

History (Podcasts) for All: Democratizing and Diversifying the Field of History

*"Name three men from history."
"Washington, Adams, Jefferson."
"Now name three women."
"Uh..."¹*

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HISTORY RELIES on the recording of events and narratives through oral history or written documents. The study of history is extremely broad, leading to great diversity within the academic communities, though most of the focus is on available documents or artifacts rather than on less documented fields of study. The history field primarily relies on traditional media, such as written records, texts, and other primary sources, but the means of disseminating historical knowledge and information into the public sphere are evolving. Beyond academic publishing, we have seen the growth of history podcasts, history documentaries, history-specific subscription services, and history social media accounts. With the ready accessibility of such historical knowledge, the coverage of specific historical events, individuals, time periods, and locations are shifting away from the stereotypical understanding of history as the study of Europe, North America, and white men as disseminated by academics, writers, and men. In the case of podcasts, the democratization of technology increasingly allows

Internet users to create and publish their own productions, which can then be made available to listeners for free—and draw massive audiences to the study of history.

With these shifts in mind, this article examines three women's history podcasts—*The History Chicks*, *History Tea Time*, and *What's Her Name*—that focus on “women you've never heard of.”²² These three podcasts in particular offer valuable insights into the variety of factors that go into creating a successful women's history podcast, and their significant differences and similarities offer examples of the trajectories in podcasting and “edutainment” in the twenty-first century. These podcasts reframe the historical narrative to spotlight women and women's experiences through history, challenging the concept of “women worthies”²³ and instead including women from all time periods around the world. In doing so, they use a new and transformative medium (podcasting) in conjunction with social media to continue to disperse this new interpretation of history to a larger, non-specialist audience. The democratization of podcasting also allows the hosts of these shows to change notions about who is deemed an expert and a historian, consequently changing the demographics and past trend of gatekeeping historical knowledge. Podcasts can be useful and inspirational for history teachers, can be implemented as teaching tools for history students, and can broaden our shared sense of who should be included in history—as subjects and as practitioners.

An Introduction to History Podcasting and Selected Titles

Many students might already be familiar with podcasting as a medium, listening to various shows for entertainment or for learning more about their own hobbies or interests. History podcasts are a specific subgenre within the podcasting community, addressing all facets of the field, from military history, ancient history, twentieth-century history, Black American history, LGBTQ+ history, women's history, and more. For the purposes of this study, to qualify as a history podcast, the production must primarily focus on historical events, time periods, locations, and figures (i.e., those who have made history). History podcasts should also have a strong breadth of research behind the event, era, location, or figure of study. History podcasting translates written historical records and secondary sources back into oral history. The benefit of podcasting as public

and oral history lies in its digital and recorded nature, with a website or audio streaming service passing on and protecting the historical information. History podcasting also combines primary and secondary sources into an accessible format, available to a broad audience at little to no cost on computers, smartphones, and other devices through various apps, websites, and social media accounts.⁴ While there may be a language barrier, translating services continue to advance the technology for generating subtitles or overdubbing for a wider range of audiences, and people around the world listen to and create podcasts. Typically, podcasts are free for listeners, although some shows offer paid options to remove ads or to access member-exclusive content. The podcast community, particularly among productions with shared genres, cross-pollinate by advertising similar shows or releasing episodes from other shows during the off-season. Many of the shows discussed in this paper promote other history podcasts due to connections between various hosts and similarities in general or episodic content (see **Appendix A** and **Appendix B** for recommendations of additional women's history and general history podcasts).

According to Rachel O'Toole, a history professor at the University of California, Irvine, successful history podcasts must be immersive, present some sort of argument that is backed by credible evidence, and have a narrative structure with a clear beginning, middle, and end. This combination of immersion, narrative, and argument, particularly in the cases of marginalized fields of history (primarily women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people of color), generates a powerful impact on the listener, who experiences history through the podcast. History podcasts in particular, O'Toole noted, take production and soundscape into account, often including music, voice actors, interviews with historians, and primary sources in their recordings.⁵ While history podcasts may implement similar production elements, each show chooses to implement these elements in different ways according to their interests and topics of concern. For example, on *Drinks with Great Minds in History*, host Zachary DeBacco uses an excerpt from Edvard Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King" and a custom theme song for his podcast, while Kate Armstrong, host of *The Exploress Podcast*, uses free, period-accurate music. Each podcast is able to create a historical presentation through their own expressive manner.

Podcast 1: The History Chicks

The first podcast of study is *The History Chicks*, a women's history podcast hosted by Beckett Graham and Susan Vollenweider.⁶ The podcast has a rating of 4.7 out of 5 stars on Apple Podcasts, with more than 7,800 listener reviews.⁷ The show has a catalog of over 330 episodes dating back to 2011, including some repeats (such as their annual "Mrs. Claus" episode in December)⁸ and remastered episodes.⁹ *The History Chicks* is heavily researched, and each episode includes a lengthy list of sources that are also available on the podcast's website. Hosts Graham and Vollenweider release episodes two weeks apart on a variety of podcast platforms, including streaming giants such as Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Amazon Music. Like other podcasts, they frequently have advertisements and sponsorship "commercials" embedded into their episodes. *The History Chicks* was a finalist for the People's Choice Podcast Award in Education seven years in a row, a 2016 finalist for the Academy of Podcasters Awards, and won the Best Talk Show in the Education Category for the Mixcloud Online Radio Awards in 2018.¹⁰

Podcast 2: What's Her Name

Next, the *What's Her Name* podcast is hosted by sisters Dr. Katie Nelson and Olivia Meikle, who cover stories about "fascinating women you've never heard of."¹¹ The show has a rating of 4.8 out of 5 stars on Apple Podcasts, with over 450 reviews.¹² Since 2017, they have released over 160 episodes through multiple popular media platforms, including YouTube and Patreon, with new episodes biweekly on Mondays. As *The History Chicks* did in later seasons, *What's Her Name* organizes tours for fans to visit historical sites from the episodes. The production is research-heavy, drawing on primary sources (when available) and secondary sources about the episode's subject, and Nelson and Meikle also interview experts—including fellow podcasters such as Kate Armstrong from *The Exploress Podcast*¹³—about the historical woman in each episode. *What's Her Name* particularly emphasizes the discussion of women who did not make it into the larger women's historical narrative around the world.

Podcast 3: History Tea Time

The third podcast of study is *History Tea Time*.¹⁴ This is the youngest show of the three, with over 180 episodes released since 2022, and a rating of 4.5 out of 5 stars from nearly 500 reviews on Apple Podcasts.¹⁵ Host Lindsay Holiday primarily focuses on royal history (including a series titled “Queens of the World”), women’s history, feminine history (her “History of Menstruation” is one of her most popular episodes), and LGBTQ+ history. Unlike *The History Chicks* and *What’s Her Name*, *History Tea Time* started out as a YouTube channel (with the same name) that originally focused on spooky history, horror, and scary stories before transitioning to history content. Holiday releases new “mini documentaries” on YouTube every week, as well as new podcast episodes through several mainstream platforms, including iHeartRadio, Airwave Media, Radio.net, and many more. The content slightly differs between YouTube videos and the audio podcast; she often releases content on the podcast before it is scheduled to upload on YouTube, and also remasters YouTube videos for release on the podcast.

A Closer Analysis of Selected Podcasts

Host Backgrounds

The hosts of these three podcasts are important to the quality and character of each show. All of the hosts are women based in the United States, and they all do the research behind each episode themselves. Hosts Beckett Graham and Susan Vollenweider of *The History Chicks* and Lindsay Holiday of *History Tea Time* do not elaborate on their backgrounds and prior experience with history, but their self-education for each episode and the professionalization of their respective podcasts grant them credibility with their audience. For example, Graham and Vollenweider appear to do the recording and editing of the podcast themselves, and they also seem to organize (or collaborate with a travel agency) on their field trip tours in the United Kingdom and New England states. Meanwhile, hosts Katie Nelson and Olivia Meikle of *What’s Her Name* provide detailed academic backgrounds on their podcast’s website. Nelson

has a Ph.D. in History from the University of Warwick and teaches at Weber State University in Utah, where she is also the executive director of the Weber County Heritage Foundation. Meikle has an M.A. in English Literature and Women's and Gender Studies from the University of Colorado Boulder and teaches women's and gender studies at Naropa University in Colorado. Meikle is the creator of the travel website, *Around the World in 80 Diapers*, and the two hosts have co-authored multiple books, including *The Book of Sisters: Biographies of Incredible Siblings Through History* (2022) and *A History of the World in 80 Lost Women* (2024). Nelson and Meikle have two interns, Livia Follet and Catie Boucher, attached to the podcast, though Nelson and Meikle do most of the recording and behind-the-scenes work themselves.¹⁶

Production Quality

Each of these shows fall into the category of “indie” podcasts.¹⁷ However, they are extremely well produced considering their independent status, and sound as though they were formally edited by a large-scale production studio with a team of editors, sound technicians, and production assistants. From a scale of “at-home sound studio in a closet” to “professional recording studio,” these shows lean towards the latter, despite their limited resources and small or non-existent support teams. The years that the hosts have put into the production and research of each episode of their respective podcasts is apparent. These podcasts demonstrate that there is no explicit need for a high-tech podcasting studio to create a professional, well-researched show, spotlighting the accessibility of the podcasting industry and its potential for bringing history to a wider audience.

