

John Dean Davis

Curriculum vitae

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Knowlton School of Architecture – College of Engineering – Ohio State University
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EDUCATION

- 2018 Ph.D., Department of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Planning, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University.
Dissertation title: “The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Reconstruction of the American Landscape, 1865–1885.” Advisor: Antoine Picon.
- 2014 A.M., Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University.
- 2011 M.Arch., with distinction, Harvard University Graduate School of Design.
- 2005 B.S., University of Virginia.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2019– Assistant Professor, Landscape Architecture Section, Knowlton School, College of Engineering, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.
- 2018–19 Assistant Professor, College of Architecture, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.
- 2015 Lecturer, Department of Architecture, Northeastern University, Boston, MA.
- 2014 Lecturer, Department of the History of Art and Architecture, Boston University, Boston, MA.

PUBLICATIONS

Edited Volumes

- 2021 *Military Landscapes*, ed. by Anatole Tchikine and **John Dean Davis** (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks/Harvard University Press).

Refereed Journal Articles

- 2022 “Hope, Anger, and Engineering in a Reconstruction Landscape,” *Buildings & Landscapes* 29, no. 2 (51-73).
- 2020 “Landscapes and Archives: Notes on a method,” *Landscape Journal* 39, no. 1 (2020): 71-85.

Refereed Book Chapters

- 2021 “Olmsted in the South, Olmsted at War,” in *Military Landscapes*, ed. by Anatole Tchikine and John Dean Davis (Washington, D.C.: Harvard University Press/Dumbarton Oaks), 173–199.
- 2019 “A Continental Laboratory: The Landscape of the United States Military Academy at West Point,” in *Landscape and the Academy*, ed. by Daniel Bluestone and John Beardsley (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks/Harvard University Press), 113-142. Winner of the 2020 Landscape History Essay Prize, Society of Architectural Historians.

Manuscripts in Preparation

- 2024 *Reconstructors: Land, Work, and Engineering after the Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, under contract).
- 2024 **John Dean Davis** and Bryan E. Norwood, *Architectures of the Greater Caribbean* (Austin: University of Texas Press, under contract).
- 2024 “The Compass and the Jetty: Capital and Maritime Geometry at Okefenokee, Tehuantepec, and América,” in *Architectures of the Greater Caribbean* (Austin: University of Texas Press, forthcoming).
- 2023 “Rock Work: The Military Reorganization of the Heavy Construction Industry during Reconstruction,” in *Ruins and Reconstructions*, ed. by Nathaniel Walker and Rachel Engmann (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, under review).

Book Reviews

- 2021 Review of *Lowcountry at High Tide: A History of Flooding, Drainage, and Reclamation in Charleston, South Carolina* by Christina Rae Butler and *The Place with No Edge: An Intimate History of People, Technology, and the Mississippi River Delta* by Adam Mandelman. *Arris: The Journal of the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians* 31, 125-128.
- 2019 Review of *Modernism’s Visible Hand: Architecture and Regulation in America*, by Michael Osman. *Constructs* 20, no. 2 (Spring), 16.
- 2018 Review of *The Draining of the Fens: Projectors, Popular Politics, and State Building in Early Modern England*, by Eric Ash. *Landscape Journal* 36, no. 2 (Spring), 112-113.

