

ROBYN SHAHAN SPEARS

Adjunct Instructor
University of Arkansas
Old Main 416
416 N. Campus Drive
Fayetteville, AR 72701
rsspears@uark.edu

EDUCATION

- 2024 University of Arkansas
PhD History
- 2020 University of Arkansas
MA History
- 2015 Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy
Certificate
- 1999 Brigham Young University
Bachelor's Degree in Zoology (Pre-Medicine)/Spanish minor

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2025-Present Adjunct Assistant Professor
Medical Education Program, Alice L. Walton School of Medicine
Art of Healing, History of Medicine
- 2025-Present Adjunct Instructor
Department of History, University of Arkansas
Health and Disease HIST 4883
- 2021-Present Instructor
Northwest Arkansas Institute of Religion
Foundations of the Restoration 225, Doctrine and Covenants 324, 325, Answering
Gospel Questions 280
- 2021-2023 Teaching Assistant
University of Arkansas
American People to 1877, World Civilizations I, American People 1877 to Present
- 2018-2021 Research Assistant

University of Arkansas
Vietnam War, Indian Affairs, Fulbright Archives

- 2015-2017 Genealogy Consultant
Private Firm
Contractual research into family histories of private clients
- 2010-2011 Spanish Teacher
Marble Valley Academy, El Dorado Hills, California
- 1999-2000 Technical Writer
Xactware
Content writer for home improvement instructions
- 1997-1999 Teaching Assistant
Brigham Young University
Organic Chemistry Lab 353, Human Anatomy Lab 220

COURSES TAUGHT

- 2025-Present History of Medicine
Medical Education Program, Alice L. Walton School of Medicine
- 2025-Present History 4883: Health and Disease
History Department, University of Arkansas
- 2024-Present Religion C 225: Foundations of the Restoration
Northwest Arkansas LDS Institute of Religion
- 2024-Present Religion 280: Answering My Gospel Questions
Northwest Arkansas LDS Institute of Religion
- 2023 History 2013: American People 1877 to Present
History Department, University of Arkansas
- 2021 Religion C 324: Doctrine and Covenants 1-76
University of Arkansas LDS Institute of Religion

2021

Religion C 325: Doctrine and Covenants 77-Official Declaration 2
University of Arkansas LDS Institute of Religion

PUBLICATIONS

Dissertation

Spears, Robyn Shahan. "First Latter-day Saint Women Baptized in Europe and Oceania: Ann Cottam Dawson (1785-1849) and Teri'i (ca. 1800-ca. 1860)." PhD diss., University of Arkansas, 2024.

Thesis

Spears, Robyn Shahan. "Arkansas Aprons: Food Power and Women in Arkansas, 1857 to 1891." ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, 2020.

Articles

Spears, Robyn Shahan. "The Ann Dawson Letter: The Only Extant Document by the First Female Baptized in Europe," *Journal of Mormon History* 51, no. 2 (Spring 2025): 138-146.

Spears, Robyn Shahan. "The Voice of Terii: First Latter-day Saint Female in Oceania," *Latter-day Saint Historical Studies* 24, No. 2, (Fall 2023).

Book Review

Spears, Robyn. Review of Jennifer Jensen Wallach, *Every Nation Has Its Dish: Black Bodies and Black Food in Twentieth-Century America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2019). *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 80 (Winter 2021): 505-507.

Works in Progress

Articles "“We Appointed Teli Their Guardian”: The First Polynesian Church School, 1844-52”

“Ann Dawson: The First and Best Claim to the ‘First Female Baptised’ in Europe,” *Journal of Mormon History*. (under consideration)

“Ann Dawson’s Conversion: “The First Female Baptised” in Europe, *Journal of Mormon History*. (recommended to JMH by Steve Harper)

“Re-imagining Mary Fielding Smith’s Miraculous Healing of the Ox”

“Arkansas Aprons: Food Power and Women in Arkansas, 1857-1891”

- Books *First Latter-day Saint Women: In Europe and Oceania*
- Mary Fielding Smith: Called to Endure.* Co-authored with Ron Esplin

VIDEOS

- 2024 Robyn Spears, “Teri’i: First Female Baptized in Oceania,” Community of Christ Historic Foundation, Spring Series, [YouTube](#), Independence, Missouri/Digital.
- 2024 Robyn Spears, “Ann Dawson: First Female Baptized in Europe,” Community of Christ Historic Foundation, Fall Series, [YouTube](#), Independence, Missouri/Digital.
- 2021 “Robyn Spears--Arkansas Aprons: Food Power and Women in Arkansas, 1857-1891,” Central Arkansas Library System, [YouTube](#), Little Rock, Arkansas/Digital.

