
Nick Yablon

Associate Professor
History (and American studies)
University of Iowa

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EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

Higher education

- 2002 Ph.D., History, University of Chicago (with Distinction)
Dissertation committee: Neil Harris (chair), Amy Dru Stanley, Bill Brown
- 1994 B.A. (Hons.), Medieval and Modern History, University of Birmingham, England

Professional and academic positions

- 2018- Associate Professor, Department of History (with zero-percent appointment in American Studies), University of Iowa
- 2016-18 Associate Professor, Departments of American Studies and History, University of Iowa
- 2009-16 Associate Professor, Department of American Studies, University of Iowa
- 2003-2009 Assistant Professor, Department of American Studies, University of Iowa
- 2002-2003 AAS-National Endowment of the Humanities Postdoctoral Research Fellow, at the American Antiquarian Society

SCHOLARSHIP

Books

“From the Sky Scrapper to the Wild Flower”: Charles Gilbert Hine’s *Photographic Survey of New York’s Broadway, 1885-1910* (research complete; 50 pages written, under contract to Columbia University Press).

Remembrance of Things Present: The Invention of the Time Capsule (University of Chicago Press, June 2019), 384pp; reviewed in *Bookforum*.

Untimely Ruins: An Archaeology of American Urban Modernity, 1819-1919 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 380pp.; reviewed in *Journal of Urban Design*; *Reviews in American History*; *American Historical Review*; *Technology and Culture*; *Science Fiction Studies*.

Edited collections

“Containing Cultures,” special issue of *Winterthur Portfolio*

Journal articles

“The Subway Boom: Photography, Historic Preservation, and Real Estate in New York, 1897-1908” (drafted, will submit to *Buildings & Landscapes* [Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum])

Introduction to “Containing Cultures,” *Winterthur Portfolio*

“The Man With the Carpet Bag, or, How a Container Came to be a Counter-Reconstruction Epithet” (manuscript complete, about to be submitted to *Winterthur Portfolio*)

“The League of Planets: Professor Albert Porta and the Apocalyptic Panic of December 1919” (manuscript completed and submitted to *History Today*)

“For the Future Viewer: Salvage Ethnography and Edward Curtis’s “Oath – Apsaroke,” forthcoming, *Journal of American Studies* (2018) (13,000 words)

“‘A Curious Epitome of the Life of the City:’ New York, Broadway, and the Evolution of the Longitudinal View,” *Journal of Urban History* 44, 5 (2018): 953-84 (17,500 words)

“Posing for Posterity: Photographic Portraiture and the Invention of the Time Capsule, 1876–89,” *History of Photography* 38, no. 4 (Fall 2014): 331-355 (14,500 words)

“‘Land of Unfinished Monuments’: The Ruins-in-Reverse of Nineteenth-Century America,” *American Nineteenth Century History* 13, no. 2 (August 2012), 153-97 (15,000 words)

“Encapsulating the Present: Material Decay, Labor Unrest, and the Prehistory of the Time Capsule, 1876–1914,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 1-28 (14,500 words)

“Utopia or Heterotopia: John Sloan and the ‘Roof Life of the Metropolis,’” *American Art* 25, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 14-17 (2,000 words)

“Echoes of the City: Spacing Sound, Sounding Space, 1888-1916,” *American Literary History*, vol. 19, no. 3 (Fall 2007), 629-660 (14,000 words)

“The Metropolitan Life in Ruins: Architectural and Fictional Speculations in New York, 1909-1919,” *American Quarterly*, vol. 56, no. 2 (June 2004), 308-347 (15,000 words)

Book chapters (all commissioned)

“The Empty Cities of Urban Apocalypse,” *Apocalypse in American Literature and Culture*, ed. John Hay (under contract to Cambridge University Press), (manuscript completed and submitted)

“Time and Space,” *A Cultural History of Memory in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Susan A. Crane (London, Oxford, and New York: Bloomsbury) (in production; scheduled for publication in 2019)

“Untimely Objects: Temporal Studies and the New Materialism,” in *Time and Literature*, ed. Thomas Allen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 120-133

“‘A Picture Painted in Fire’: Pain’s Re-enactments of the Last Days of Pompeii, 1879-1914,” in Victoria Coates and Jon Seydl (eds), *Antiquity Recovered: The Legacy of Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2007), 189-206 (8,000 words)

Encyclopedia articles

Articles on “dialogism,” “reification,” Georg Lukács, Terry Eagleton, and Charles Jencks, published in the *Routledge Dictionary of TV and Film Theory* (New York & London: Routledge, 2000)

Published reviews of scholarship

“South Side Story” [review of Robin F. Bachin, *Building the South Side: Urban Space and Civic Culture in Chicago, 1890-1919*], *Reviews in American History*, vol. 33, no. 2 (June 2005), 224-32 (5,000 words)

Non-peer-reviewed writings

“The Uses and Abuses of Time Capsules,” commissioned by *Atlantic Monthly* (2019), (manuscript completed and submitted to editor)

“A mysterious time capsule: A UI historian uncovers strange and troubling history left sealed for distant millennia,” *Iowa Alumni Magazine*, June 2019 (2200 words)