Book Chapters, Articles, and Web-Based Publications

- 2023 **John Dean Davis**, Charlotte Leib, Margot Lystra, Pollyanna Rhee, “Turning Towards Action in Landscape History,” *PLATFORM*, January 9 (www.platformspace.net/home/turning-towards-action-in-landscape-history).
- 2022 “Finding the Technical Edge,” in *Technical Lands: A Critical Primer*, ed. by Jeffrey Nesbit and Charles Waldheim (Berlin: Jovis Verlag), 100-114.
- 2021 “Owner, Occupier, Intruder: The Fight for US Public Lands,” in *Harvard Design Magazine* 49 (2021), 38–43.
- 2021 “Becoming that Antagonist” in *Manifest: A Journal of the Americas* 3 (2021), 199–204.
- 2018 “Levees, Slavery, and Maintenance,” in *Technology’s Stories* (www.technologystories.org/levees-slavery-and-maintenance/, August).
- 2017 “The Cyborg in the Garden,” in *New Geographies* 9, (2017), 156-160.
- 2017 *The D.C. Water Atlas* (www.doaks.org/resources/water-atlas/).
- 2016 “Fluid Boundaries: *United States v. Rapanos* Revisited,” in *The Site* 36 (Winter) 34-40.
- 2014 “Letter to Ed Eigen,” in *Open Letters* 11 (March).
- 2013 “Landscapes of Exchange: Jan van Linschoten’s Journey to the Portuguese East,” in *Platform* 6, ed. by Rosetta Elkin (Barcelona: Actar).

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2022 Research Support Grant, “Architectures of the Caribbean,” Knowlton School of Architecture, Ohio State University. \$1,500.00.
- 2020 “Agrarian Forms,” InFACT Linkage and Leverage Planning Grant, with Justin Parscher, Initiative for Food and Agricultural Transformation, Ohio State University. \$2,392.00.
- 2020 “Architectures of the Caribbean: Routes, Reconstructions, Revolutions,” project grant, with Bryan Norwood, Global Architectural History Teaching Collaborative. \$9,990.00.
- 2019 Research Support Grant, Knowlton School of Architecture, Ohio State University. \$1,600.00.
- 2019 Alumni College Humanities Fellowship, Texas Tech University. \$3,000.00.
- 2017 Rosann S. Berry Fellowship, Society of Architectural Historians. \$1,000.00.
- 2017 Travel Grant, National Science Foundation.
- 2017 Charles Warren Center for the Study of American History Dissertation Completion Grant, Harvard University. \$35,000.00.
- 2015–2017 William R. Tyler Fellowship, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C. \$70,000.00.
- 2014 Harvard University Weatherhead Center for International Affairs Conference Grant, with Bryan Norwood and Lisa Haber-Thomson.
- 2014 Harvard Graduate School Council Student Group Grant, with Bryan Norwood and Lisa Haber-Thomson.
- 2011-2013 Harvard University Fellowship.

AWARDS AND HONORS

- 2020 Landscape History Essay Award for “A Continental Laboratory: The Landscape of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point,” Landscape History Chapter, Society of Architectural Historians.
- 2017 Robinson Prize, honorable mention, Society for the History of Technology.
- 2017 Travel Award, Harvard University Graduate School of Design.
- 2015 Outstanding Teaching Fellow, Harvard University Graduate School of Design.
- 2014 Outstanding Teaching Fellow, Harvard University Graduate School of Design.
- 2014 Travel Award, Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.
- 2010 Penny White Travel Award, Harvard University Graduate School of Design.
- 2005 Sean Steele-Nicholson Award, University of Virginia.

2005 Design Excellence Award, University of Virginia.

INVITED TALKS

- 2023 “Rock Work: The Army and Black Workers in Reconstruction Alabama,” Black History Month Webinar, Construction History Society of America (CHSA), February 24.
- 2022 “War, Reunion, and Frederick Law Olmsted,” keynote lecture, Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA) Annual Conference, Santa Ana Pueblo, NM, March 15.
- 2021 “Olmsted in the South, Olmsted at War,” University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, September 15.
- 2019 “The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Reconstruction of the American Landscape,” Knowlton School of Architecture, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, February 13.
- 2019 “Reconstructing the American Landscape,” University of Illinois, Champaign, IL, January 30.
- 2018 “The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Reconstruction of the American Landscape,” College of Architecture, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX, April 6.
- 2018 “The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Reconstruction of the American Landscape,” Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA, February 9.
- 2015 “The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the American Landscape, 1865-1885,” Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C., December 14.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Conferences Organized

- 2022 “Architectures of the Caribbean: Routes, Reconstructions, Revolutions,” with Bryan Norwood, workshop, University of Texas at Austin, June 8–10.
- 2018 “Military Landscapes,” with Anatole Tchikine, symposium, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C., May 4-5.
- 2014 “Cambridge Talks VIII: Environments, Institutions, Architecture,” with Bryan Norwood and Lisa Haber-Thomson, symposium, Harvard Graduate School of Design, April 11.

