

Curriculum Vitae  
**WILLIAM R. BLACK**  
Western Kentucky University  
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wrblack.com

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## EDUCATION

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2018      PhD, History, Rice University  
2013      MA, History, Western Kentucky University  
2011      BA, History, Bethel University (Tenn.)

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## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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19th century U.S. history, American religion, cultural history, histories of race and gender, slavery, U.S. Civil War era

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## EMPLOYMENT

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2018–      Visiting Instructor, Western Kentucky University  
                 HIST 102: World History since 1500  
                 HIST 443: U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction  
2017      Adjunct Instructor, University of Memphis  
                 HIST 2020: The United States since 1877

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## REFEREED PUBLICATIONS

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### Articles

“How Watermelons Became Black: Emancipation and the Origins of a Racist Trope,”  
*Journal of the Civil War Era*, 8 (March 2018), 64–86

“Helen Keller Jokes, Body and Soul,” *Journal of Popular Culture*, 47 (Dec. 2014), 1167–79

### Edited Primary Sources

“Cumberland Presbyterian Confession of Faith, 1814” and “Cumberland Presbyterian Confession of Faith, 1883,” in Andreas Mühling and Peter Opitz, eds., *Reformierte*

*Bekennnisschriften [Reformed Confessions]*, vol. 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht), forthcoming

## Book Review

Review of K. Stephen Prince, *Stories of the South: Race and the Reconstruction of Southern Identity, 1865–1915*, in *American Nineteenth Century History*, 16 (Summer 2015), 368–70

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## PUBLIC WRITING

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Relevant links at [wrblack.com/writing](http://wrblack.com/writing)

- 2018        “How the Women in Your Life Learned About Aunt Flo,” *MEL Magazine*, Aug. 6
- “Why the Alt-Right Thinks Porn Is a Jewish Conspiracy,” *MEL Magazine*, May 29
- Monthly columnist (“Our History: Stories from the Archives”), *Cumberland Presbyterian*, March–
- “Abraham Lincoln’s Secret Visits to Slaves,” *The Atlantic*, Feb. 12
- 2017        “Maybe Now, Memphis Can Be Free,” *MLK50*, Dec. 21
- “Violence to Redeem the World,” *U.S. Intellectual History*, Nov. 4
- “Know Your Archive: The Historical Foundation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church,” *Religion in American History*, Oct. 7
- “Untangling the Lost Cause Myth from the American Story Will Be Hard,” *Washington Post*, Aug. 25
- “Celebrating Nathan Bedford Forrest Is Celebrating White Supremacy,” *MLK50*, July 12
- “Why Couldn’t the Civil War Have Been Worked Out?,” *Vox*, May 11
- “Your Neighborhood Midwife, Afua Hassan,” *Scalawag*, April 7
- 2016        “Confessions of a Former Neo-Confederate,” *Vox*, Sept. 30
- 2015        “Gordon Wood’s Notecards and the Two Presentisms,” *The Junto*, Feb. 18
- 2014        “How Watermelons Became a Racist Trope,” *The Atlantic*, Dec. 8
- “End-times Watcher Sees Satan in an Energy Drink,” *Religion Dispatches*, Nov. 14

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## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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- 2018 “Roundtable: Can the Denominational Historian Go Home Again?,”  
Conference on Faith and History, Grand Rapids, Mich., Oct. 5
- 2017 “Cumberland Presbyterians and the Project of the Christian Nation,”  
Society for U.S. Intellectual History, Plano, Tex., Oct. 26
- 2015 “*Boler v. Boler: Anti-Shakerism and Marriage Law in Kentucky*,” Communal  
Studies Association, Pleasant Hill, Ky., Oct. 2
- 2013 “When Honest Abe Came Down South: Lincoln Sightings in African-  
American Folklore,” Southern American Studies Association, Charleston,  
S.C., Jan. 31
- 2011 “‘Because She Can’t Hear Them Anyway’: *The Miracle Worker*, Helen Keller  
Jokes, and Historical Memory,” Midwest Popular Culture Association,  
Milwaukee, Oct. 14

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## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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*Relevant links at [wrblack.com/cv](http://wrblack.com/cv)*

- 2018 Interviewed about the racist watermelon stereotype, *Strange Fruit*, June 30
- Interviewed about the Michael Landis controversy, *Chronicle of Higher  
Education*, June 28
- Master Local Historians workshop leader, Morton Museum of Collierville  
(Tenn.) History, April 30
- Interviewed about Lincoln sightings in African-American folklore, *Texas  
Matters*, Feb. 16
- 2017 Historical consultant, Memphians for Removal of Confederate Statues
- “The Deep History of #WhiteChurchQuiet: Cumberland Presbyterians  
and Slavery,” invited talk, Memphis Theological Seminary, Oct. 24
- “How Watermelons Became Black: Emancipation and the Origins of a  
Racist Stereotype,” Annual Civil War Lecture, Institute for Civil War  
Studies, Western Kentucky University, Oct. 19
- Interviewed about movement to remove Confederate monuments in  
Memphis, WMC Action News 5, June 20

## Conversations on *Bloggingheads.tv* and *MeaningOfLife.tv*

- 2018 Arabelle Raphael (sex work and the gig economy), July 9  
Jemar Tisby (race and evangelicalism in the Deep South), June 20  
Natalie Wynn, aka “Contrapoints” (transgender identity and New Atheism), May 17  
David Austin Walsh (George Wallace and William F. Buckley Jr.), April 25  
Elizabeth Catte (Appalachia and public history), April 2  
Edward H. Miller (Cold War culture and JFK assassination conspiracy theories), Feb. 19  
Benjamin E. Park (Mormonism and the LDS presidency), Feb. 5
- 2017 Kate Lister (sex work and digital history), Nov. 30  
Jorge Juan Rodriguez V (religion and politics in Puerto Rico), Nov. 14  
Aryeh Cohen-Wade (Civil War memory and counterfactuals), Aug. 29

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## AWARDS

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- 2018 Award in Cumberland Presbyterian History, Historical Foundation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church
- 2015–18 Graduate Research Grants (3), Humanities Research Council, Rice University
- 2013 Outstanding Graduate Student Award, Potter College of Liberal Arts and Letters, Western Kentucky University
- 2012 George C. Herring Graduate Student Writing Award, Kentucky Association of Teachers of History