“An elegant, bronze time capsule, rediscovered at the New-York Historical Society, awaits its opening,” New-York Historical Society website, 2014,
<http://behindthescenes.nyhistory.org/elegant-bronze-time-capsule-rediscovered-new-york-historical-society-awaits-opening/> (1,300 words)

“Relapsing into Barbarism,” *Iowa Alumni Magazine*, 2007 (1000 words)

Interviews/profiles

Interview on CBC Radio (Canada) regarding time capsule discovery, October, 2017

Interview on CBC Radio (Canada) regarding commemorations of the 150th anniversary of Canadian Federation, June 2017

Eric Grundhauser, “The Best Way to Find a Time Capsule,” *Atlas Obscura*, February 15, 2017, <<http://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/time-capsule-how-to-find>>

Interview about time capsules, KWMR, March 2016

Interview in “Permanent Record” (object-based history project by journalist Paul Lukas), 2014, <<http://permanentreCORDproject.blogspot.com/2014/10/photo-by-julie-jacobson-associated.html>>

Grants Funded

External

Short-term research fellowship at the Winterthur Library, 2014 (declined)

NEH Research Fellowship at the New-York Historical Society, 2013-14 (to research Charles Gilbert Hine’s Photographic Survey of New York’s Broadway, 1885-1910)

Getty Postdoctoral Fellowship, 2007-8 (to complete *Untimely Ruins*)

American Antiquarian Society-National Endowment of the Humanities Research Fellowship,
2002-03 (to expand dissertation into a book manuscript)

Andrew Mellon Dissertation Writing Fellowship, University of Chicago, 2000-01

Andrew Mellon Fellowship for Research at the Huntington Library, Pasadena, California, 2000

Internal

Subvention for publication of images, 2009

Old Gold fellowship, Summer 2004

Invited Lectures and Conference Presentations

Invited Lectures

[Title to be decided], at The Human Document Project, a “debatival” in Gmunden, Austria, 2020

"Henry Cogswell's 'Box with Mementos for the Historical Society,' Unpacking a Time Capsule from the Gilded Age San Francisco," at the California Historical Society, San Francisco, September 10, 2019

“'An Index to Our Civilization': The Hidden History of the Time Capsule,” at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, November 12, 2019

“The League of Planets: Professor Albert Porta and the Apocalyptic Panic of December 1919” at the Huntington Library, October 19, 2019 (one of several lectures organized to commemorate the library's 100th anniversary)

“Time Capsules and the Politics of Commemoration” (via skype) for San Diego Art Institute's public art series, “Parkeology,” January 2017

“A Curious Epitome of the Life of the City:” New York, Broadway, and the Evolution of the Longitudinal View,” at the Department of Art and Architectural History, Boston University, 2016

“Inventing the Time Capsule: Media, Memory, and the Politics of Posterity,” School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design, York University (Toronto), 2015

“Instant Relics: Wall Street and the Projection of Civic Patriotism,” introductory talk, prior to opening of a 1914 time capsule at the New-York Historical Society, 2014

“From the Sky Scrapper to the Wild Flower’: Charles Gilbert Hine's Walk Up Broadway, 1905,” at the New-York Historical Society, 2014

“P.O. Box to the Future: Ethnic/Class Conflict and the Co-Invention of the Time Capsule, San Francisco, 1879” at the Religion, Literature, and the Arts conference, “Futures and Illusions: Hope and the Longing for Utopia,” University of Iowa, 2012

“Uniting times past, times present, and times to come”: The City, Posterity, and the Invention of the Time Capsule,” at symposium on the legacy of Lewis Mumford, at Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, Columbia University, 2012

“American Spectacles of the Last Days of Pompeii, 1834-1908,” at J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, California, 2012

“Rhetoric of the Unfinished: Invoking the Ruins of America's Half-built Monuments, 1825-1893,” JFK Institut für Nordamerikastudien, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, 2011

“Land of Unfinished Monuments’: The Ruins-in-Reverse of Nineteenth-Century America,” lecture to the Iowa Chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), 2010

“As if Struck by a Tornado of Supernatural Strength: Building up and Demolishing the Star Theatre, 1901,” at “Mean Streets: Violence and the Cinematic City,” Cornell University, 2009

“Posteritism: A Prehistory of the Time Capsule, 1876-1901,” Department of American Studies’ Friday Lecture Series, University of Iowa, 2009

“Encapsulating the Present: The ‘War of the Classes’ and the Birth of the Time-Capsule, 1876-1914,” presented at the symposium, “The Politics of Display: America’s Past in Three Dimensions,” in honor of Professor Neil Harris’s retirement, University of Chicago, 2008

“Trouble in Eden: Fantasies of Ruin on the American Urban Frontier, 1825-37,” 18th/19th-Century Interdisciplinary Colloquium “Fauna and Flora” Lecture Series, in connection with the University of Iowa Museum of Art’s exhibition, “Picturing Eden,” 2007

“‘Even Eden, You Know, Ain’t All Built’: Transatlantic Circulation and the Ruins of Cairo, Illinois, 1837-44,” Project on Rhetoric of Inquiry (POROI), University of Iowa, 2005

