

The Journal of
African American History

Formerly The Journal of Negro History *Founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, January 1, 1916*

August 5, 2023

To: Executive Council
 Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)

From: Pero G. Dagbovie
 Editor, *The Journal of African American History (JAAH)*
 Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and Dean of the Graduate School
 University Distinguished Professor of History, Michigan State University

Re: Final Report for *JAAH* Activities

This is the final formal report of *JAAH* activities under my editorship. My term as editor of *JAAH* officially ends on December 5, 2023, several months before the release of Volume 109, Number 1 (Winter 2024). The final manuscripts for this issue have been submitted to the University of Chicago Press (UCP) for publication and include five articles and twenty book reviews. In what follows, I briefly overview the progress that has been made with *JAAH* since May 10, 2023 (when I submitted a spring “progress report”) and briefly reflect upon my tenure as editor. I can expand upon any of the topics mentioned below. It has been a great pleasure, privilege, and honor serving as editor of *JAAH*, working with the editorial board, the UCP Journal Division, and ASALH leadership.

The next forthcoming issue of *JAAH*, Volume 108, Number 3 (Summer 2023)—a “special issue” on the history of the “Black 1980s”—will be released this month. Authors are currently working on their copyedits and I anticipate receiving the page proofs soon. Guest edited by George Derek Musgrove and his colleagues, the complete manuscripts for this issue were submitted to UCP in May 2023. In addition to an engaging “Roundtable” and “Introduction” as well as twenty book reviews, the issue includes five articles: Amanda Hall, “Students are the Spark: Black Internationalism, Apartheid Divestment, and Amandla!”; Quito Swan, “Vanuatu, the Black Pacific, and the Global 1980s”; Donna Murch, “The Black Working Class, the Underclass Debate and the Politics of Erasure in the Long Eighties”; Ajamu Amiri Dillahunt-Holloway, “Victory Through Struggle: Black Workers for Justice and the Fight for Economic and Environmental Justice in North Carolina”; and Jonathan Gray, “Treat it Like a Seminar: Black Sonic Resistance to the Reagan Revolution.”

The last issue that will appear under my and the current editorial team’s tenure is **Volume 108, Number 4 (Fall 2023)**. The complete manuscripts were submitted to UCP on July 12, 2023. This issue should be released, according to UCP’s publication schedule, sometime in November 2023 and includes the following six articles: Margarita Lila Rosa, “‘They Won’t Let Me Alone’: Riotous Black Women and the Archival Offerings of Desire and Desperation”; Gideon Cohn-Poster, “‘That Infernal Race Prejudice’: Dr. George Wellington Bryant and the Contestation of Black Officeholding in the Gilded Age”; Christine Woyshner, “Black Civic Organizations and the Quest for Education: The Improved, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World, 1898-1954”; Alison Parker, “Oscar Stanton DePriest: Chicago, Republican Politics, and African American’s Political Ambitions”; Samuel Galen Ng, “Professional Mourning: Billie Holiday’s ‘Strange Fruit’ and the Remaking of Black Consciousness”; Erik Wallenberg, “Staging Environmental Racism: The Free Southern Theater’s Environmental Justice Script and Use of Documentary Theater.” The Fall 2023 issue also includes a forum on the life and legacy of Carter G. Woodson in recognition of the upcoming

opening of the Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site; an “In Memoriam” (including ten heartfelt pieces) in honor of longtime ASALH member John H. Bracey Jr. organized by editorial board member Stephanie Evans; and twenty book reviews. In October 2023, I will receive the “whites” (page proofs) for Volume 108, Number 4 before its release in November.

According to Section 10. (“Transfer of the Editorship) of the MOU I signed with ASALH in early March 2022 that extended my editorship until December 5, 2023, I agreed to “provide the new editor training in the procedures for producing the journal.” In order to help facilitate a smooth transition for *JAAH* moving forward, in early June 2023, I invited the incoming *JAAH* editor, Dr. Bertis English, to MSU to visit the current *JAAH* office, discuss the duties and responsibilities of the *JAAH* editor, take stock of UCP’s publication schedule for the journal, and explore the basics of the Editorial Manager (EM) system (a highly-configurable workflow management system built to streamline editorial processes that takes some time to get comfortable with).¹ Book review editor and managing editor LaShawn Harris also joined us virtually to overview the various responsibilities of the book review editor.² We have shared with Dr. English important contacts at the UCP (e.g., Olivia Kinker, Jeff Hamrick, and Rob Blixt) and, since June 2023, have passed along to him manuscripts submitted by prospective authors for his perusal and optional feedback about next steps (i.e., determining which manuscripts should be sent out for formal peer review). On August 1, 2023, at Dr. English’s request, I reached out to members of the current editorial board asking them if they would like to renew their terms under his forthcoming editorship. I anticipate receiving responses in the near future and will share the results with Dr. English. In early August, LaShawn Harris reached out to all our contacts with presses whose books we review indicating that review copies of books and catalogs should be mailed to Dr. English at Alabama State University beginning in the early fall.