Panels Organized

- 2021 “Labor and Landscape,” with Jay Cephas, Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Montreal, Canada, April 15–16.
- 2020 “Structuring Environments: Building and Managing Landscapes and Places,” with Kirke Elsass, Annual Conference of the American Society for Environmental History, Ottawa, Canada, March 25–29.*

Papers Presented

- 2022 “The Compass and the Jetty: Entrepôt Building around the Gulf of Mexico,” Annual Conference of the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians, Memphis, TN, November 2–5.
- 2022 “Volunteering Olmsted,” Olmsted: Bicentennial Perspectives Conference, Harvard University Graduate School of Design and Arnold Arboretum, Boston, MA, October 14–15.

- 2022 “Finding a Line in Okefenokee, Tehuantepec, and América,” Architectures of the Caribbean, University of Texas, Austin, TX, June 8–10.
- 2022 “Rock Work: The Army and Black Workers in Reconstruction Alabama,” 7th Biennial Conference of the Construction History Society of America, Marietta, GA, June 2-4.
- 2022 **John Dean Davis** and Bryan Norwood, “On the Built History of Reconstruction,” C19: 2022: Reconstructions, Annual Conference of the C19 Americanists, Coral Gables, FL, March 31–April 2.
- 2021 “Technical Services and the Rhetoric of Development in the New South,” Annual Conference of the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians, Natchez, MS, September 30–October 2.*
- 2021 “Gizmos in a Landscape: Reyner Banham and the Structures of History,” Black-Boxing Banham, symposium, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, February 25.
- 2020 “Toward a Continental Diagram: Infrastructure and Military Geometry in the Reconstruction U.S. South,” Annual Meeting of the Society for the History of Technology, New Orleans, Louisiana, October 9–10.*
- 2020 “The Oyster and the Engineer: Nineteenth-Century Military Experiments with Bivalve Structures on the Gulf Coast,” Annual Conference of the American Society for Environmental History, Ottawa, Canada, March 25–29.*
- 2019 “Rock Work: Military Reorganization of the Construction Industry at Muscle Shoals, 1870 – 1890,” Ruins and Reconstructions: Architectures of Slavery Conference, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC, October 24–26.
- 2019 **John Dean Davis** and Bryan E. Norwood, “On the Built History of Reconstruction,” Annual Conference of the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians, Greenville, SC, October 9–12.
- 2019 “More than Forty Acres: Hope and Engineering in Reconstruction Landscapes,” 72nd Annual International Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Providence, RI, April 24–28.
- 2018 “Olmsted in the South, Olmsted at War,” Military Landscapes Symposium, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C., May 4–5.
- 2018 “Laboring Rivers: Engineering and Work in the Cotton Empire,” 71st Annual International Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, St. Paul, Minnesota, April 18–22.
- 2017 “Reconstructing the Cape Fear: Re-engineering the Coast after the American Civil War,” Annual Meeting of the Society for the History of Technology, Philadelphia, October 26–29.
- 2017 “On the Angle of Repose,” Maintainers II: Labor, Technology, and Social Orders, conference, Stevens Institute of Technology, April 6–8.
- 2016 “A Continental Laboratory: The Landscape of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point,” Landscape and the Academy Symposium, Dumbarton Oaks, May 6.

