

Call for Proposals

AHR Special Issue on Histories of Resilience

Due 21 November 2022



Bisa Butler, *I Know Why the Cage Bird Sings*, 2019. Minneapolis Museum of Art. © Bisa Butler.

The *American Historical Review* seeks proposals for a special issue of the journal on histories of resilience. This issue will inaugurate a new annual digital-only special issue of the *AHR* designed to advance innovative themes, approaches and methods to the past that can contribute to reshaping contemporary historical practice. We invite scholars (as individuals or collaborative teams) working in any time period and place to propose projects for the special issue that speak to capacious historical audiences on questions of resilience.

“Today, resilience is on everyone’s mind,” writes Dr. Kyle Powys Whyte (Potawatomi). “Vulnerability to climate change, extreme weather events, biodiversity loss, and food insecurity raise pressing concerns about the well-being of human and nonhuman lives.”¹ Indeed resilience has become a resonant conceptual frame in a variety of fields from environmental studies, developmental psychology and comparative literature to trauma and memory studies. African and Indigenous historians have more recently brought conceptions of resilience to the center of their work, seeing resilience not only as a response to crisis but as a system or method of approaching the world that takes into account the sustainability of society and anticipates the prevention of crisis. This generative historical scholarship motivates the inaugural special issue of the *AHR*.

Because historians and other scholars doing historical work are skilled in tracking and conceptualizing change across time and space, they are well placed to examine the ways in which communities have fostered resilience along with its multiple formations as they negotiated

¹ Kyle Powys Whyte, “Critical Investigations of Resilience: A Brief Introduction to Indigenous Environmental Studies & Sciences,” *Dædalus* 147, no. 2 (2018): 137.

conditions of chronic adversity, catastrophes and structural economic and racial inequalities. How has resilience been imagined in a variety of cultural contexts and how has it informed the ways in which communities, societies and nations rebuilt or crafted futures after, for instance, slavery, civil war, internment, displacement, devastating environmental disaster or the denial of non-hegemonic gender identities? To explore these questions is to respond to a ubiquitous concern: How to revive after things fall apart, or perhaps more importantly, how to foster resilience so things don't fall apart?

If the answers to these questions will necessarily differ across cultures and human experiences, the diversity of historically specific approaches to them promise to infuse deeper understandings of how context and contingency contribute to forms of resilience. We envision this special issue as offering a space in which historians across all time periods and geographical spaces can begin to do this and explore culturally specific practices of resilience. We especially encourage proposals from historians whose areas of study have been underrepresented in the *AHR*.

Because this special issue of the *AHR* will be in digital form only, we invite individuals or teams of scholars to propose interventions in a wide variety of textual and visual forms. They can include, but are not limited to:

- More traditional *AHR* research articles
- Curated collections of shorter research essays
- Photo- or video-driven essays
- Community-engaged research and pedagogical projects
- Digital history/humanities projects
- Public history projects and virtual exhibitions
- Featured reviews of key readings and/or sources
- Pedagogical essays that discuss the use of resilience in the classroom
- Website reviews of sources that highlight historical and contemporary forms of resilience
- Curated and annotated short collections of primary sources

Procedures for Proposal Submission

Proposals are due on 21 November 2022. They should convey in no more than 250 words the subject of your intervention, its larger significance, and the form it will take in the journal. Proposals should be submitted to <https://www.dropbox.com/request/4b5BSuVWNC7gsnx6AYrs>. Questions should be directed to ahrassistant@historians.org.

Decisions on proposals will be announced in January 2023. A positive notification does not ensure publication in the journal but rather is an invitation to authors and author teams to submit the full version of their proposed submission for peer review by 1 May 2023. The nature of the peer review will vary depending on the type of submission. We anticipate publication of the special issue in early 2024.

The editors of this *AHR* special issue are drawn from the journal's Board of Editors, and include Shelly Chan (University of California, Santa Cruz), Yoav Di-Capua (University of Texas at Austin), Cymone Fourshey (Bucknell University), Joshua Reid (University of Washington) and Wendy Warren (Princeton University).