IN THE NEWS

- 2024 “Doctoral Candidate Spears Claims Over \$30,000 in Grants, Will Defend Dissertation in September,” [UARK News](#), Fayetteville, Arkansas.
- 2019 “Robyn Spears to Conclude Spring Graduate Speaker Series,” [UARK News](#), Fayetteville, Arkansas.

FAMILY HISTORY EXPERIENCE

- 2008-2018 Family History Consultant/Committee Leader, Redding & El Dorado Hills, California, and in Bentonville, Arkansas
- 2019 Graduate School Recruitment Team, History Department, University of Arkansas Exhibit Hall, RootsTech, Salt Lake City
- 2015 Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy Certificate, Salt Lake City, Utah
- 2015 Mentorship for Board of Certification of Genealogists, Shannon Terwedo, MA, Sacramento, California

AWARDS, GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS, & FELLOWSHIPS

2024	Travel Grant, BYU Church History Symposium, Provo, Utah
2024	Doctoral Presentation Travel Grant Award, Graduate School, University of Arkansas
2024	University Dissertation Scholarship, Faculty Development Committee, Fulbright College, University of Arkansas
2024	Gatewood Fellowship, Department of History, University of Arkansas
2023	Doctoral Research Travel Award, Graduate School, University of Arkansas
2023	Domestic Young Scholar Grant, Church History Library and Museum of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
2023	Competitive Bridge Fellowship, Gender Studies, University of Arkansas
2023	Student Travel Grant, Mormon History Association, Rochester, New York
2023	Ralph V. Turner Endowed Travel Award, Department of History, Fulbright College, University of Arkansas
2023	Dissertation Grant, Religious Education Center, Brigham Young University
2022, 2023	Doctoral Presentation Travel Grant Award, Graduate School, University of Arkansas
2022, 2023	John Whitmer Historical Association Student Scholarship
2022	Student Grant, Mormon Women's History Initiative Team, Provo, Utah
2022	Student Travel Grant, Global Mormon Studies Conference, Coventry, England
2021, 2022	Jesse Taylor Jr. Endowed Student Scholarship, Department of History, Fulbright College, University of Arkansas
2021	Walter Lee Brown Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Scholarship, Department of History, University of Arkansas

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

Panels Organized

2025	"LDS Women and Miracles: Pioneers, 20th Century, Contemporary," with Jennifer Reeder, Chair, Holly Miller Jones and Jennifer Black presenting, Mormon History Association, Ogden, Utah
2024	"The British Mission in 1840," with Matt Rasmussen, Chair, with Elizabeth Mawlam and Naomi Krüger, Mormon History Association, Kirtland, Ohio
2023	"Ritual Practice," with Kristine Wright, Chair, with Jonathan Stapley and David Grua, Mormon History Association, Rochester, New York

Panel Chaired

2023	"Evangelism and Church Planting 'For the Express Purpose': Power, Conflict, and Positioning in the Apostolic Quorum During their First Mission (1835)," Maclane Heward, and "Restoration Tales from South Asian Trails," Nicole Isaac and Taunalyn Ford, John
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Whitmer Historical Conference, Fredericksburg, Texas

