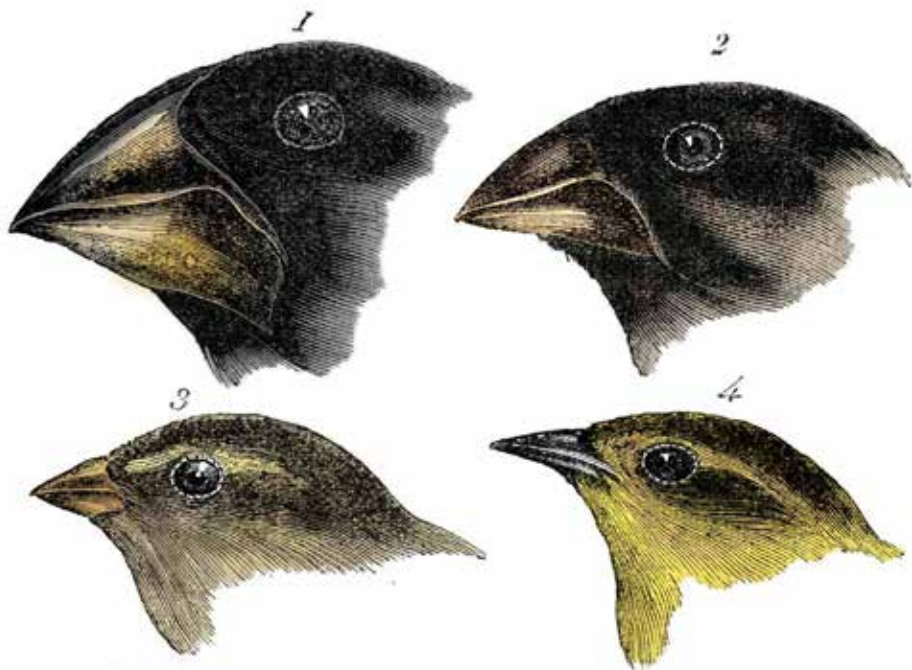


**49th Annual Conference of the
Midwest Victorian Studies Association**

GENEALOGIES

HOSTED BY

**PURDUE UNIVERSITY
FORT WAYNE**



1. *Geospiza magnirostris*.
3. *Geospiza parvula*.

2. *Geospiza fortis*.
4. *Certhidea olivacea*.

APRIL 3-6, 2025

CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE

Thursday, April 3, 2025

3:00: 1st Library tour (no transport offered)

5:00-7:00: Opening Reception and Registration at the Alumni Center (across the street from the conference venue Holiday Inn 4111 Paul Shaffer Dr, Fort Wayne, IN 46825)

Friday, April 4, 2025

8:00-8:30: Registration at PFW Holiday Inn (4111 Paul Shaffer Dr, Fort Wayne, IN 46825)

8:30-10:00: Plenary Session

10:00-10:15: Break

10:15-11:45: Session 1 (breakout rooms)

11:45-1:00: Lunch (box lunches at Alumni Center)

1:00-2:30: Session 2 (breakout rooms)

2:30-2:45: Break

2:45-4:15: Session 3 (breakout rooms)

4:15-4:30: Break

4:30-6:00: Session 4 (breakout rooms) [2nd Library Tour]

Dinner on own (group reservations)

Saturday, April 5, 2025

8:30-10:00: Session 5 (breakout rooms)

10:00-10:15: Break

10:15-11:45: Session 6 (breakout rooms)

11:45-1:00: Lunch (box lunches at Alumni Center)

1:00-2:30: Stedman Lecture

2:30-2:45: Break

2:45-4:15: Session 7 (breakout rooms)

4:15-4:30: Break

4:30-6:00: Session 8 (breakout rooms)

6:15-8:15: Banquet at Alumni Center
[7:30 concert at the Auer Performance Hall]

Sunday, April 6, 2025

12:00: Library Tour



Alison Booth is Brown-Forman Professor of English and Faculty Director of the Digital Humanities Center, University of Virginia. Leading a DH project, *Collective Biographies of Women* based on *How to Make It as a Woman--1274* books collecting biographies of over 8000 varied women--she has also studied literary house museums in *Homes and Haunts: Touring Writers' Shrines and Countries*. Currently she researches and teaches the writings and museum of Anne Spencer, Harlem Renaissance poet of Lynchburg, Virginia. Booth's work on British women writers includes *Greatness Engendered: George Eliot and Virginia Woolf*.