Alongside the professionalism of each episode, these podcasts retain a level of casualness and informality—a key characteristic of the podcast genre. This atmosphere engages the listener with historical topics and encourages them to interact with the information in a new and more effective way. Podcasting, unlike a history text, creates a soundscape that immerses the reader in the historical period, often by including period-accurate music or voice actors cast as particular individuals. As O'Toole noted, these production elements create multiple perspectives of the same event, providing different information and insight from that of a one-perspective text.

In the case of an academic text, the perspective is usually that of the historian rather than the individuals in the text, which affects the presentation and interpretation of knowledge.¹⁸ The dynamic nature of podcasts and their ability to bring in historical soundscapes and other immersive production techniques allows the audience to experience history differently from the book and the classroom. The informal conversational aspect of podcasts (between the hosts during the recording of the podcast, and between the hosts and the audience during the listening of the podcast) further transforms the consumption of historical information. This less-structured, informal approach may be more palatable to the listener who struggles with being “talked at” rather than “talked to.”

Students may find the conversational aspect of multi-host podcasts appealing and entertaining because it mimics the in-class dialogue of small-group work and office hours discussions with professors. The indie-style format shifts traditionally dense information from jargon-heavy academic language into colloquial terms.

Research and Information Sources

Interestingly, these podcast hosts do not cite their personal research in their content, instead drawing upon the expertise of other historians, specialists, and academics. On *What's Her Name*, Nelson and Meikle interview experts on a historical woman in each episode, building the narrative off each expert's knowledge and supporting that narrative with research (of primary documents and secondary sources) done by Nelson, Meikle, or their research interns. At the end of each episode (or series) on *The History Chicks*, Graham and Vollenweider provide a list of reading materials and research sources, many of which are books, as well as places for listeners to find more information.¹⁹ Graham and Vollenweider also recommend children's books about historical women in the episode's resources section on their website; their ability to track down such titles for their listeners reflects their commitment to spreading women's history, encouraging their listeners to support these authors, and supporting these authors themselves by purchasing, borrowing, and promoting these books even though they are not the target audience of children. Holiday does not provide information on her sources at the end of her videos or podcast episodes for *History Tea Time*, though we

can speculate that it is extremely likely she uses a combination of secondary source books, primary source images (paintings and photographs), and other secondary sources for her research, based on the content and visuals presented in her YouTube videos.

Similar to the advantages of an informal, conversational format, students can also benefit from the hosts' selection of information sources. With the hosts often using books and media sources meant for popular consumption, students taking their first history courses may find these texts more approachable, yet still academically rigorous and credible. Professors may consider taking a similar tactic in selecting reading materials and approving student bibliographies on research assignments, with Holiday's use of online sources and primary source images as a model.

Academic Authority and Historical Expertise

Each host's use of research and reference materials is particularly interesting given how they are changing the dissemination of historical information and challenging the ideas of historical expertise. Traditional academics might question if Graham, Vollenweider, and Holiday count as "authorities" on women's history when they are relying upon the work of others. Their ability to synthesize several resources and present significant information within their podcast episodes shows that they have clearly acquired historical skills to read and synthesize a variety of documents to create historical sketches, even though they themselves are not generating new historical arguments. With the continued development of women's history as a subfield and the transition of history to new mediums such as the podcast, Graham and Vollenweider act as subject authorities to their audience given the longevity and success of *The History Chicks*, and Holiday falls in this same category. Though they do not necessarily generate new arguments or insights of historical figures in a strict academic sense, the medium through which they discuss and synthesize historical information could allow them to call themselves historical podcasting experts (or historical YouTube experts). Meikle and Nelson, who have graduate degrees and teach at American universities, primarily use interviews with other subject experts as the main source of information. With official credentials in History, English Language and Literature, and Women's and

Gender Studies, they clearly have the academic training, and their interns and interviews with other experts add to their own expertise and knowledge.

Admittedly, the hosts rely on previously established historical documents and secondary sources for the research and creation of their podcast episodes due to time, financial, and personal restraints. However, this does not lessen their credibility as podcasters or their integrity as academics or honorary academics given their experience as researchers, as content creators, and as history practitioners. Traditional historical experts (typically referring to members of academia trained in the written word and established historiographic methods) should acknowledge podcasters' contributions to the historical community outside of conducting original historical research, particularly in drawing audiences to the discipline.

Combining each host's varied backgrounds with the juxtaposition of professionalism and informality in their podcasts, *The History Chicks*, *What's Her Name*, and *History Tea Time* demonstrate nuance in the concepts of "expertise" and "the historian" by changing the demographics and medium through which they discuss history.²⁰ This presents a challenge to the assumption that historians must be academic professionals operating within academic mediums (e.g., written forms such as books or journal articles) and instead encourages the development of a broader community of history participants. Expanding these concepts encourages a reduction in ideological gatekeeping that limits the practice of history to academics with pre-established historical knowledge, and opens the history community to groups previously excluded from the field (in this case, women historians).

By introducing students to the "edutainment" world and offering legitimate and academically credible options like these podcasts (as well as the additional titles in **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**), professors can challenge students' ideas of what history majors or historians "are." This allows students to think about the non-academic application of history, historiography, and history skills (such as research, writing, and critical thinking) more broadly and in ways that will diversify and expand the field for subsequent generations of history enthusiasts. This is even applicable for non-history major students in history courses for general education requirements; they need not complete degrees in a field to become

an expert or share their love of the field with others, as these podcast hosts are themselves examples for independent study outside the academy as semiprofessional historians in their own right.

Audience Appeal

Podcasts, by virtue of their customizable nature, can cover any topic, and this is clearly apparent in the history podcasting communities on audio streaming platforms. While this research focuses on a sample of three women's history podcasts, each of which clearly demonstrates the ability to study, discuss, and explore a variety of histories with limited resources, there are many more examples (see **Appendix A** and **Appendix B** for annotated lists of additional history podcasts). With *The History Chicks*, *What's Her Name*, and *History Tea Time*, the hosts are all women, often working with support teams composed of other women, bringing a distinctly female perspective and analysis to their audiences. *History Tea Time* is the only show that discusses men as key figures in their content (while Holiday primarily discusses women's history and the histories of female rulers, she includes historical men as central figures within the narratives of each episode). Because of the freedom and independent control over material, history podcasts, despite any overlap with other shows, can cover any historical figure, period, and thematic subtopic.

Although most audio streaming platforms do not provide demographic information to listeners about the people who subscribe to these shows, some inferences can be made by looking at the information in the show, how the hosts communicate information to the listener, the average lengths of an episode, and the audience's reception of the shows based on user reviews.²¹ These three podcasts present information in such a way as to reach the broadest audience (a typical strategy for indie podcasters), ranging from specialists familiar with women's history to non-historians with limited background knowledge. These shows are in the middle of the formality-informality spectrum, where they sound professional, rely on credible documents and reference materials, and use academic or semi-formal language in their shows. With two hosts in each episode, *The History Chicks* and *What's Her Name* are more conversational and feel more casual (though they are

<i>The History Chicks</i> thehistorychicks.com	<i>What's Her Name</i> whatshernamepodcast.com	<i>History Tea Time</i> youtube.com/c/lindsayholiday
Facebook – 25,000 Twitter/X – 8,874 Instagram – 20,100 YouTube – n/a Patreon – n/a Pinterest – 23,700 BlueSky – 541 TikTok – 12	Facebook – 1,500 Twitter/X – n/a Instagram – 5,415 YouTube – 1,850 Patreon – 275 Pinterest – n/a BlueSky – 1,800 TikTok – 12	Facebook – 863 Twitter/X – n/a Instagram – 2, 425 YouTube – 1.06 million Patreon – 1,079 Pinterest – n/a BlueSky – n/a TikTok – 1,620

Figure 1: Social media accounts and followers. Figures current at time of publication.

very structured). *History Tea Time*, on the other hand, is the only show with a host that had experience producing history content on YouTube for mass consumption, and this experience shows through the historical narratives and production quality.²²

Each of these podcasts also have presence on social media to further engage audiences and create an interactive fan base (see **Figure 1**). This can also encourage cross-interaction between listeners of different shows, especially if a listener follows more than one show on social media. Algorithms are often based on echo chambers or have “if you liked x, then you will like y” recommendations, which will likely result in a follower of *The History Chicks* being introduced to *What's Her Name* or *History Tea Time* (and vice versa). Similarly, apps like Instagram show “mutuals” for accounts that follow particular accounts or profiles, and this leads to recommendations for other accounts in any given category. This endorses the creation of overlapping fan communities on social media, which may then bleed over into overlapping audiences on audio streaming platforms. As such, beyond promotion of any single show, social media can enhance the prevalence of women's history podcasts and women's history content communities more generally.