Papers Presented

- 2025 “Re-imagining Mary Fielding Smith’s Miraculous Blessing of the Oxen,” Mormon History Association Conference, Ogden, Utah
- 2024 “‘We Appointed Teli Guardian’: The First Polynesian Church School, 1844-52” Church History Symposium, Provo/Salt Lake City, Utah
- 2024 “The Ann Dawson Letter: The Only Extant Document by the First Female Baptized in Europe,” Mormon History Association, Kirtland, Ohio
- 2023 “First Female Baptized in Europe,” John Whitmer Historical Association, Fredericksburg, Texas
- 2023 “Certain Women: Restored Administrations in England and French Polynesia, 1837-1852,” Mormon History Association, Rochester, New York
- 2023 “Terii: Healer, Host, Musician & Diplomat,” Church History in the Pacific and Asia Conference, Brigham Young University—Hawaii
- 2022 “‘Receive a Blessing’: The Global History of Women and Healing in the Early Latter-day Saint Movement,” John Whitmer Historical Association Conference Independence, Missouri
- 2022 “Bless the Sick: The Global History of Women and Healing in the Early Latter-day Saint Movement,” Global Mormon Studies Conference, Coventry, England
- 2022 “Bless the Sick: The Global History of Women and Medicine in the Early Latter-day Saint Movement,” American People from 1877 to the Present, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas
- 2021 “Bless the Sick: Women and Medicine in Early Mormonism,” Panel with Rebecca Strain and Jennifer Pulsifer, Mormon History Association, Park City, Utah
- 2021 “Women of the West,” American People from 1877 to the Present, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas
- 2021 “Arkansas Aprons: Women’s History and Food History in the Nineteenth Century,” Rural Women’s Studies Association Conference, Toronto, Canada/Digital

INVITED PRESENTATIONS & LECTURES

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- 2024 “The Plan of Happiness and the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Latter-day Saint Women’s Lives,” Springfield Missouri Young Women’s Temple Trip, Bentonville, Arkansas
 - 2024 “Research Discoveries: Ann Dawson and Terii,” Roundtable, Church History Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah
 - 2024 “Dissertation Miracles,” Sunday Fireside, Sugar Creek Ward, Rogers Stake, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Bella Vista, Arkansas
 - 2023 “Women’s Blessings of Healing,” Guest Lecturer, with Casey Griffiths, Brigham Young

- University
- 2023 “Converted Women’s Perspectives in Early Church History,” Second Annual Bridge Fellows Research Roundtable, Gender Studies Program, University of Arkansas
- 2021 “Arkansas Aprons: Food Power and Women in Arkansas, 1857 to 1891,” Central Arkansas Library Systems Conference, Little Rock/Digital
- 2019 “Arkansas Aprons: Nineteenth-Century Women’s Diaries and Food,” Graduate Student Speaker Series, Special Collections, Mullins Library, University of Arkansas

CITIZENSHIP & SERVICE

- 2023-Present Consultant, Teri’i, Salt Lake Temple Open House, Church History Museum, Salt Lake City, Utah
- 2023-Present Articles Award Committee, John Whitmer Historical Association Conference, St. George, Utah
- 2024 New Hire Welcome Committee for African American Studies Professor, Graduate Student Representative, Department of History, University of Arkansas
- 2023 Family History Media Lead, Rogers Stake Family History and Temple Committee, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Rogers, Arkansas
- 2023 Consultant, Terii and Ann Dawson, Women’s History October Bus Tour, Community of Christ, Independence, Missouri
- 2022 Global Mormon Studies Committee, Mormon History Association Conference, Logan, Utah
- 2022 Parent Perspective Review Committee, Visual & Performing Arts Handbook 2022-2023, Matthew Peoples, Bentonville School District, Arkansas
- 2022 New Hire Committee, Civil War Historian, Graduate Student Representative, Department of History, University of Arkansas
- 2014-2017 Chair, Volunteer, Coconut Club Fundraising, Music Department, Oakridge High School, El Dorado Hills, California
- 2005-2009 Volunteer, YMCA, Redding, California

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 2023-25 Assistant Communications Director, Community Outreach and Online Presence Specialist, Rogers Stake Communications Council
- 2024 Inaugural Scholar, Career Exploration Conference at the Sperry Symposium, BYU Religious Education
- 2023 Global Women’s Research, Emily Peck Deason, Young Domestic Scholar Award, Church History Department, Salt Lake City, Utah
- 2022 Mormon Studies Publication and Professionalization Workshop, Mormon History

1996 Association, Logan, Utah
Model United Nations, World Health Organization, Kennedy Center for
International Studies, Brigham Young University

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society
Mormon History Association
Global Mormon Studies Community
Arkansas Historical Association
John Whitmer Historical Association
Association for Genealogical Educators

LANGUAGE

Spanish