SPECIAL EVENTS & KEYNOTE

Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center Tours

The Power of Story

The ACPL Genealogy Center welcomes you to explore our unique and state-of-the-art resource for family history research. We have the largest publicly-available research collection in the country and make available, at no cost, records from around the world to aid in your discovery. Our staff specializes in genealogy and is ready to help. Everyone has a story. Let's find yours!

MVSA has scheduled three tours of the Center during course of the event:
Thursday April, 3pm (own transportation)
Friday April 4, 4:45pm (MVSA can organize transport if enough people sign-up)
Sunday April 6, 12pm (own transportation)

Stedman Lecture: Saturday April 5 1:00-2:30: Generative Models of Victorian Women, Hidden in Plain Text by Alison Booth

Led by so-called Victorian sages, the period increased production of biography, often in shorter forms such as periodical series or chapters in books, including lives of exceptional women of many kinds. Today, you can find AI assistants generating the right questions to ask for family histories or memoirs. Just as genealogy and "ancestry" DNA tests are driven by a desire for explanatory (and proud) origins (assisted by AI), short interconnected "lives" in printed collections narrate and compare exemplary forebears. Rather than only featuring a handful of great or idealized women, the hundreds of collections during the Victorian era also acknowledge figures who are marginalized by class, gender, race, nationality, disabilities visible and invisible, and who defy the norms. The narratives are brief (reducing the complexity), formulaic in structure and sometimes substance, and yet generative, not unlike generative Large Language Models, perhaps.

In *How to Make It as a Woman*, I called this genre self-help history because it serves to bridge personal growth and a virtual genealogy of one's identity types such as "English," "Methodist," "nurse." The recognition templates select and sort, while in localized, mortal details they are startling and genuinely noteworthy. This talk draws from Collective Biographies of Women, the bibliographical database that grew out of *How to Make It*. Illustrating the rich varieties within the versions of several Victorian women's lives that we have analyzed with our text encoding schema, I also share some AI prompt engineering with Gemini, ChatGPT, and DeepSeek. These generative models are not "reading" printed biographies or plagiarizing Wikipedia; they instantaneously emulate the genre of praiseworthy lives, with almost the same final sentences, not necessarily encumbered by facts. With different technological and interpretative means we can combat the recurrent obliteration of women's lives *and* the prescription of what makes a woman's life narratable.

Optional Fort Wayne Philharmonic Concert at Auer Performance Hall on the PFW campus: April 5 7:30pm Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* and Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* symphony.

DETAILED SCHEDULE

Friday, April 4, 2025

8:30–10:00: Plenary Session, Room A

Plenary: Grounding Genealogy in Memoir, Archive, and Picture

Moderator: Laura Kasson Fiss (Michigan Technological University)

Sue Howard (Duquesne University), "Editing Family Legacies: Nineteenth-Century Women Editing Eighteenth-Century Women's Memoirs"

Kristen Renzi (Xavier University), "Genealogical Restoration After the Fact: Repairing Institutionally Inflicted Wounds and Doing Justice to Complex Families in the fin-de-siècle London Foundling Hospital Archives"

Joti Bilkhu (York University), "Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*: Tracing a Genealogy of Disability Through Illustrations"

10:00–10:15: Break

10:15–11:45: Session 1

**1A
Room A**

"The Child [as] Father of the Man": Dynamic Genealogies of Childhood

Moderator: Colten Biro (Saint Louis University)

Colten Biro (Saint Louis University), "Playing at Discourse: Childish Conversations and Liberal Disinterest"

Sara Loy (Indiana University), "Reading, Rereading, and Repetition in Victorian Children's Literature"

Alisa Clapp-Itnyre (Indiana University East), "Controlling the Narrative: Child-Diarists of the Nineteenth Century"

