Travel Grant
2010	Hannah Beiter Graduate Student Research Grant, Children's Literature Association
2007	Liberal Arts Graduate Research Fellowship, University of Texas at Austin
2007	Stott Travel Fellowship, University of Texas at Austin
2005-2006	Donald D. Harrington Fellowship, University of Texas at Austin

## INVITED TALKS

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- 2016 “Pop History,” High-Stakes History: The Many Conversations of the Historian, History in Action, Columbia University, January 22
- 2015 “Writing History Outside of the Academy,” Historians are Writers!, Cornell University, April 24.
- 2015 “How Science Became Child’s Play: Childhood and Public Science in the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century United States,” Case Western Reserve University Department of History, March 27.
- 2015 “How I Got Here,” Case Western Reserve University Department of History, March 26.
- 2014 “The Practice of Viral History,” Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo Department of History, November 12.
- 2012 “Saving ‘Embryo Scientists’: The Westinghouse Science Talent Search vs. Postwar Youth Culture,” University of Pennsylvania History and Sociology of Science Workshop, November 5.
- 2011 “The Story of a Wonder World: Science, Industry, and the ‘Romance of Reality’ in American Kids’ Books of the 1920s and 1930s.” Brown-bag talk for the Friends of the Princeton University Library, Princeton, NJ, July 15.
- 2008 “Reclaiming the Machine: Steampunk Practice and the Humanization of the Technological Object,” Material Culture Symposium for Emerging Scholars, Winterthur Museum, Delaware, April 12.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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### Panels Organized:

- 2013 “Destroyed Worlds, Unpayable Debts: Uses of Children and Childhood in Environmentalism” (co-sponsored by Childhood and Youth Studies Caucus and Environment and Culture Caucus). American Studies Association annual meeting, Washington, DC, November 21-24.
- 2013 “Going Public: Scientists in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century US Culture, Politics, and War” (co-organized with Sarah Bridger). Society for US Intellectual History, Irvine, CA, November 1-3.
- 2012 “Space, Place, and Privilege: The New Geographies of Childhood” (co-organized with Nicholas Syrett; sponsored by Childhood and Youth

Studies Caucus). American Studies Association annual meeting, San Juan, PR, November 15-18.

- 2011 “Objects of Learning: Material Culture, Imaginative Pedagogy, and the Transformation of American Childhood, 1880-1980” (co-organized with Sarah Carter; sponsored by Material Culture Caucus). American Studies Association annual meeting, Baltimore, MD, October 20-23.
- 2011 “From Decay to Deterioration: Questioning the Aesthetics of Abandonment” (sponsored by Visual Culture Caucus). American Studies Association annual meeting, Baltimore, MD, October 20-23.

**Panels Chaired:**

- 2016 “Podcasting—Reaching a Mass Audience From Above and Below.” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Providence, RI, April 7-10.

**Roundtable Participation:**

- 2016 “History Communicators,” American Historical Association, Atlanta, GA, January 7
- 2015 “H.O.T. Goes Pop! Histories of Technology in the Public Eye,” Society for the History of Technology, Albuquerque, NM, October 8-11.

**Papers Presented:**

- 2015 “History Communicators,” National Council on Public History, Nashville, TN, April 15-18.
- 2014 “The Virality of History: Playing with Historical Enthusiasms in the Digital Age,” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA, November 6-9.
- 2014 “Tracking and Mapping Young Scientists: The Science Talent Search Database” (with Jill Anderson), Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, Toronto, Canada, May 22-25.
- 2014 “How the Chemistry Set Lost Its Teeth: Consumer Safety and Childhood Play,” Eastern American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, March 28-29.
- 2013 “Growing Up Into Climate Change: Children’s Knowledge, Children’s Fears, and the Politics of Science Education,” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, November 21-24.

- 2013 “Restoring Color to Science: Frank Oppenheimer’s Exploratorium as Cultural Intervention,” Society for US Intellectual History, Irvine, CA, November 1-3.
- 2013 “Playing the Environment: Advocacy and Web-Based Video Games in Contemporary American Children’s Culture,” Society for the History of Technology, Portland, ME, October 10-13.
- 2013 “Environmental Pessimism, Science, and Children’s Media in the 1970s,” International Congress for the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine, Manchester, UK, July 21-28.
- 2012 “Childhood, Animality, and New Geographies of Extinction in the 1970s,” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Juan, PR, November 15-18.
- 2012 “Dark Futures: Environmental Catastrophes and American Childhood in the 1970s,” Philadelphia Area Center for History of Science Introductory Symposium, Philadelphia, PA, September 28.
- 2012 “Making Science Fun: Critical Intersections of Science and Childhood in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century American Culture,” University of Texas at Austin History of Science Colloquium, Austin, TX, March 30.
- 2011 “Reality in the Basement: Science Sets, Home Laboratories, & the Market for the Modern Mind.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD, October 20-23.
- 2011 “Science, Childhood, and the ‘Informational’ Book: Knowing the Modern World in the 1920s and 1930s.” Children’s Literature Association annual meeting, Hollins, VA, June 23-25.
- 2010 “Varieties of Scientific Experience: The American Museum of Natural History, the Brooklyn Children’s Museum, and the Production of Wonder, 1900-1930.” American Studies Association annual meeting, San Antonio, TX, November 18-21.
- 2010 “Melding Childhood Studies, Science Studies, and the History of Education.” Exploring Childhood Studies Conference, Childhood Studies Graduate Program, Rutgers-Camden, Camden, NJ, April 9.
- 2007 “Re-articulating the Native, Claiming the Human: Man-Dog Relationships in the New American North,” Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts, Portland, ME, November 1-4.