Due to the nature of data provided by social media sites and podcast streaming services, the true overlap of *The History Chicks*, *What's Her Name*, and *History Tea Time*'s audiences is, at present, unknown. However, given the work of social media algorithms, the likelihood of cross-advertising, and the interests of listeners and subscribers, it is extremely likely that the audiences include

individuals that are interested in women's history specifically (and history more generally) and are female themselves (especially when considering the hosts' identity and self-presentation). Along with the presence of other women's history podcasts on social media and audio streaming apps, there is a large community of women's history podcast enthusiasts and listeners (the true scope of which is obscured due to restricted access to personal user information).

Social media presence might be particularly interesting to students, especially the opportunities to engage with other fans of a podcast. Students and instructors alike can share and explore non-academic sites of community-building (whether online or at in-person library events, campus clubs, talks at a local museum or university, and more) that foster local history-centric communities.

An Examination of Sample Episodes

While these three podcasts have many episodes, the episodes tend to follow similar formats, and each show has unique characteristics. The women covered in *The History Chicks*, *What's Her Name*, and *History Tea Time* represent three rough categories: (1) well-known women, who have made their way into the mainstream historical record as women worthies; (2) unknown or lesser-known women, who have historically not made it into the mainstream historical record; and (3) diverse, historically marginalized women, whose race, sexual orientation, ability, and other identity factors previously did not fit the mainstream historical narrative. By looking at a small sample of episodes from each podcast, listeners can examine these shows in greater detail as representative for the larger catalog. Some historical women overlap between two or three of these podcasts, and the significance of the overlap, as well as the importance or relevance of the historical women, plays a role in each show's content and intended audiences.

Structure and Content of The History Chicks

The History Chicks podcast airs episodes approximately one to two hours in length, and often features multi-part episodes on a single individual, such as Mary Todd Lincoln, Elizabeth Taylor, Maya Angelou, and Mary McLeod Bethune, to name just a few.²³

Following any advertisements, the show begins with a thirty-second summary of the historical woman of the episode, usually vague or glib enough as to pique the interest of the listener without giving anything away. At the end of each episode, hosts Graham and Vollenweider list their reference materials, categorized by media type (books, movies, documentaries), and weigh the pros and cons of each source. In their multi-part episodes, they list their sources at the end of the last episode of the series. Their episodes are meticulously researched, and Graham and Vollenweider are the only hosts who provide their source material in the production.²⁴ They also tailor the “commercial break” musical interludes to the historical woman the episode focuses on, a clever flourish across multiple podcasts. *The History Chicks* began a feature on field trips, including to New England, London, Paris, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., with episodes detailing their trip itineraries and quotes from participants—another unique episode format. The hosts also comment on historical dramas and pop culture; they used to have one fictional-themed episode a season, but began airing such episodes on their other show, *The Recappery* (2015-2018).²⁵

In an episode on Lillian Moller Gilbreth (1878-1972), Graham and Vollenweider set out to bring “the mother on *Cheaper by the Dozen*” to life and reject the existing narrow definition of a what makes a fascinating historical woman.²⁶ In other episodes, the hosts sought out women who made it into the historical record and had familiar names (by male-centric historical standards), with the show exploring their lives beyond what the women were known for.²⁷ The Gilbreth episode is particularly interesting for Graham and Vollenweider because Gilbreth became a minor celebrity among niche audiences, so there was already some information about her available. In their sources section, Graham and Vollenweider include the two books written by Gilbreth and her husband, as well as some of their motion study films. They also include a variety of books and websites about Gilbreth, some of which are online archives. Being a more recent historical woman, Gilbreth has more concrete details and a variety of interesting records about her, which enhances the information the hosts can include in the episode. Gilbreth also more easily meets preconceptions about “the modern woman” given her role in the twentieth century with consumerism and the growth of modern mass media.

Their two-part series on Mary Todd Lincoln is also typical for *The History Chicks*.²⁸ Similar to the framework for the Gilbreth episode, Graham and Vollenweider go past the popular image of Mary Todd Lincoln as a First Lady and a widow, further focusing on the complications of family, friends, and mental health. Here, their use of primary and secondary sources (and others' analyses of Mary Todd Lincoln) allows them to look beyond the facts and the masculinist historical perspective to understand Lincoln's high spending rate during her husband's presidency or her son committing her to an asylum. The hosts shift the spotlight in the Civil War away from Abraham Lincoln to Mary Lincoln, and this new perspective highlights the unacknowledged roles that women played just off the historical stage for centuries. By covering historical women with familiar names, such as Mary Todd Lincoln, the podcast allows listeners who may have name recognition and peripheral awareness to use these historical women as gateways to the larger realm of women's history. While the white-centric historical narrative (for men and women) may be a point of frustration, the more famous names draw listeners to a broader, more diverse women's historical narrative (in comparison to the traditional study of white, educated, upper- and middle-class women). For example, Mary Todd Lincoln's feature on *The History Chicks* led to an episode on Elizabeth Keckley, a Black seamstress and close friend to Lincoln.²⁹

An episode on Fannie Lou Hamer also contains the standard characteristics of *The History Chicks*, though it airs on the longer side, with a run time of nearly two hours.³⁰ The episode touches on the American civil rights movement and the role of Black women in the movement. Given the historical coverage of the civil rights movement, Graham and Vollenweider cite a broad list of resources and reference material, including links to audio recordings of Hamer's speeches and singing, as well as documentary movie trailers about Hamer's life. In addition to Hamer, Graham and Vollenweider cover a decent number of historical women of color on their show, increasingly so since they began their podcast. Early episodes mostly covered famous historical white women such as Abigail Adams and Laura Ingalls Wilder, but the coverage has since become more diverse as the hosts expand their historical knowledge and familiarity with the podcasting process. For example, episodes from 2025 feature a range of women, including Charity Adams Earley, Josephine Bonaparte

and Eugénie Bonaparte, Georgia Gilmore, Wangari Muta Maathai, Miep Gies, Alice Paul, Suzanne Valadon, and Catherine de Medici.³¹

Structure and Content of What's Her Name

The *What's Her Name* podcast episodes are much shorter compared to *The History Chicks*, ranging from 45 to 60 minutes (with a handful of exceptions), which allows hosts Nelson and Meikle to discuss a lot of information in a concise, reasonable time limit.³² In each episode, the hosts present an expert interview about “forgotten women you’ve never heard of.” While Nelson and Meikle and their interns conduct their own research into the historical woman featured, they intersperse clips from the interview into each episode. Their experts are, for the most part, academics or authors (both fiction and nonfiction) who specialize in the historic region, period, or individual woman being studied. Many of the experts are museum managers, curators, or directors, though others have careers that may not align with preconceptions of history-related occupations, such as state park interpreters, office assistants, podcast hosts, concert pianists, dancers, and animal sanctuary owners. Given the constraints of the show—namely, its focus on unknown women—*What's Her Name* is one of the more unique women's history podcasts, specifically focusing on LGBTQ+, marginalized, and/or women of color through the use of expert interviews to create a more complete understanding of the historical woman in question.

In an episode on astronomer Caroline Herschel, the hosts interview subject expert Joseph Middleton, manager of the Herschel Museum of Astronomy.³³ Sister to fellow astronomer William Herschel, Caroline is an example of the historically unknown woman in proximity to a famous man, typically a father, brother, or husband. Mary Todd Lincoln similarly falls in this category, but her name is more well-known than Herschel's (reflecting the unique focus of *What's Her Name* on unknown women with achievements in their own right). Herschel eventually wrote her memoirs about being the “Comet Huntress,” having made her first discovery in 1783, just two years after her brother William began to study astronomy. Although history would limit her contributions to astronomy to her records of her brother's discoveries, British and Prussian rulers, as well as famous scientific societies, eventually recognized and rewarded her.

