



The Department of History

HISTORY WORKSHOP

TUESDAYS 12:30-1:30 ON ZOOM



KATHERYN LAWSON

PhD Candidate
May 3, 2022

Zoom ID:
968 7068 4304
PW: UDHistory

PETS OF RESPECTABILITY: BLACK PHILADELPHIANS AND THEIR ANIMAL COMPANIONS, 1950-1990

Popular perceptions often assume pet keeping to be a function of middle-class whiteness or a unifying force across racial boundaries. A closer look, however, reveals that the keeping, breeding, and competing of companion animals has helped to articulate middle-class Blackness. Combining oral history, digital mapping, and print culture analysis, this paper explores how pets have mattered to Black Philadelphians since the postwar era.

SPEAKER BIO

Katheryn Lawson is a PhD candidate in History at the University of Delaware, studying the intersections of race, pet keeping, animal care, and animal control in urban America.

Her recent digital essays include “Pet Keeping and Pet Hiding in Black America” and “The Little-Known History of Cat Litter.”

She has been the copy editor for Sloth: A Journal of Emerging Voices in Human-Animal Studies since 2017.