- 2007 “Colonial Narratives, Written on The Animal Body: The Watercolors of Walton Ford,” Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment, Spartanburg, SC, June 12-16.
- 2006 “Visions of Carnivore Ecology in Children’s Culture: *Dinotopia* and *Jurassic Park*,” Carnivores 2006 (Defenders of Wildlife conference), St. Petersburg, FL, November 12-15.
- 2006 “Lead Dogs and Heroic Masculinity in the New Age of Celebrity,” Western Literature Association, Boise, ID, October 25-28.
- 2006 “The Endless Quest for Authenticity: The *Lord of the Rings* and Teenage Girls,” SW/TX Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association, Albuquerque, NM, February 8-11.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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- 2013 Attended THATCamp Prime (digital humanities “unconference”), George Mason University, Fairfax, VA
- 2012 Attended THATCamp Philly, Philadelphia, PA
- 2012 Attended THATCamp Liberal Arts Colleges, Austin, TX
- 2012 Attended THATCamp Prime, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA
- 2011 Attended THATCamp Southeast, Emory University, Atlanta, GA
- 2008 Attended University College Dublin Clinton Institute in American Studies Summer School
- 2008 Graduate participant, University of Texas at Austin Humanities Institute Faculty Fellows Seminar (topic: “The Human and its Others”)

### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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- 2013 Directed month-long externship, Oberlin Winter Term program
- 2011-2012 Assistant Instructor, Department of American Studies, University of Texas at Austin (Course: Popular Culture and American Childhood)
- 2009-2010 Graduate Assistant, Department of History, University of Texas at Austin (curriculum development, twentieth-century US survey course)
- 2008-2009 Assistant Instructor, Department of Rhetoric and Writing, University of Texas at

Austin

- 2008-2009 Consultant, University Writing Center, University of Texas at Austin
- 2007 Supplemental Instruction Leader, University of Texas at Austin Learning Center
- 2006-2007 Teaching Assistant, American Studies Department, University of Texas at Austin

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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- 2010, 2012 Research Assistant to John Taliaferro, independent historian, Austin, TX
- 2009-2010 Research Assistant to Dr. Penne Restad, Department of History, University of Texas at Austin
- 2007-2008 Research Assistant to Dr. Janet Davis, American Studies Department, University of Texas at Austin

## SERVICE

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- 2015 Member, National Endowment for the Humanities grant review panel
- 2014 Member, Society for History of Technology Committee on Social Media
- 2013 Co-convener, Philadelphia Area Center for History of Science working group in Earth and Environmental Sciences
- 2013 Reviewer, *Ada: A Journal of Gender, New Media, and Technology*
- 2012-2013 Reviewer, *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*
- 2012-2013 Steering committee, Childhood and Youth Studies Caucus, American Studies Association
- 2009 Organized visit of guest speaker Cindi Katz, Childhood Studies Graduate Research Cluster, University of Texas at Austin
- 2008 Mentor, Intellectual Entrepreneurship Program, University of Texas at Austin
- 2008 Member of committee to organize MEPHISTOS graduate conference in the history, anthropology, and sociology of science
- 2007 Member of committee to organize UT American Studies Graduate Conference
- 2006 Co-organized UT American Studies Graduate Conference



## LANGUAGES

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Fluent in Spanish  
Intermediate Proficiency in Italian

## REFERENCES

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Janet Davis  
Associate Professor  
Department of American Studies/Department of History  
University of Texas at Austin  
1 University Station B7100  
Austin, TX 78712  
Office Phone: 512.232.1848 or 512.471.7277  
Email: [janetmdavis@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:janetmdavis@austin.utexas.edu)

Julia Mickenberg  
Associate Professor  
Department of American Studies  
University of Texas at Austin  
1 University Station B7100  
Austin, TX 78712  
Office Phone: 512.232.2650 or 512.471.7277  
Email: [mickenberg@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:mickenberg@mail.utexas.edu)

Jeffrey Meikle  
Professor  
Department of American Studies/Department of Art and Art History  
University of Texas at Austin  
1 University Station B7100  
Austin, TX 78712  
Office Phone: 512.232.2166 or 512.471.7277  
Email: [meikle@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:meikle@mail.utexas.edu)

Bruce Hunt  
Associate Professor  
Department of History  
University of Texas at Austin  
1 University Station B7000  
Austin, TX 78712  
Office Phone: 512.232.6109  
Email: [bjhunt@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:bjhunt@mail.utexas.edu)

Penne L. Restad (Teaching Reference)

Distinguished Senior Lecturer  
Department of History  
University of Texas at Austin  
1 University Station B7000  
Austin, TX 78712  
Office Phone: 512.475.7233  
Email: [restad@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:restad@mail.utexas.edu)