**1B
Room C**

Collecting, Stuffing, and Arguing: Victorian Science from Amateurs to Professionals

Moderator: Ann Tandy (University of Minnesota-Twin Cities)

Amy Huseby (Rice University), "'Pursuits for Ladies': Women Lepidopterists and the Genealogy of Collection"

Tyler Groff (Ball State University/Burriss Laboratory School), "Cruel Genealogies: Intersections of Natural History, Empire, and Domestic Spaces in Victorian England"

Thomas Prasch (Washburn University), "'The Importance of the Principle of Inheritance': Charles Darwin on Erasmus Darwin"

11:45–1:00: Lunch (box lunches at Alumni Center)

1:00–2:30: Session 2

**2A
Room A**

To Make (or Not to Make) New Victorians: Nineteenth-Century Family Planning and Obstetrics

Moderator: Amy Kahrman Huseby (Rice University)

Sigrid Anderson (University of Michigan), "Family Planning as Self-Defense: A Social History of Contraceptive Douching in the Nineteenth Century"

Jaelyn Glennemeier (Indiana University, Bloomington), "A Patient and Her Friends': Real and Imagined Care Communities for Birth in Late Victorian Britain"

Doreen Thierauf (North Carolina Wesleyan University), "Reproduction without Women: Debiologizing Maternity after Malthus"

**2B
Room B**

What the Past Yields: Victorian Biography and the Limits of the Archive

Moderator: Matthew Skwiat (Morehouse College)

Victoria Bik (Rutgers University), "Assembling Lisa Stillman's Life Out of a Mosaic of Others"

Martha Groppo (Eastern Kentucky University), "Destroyed Letters and Burning Ears: Archival Politics, Society Gossip, and the Challenges of Biography"

Jessica Durgan (Bemidji State University), "Imperial Genealogies: Three Generations of Medhursts and Hilliers in Southeast Asia"

2C Room C

Victorian Material Circulations (Some of Them Unethical)

Moderator: Emily Tock (Purdue University Fort Wayne)

Erin Chamberlain (Washburn University), "Home on the Sunbeam: The Travel Writing of Lady Annie Brassey"

Brianne Neptin (University of Illinois Chicago), "The Making of a Sweet Tooth: Slippery Origins in George Eliot's 'Brother Jacob'"

Marissa Knaak (Michigan State University), "Passing the Trade: From Drapers to Department Stores in Sheffield during the 19th Century"

2:30–2:45: Break

2:45–4:15: Session 3

3A Room A

Mirror, Mirror: Exploring Victorian Celebrity Culture

Moderator: Doreen Thierauf (North Carolina Wesleyan University)

Mercedes Sheldon (University of Minnesota, Twin Cities), "Survival of the Fittest: Grant Allen's Evolution from Scientist to Celebrity Writer"

J. Myles Hesse (Saint Louis University), "'And wit they utterly abhor': The Dysfluency of William Somerset Maugham and His Rejection of the Oscar Wilde Legacy"

Laura Kasson Fiss (Michigan Technological University), "'Haunted by *The Mikado*': Towards a Bibliography of George Grossmith [II]'s Comic Songs"

3B Room C

Troubling Categories of Race and Science

Moderator: Amanda Shubert (University of Wisconsin)

Anne Rodrick (Wofford College), "From Chit-Chat to Quarrel: Genealogies of Gossip in a Victorian Science Journal"

Elizabeth Winter (Northwestern University), "Inherited Anxieties: Legal Definitions of Race and British Literary Sensation"

Kristine Swenson (Missouri S&T), "Occult Eugenics: Arabella Kenealy and the *nouvelles fantastiques* of Gérard Dôle"

4:15–4:30: Break

4:30–6:00: 2nd Library Tour

4:30–6:00: Seminar (closed session)

Room B

New Directions in Victorian Studies

Moderator: Andrea Kaston Tange (Macalester College)

Courtney Simpkins, "Micro-Paralytic Optimism and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*"

Kate Nesbit, "For Whom the Bell-Pull Tolls: Victorian Domestic Bell Systems and the Limits of Working-Class Containment"