In an episode on Margery Kempe, a better-known historical woman despite being from the fifteenth century, Nelson and Meikle interview author Mary Sharratt, a recurring guest to the podcast.³⁴ After following the medieval tradition of marrying young and having far too many pregnancies, Kempe experienced visions and eventually walked from France to Jerusalem and back on pilgrimage. One of the more historically popular figures covered on the podcast (in terms of audience familiarity and presence in the mainstream, male-centric historical narrative), Kempe has a handful of books about her, giving Nelson and Meikle a greater breadth of information to use on the podcast and cite in the show notes on their website. As a religious figure, Kempe also authored a book by dictation in the fifteenth century, so Nelson and Meikle also had the opportunity to reference modern scholarship and commentary about Kempe's own book on their podcast—a rare occurrence on the show.

In an episode about one of the most unknown historical women, *What's Her Name* introduces the story of Zazil-ha and her resistance to the Spanish conquest of what is now Mexico.³⁵ Interviewing Gabriel Cemé, a native Maya who runs the Eco Maya animal sanctuary and has an interest in history, Nelson and Meikle dive into the story of a historical woman who has almost fallen into legend. Their ability to interview on location enhances the episode, and the interview with Cemé invites thought about the notions of “historian” and “expert” beyond the academic establishment. Cemé's retelling of Zazil-ha's story, supplemented by Nelson and Meikle's commentary and contextual information, particularly drive the messages of the story home. Zazil-ha, the flower in the water, was an Indigenous Maya woman from the Yucatán peninsula who fell in love with a Spanish man, became one of the mothers of the *mestizo* peoples, and prepared her people for life post-Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century. Zazil-ha's story may sound familiar, sharing elements with the stories of Malintzin and thousands of unknown, unnamed Indigenous Mexican women who dealt with the personal and political conflicts of the Spanish invasion and conquest of Mexico and the Americas. Zazil-ha and her historical invisibility embody the podcast's objective to successfully tell the stories of historical women who have fallen through the cracks and not made it into the mainstream historical narrative.

What's Her Name covers a broad range of history, from different eras and locations. For example, an episode on athlete Lusia Harris, who in 1976 would score the first basket in Olympic women's basketball history, features an interview with Andrew Maraniss, author of *Inaugural Ballers: The True Story of the First US Women's Olympic Basketball Team*.³⁶ The subsequent episode is set in the Dutch "Disaster Year" of 1672 and follows Maria van Nispen, a bricklayer's daughter, featuring an interview with Susan Suer at the Heritage Leiden archives.³⁷ Next, an episode exploring the 1970s scandal of the Love Canal chemical dump through the life of biologist Beverly Paigen features an interview with recurring guest Keith O'Brien, author of *Paradise Falls: The True Story of an Environmental Catastrophe*.³⁸ The podcast then jumps to the sixteenth-century story of Grace O'Malley, the Irish pirate queen of the Elizabethan age, using documents discovered by historian Anne Chambers to inform the research and an interview with Westport House's Kathryn Connolly.³⁹ In another episode, Nelson and Meikle interview director Amanda Pollack and writer-producer Gene Tempest about Mária Telkes, a pioneer in the fields of solar heat and solar energy and the subject of Pollack and Tempest's *American Experience* documentary, *The Sun Queen*.⁴⁰

Structure and Content of History Tea Time

History Tea Time, by virtue of starting as a YouTube channel, already had several years of previously recorded content prior to the launch of the podcast in its current form.⁴¹ Host Lindsay Holiday transferred and updated the audio from some of her most popular YouTube videos (such as "A History of Menstruation" and "A History of Childbirth" series) to air on the podcast.⁴² Holiday posts new YouTube videos and podcast episodes every week, each running approximately 30 minutes, much shorter than both *What's Her Name* and *The History Chicks*. Like the other two podcasts, Holiday produces multi-part series on her channel, such as her "Sultanate of Women" trilogy, eight-episode "Tudor Queens" series, and recurring "A History of" feature. Holiday uses the art of storytelling rather than expert interviews and provides some sources in the YouTube video descriptions, though not to the extent of Graham and Vollenweider. Given these aspects, the

information presented is more that of an amateur historian compared to a professional historian, with general sources such as Wikipedia and Britannica rather than specialized historical monographs or scholarly articles. The episodes occasionally contain advertisements for products and companies sponsoring the podcast, and each show has the same introduction and theme music. As with many creators, Holiday concludes an episode by endorsing her own content, inviting audiences to subscribe to the podcast or YouTube channel.

Adapting to its newer audio format, *History Tea Time* will routinely update and cross-post earlier videos from YouTube as podcast episodes. In one example, Holiday introduces the lesser-known Margaret Tudor, the Queen of Scotland, and Mary Tudor, the Queen of France and Duchess of Suffolk, and explores the lives, tragedies, marriages, and children of these two sisters of Henry VIII.⁴³ Holiday offers an introductory summary to the often-overlooked Margaret and Mary Tudor, recounting their stories as queen consorts and noblewomen who played the political game of sixteenth-century politics. Holiday uses limited and easy-to-find open-access sources, referencing Wikipedia, Britannica, and a website about English monarchs. The British royal family is a frequent topic of interest, and this particular episode is one of her more popular videos on YouTube, with nearly 2 million views.

An episode on a more famous historical woman, Empress Elisabeth “Sisi” of Austria, was re-released to coincide with popular period dramas released on Netflix and PBS about the last Empress of Austria-Hungary.⁴⁴ Holiday’s focus on royal women across Europe (and the world, more broadly) makes this episode standard for her historical content, especially with the ties to pop culture and dramatic film and television productions about her subjects. The YouTube video has 2.3 million views, so the content of the episode clearly appeals to her audience. Empress Elisabeth was on the cusp of being a marginalized historical woman, but she is emerging as a famous figure given the new period dramas and podcast episodes about her. Holiday does not argue new interpretations about Empress Elisabeth’s life as an academic historian would, but instead translates the information to her massive audience with helpful related images. This episode highlights some of the nationalist tensions of the nineteenth century, as well as the complicated demands of monarchy as more countries were transitioning away from monarchical rule.

In a podcast episode on Nurbanu Sultan and Safiye Sultan, Holiday revisits and remasters a former YouTube video about two Ottoman royal wives from 1533-1656 (the Sultanate of Women period) who exerted impressive political control in and out of the harem system.⁴⁵ This sort of short series about royalty is characteristic of *History Tea Time*; Holiday presents several series and stand-alone episodes on various royal families and their key members, from Holy Roman Emperors to every royal consort in the British monarchy, so her brief foray into the Ottoman Empire, particularly its history around famous and important royal women, is fairly in-character for the podcast and channel. While *History Tea Time* primarily covers white European women, especially monarchies, there are episodes on the Sultanate of Women, Nzinga of Ndongo and Matamba, Queens of the Pacific Islands, Empress Carlota of Mexico, Black aristocrats and celebrities of the Victorian Era, as well as figures from Asian and Egyptian history. Adding to the catalog on women of color, 2025 included video and podcast episodes such as “Empress Wu Zetian of China,” “Yaa Asantewaa, Asante Warrior Queen,” “Börte, Genghis Khan’s Beloved Empress,” and “Queens of Jazz: Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald & Nina Simone.”

The *History Tea Time* podcast offers bonus material to accompany episodic series, also available on the YouTube channel. For example, the podcast’s “The Crown Jewels: A Journey Through History” was followed up with “The Crown Jewels: A Peek Inside the Jewel House” shortly after. To coincide with the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla in May 2023, Holiday aired “A History of Coronations: From Ancient to Modern Times” on podcast platforms and on YouTube in March of the same year. Three days later (rather than the typical week), she aired “Bonus! History Daily - Henry VIII’s Jousting Accident and Elizabeth I’s Death.” This is *History Tea Time*’s first bonus episode and was inspired by another podcast called *History Daily*.⁴⁶

Reinforcing Women’s Presence in the Historical Narrative

Though these podcasts each have different focuses on the historical women they cover, their shows occasionally feature the same figure. For example, *The History Chicks*, *What’s Her Name*, and *History Tea Time* have all covered Irish pirate Grainne Ó

Máille, also known as Grace O'Malley (1530-1603). With *History Tea Time* primarily focusing on European history, royal history, and women's history, Ó Máille meets all three of these criteria, being an Irishwoman, the head of the Ó Máille dynasty, and the wife of a Celtic clanchief. With *The History Chicks* focusing more broadly on women's history, Ó Máille was able to survive deep in the historical record and the hosts found several books about her as part of their research. Additionally, Ó Máille's near-mythical status until a massive discovery in the 1990s and her importance to local history and Irish resistance to British rule make her a perfect subject for the *What's Her Name* podcast.

