

The Loose Ends of History 2

No history can encompass all historical evidence. In every paradigm, whether methodologically or historiographically generated, some evidence is privileged and some neglected. Some evidence will always be ephemeral or irrelevant to a dominant paradigm that weaves together the historically specific into a larger, broader narrative of the past. At the same time, professional historians understand that new lines of historical analysis have been generated by fresh attention to neglected evidence: the *loose ends* of history. Every historian has, in the course of their research in archives, libraries, and museums, come across compelling evidence that does not contribute to dominant narratives of their subfields, or fields, of history. These loose ends of history have tremendous generative potential.

In treating the effort to rehabilitate loose ends as a shared methodological and epistemological enterprise across a range of historians, this panel series is inspired in part by the methodological challenges raised by Michel-Rolph Trouillot, who identified the production of historical silences at the moment of 1) the production of sources, 2) the making of archives, 3) the retrieval of sources and 4) the assigning of retrospective significance. Our effort is twofold: to share methodological solutions for retrieving historical loose ends, and to begin an open inquiry into considering what new stories can be found in them.

In our field of early modern history, some creative recent subjects of analysis have included:

- gender fluidity (e.g. cross dressing)
- forms of religious hybridities and coexistence (e.g. simultaneum churches)
- transnational networks (especially ones that cross linguistic boundaries not bridged by previous historians)
- migrations and movements across borders
- studies of bureaucrats, functionaries and other ambiguous agents of states (e.g. archivists)
- the roles of indigenous peoples in shaping colonialism (e.g. mapmaking)
- role of the informal economy within capitalism (e.g. brothels)
- studies of non-textual elements of the human experience (e.g. soundscapes)

The Sixteenth Century Society and Conference (SCSC) has long brought scholars from diverse fields and regions together to explore and develop new subjects of analysis in the early modern. At the Fall 2021 SCSC, a group of scholars assembled in five panels to share new arguments about causation and motivation, and new understandings of outcomes and trajectories. New narratives emerged from new methodical approaches, new historical questions applied to old sources, and new types of sources.

For the Fall 2022 SCSC, set to be held in Minneapolis, October 27-30, we invite previous contributors to return, and new contributors to join us. Our goal is to provide entries into alternative historical narratives, creating a space and an audience for further discussion and thought about the questions they raise. Panels will be organized around themes associated with historical methods and interpretation such as:

- alternatives to dominant narratives
- new readings of traditional sources attentive to evidence previously ignored
- the interpretation of sources often shunted aside as ephemera
- the agency of individuals once treated as marginal to historical change
- the production of historical silences

Please send a 250-word abstract, brief bio (of less than 150 words), information about any A/V, scheduling, or letter of invitation needs to Jesse Spohnholz, Washington State University, (spohnhoj@wsu.edu) and Carina Johnson, Pitzer College (carina_johnson@pitzer.edu) by March 25, 2022.