

Scott Reynolds Nelson

Georgia Athletic Association Professor of History, University of Georgia

Department of History, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602 · 706-542-2053 · srnelson@uga.edu

scottreynoldsnelson.com · ORCID 0000-0001-8113-0920

EDUCATION

Ph.D. & M.A., U.S. History, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1995

B.A. (highest honors), History, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1987

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Georgia Athletic Association Professor of History, University of Georgia, 2016–present

Legum Professor of History, College of William & Mary, 2007–2016

Associate Professor of History, William & Mary, 2001–2007; Assistant Professor, 1994–2001

HONORS, PRIZES, AND AWARDS (SELECTED)

Elected Member, Society of American Historians, 2024

Charles Warren Fellow, Harvard University, 2024 and 2010

Guggenheim Fellow, 2019

Distinguished Visiting Professor, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), France, 2018

Visiting Professor, University of Leiden, the Netherlands, 2016

Resident Fellow, National Humanities Center, 2012–13

Lloyd Lewis Fellow in American History, Newberry Library, 2009

OAH Distinguished Lecturer, Organization of American Historians, 2008–present

Commonwealth of Virginia Distinguished Scholar, 2007–2016

For *Steel Drivin' Man* (2007): Merle Curti Prize (OAH, best book in U.S. social & cultural history); Anisfield-Wolf Prize for Nonfiction; Virginia Literary Award for Nonfiction

For *Ain't Nothing But a Man*: Jane Addams Children's Book Award, 2009; Aesop Prize, American Folklore Society, 2008

Phi Beta Kappa, University of North Carolina, 1987

BOOKS

Oceans of Grain: How American Wheat Remade the World (Basic Books, 2022). Translated into Portuguese, Russian, Japanese, Turkish, Ukrainian, and Chinese (complex and simplified).

A Nation of Deadbeats: An Uncommon History of America's Financial Disasters (Knopf, 2012).

Steel Drivin' Man: John Henry, the Untold Story of an American Legend (Oxford University Press, 2006).

Iron Confederacies: Southern Railways, Klan Violence, and Reconstruction (University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

CO-AUTHORED AND EDITED BOOKS

With Carol Sheriff, *A People at War: Civilians and Soldiers in America's Civil War* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

With Marc Aronson, *Ain't Nothing But a Man* (National Geographic Children's Books, 2007).

With Carol Sheriff, ed., *The American Civil War at Home* (2013).

STAGE ADAPTATIONS OF STEEL DRIVIN' MAN

Steel Hammer, dir. Anne Bogart; librettists Kia Corthron, Will Power, Carl Hancock Rux, and Regina Taylor; toured the U.S., 2014–2015.

JH: Mechanics of a Legend, Hiawatha Project, dir. Anya Martin; August Wilson Center, 2017.

SELECTED ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS

"The Bourbon South," in *A New History of the American South* (Ferris & Ferris / UNC Press, 2023).

"Inventing the Future: The Effort to Keep the Union Army Fighting Created the Commodities Market," *American History* 57, no. 4 (2022): 56–65.

"The Many Panics of 1819," *Journal of the Early Republic* 40, no. 4 (2020): 721–727.

"Who Put their Capitalism in My Slavery?" *Journal of the Civil War Era* 5, no. 2 (2015): 289–310.

- "A Storm of Cheap Goods: New American Commodities and the Panic of 1873," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10 (2011): 447–453.
- "After Slavery: Forced Drafts of Irish and Chinese Labor in the American Civil War," in *Many Middle Passages* (University of California Press, 2007).
- "Who Was John Henry? Railroad Construction, Southern Folklore, and the Birth of Rock and Roll," *Labor* 2 (2005): 53–79; reprinted in *Other Souths* (University of Georgia Press, 2008).
- "The Confederacy serves the Southern: the Construction of the Southern Railway Network, 1861–65," *Civil War History* 41 (1995): 227–43.
- "The Ordeal of Eugene Debs: The Panic of 1893, the Pullman Strike, and the Origins of the Progressive Movement," in *Workers in Hard Times* (University of Illinois Press, 2014).
- "An American War of Incarceration: Guerilla Warfare, Occupation, and Imprisonment in the American South, 1863–1865," in *Inventing Collateral Damage* (Between the Lines, 2009).
- "Red Strings and Half-Brothers: Civil Wars in Alamance County, North Carolina," in *Enemies of the Country* (University of Georgia Press, 2001).