To offer more examples, all three shows also have individual or multi-part episodes on the six wives of Henry VIII of England and the Tudor queens regnant (Jane Grey, Mary I, Elizabeth I, and Mary, Queen of Scots). This overlap is unsurprising considering the relative ubiquity of these historical women given their "women worthy" status or their infamy. However, multiple-episode overlap also occurs regarding lesser-known historical women, such as Queen Nzinga of Ndongo and Matamba and Hurrem Sultan (Empress Roxelana), both featured on *The History Chicks* and *History Tea Time*. Other lesser-known historical women receiving overlapping coverage include Margaret "Molly" Brown, Annie Londonderry, Edmonia Lewis, Ching Shih, and Mary Seacole, the latter three being women of color.

The airing of episodes on historical women who regularly appear in the mainstream historical narrative is important given the podcasts' ability to analyze the significance of these women for a modern audience, especially when seeking to debunk myths centered on the perspective of the male gaze.⁴⁷ However, the comparatively recent discussion of women of color in history is especially crucial for twenty-first-century history.⁴⁸ The emerging emphasis on gender studies, Chicano studies, African and Black American studies, and other ethnic studies programs have led to a decentering of the white male in the historical narrative, and historians have responded accordingly by developing new paths in marginalized histories. The history podcast community also reflects this interest, as demonstrated by the many women's history, LGBTQ+ history, African American history, and other marginalized history podcasts (see **Appendix A** and **Appendix B** for examples).

Because the podcasts discussed here are curated by hosts with full creative license rather than a school board or an accreditation committee, Nelson, Meikle, Graham, Vollenweider, and Holiday can research and discuss any historical woman of their own choosing.

Podcasts, New Conversations, and New Communities

This small sample of three women's history podcasts reflects the massive changes within the field of history towards inclusivity and the sharing of new stories. By bringing historical women from across the globe into the spotlight, these podcasts are shifting the focus and the visibility of history. The diversity of the history podcast genre opens up a world of creative possibilities for what medium is used to share information, how information is conveyed (through tone, informality, profanity, etc.), how information is interpreted by the speaker, and who is sharing the information. In this sample, two of the three podcasts of study are not hosted by academics, and this allows for a transformation of the stereotypical idea of historian and academia as the be-all and end-all of historical expertise—by someone with credentials and graduate degrees who works with the written word (rather than the spoken word) and upholds a certain level of gatekeeping within the history community. If history podcasters can have successful, credible, engaging, popular podcasts (or social media accounts), this promotes other individuals interested in history to pursue those interests and share them in any medium that speaks to them. A lack of official credentials does not make podcasters less admirable, but instead demonstrates the accessibility of history by so many different individuals with different historical knowledge and backgrounds to join together in a large, interconnected community.

By changing how historians transmit historical knowledge to an extensive, non-expert audience, history podcasters (to say nothing of the history YouTubers, TikTokers, and Instagrammers) are opening the field of history, regardless of credentials. The medium of podcasting can appeal to a vast range of listeners, bringing massive audiences to the study of history. Many podcasts maintain a formal atmosphere, while others not specifically examined in my research may be quite candid and use profanity as they talk about history and interpret historical events and figures in their own ways.⁴⁹

Podcasts with a single host can excel at delivering an information-dense narrative, while those with multiple hosts or guests present a more casual dialogue, allowing the listener to feel like part of the conversation. A smaller podcast can establish a friendly, dedicated community among listeners, while a larger production, such as Lindsay Holiday's *History Tea Time*, can amass well over a million subscribers—each translating historical knowledge to their respective audiences.

The historical conversation topics do seem to be changing because of the increased access to podcasts and the growing diversity within the history podcast field. The top listener-submitted reviews on Apple Podcasts suggest that *History Tea Time*, *What's Her Name*, and *The History Chicks* are introducing their audiences to a plethora of unknown historical women. These reviews seem to imply that the conversation is changing for the better, encouraging listeners to explore women's history and their own historical interests.

The overall shift from the authoritative dissemination of historical knowledge (as from an instructor to a student, or accredited author to a reader) to a more informal conversation through podcasts and other forms of historical media has decentralized the discipline of history. Clearly, becoming a historical expert through established academic settings and mediums is not the only way to learn and understand history. The changes in both formality and medium allow for a corresponding change in accessibility, making history and historical information readily available through free audio streaming services. Podcasts are more portable than books or classroom lectures, living in the Cloud or on a phone app, and the use of informal language (and, at times, profanity), makes the material more digestible and understandable for the general audience. Of course, academics can also employ history podcasts in the classroom, as O'Toole has done at the University of California, Irvine. O'Toole noted that podcasts pack a lot of information into a twenty- or forty-minute window, and assigning a podcast episode over an article or book chapter can take less student time to obtain the same amount (or more) information.⁵⁰ There is also a novelty factor in assigning podcasts as homework or classwork instead of traditional materials like articles and books, as podcasts engage with information in a way that may be more appealing and conducive to the learning process for some students.

The introduction of new media to the history community positively benefits the spread of history and historical information to new and unlikely communities. With a wide range of topics and levels of formality available to listeners, the history podcasting community generates a variety of new historical conversations for a wide audience. Through shows such as *What's Her Name*, *History Tea Time*, and *The History Chicks*, hosts can indulge their historical interests and share their research with a like-minded community in addition to introducing new listeners to histories of marginalized groups—in this case, women's history. History podcasts more broadly encourage non-academic, non-specialist listeners to explore this typically academic field at their own pace and according to their particular interests. Academic and non-academic audiences alike value history podcasts for their ability to comprehensively disseminate historical information to listeners from all backgrounds in a free, convenient, and approachable format. The adaptation of new media into the academic fields of history by non-specialists promises to ensure the discipline's continued accessibility and reach to new audiences, promoting history's continued presence as a public and highly desirable field of study.

Notes

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1. Quotes are adapted from an episode of Kelsie Eckert and Brooke Sullivan's *The Remedial Herstory Podcast*.

2. The phrasing of "women you've never heard of" is from the description for Katie Nelson and Olivia Meikle's *What's Her Name* podcast.

3. "Women worthies" references the idea that male historians included specific women in texts or classes (before the establishment of women's history) because they demonstrated masculine or domestic qualities. For instance, Abigail Adams was a patriotic wife and mother, while Isabella of Castile and Elizabeth I went to war.

4. Podcasts often have a dedicated website where episodes are available to download or stream, in addition to publishing on digital media platforms such as Apple Podcasts, Spotify, YouTube, Amazon Music, iHeartRadio, and many more. Often, shows are also published or publicized via social media such as Instagram, Twitter (X), Facebook, Pinterest, etc.

5. Rachel S. O'Toole (Associate Professor of History at the University of California, Irvine), interview with the author, February 2023.

6. Beckett Graham and Susan Vollenweider, *The History Chicks* (podcast). Podcast website available at <<https://www.thehistorychicks.com>>.

7. Apple Podcasts, *The History Chicks: A Women's History Podcast*, <<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-history-chicks-a-womens-history-podcast/id415983183>>. Figures current at time of publication.

8. The first Mrs. Claus episode aired on December 22, 2014, as a "minicast" (short podcast episode). Since 2014, *The History Chicks* re-releases the episode in late December, usually the week before Christmas.

9. Remastered episodes are previously published episodes that are re-released with additional information, updated production value, or improved audio quality.

10. "About The History Chicks," *The History Chicks*, <<https://www.thehistorychicks.com/about/>>.

11. Katie Nelson and Olivia Meikle, *What's Her Name* (podcast). Podcast website available at <<https://www.whatshernamepodcast.com>>.

12. Apple Podcasts, *What's Her Name*, <<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/whatshername/id1320638747>>. Figures current at time of publication.

13. See Appendix A for more information about *The Exploress Podcast*.

14. Lindsay Holiday, *History Tea Time* (podcast). Podcast website available

at <<https://www.airwavemedia.com/our-shows/history-tea-time>>. YouTube video catalog available at <<https://www.youtube.com/c/lindsayholiday>>.

15. Apple Podcasts, *History Tea Time*, <<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/history-tea-time/id1619978406>>. Figures current at time of publication.

16. “About Us,” *What’s Her Name*, <<https://whatshernamepodcast.com/about-us/>>.

17. Indie (short for “independent”) podcasts are unattached to a major production studio and are created and produced independently, typically by the hosts of the show.

18. O’Toole, interview with the author.

19. Graham and Vollenweider often mention historical drama adaptations around the historical woman, primary video content (especially of performers or individuals from the twentieth century), pictures or paintings, museums or exhibits, etc., as part of their sources.

20. O’Toole, interview with the author.

21. The audience, for the intent of this study, consists of the people who subscribe to the show and those who leave reviews. These two populations of study may not necessarily overlap. Due to the inability to access numbers and demographic information about the audiences and subscribers (as well as other pertinent statistics like download rates, listens per episode, etc.), my conclusions about the audiences and subscribers of these shows (and any overlaps) will come from my impressions of the show and other contextual factors.

