

ROBYN S. SPEARS

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EDUCATION

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

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2026	Visiting Instructor Department of Ancient Religion, Brigham Young University New Testament REL A 211 Department of Church History & Doctrine, Brigham Young University Foundations of the Restoration REL C-225
2025-2026	Curriculum Developer and Admissions Interviewer Medical Education Program, Alice L. Walton School of Medicine History of Medicine
2025	Adjunct Instructor Department of History, University of Arkansas Health and Disease, HIST 4883
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, Provo, Utah
- 1997-1999 Teaching Assistant
Brigham Young University
Organic Chemistry Lab 353, Human Anatomy Lab 220

COURSES TAUGHT

- 2026 Religion A 211: New Testament
Ancient Scripture, Brigham Young University
- Religion C 225: Foundations of the Restoration
Church History & Doctrine, Brigham Young University
- 2024-2026 Religion 280: Answering My Gospel Questions
Northwest Arkansas Institute of Religion
- 2025 History 4883: Health and Disease
History Department, University of Arkansas
- 2024 Religion C 225: Foundations of the Restoration
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 "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 Woman in Europe & Oceania*, University of Illinois Press (under consideration)

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.

HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVE EXPERIENCE

- 2023-2025 Assistant Director, Interfaith Specialist, Communications Council, Rogers Arkansas Stake, Rogers, Arkansas
- 2017 Bikes for Refugees, Grant Spears Eagle Project, Boy Scouts of America, Sacramento, California

AWARDS, GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS, & FELLOWSHIPS

- 2025 ICAPGen Study Group Scholarship
- 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 Whitmer Historical Conference, Fredericksburg, Texas
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Papers Presented

2025	"Mary Fielding Smith and the Politics of Religion in Missouri, 1838: A Trauma-Informed Analysis of the Letter Smith Wrote to Her Husband Hyrum on April 11, 1839," John Whitmer Historical Association, Independence, Missouri
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

- 2026 “Oxytocin and Global Latter-day Saint Women,” NWA YSA Conference, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas
- 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, Provo, Utah
- 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

2021-Present	Instructor, Northwest Arkansas Institute of Religion Foundations of the Restoration 225, Doctrine and Covenants 324, 325, Answering Gospel Questions 280
2025-2026	Admissions Interviewer, Alice L. Walton School of Medicine (AWSOM), Bentonville, Arkansas
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, Coconut Club Fundraising, Music Department, Oakridge High School, El Dorado Hills, California
2005-2009	Volunteer, YMCA, Redding, California

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2026	ICAPGen Winter Study Group, The International Commission for the Accreditation of Professional Genealogists, Salt Lake City, Utah
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
John Whitmer Historical Association
Association for Genealogical Educators

LANGUAGE

Spanish