- 2015 “Notes on Design and Authority in the Antebellum U.S. Army,” Cambridge Talks X, Harvard University, April 2.
- 2015 “Empiricism, Intuition, and Technical Drawing in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,” New England Society of Architectural Historians, February 29.
- 2014 “Technical Drawing in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,” Military Engineering in the Americas, conference, Universidad de Sevilla, November 18.

Discussant

- 2021 “Descriptions” panel, Manifest III, University of Virginia, February 23.
- 2019 “Obduracy” panel, After Design: Monitoring and Managing the Texas Landscape, symposium, Texas Tech University, April 5.
- 2016 “Plug-Ins” panel, Heliomorphism Conference, Harvard Graduate School of Design, September 15.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

As Instructor

- 2023 Landscapes and Architecture of Mexico, undergraduate and graduate travel seminar, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.
- 2022 Labor and Landscape, undergraduate and graduate seminar, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.
- 2020 Tracing the Underground Railroad, undergraduate and graduate seminar, with Tijs van Maasakkers and Karen Lewis, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.
- 2020– Making and Meaning in the American Landscape, general education undergraduate lecture, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.
- 2020– Landscape History and Theory II: The Modern Era, undergraduate lecture, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.
- 2019– Landscape History and Theory I: Prehistory to Modern Era, undergraduate lecture, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.
- 2019 Nature and Construction: Theories of Environment and Architecture, graduate seminar, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.
- 2019 Architectural Design, undergraduate studio, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.
- 2018 Building the United States, undergraduate lecture course, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.
- 2018 Collaborative Design Studio, with Jason Sowell, graduate architectural and landscape design studio, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.
- 2015 Fundamentals of Design, undergraduate architectural design studio, Northeastern University, Boston, MA.

2014 History and Theory of Landscape Architecture, undergraduate lecture course, Boston University, Boston, MA.

SERVICE

2023 President, Landscape History Chapter, Society of Architectural Historians.

2022– Scientific Committee, Construction History Society of America.

2022–23 Vice President, Landscape History Chapter, Society of Architectural Historians.

2022–23 Faculty Search Committee, Department of Art History, College of Arts and Sciences, Ohio State University.

2021– Acting Chair, Baumer Lecture Series Committee, Knowlton School of Architecture, Ohio State University.

2020–21 Baumer Lecture Series Committee, Knowlton School of Architecture, Ohio State University.

2019–22 Advisory Board, Landscape History Chapter, Society of Architectural Historians.

2019–22 Editorial Board, *Journal of Architectural Education*.

2019–20 Library Committee, Knowlton School of Architecture, Ohio State University.

2018–19 Faculty Search Committee, Texas Tech University College of Architecture.

2018–19 Urban and Community Design Committee, Texas Tech University College of Architecture.

2018–19 Lectures and Events Committee, Texas Tech University College of Architecture.

2017 Media Investigations Competition Jury, Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture.

REVIEWING

2022 *Landscape Research*.

2021 *Landscape Journal*, *Buildings & Landscapes*, *Economic Anthropology*, *Thresholds*.

2020 *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*.

PODCASTS, WEBINARS, INTERVIEWS, AND OTHER MEDIA COVERAGE

2023 “Hope, Anger, and Engineering in a Reconstruction Landscape,” *Civil War Era Documentary* Happy Hour, February 23.

2023 “Angry Popes and Architecture,” Manifesto! Podcast, no. 49, January 26.

2016 Jared Green, “University Landscapes Teach, Too,” *The Dirt* (blog), American Society of Landscape Architects, May 19.

2015 Alex Beam, “Matter of Course: Contingencies of Design Northeastern University,” *Architecture Boston* 18, no. 3 (Fall).

LANGUAGES

Spanish – reading, writing, intermediate speaking

French – reading, writing, basic speaking

German – reading with dictionary

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Society of Architectural Historians

Society for the History of Technology

American Society for Environmental History

Southern Historical Association

REFERENCES

available on request