22. In this context, production quality refers to clarity of audio (i.e., no disruptive background noise, no static or bad audio in the final cut), video quality (in the case of shows with a YouTube channel or livestream episodes), formality of language in the scripts (unless informality is part of the show’s character), ad breaks (when recorded and placed by the hosts vs. inserted by the app or platform), and the inclusion of other audio effects (music, sound effects, etc.).

23. For a full list of episodes from *The History Chicks*, see “Full Episodes,” *The History Chicks* (podcast), <<https://www.thehistorychicks.com/episode-list/>>.

24. Including among the additional hosts listed in Appendices A and B. Nelson and Meikle have an online storefront and a section on their website where they include books by guests of the show and books about past subjects, but this information is not readily available in the episode itself. Holiday does not list individual sources for each show, which forces viewers and listeners to do their own research to learn more about the topic or figure(s) from a particular episode.

25. Episodes with a fictional focus include: “Bookcast: Jane Austen Book Club”; “Little House Book Minicast”; “Cinderella”; “Red Riding Hood Minicast”; “Age of Innocence Moviecast”; “Encore: The Wizard of Oz”; “The Women of Gone With The Wind”; “Miss Potter Moviecast”; “Barbie”; “Wonder Woman”; and *The Recappery*’s “Anne with an E Recap” and “Little Women Recap” series. Access episodes through the search function at <<https://www.thehistorychicks.com>>. *The Recappery* is available on the same podcast streaming platforms as *The History Chicks*, as well as through their primary website at <<https://www.thehistorychicks.com/the-recappery-podcast/>>.

26. *The History Chicks*, “Episode 59: Lillian Gilbreth.” Also refer to “Episode 233: Lillian Moller Gilbreth.”

27. For a more familiar example, they discuss Clara Barton’s time as a teacher before talking about what she was famous for—nursing and the Red Cross. *The History Chicks*, “Episode 14: Clara Barton.” Also refer to “Episode 111: Clara Barton Revisited and Refreshed.”

28. *The History Chicks*, “Episode 69: Mary Todd Lincoln, Part One” and “Episode 70: Mary Todd Lincoln, Part Two.”

29. *The History Chicks*, “Episode 72: Elizabeth Keckly.” This episode was remastered and re-released as “Episode 197: Elizabeth Keckley, Revisited.” More recently, “Episode 273: Elizabeth Packard” also references their Mary Todd Lincoln series and overlaps with elements from the second episode in that series.

30. *The History Chicks*, “Episode 154, Fannie Lou Hamer.”

31. *The History Chicks*, “Episode 258: Charity Adams Earley & The 6888th”; “Episode 259: Josephine Bonaparte and Eugénie Bonaparte”; “Episode 260: Georgia Gilmore”; “Episode 261: Wangari Muta Maathai, Part One”; “Episode 262: Wangari Muta Maathai, Part Two”; “Episode 264: Miep Gies, Part One”; “Episode 265: Miep Gies, Part Two”; “Episode 267: Alice Paul, Part One”; “Episode 268: Alice Paul, Part Two”; “Episode 269: Suzanne Vadon”; and “Episode 271: Catherine de Medici, Part One.”

32. For a full list of episodes from *What’s Her Name*, see “Episodes,” *What’s Her Name* (podcast), <<https://www.whatshernamepodcast.com/episodes/>>.

33. *What’s Her Name*, “Episode 20: The Astronomer: Caroline Herschel (with Joseph Middleton at the Herschel Museum).”

34. *What’s Her Name*, “Episode 78: The Mystic: Margery Kempe (with Mary Sharratt).” Sharratt also joins *What’s Her Name* for “Episode 19: The Composer: Alma Mahler (with Mary Sharratt)” and “Episode 26: Witches & Mediums & Ghosts, Oh My! 2018 Halloween Special (with Paul Draper, Sharon Wright, Mary Sharratt, and Charlotte Bumgarner).”

35. *What’s Her Name*, “Episode 65: The Flower in the Water: Zazil-ha (with Gabriel Camé in Yucatan, Mexico).”

36. *What’s Her Name*, “Episode 110: The Inaugural Baller: Lusía Harris (with Andrew Maraniss).”

37. *What’s Her Name*, “Episode 111: The Warden: Maria van Nispen (with Susan Suèr in Leiden, Netherlands).”

38. *What’s Her Name*, “Episode 112: The Useless Housewife Scientist: Beverly Paigen (with Keith O’Brien).”

39. *What’s Her Name*, “Episode 112: The Pirate Queen of Connaught: Grace O’Malley (with Kathryn Connolly in Westport, Ireland).”

40. *What’s Her Name*, “Episode 114: The Sun Queen: Maria Telkes (with Amanda Pollack and Gene Tempest).”

41. For a full list of episodes from *History Tea Time*, see the podcast catalog at <<https://www.airwavemedia.com/our-shows/history-tea-time>> and YouTube video catalog at <<https://www.youtube.com/c/lindsayholiday>>.

42. *The History Tea Time* “A History of Menstruation” video from 2021 has gained over 5.6 million views on YouTube, and was adapted as a podcast episode

in 2022. Similarly, the three-part “A History of Childbirth” video series from 2020 on conception, pregnancy, and delivery (with over 1.4 million, 1.1 million, and 1.1 million views, respectively) was condensed into one podcast episode in 2022.

43. *History Tea Time*’s audio and video versions of the episode are both titled “Henry VIII’s Sisters.”

44. *History Tea Time*’s audio and video versions of the episode are both titled “Empress Elisabeth ‘Sisi’ of Austria.”

45. *History Tea Time*’s audio version of the episode is titled “The Sultanate of Women 2/3: Nurbanu & Safiye,” while the video version is titled “The Sultanate of Women: Nurbanu Sultan & Safiye Sultan.”

46. Lindsay Holiday, in the episode description, calls *History Daily* one of her favorite podcasts, and used their format of “this day in history” to introduce her listeners to these two events. The *History Daily* podcast, hosted by Lindsay Graham, is available at <<https://www.historydaily.com>>.

47. Here, the concept of the “male gaze” refers to the dominance of male-centric values, aesthetic preferences, and ideals throughout history as a result of patriarchy and misogyny. The term is traditionally used in film and media studies, art history, and gender studies to highlight an assumption of masculinity of the viewer of a piece of visual art or film. Historians, however, can adapt the analysis of the male gaze to account for male-centric biases or interpretations in historiography or even primary and secondary sources. For example, sexist stereotypes about Anne of Cleves’ appearance or Marie Antoinette’s frivolity deny historical women from having complex characters and motivations. By contrast, one could instead examine what Anne of Cleves being described as “unattractive” meant about her actual appearance or revealed about Henry VIII’s frustration with his own aging and injuries.

48. The history discipline’s conversation about women and women of color as individuals coincides with the rise of ethnic studies, African and Black American studies, and women’s studies in the 1960s and 1970s, making this a recent historiographic transition.

49. Profanity is sometimes necessary when discussing certain events and historical individuals. Hosts may use profanity intentionally or casually, maintaining the conversational and informal angle, while others may use profanity when quoting original language in primary documents. These three podcasts do refrain from using racial, homophobic, and gendered slurs, but other shows may choose to include such language to better carry their larger point across in the event that sanitizing terminology may have an opposite intended effect. Hosts may also use profanity to express their personal (twenty-first-century) beliefs about certain historical individuals who they personally disagree with or dislike—not necessarily as a historical fact, but as an expression of their and the show’s character.

50. O’Toole, interview with the author.

Appendix A

Recommended Women's History Podcasts

The following list of history podcasts includes ratings and reviews data collected from Apple Podcasts at the time of publication. Note that individual episodes may address sensitive topics or use explicit language. Productions rated as explicit on Apple Podcasts are noted as such with asterisks below.

The Exploress

Hosted by Kate Armstrong and Carly Quinn

4.9 out of 5 stars (369 reviews on Apple Podcasts)

The Exploress podcast has aired over 130 episodes in six years, typically running about 25 to 45 minutes in length and released about every two weeks during a “season” of the show. Like *The History Chicks*, *The Exploress* is research-heavy, and co-hosts Kate Armstrong and Carly Quinn primarily present narratives (unless there is a guest on the show). Armstrong, an American expat now living in Melbourne, Australia, has a background in English and has worked as a writer, editor, and teacher. She leads the research, recording, and editing, though she has mentioned an intern in some episodes of the show. Co-host Carly Quinn, who joined the podcast in 2021, studied public history at Northeastern University and has experience working with notable museums. *The Exploress* podcast routinely features guests to provide further information on the episode's subject, many of whom have their own podcasts. Visual guides and timelines are available on the show's website for the audience's perusal, with these resources for sale through the show's online store.