The journal is in a very solid state for the next editorial team. *JAAH* is running smoothly; the editor and managing editor are closely monitoring the journal’s EM and responding to authors’ submissions in timely manners. Dr. English and his editorial team will inherit three complete issues—Volume 109 (Numbers 1, 2, and 3)—that, combined, comprise of fifteen articles on a range of topics and

¹Among the responsibilities of the *JAAH* editor that were communicated include: learning the Editorial Manager system; managing the nuances of the peer-review process; creating a separate *JAAH* e-mail account and responding to e-mail inquiries; reading reviews of manuscripts and manuscripts to ensure quality and technical accuracy; writing editorial decision letters based on the reviews; reading the final proofs for each issue several times before they are published; communicating regularly with the editorial board and UCP Journal Division staff members to plan future issues; selecting covers for issues; attending the three annual business meetings of the ASALH to provide updates about *JAAH* to the Executive Council and producing periodic written reports; providing leadership of the editorial board; serving as an ambassador for the journal; remaining in contact with the authors, the reviewers, and production team who manage the UCP Journal Division publication side of the journal; regularly checking the Editorial Manager portal for submissions; attending the AHA journal editors meetings at the annual conferences; and soliciting manuscript submissions, when needed, and organizing “special issues.”

²The primary responsibilities of the *JAAH* book review editor that were conveyed include: maintaining and adjusting, if necessary, a set of guidelines for book reviews submitted to *JAAH*; ensuring that between 20 and 25 book reviews are published in each issue of the journal; identifying books that warrant being reviewed and obtaining review copies from the publishers if needed; identifying potential reviewers, soliciting submissions, and transmitting to potential reviewers the “Book Review Guidelines;” preserving a database of book reviewers and expanding this as necessary (and providing this to ASALH Executive Director Sylvia Cyrus upon periodic request); corresponding with the authors of the book reviews, providing them with information about the status of its editorial review as necessary; offering feedback to authors of the book reviews, if necessary (especially in terms of tone and professional collegiality) before they are sent to the editorial staff at UCP; and providing presses with the reviews of books from their presses after they are published.

more than sixty book reviews.³ Thus, the first issue that Dr. English will be completely responsible for organizing, putting together, and processing will be **Volume 109, Number 4 (Fall 2024)** which will be released in November 2024. Per the journal's detailed publication schedule, which has been shared with Dr. English, the final manuscripts for this issue will be due to UCP by mid-July 2024.

In a 2019 editorial I authored in the journal, I remarked, "During my term as editor, the journal will aim to provide its diverse readership with original and innovative scholarship, seek to foster cross-generational dialogues and conversations, and keep abreast of trends in the discipline during what has been called 'the era of the digital echo.'" Thanks to the work and support of many, I believe these goals have been accomplished. LaShawn and I began transitioning into our *JAAH* leadership positions in early 2018 and since Volume 104, Number 1 (Fall 2019), more than 90 articles; a collection of review essays; several forums, symposia, In Memoria, and roundtables; five innovative "special issues" on a range of topics; and more than 450 book reviews have been published in *JAAH*. I'm particularly pleased with our work with junior scholars and the increased visibility and innovation we provided for the "leading scholarly journal in the field of African American history."

As I expressed in a progress report I wrote in April 2022, I have learned much along the way and hope I have contributed to the tradition of excellence fostered by Dr. Carter G. Woodson. While balancing the responsibilities of serving as *JAAH* editor with my role (since early in 2022) as vice provost of graduate and postdoctoral studies and dean of the Graduate School at Michigan State University has been challenging, I have thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity and experience. I appreciate the editorial board and hundreds of peer reviewers for meticulously reviewing manuscripts during my tenure and for their support.⁴ Associate editors Derrick Alridge and Daina Ramey Berry provided invaluable support and I wouldn't have been able to continue do my work for the journal without the unwavering support of LaShawn Harris, the devoted book review editor and managing editor. The University of Chicago Press Journal Division *JAAH* team has been extremely helpful and supportive over the years. I'm grateful for the support and encouragement from ASALH leadership.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with any questions. Thank you very much for your support. I am looking forward to the 108th Annual ASALH Conference and my final *JAAH* Reception as editor.

³ Each issue of *JAAH* (four per year—Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall) normally consist of between four and six articles and between twenty and twenty-five book reviews. When applicable, issues can also feature book review essays, forums, roundtables, symposia, In Memoria, and announcements. Also, from 2019 until 2023, each volume of *JAAH* included one "special issue" (i.e., we published one "special issue" per year).

⁴ I formally invited the current editorial members to join the *JAAH* team in early February 2018. Later in the month, the ASALH EC approved the list. The first meeting of editorial board was held on October 5, 2018 at the annual conference in Indianapolis. The editorial board included the following scholars who served from 2018 until 2023: Leslie A. Alexander, Shawn L. Alexander, Erica Armstrong Dunbar, Davarian L. Baldwin, Mia Bay, Keisha N. Blain, Stephanie Y. Evans, Tiffany M. Gill, Thavolia Glymph, Cheryl D. Hicks, David H. Jackson Jr., Martha S. Jones, Ibram X. Kendi, Khalil Gibran Muhammad, Kevin Mumford, Celia E. Naylor, Russell J. Rickford, Stephanie J. Shaw, Nikki M. Taylor, and Ula Y. Taylor. This team represented the geographical and topical range as well as the thematic and theoretical complexities of the journal's aim and scope. As active scholars, they are aware of the trends and developments within their specializations and the African American historical enterprise in general. In addition to being committed to the enduring vision and mission of *JAAH*, they assisted in soliciting submissions; reviewing a reasonable number of submissions related to their expertise; acting as an 'ambassadors' for the journal by promoting it within their scholarly networks; and encouraging colleagues and students to draw upon the resources available in the journal. Along with book review editor and managing editor LaShawn Harris, I registered hundreds of potential manuscript reviewers in the journal's Editorial Manager system. During our tenure, we reached out to approximately 500 scholars to serve as peer reviewers for submitted manuscripts.