SELECTED PUBLIC WRITING

- "Radical Tariffs Aren't New, But They Have Been Disastrous," *AHA Perspectives*, 2025.
- "The Awful History of Tariffs and Depressions," *Foreign Policy*, 2025.
- "Ukrainian Wheat Is Once Again Changing the Course of History," *Time*, 2022.
- "The Real Great Depression," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2008 — translated into German, French, Spanish, Italian, Korean, and Hungarian.
- Commissioned essays for the *New York Times* "Room for Debate," 2009.

SELECTED INVITED TALKS AND KEYNOTES

- Keynote, RenMac Edge (conference for fund managers), 2026.
- "The Geopolitics of Ukraine," JP Morgan Commodities Center Keynote, Denver, 2023.
- "Oceans of Grain," Washington History Seminar (with Heather Cox Richardson and Stephanie McCurry), 2022.
- Interview, guancha.cn (Observer Net), Shanghai, 2024; Sky News Arabia documentary *Grain of Wheat*, 2022.
- "Grain War," *Open Source with Christopher Lydon*, 2022.
- "Nation of Deadbeats," Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, 2013; Banner Lecture, Virginia Historical Society, 2012.
- Kendrick J. Kelley Lecture, Davidson College, 2011.
- Economic History Seminar, Université Paris 1 (Paris School of Economics), 2018.
- American History Colloquium, Queen's University Belfast, 2008; Clinton Institute, University College Cork, 2008.
- "How Wheat Shaped the World," Kansas Public Radio (hour-long interview), 2023; "Demeter's Secret and the Long History of Ukraine," Duke University, 2023.
- "Oceans of Grain," New Orleans Book Festival, 2023; Weinstein Author Series, Library of Virginia, 2022; Hall Center for the Humanities, University of Kansas, 2022.
- "Os Cereais Como Arma de Guerra," Ambito Cultural panel, Lisbon, Portugal, 2022; Denver Council on Foreign Relations, 2022.
- "Financial Crises and the Political Pendulum," Wellesley College, 2012; Seminar on the Financial Crisis, Carnegie Mellon University, 2009.
- "From Mortgage Crisis to Market Meltdown," CLSA seminars for fund managers, Hong Kong and Las Vegas, 2009.
- Keynote, Thirtieth Annual John Henry Festival, West Virginia, 2002; West Virginia Humanities Council Lecture, 2008.

COURSES TAUGHT

History of American Capitalism · U.S. History Survey (both halves) · The American Civil War · The Gilded Age · Gender and the Civil War (undergraduate research seminar) · Research Seminar in U.S. History, 1815–present (graduate) · The Literature and History of American History (graduate historiography).

GRADUATE MENTORSHIP

Directed **19 doctoral students to completion** (College of William & Mary and University of Georgia) and more than 15 M.A. students; currently directs 7 doctoral students and serves on 10 additional doctoral committees. Doctoral students with published first books include Alexandra Finley, (UNC Press, 2020); Kate Côté-Gillin (USC Press, 2013); Jennifer Luff (UNC Press, 2012); Seth Bruggeman (University of Georgia Press, 2008); and Julie Lautenschlager (McFarland, 2006).

Graduate Ombudsperson, Arts & Sciences, William & Mary, 2001–03 and 2005–07.

Completed doctorates, William & Mary: Julie Lautenschlager (2003), Toby Chieffo-Reidway (2005), Leni Sorensen (2005), Jennifer Luff (2006), Seth Bruggeman (2006), Kate Côté-Gillin (2007), Sarah Grunder (2010), Jackson Sasser (2015), Chase Wallace (2015), Alexandra Finley (2017), Kristina Poznan (2018), August Butler (2019), Amanda Gibson (2021).

Completed doctorates, University of Georgia: Matt O’Neal (2023), Karyna Hlyvynska (2025), Bryant Barnes (2025), Rob Ferguson (2025), Jared Asser (2026), Nathanael Mickelson (2026).

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Chair, Nominations Committee, Society of American Historians, 2025–present.

Chair, Mark Lynton History Prize, 2025–present (Prize Committee, 2024–present).

President, Southern Labor Studies Association, 2012–13.

Associate Editor, *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 2003–2011.

Editorial Board, *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*, 2007–2023.

SELECTED UNIVERSITY SERVICE

University of Georgia: University Council, 2017–24; Chair, Committee on Facilities, 2020–22; Graduate Council, 2020–24.

William & Mary: Chair, Retention, Promotion & Tenure Committee, 2012–13; Secretary, Faculty Assembly, 2005–06.

LANGUAGES AND REVIEWING

Reading knowledge of German and Russian; some French and Spanish. Reviews books for *Journal of American History*, *American Historical Review*, *William and Mary Quarterly*, *Journal of Southern History*, and other journals.