The Remedial Herstory Podcast

Hosted by Kelsie Eckert and Brooke Sullivan

4.8 out of 5 stars (25 reviews on Apple Podcasts)

The Remedial Herstory Project produces a podcast of the same name, currently in its fifth season with over 150 episodes. Hosts Kelsie Eckert and Brooke Sullivan discuss the lack of women and the female perspective in history textbooks and course material. The Project also provides lesson plans that include the female historical perspective for educators. Across the various seasons, the show has examined barriers that prevented the

discussion of women in the history curriculum, themes within women's history, and social processes and concepts behind the erasure of women's history beyond the curriculum. Eckert, a high school history and social studies teacher and the coordinator of Social Sciences Education at Plymouth State University, also created the Eckert Test, which “applied the ‘Bechdel Test’ for films to the history curriculum” to evaluate the quality and quantity of women's perspectives in any given history curriculum. The test has three requirements in order to pass: (1) two women are present in a history lesson; (2) the women have different opinions; and (3) the women have different backgrounds. Sullivan works with a variety of non-profit organizations, acts as a recruiter for several New Hampshire organizations, and has a background in English secondary education and communications.

Six Queens

Hosted by Kate and Cally

5 out of 5 stars (17 reviews on Apple Podcasts)

Six Queens, as the name suggests, focuses on “the six queens who married Henry VIII”—Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, Katherine Howard, and Katherine Parr. Hosts Kate and Cally met in an Early Modern History M.A. program, and both were interested in the Tudor period. In each episode, they examine different elements of the lives of Tudor noblewomen through the lens of the six wives of Henry VIII and other women living in England during the sixteenth century. Through 65 episodes over several seasons, the podcast has focused on topics such as the Tudor court as a physical space, particularly important locations; what it meant to be a Tudor queen in the first half of the sixteenth century; Protestant Reformation, religion, and wartime in the lives of sixteenth-century women; the shift from Catholicism to Protestantism and the many religious variations among the two; and motherhood in the Tudor period. In a recurring feature called “Six Queens on Screen,” Kate and Cally discuss film and television adaptations set in the Tudor era, including productions such as *Becoming Elizabeth* (2022), *Wolf Hall* (2015), *Firebrand* (2023), and *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (1933).

Womanica

Hosted by Jenny Kaplan

4.4 out of 5 stars (860 reviews on Apple Podcasts)

Womanica, a show produced by Wonder Media Network (WMN), releases a short 5- to 10-minute episode every weekday. Shows feature a new woman

from history that ties into the monthly theme, and their catalog includes over 1,700 episodes. Wonder Media Network is based in New York City, and the shows produced by the network focus on women's history, politics, society and culture, business, news, spirituality, and true crime. Host Jenny Kaplan is also the CEO and co-founder of WMN, with a background in news, reporting, social media, and journalism, and hails from North Carolina. The show frequently has guest hosts, depending on the theme of the month. Individuals and themes only repeat on specific occasions, often for a "Best Of" theme one month or a scary theme in October.

Women of HERstory

Hosted by Heather Ashley Shore and Joe Ortiz

3.1 out of 5 stars (37 reviews on Apple Podcasts)

Women of HERstory focuses on "women who made, or are are making their mark on our society." Active from 2020 through 2022, hosts Heather Ashley Shore and Joe Ortiz released over 175 episodes, alternating each between a presentation of a historical woman of the week and an interview with a woman leader in our present day. Shore and Ortiz are both performing artists who started *Women of HERstory* following the United States' COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020; without their main line of work possible, Ortiz and Shore began discussing the representation of women in the media. The podcast then evolved to also create connections between powerful women and a supportive and empowering network.

Ancient History Fangirl**

Hosted by Jenny Williamson and Genn McMenemy

4.5 out of 5 stars (436 reviews on Apple Podcasts)

*****Note: rated for explicit content***

Ancient History Fangirl delves into history before 1066 (except for Genghis Khan), though hosts Jenny Williamson and Genn McMenemy both say that the show really covers what they are interested in at the time. Released bimonthly with over 300 episodes to date, the show primarily focuses on Ancient Greek and Roman history, but has also explored the histories of the Mongols, ancient China, North Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, and the hosts plan to continue to branch out in future episodes, potentially discussing the histories of ancient Egypt, Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Central and South

America. Neither Williamson nor McMenemy have backgrounds in history beyond their pre-existing interests (both are writers who obsessed over ancient history in childhood), and their podcast has a mix of quality information and casual language that draws the audience in. Their joint book, *Women of Myth*, came out in August 2022, in which they explore women from various mythologies around the world, many of whom are covered on the podcast.

For the Love of History**

Hosted by Tehya N. (TK)

4.9 out of 5 stars (190 reviews on Apple Podcasts)

*****Note: rated for explicit content***

For the Love of History covers “world history, women’s history, and weird history,” with host TK releasing new episodes approximately every two weeks during a season of the show. The catalog includes over 100 episodes and, like other podcasts, also offers show merchandise through an online store. The format is very informal, and TK’s wit and knowledge bleed through each episode, with the quirky topics and theme titles (“Empress Baddies,” among others) adding to the show’s charm. TK is an American expat living in Japan, where she teaches second grade, and has a background in history, studying it in college.

History is Gay**

Hosted by Leigh Pfeffer

4.8 out of 5 stars (468 reviews on Apple Podcasts)

*****Note: rated for explicit content***

History is Gay releases monthly episodes and highlights the roles that LGBTQ+ individuals have played in history. Host and producer Leigh Pfeffer built the podcast to challenge cis-heteronormative history and the idea that “queer people are not ‘new’ or a ‘trend.’” With a catalog of more than 70 episodes to date, the show focuses on making history inclusive and representative, as well as making history enjoyable for LGBTQ+ communities. Pfeffer has degrees in European History and Theater and an interest in archaeology. The show seeks to address a historic gap in the mainstream history community as well as the podcasting history community. Pfeffer also includes interviews with history experts on the podcast.

Queens Podcast****Hosted by Katy Hearne-Church and Nathan Foster*****4.5 out of 5 stars (1,300+ reviews on Apple Podcasts)********Note: rated for explicit content***

Queens Podcast, like the name suggests, primarily discusses women from royalty and nobility or who are connected to the aristocracy. With a back catalog of over 200 episodes, the show airs a new episode every two weeks, and bonus content or previous episodes (adjusted for a PG audience) are released in the summer off-season. The show also releases a biweekly newsletter and has an online shop for show merchandise. Hosts Katy Hearne-Church and Nathan Foster are friends who began recording the podcast in their living room (and then over Zoom) looking to address a gap in the content of history podcasts—namely, misogyny and the absence of women in history. They produce, record, research, and edit the show themselves, and though they appear to have no history background, the quality of the show and the information is on par with the other shows in these appendices. The most informal of these shows, Foster creates cocktails tied to the historical woman of the episode, and the hosts then proceed to explore the life of each historical woman. They cover a broad range of history, from ancient Greece to fifteenth-century England and nineteenth-century Korea, and use a variety of clever, if crude, catchphrases as they recount the lives of these historical women.

Appendix B

Other Recommended History Podcasts

The following list of history podcasts includes ratings and reviews data collected from Apple Podcasts at the time of publication. Note that individual episodes may address sensitive topics or use explicit language. Productions rated as explicit on Apple Podcasts are noted as such with asterisks below.

Dan Carlin's Hard Core History **Hosted by Dan Carlin**

4.8 out of 5 stars (60,000+ reviews on Apple Podcasts)

Dan Carlin's Hard Core History (and *Hard Core History: Addendum*) explores history in detail through long-form podcasting, with episodes running well over three or even five hours (and typically over one to two hours for *Addendum*). Hosted by journalist and broadcaster Dan Carlin, the show appeals to more conventional history fans (particularly of military history) and for fans of long-form podcasting. *Hard Core History* has a slightly higher rating compared to *Addendum*, which has a rating of 4.8 out of 5 stars from over 8,000 reviews. Carlin has some of the highest credentials and name recognition within the podcast community, with *Hardcore History* earning millions of listeners and multiple broadcasting awards. Unlike all the other podcasts discussed in this article, *Hard Core History* currently releases about once a year, for a total of 11 episodes, which is understandable given the detail presented in a single multiple-hour episode. *Addendum*, by contrast, releases about three to five episodes per year, featuring interviews with authors, journalists, and historians.