Matthew Skwiat, "The Strange Case of Rob Roy and Mr. Hyde: Theatrical Monsters, Performative Narrators, and the Drama of Gothic Fiction"

4:30–6:00: Session 4

4A
Room A

Extra, Extra! The Rise and Professionalization of Victorian Journalism

Moderator: Alisa Clapp-Itnyre (Indiana University East)

Dallas Liddle (Augsburg University), "The Ascent of Journalism: Variable Evolution of the Victorian Daily Newspaper"

Lindsay Lawrence (University of Arkansas at Fort Smith), "Reproducing Frances Hodgson Burnett's *A Fair Barbarian* in *Peterson's Magazine* and *Scribner's Monthly Magazine*"

Laura Vorachek (University of Dayton), "Sisterhood is Powerful: The Formation of the Society of Women Journalists"

4B
Room C

Out of One's Hands: Reconsidering Interpretive Legacies

Moderator: Emily Tock (Purdue University Fort Wayne)

Kate Fisher (University of Louisville), "Navigating Estrangement within Anne Brontë's Textual Genealogy: The Creation of Meaning After Death"

Annmarie Steffes (University of Louisville), "Associations enough and to spare: Genealogies of Place in *Jude the Obscure*"

Max Vitelli (Goldsmiths, University of London), "FitzGerald's Monster: *The Myth of Omar Khayyám*"

Dinner on own (group reservations)

Saturday, April 5, 2025

8:30–10:00: Seminar (closed session)

Room B

"Victorian Studies and the Plant Humanities." Led by Lindsay Wells (University of California, Los Angeles).

Christopher Ferguson: "The Plant on the Working-Class Windowsill in Victorian Britain"

Menglu Gao: "Thingness and Wilderness: Reimagining Nineteenth-Century Plants and Laborers in the Plantation System"

8:30–10:00: Session 5

5A
Room A

The Family and the Archive

Moderator: Doreen Thierauf (North Carolina Wesleyan University)

Amanda Shubert (University of Wisconsin-Madison), "A Past that is Not Past: Autobiography and the Undisciplining of Victorian Studies"

Andrea Kaston Tange (Macalester College), "'Baby Shoes, \$2.75': Reading (and Writing) the Gaps in our Great-Grandmother's Stories"

Rosemary Richards (Independent Scholar), "'This is Grand and I could not give up this pleasure for anything': Two Methodist Choir Conductors in Australia"

5B
Room C

Déjà Vu: Victorian and Neo-Victorian Adaptations

Moderator: Dallas Liddle (Augsburg University)

Anna Isbell (University of Iowa), "Genealogy Interrupted: Medea, Love, and the Murdering Mother in Victorian Visual Culture"

Ashni Clayton (Washington University in St Louis), "Something About Jane: The Enduring Passion and Promise of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*"

10:00–10:15: Break

10:15–11:45: Session 6

6A
Room A

Reading Methodologies Revisited: Latency, Resurfacing, Prosody

Moderator: Amy Kahrman Huseby (Rice University)

Sasha Starovoitov (Stanford University), "Reading for Resistance, Resisting Reading: Resurfacing Desire in *Villette*"

James Mussell (University of Leeds), "'On the threshold, with her candle in her hand': Wilkie Collins, Material Media, and the Revelation of Content"

Kayla Carden (University of Minnesota), "Rhythm and Redivivus: Poetic Generations According to E. A. Sonnenschein and Constance Naden"

6B
Room C

Please Pay Attention: Theoreticians of Mind and History

Moderator: Andrea Kastan Tange (Macalester College)

Jeffrey C. Kessler (University of Illinois at Chicago), "Walter Pater's Theory of Attention: A Genealogy of a Crisis."

