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Naming Rape: The Social Practice of Power, Agency, and Victimization in the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1936-1940

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The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy

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Research Panel: Gender, Violence, and Agency

Presenter: Caroline Waldron Merithew, University of Dayton

Title: Naming Rape: The Social Practice of Power, Agency, and Victimization in the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1936-1940

Abstract:

This paper, "Naming Rape," shows how and when rape got named as part of the movement against the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1936. I show that activists used the term strategically at certain points and specific places of the struggle to sway opinion and move the international community to challenge fascist violence and expansionism. Naming rape was something new for antiwar activists at this time.

About the presenter:

Caroline Merithew is an historian of transnationalism. She is an associate professor of history and a Human Rights Center associate at the University of Dayton. Her publications focus on the intersection of immigration, labor, and women's history and include "Navigating Body, Class, and Disability in the Life of Agnes Burns Wieck" in the *Journal of Historical Biography* (2013); "Domesticating the Diaspora: Remember the Life of Katie DeRorre" in *Intimacy and Italian Migration: Gender and Domestic Lives in a Mobile World* (Fordham 2011); "'We Were Not Ladies': Gender, Class, and a Women's Auxiliary's Battle for Mining Unionism," in the *Journal of Women's History* (2006), awarded the Anita S. Goodstein Junior Scholar Prize for the best article published in the field of American women's history; "Anarchist Motherhood," in *Women, Gender, and Transnational Lives* (2002); and "'Lynch-Law Must Go!'" in the *Journal of American Ethnic History* (2000).