Dan Snow's History Hit **Hosted by Dan Snow**

4.7 out of 5 stars (4,000+ reviews on Apple Podcasts)

Dan Snow's History Hit, produced by United Kingdom media company History Hit (which hosts many other podcasts on a variety of topics by top historians), releases episodes nearly every other day on the history behind modern events and headlines. Host Dan Snow, a historian, interviews other historians and relevant experts on historical events,

discoveries, objects, and individuals. There is a wide range of content on the show, from apartheid and slavery to World War II and Roman emperors, with some 1,500 episodes available in its catalog. With some episodes reaching over one or even two hours, most fall around the 30- to 45-minute mark, and this length is excellent for commutes and brief doses of detailed history. The broad focus and short length provides listeners with the opportunity to select episodes without committing to a specific series; the other podcasts produced by History Hit are much more selective in their focus, as indicated by their titles: *The Ancients*, hosted by historian Tristan Hughes; *Warfare*, hosted by war historian and broadcaster James Rogers; *Not Just the Tudors*, hosted by famous Tudor historian Suzannah Lipscomb; *Gone Medieval*, hosted by archaeologist Cat Jarman and historian Matt Lewis; *Betwixt the Sheets*, hosted by Kate Lister; *Patented*, hosted by Dallas Campbell; and *American History Hit*, hosted by Don Wildman.

The Humanity Archive
Hosted by Jermaine Fowler

4.9 out of 5 stars (262 reviews on Apple Podcasts)

The Humanity Archive podcast is produced by an organization of the same name. The Humanity Archive has two online history courses and a book in addition to the podcast. Host Jermaine Fowler, a public historian and *New York Times* best-selling author, presents histories of “the forgotten and overlooked...that time tried to erase.” Released in 64 episodes from 2020-2024, *The Humanity Archive* primarily explores American history with some expeditions into world history, particularly in Africa and Asia, with topics such as September 11, 2001, the crack cocaine epidemic, the women’s suffrage movement, and Black American history, as well as historical figures such as Mansa Musa, King Kamehameha, and Katsushika Hokusai. Listeners praise Fowler for his storytelling skill and passion for history, and the documentary approach allows him to tell a historical narrative with detail and connect the stories with modern events. Episodes range from 15 to 40 minutes, with some running longer at 45 to 60 minutes or more, which is a good length for documentary-style podcasts so as not to overwhelm the listeners. The high rating also indicates that both the style and content on this podcast are well received. In keeping with the goals of this article and the podcasts discussed within, the show’s exploration of unfamiliar historical individuals and events create a more complete, inclusive, and comprehensive historical narrative.

Passed**Hosted by Veronica Fortune*****4.8 out of 5 stars (13 reviews on Apple Podcasts)***

In the *Passed* podcast, Veronica Fortune discusses people who would never rule in their respective historical kingdoms. An American expat living in Australia, Fortune offers various series within her show, focusing on specific periods and examining each person who would not become a reigning monarch. Produced for just two years from 2020-2022, *Passed* released 76 episodes during its run. With research, writing, and production conducted by Fortune herself, the weekly episodes primarily focus on European history and monarchies, with discussion of medieval law to add context to the week's historical figure. Though not exclusively a women's history podcast, *Passed* does cover women who would have been in line for a throne but never got the chance to rule, such as Elizabeth of York, Lady Margaret Beaufort, Joan II of Navarre, and Empress Matilda, Lady of the English. Some figures, such as John of Gaunt and Edward the Black Prince have multiple episodes dedicated to their history, with episodes running around half an hour.

Throughline**Hosted by Rund Abdelfatah and Ramtin Arablouei*****4.6 out of 5 stars (16,000+ reviews on Apple Podcasts)***

Throughline examines current events through a historical lens, seeking to uncover how the past has influenced the contemporary situation. In this National Public Radio (NPR) production with more than 400 episodes, hosts Rund Abdelfatah and Ramtin Arablouei break down historical events to provide their listeners with a better understanding of the present. The show's tagline ("The past is never past. Every headline has a history.") highlights the priority of providing a different sort of background to current events, politics, and issues such as taxes, the war in Afghanistan, AI, and race. One of many NPR podcasts, *Throughline* is one of the most professional and professional-sounding shows given their access to superior equipment and technology, in addition to NPR's years of experience with radio and podcasts. Episodes are about 50 minutes on average, covering topics from around the world. The show appears to be a massive success with their listeners; those who leave reviews cite and how it makes history "relevant" for listeners.

Dark History****Hosted by Bailey Sarian*****4.8 out of 5 stars (26,000+ reviews on Apple Podcasts)********Note: rated for explicit content***

Dark History is one of the more unique podcasts, hosted by Bailey Sarian, who is a professional makeup artist with an interest in darker themes in history. The show began as a YouTube channel, but the series took off and is now a podcast available on various audio platforms in addition to the original YouTube channel. The podcast has over 180 episodes, with YouTube videos gathering millions of views for each episode. Sarian herself has 7.77 million subscribers and over 1.4 billion views on her YouTube channel (which also features her true crime series, *Murder Mystery & Makeup*), reflecting the power of name recognition and the modern influencer trend to disseminate obscure and strange history knowledge at a huge scale. Beginning in an unconventional manner with a host whose background is in beauty and cosmetics, *Dark History* has evolved into a giant in history podcasting.

Drinks with Great Minds in History****Hosted by Zachary DeBacco*****4.8 out of 5 stars (152 reviews on Apple Podcasts)********Note: rated for explicit content***

On *Drinks with Great Minds in History*, which aired over 200 episodes from 2020-2024, host Zachary DeBacco discusses “great minds”—individuals who were exceptional for their era and their accomplishments—along with an accompanying beverage of choice (and is consequently rated as “explicit” for these references to alcohol along with use of profanity). Revisiting some familiar historical figures like Winston Churchill and Theodore Roosevelt, the podcast also examines some infamous and lesser-known individuals like Napoleon III, Christina of Sweden, and Catherine de Medici. After an introductory episode on each great mind in which DeBacco ranks both the individual and his drink based on an eighteen-point scale, a shorter episode known as “The Chaser” explores a related topic, such as the Declaration of Independence and Robert Livingston following the George Washington episode or the Columbian Exchange following the Christopher Columbus episode. In “A Twist of Psych” episodes, he is joined by his colleague, high school psychology teacher Dr. Shari Valencic, to investigate related psychological concepts. “Shots

“Heard Round the World” pits various historical figures against each other in a fictionalized one-on-one battle, such as Napoleon III against Theodore Roosevelt, with DeBacco and his guest hosts (who have backgrounds in history and education) choosing the victor. Each season also features a “Battle Royale” between the top four great minds of the season

[Redacted] History**

Hosted by André White

4.9 out of 5 stars (1,800+ reviews on Apple Podcasts)

*****Note: rated for explicit content***

On [Redacted] History, host André White explores the history not discussed in the classroom, including the people left out of standard textbooks and the stories that others want to suppress and silence. The podcast has nearly 100 episodes since 2022, all of which focus on Black American history. The variety in the length of episodes (with some running about 15-20 minutes, others 30-45 minutes, and still others at 1-2 hours) and a strong social media presence make the podcast more digestible and less intimidating for listeners. With a high rating on Apple Podcasts, many reviews credit White’s ability to create historical narratives and go on historical deep dives about unknown historical individuals and events. The show’s diligence and devotion to historical research enhance the credibility of the podcast and the information it disseminates, and its “real, unfiltered conversations” clearly fill a niche in the history podcast community.

Spill the Mead**

Hosted by Madi Gervais and additional co-hosts

5 out of 5 stars (18 reviews on Apple Podcasts)

*****Note: rated for explicit content***

Spill the Mead is self-described as “historical storytelling” and “gossip” that shares “the fun, juicy details of history.” Madi Gervais is joined by various co-hosts as they explore all historical periods in a casual, profane environment. With over 60 episodes, the podcast explores figures from ancient, medieval, and modern history, nineteenth-century history, as well as folktales from around the world. Interestingly, the show is cross-listed on podcast platforms as history and comedy, and though the episodes are researched, a disclaimer notes that they are taking liberties with their conveyance of historical information. *Spill the Mead*’s casual atmosphere provides a fantastic gateway into historical knowledge.

You're Wrong About****Hosted by Sarah Marshall*****4.5 out of 5 stars (22,000+ ratings on Apple Podcasts)********Note: rated for explicit content***

On *You're Wrong About*, host Sarah Marshall reconsiders a variety of historical individuals and events that textbooks and other sources of historical knowledge have not accurately represented. Journalist by trade, Marshall uses her skills to uncover more information about these miscast events and individuals in over 300 well-written episodes between 40 and 90 minutes long. The podcast covers a variety of historical individuals and events (from Catherine the Great, Princess Diana, and Lizzie Borden, to ten-year old Samantha Smith, being a teenager in the post-war years, and the history of housekeeping), with a sprinkling of modern events and pop culture (from Elvira, Pee-wee Herman, and Santa Claus, to the Academy Awards, corn maze attractions, and even the legend of Bigfoot). The show also includes interviews with guest experts, including writers, historians, and fellow podcasters.