Lauren Ganger (Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester), "Ungendering Arabella: Girl Prodigies and Masculine Professionalism in Mid-Nineteenth Century Britain"

Katherin Stein (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), "Finding the Female Historian: Genealogies of Female History in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*"

2:45–4:15: Session 7

7A
Room A

***Fin-de-Siècle* Inheritances, Genealogies, Conversions**

Moderator: Andrea Kastan Tange (Macalester College)

Alice Clapie (Columbia University), "Degenerate Lineages: Genealogy, National Inheritances, and the Spectacle of Fragile Heredity in Late Victorian Drama"

Gunja Nandi (Texas Christian University), "Eastern Dancers and the Western Gaze: The Queer Genealogies of Decadence in Indian Poetry"

Cathlin Noonan (Texas State University), "Conversion through Triangulated Belief Systems in Michael Field's *Wild Honey from Various Thyme* (1908)"

7B
Room C

Entre Nous: Familial Inheritances

Moderator: Rosemary Richards (Independent Scholar)

Madhukari Guha (Texas Christian University), "Queer Intimacies in the Anglo-Indian Family: The Disruptive Presence of the Ayah in Alice Perrin's Ghost Stories"

Lydia Pensel (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale), "Agency and Matrilineal Ties: Queen Victoria and Her Daughters"

Alexandria Degner (University of Louisville), "Absence is Presence: Detachment and Familial Relations in *Villette*"

4:30–6:00: Session 8

8A
Room A

Out with the Old: Victorian Genres of the Future

Moderator: Anna Isbell (University of Iowa)

Ann M. Tandy (University of Minnesota-Twin Cities), "From Londinium to London: Archeology and the Threat of the Past"

Matthew Skwiat (Morehouse College), "The Sensational Bildungsroman: Experimentation and Transgression in The Ordeal of Richard Feverel and Great Expectations"

Mary Dudley (University of Louisville), "'Children of the soil': Evolutionary Meliorism in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*"

8B
Room C

Philanthropy's Domains: Music, Institution, City

Moderator: Christopher Ferguson (Auburn University)

Phyllis Weliver (Saint Louis University), "Musical Idealism from London to Melbourne: Cousins T. H. Green and George W. L. Marshall-Hall"

Laura Witherington (University of Arkansas at Fort Smith), "Octavia Hill's Sisterhood of Men: The Kyrle Society's Genealogy and Legacy"

Eric Saylor (Drake University), "Wedgwoods and Darwins and Vaughan Williamses (Oh My!): Rebels, Heirs, and the Making of a Composer"

6:15–8:15: Banquet at Alumni Center; Burgan Prize announcement
7:30: Concert at the Auer Performance Hall

Sunday, April 6, 2025

9:00–11:00: Board meeting, PFW Helmke Library Board Room (LB 112)
Genealogy Center Tour (own transportation)

MEMBER PUBLICATIONS

Rosemary Richards, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
Memories of Musical Lives: Music and Dance in Personal Music Collections from Australia and New Zealand, co-edited by Rosemary Richards and Julja Szuster (Lyrebird Press Australia, 2022)

Laura Fiss, Michigan Technological University
The Idler's Club (Edinburgh University Press, 2023)

Florence Boos, University of Iowa
William Morris on Socialism: Uncollected Essays, ed. (Edinburgh University Press, 2023)

Victoria Bik, New York
Digital Victorians (Stanford University Press, 2024)

Jeffrey Kessler et al, University of Illinois Chicago
Writing for Inquiry and Research (University of Illinois Library, 2023)

Christina Bashford, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Violin Culture in Britain, 1870-1930: Music-making, Society, and the Popularity of Stringed Instruments (Forthcoming Cambridge UP, April 2025)

Amanda Shubert, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Seeing Things: Virtual Aesthetics in Victorian Culture (Forthcoming Cornell University Press in November 2025)

Phyllis Weliver, Saint Louis University
Reading Texts in Nineteenth-Century Music and Literature. Eds Phyllis Weliver and Katharine Ellis (Boydell & Brewer, 2025)

James Mussell, University of Leeds
Letterpress Printing: Past, Present, Future, ed. with Caroline Archer-Parré (Peter Lang, 2023)

Katherine Stein, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Selected Early Works by Elizabeth Barrett Browning (Juvenilia Press, 2025)

Anne Rodrick, Wofford College
Lecturing the Victorians: Knowledge-Based Culture and Participatory Citizenship (Bloomsbury Academic Publishing, 2024)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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