“Babel and Bedlam: Music, Technology, and the Sonics of Urban Space, 1888-1908,” Sound Research Seminar, University of Iowa, 2005

“Riot on Sunset Strip: Ed Ruscha at the Scene of the Crime,” University of Iowa Museum of Art, 2004

“‘On the Faith of Monstrous Representations’: Dickens’ Meditations on the Speculative Ruins of Cairo, Illinois,” History Department colloquium, University of Iowa, 2003

“Ruins of the Future Anterior: Architectural and Fictional Speculations in New York, 1893-1919,” Humanities Center, Johns Hopkins University, 2003

“Instant Cities, Instant Ruins: Urban Expansion and Romantic Sensation on the Erie Canal, July 9, 1831,” American Antiquarian Society, 2002

“‘Among the Detritus of the Metropolitan’: Real Estate, Popular Fiction, and the Skyscraper in Ruins,” Wayne State University, Detroit, 2002

“The Met Life in Ruins: Architectural Obsolescence, Popular Fiction, and the City of the Future (Anterior), 1909-1919,” Buell Colloquium on American Architecture, Columbia University, 2001

“‘The Damndest Finest Ruins’: Technologies of Catastrophe,” presented at the Newberry Library, Chicago, 2001

Conference presentations

Panelist on a roundtable entitled “Rethinking the Time Capsule: Past, Present, Future” (proposal submitted by Malgorzata J. Rymysza-Pawlowska for National Council on Public History annual meeting, Atlanta, 2020)

“Pledges to Posterity: Recent Critical Re-appropriations of the Time Capsule,” at the Center for the Study of Cultural Memory, London (conference theme: “Memories of the Future”), March 2019

“P.O. Boxes to the Future”: A Genealogy of the Time Capsule, 1876-1939,” American Studies Association annual conference, 2018

“The Subway Boom: Photography, Historic Preservation, and Real Estate in New York, 1897-1908,” College Art Association, 2018

“An Offering to Posterity: Edward Curtis’s North American Indian, the Myth of the Vanishing Race, and the Modern Historic Records Association, 1908-13,” Organization of American Historians annual conference, 2017

“A living history of the times”: Alexander Konta and the Modern Historic Records Association, 1911-14,” Society of Cinema and Media Studies, 2016

“Cultural Histories of Time,” at a round-table on “The Temporal Turn in United States History,” Organization of American Historians annual conference, 2014

“‘Monuments Raised to a Deceased Project’: The Ruins-in-Reverse of Antebellum American Cities,” at the Organization of American Historians annual conference, 2009

“The Reiterated Sacrifice to Pecuniary Profit: Architecture and Temporality in Henry James’ The American Scene,” at Mid-America American Studies Association, Kansas City, 2007

“Homelessness and the ‘Right to the City’ in Antebellum New York,” at the American Studies Association annual conference, Philadelphia, 2007

“The old country’s to blame for it, and not the new ‘un:” Dickens, transatlantic capital and the failure of American paper cities, 1837-44,” at *Engaging the New American Studies*, an international American Studies conference at University of Birmingham, England, 2006.

“The Petrified City: Antiquity and Modernity in Melville’s New York, 1835-1861,” at Mid-America American Studies Association, St. Louis, 2006

“Seismographs of the Mind: Snapshots and Psychologists in San Francisco, 1906,” at the annual conference for the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS), London, 2005

“This venerable landmark of history:” Tourism, Antiquarianism, and the Repossession of Fort Ticonderoga, 1820-1860,” at the Organization of American Historians annual conference, 2004

“Collecting Capital: The Art of Business and the Business of Art in Dreiser’s Trilogy of Desire,” at the conference for the British Association of American Studies (BAAS), Wales, 2003

“Silencing Space: Literature, Music, and Noise in Progressive-Era New York,” at “New York, Chicago, Los Angeles: Cultures and Representations II,” an international American Studies conference at the University of Nottingham, England, 2003

“From the Bowery to Coney Island: Re-branding Pompeii as American Mass Culture, 1834-1908,” at “Antiquity Recovered,” a symposium at University of Pennsylvania, 2002

“Photographs and Seismographs: The Psychology of Disaster,” at the annual conference of the British Association of American Studies, Keele University, England, 2001

“Revisiting the Ruins of New York: The Imagination of Disaster, 1890-1920 ,” on a panel discussing the historical background to the events of September 11, 2001, at CUNY’s Gotham Center’s Conference on New York City History, 2001

“‘Dead Lay the City’: Real Estate, Architectural Obsolescence, and the Ruins of New York, 1909-19,” conference organized by CUNY’s Gotham Center, 2001

Conference participation (as chair/moderator/commentator)

Chair of panel, “Cultural Authority and Representation,” at Mid-America American Studies Association 2018 Conference, Iowa City, 2018

Chair of panel at German Iowa & the Global Midwest, an Obermann Humanities Symposium, University of Iowa, 2016

Chair of panel, “Techne and the City,” at “Identities and Technoculture” conference, University of Iowa, 2009

Chair of panel, “Bad Boys,” at Serious Pleasures, the annual conference of Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies, University of Iowa, 2004