



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY ANNOUNCES ALABAMA WOMEN'S HISTORY SERIES  
"WOMEN IN THE PROGRESSIVE ERA" IS FIRST EVENT, DEBUTS ONLINE OCTOBER 13**

Montgomery, AL (10/07/21) – The Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) will debut a new series this month that will run through May 2022. The *Alabama Women's History Series* will feature monthly presentations by expert scholars exploring topics related to women's history in the state of Alabama.

The first program in the series will be an online presentation on "Women in the Progressive Era" on **Wednesday, October 13, at 12:00pm CT**, by Dr. Sheena Harris of West Virginia University and Dr. Marty Olliff of Troy University Dothan Campus. Harris and Olliff will discuss the lives and accomplishments of two Alabama women who worked to improve the lives of Alabamians and who exemplify the efforts of many Alabama women during the Progressive Era.

Dr. Harris will discuss the life of **Margaret Murray Washington**, the third wife of Booker T. Washington. Her presentation will provide a glimpse into the inner workings of the Black Women's Club Movement and illuminate the experiences of a Black woman who came of age during the Jim Crow South. Dr. Olliff will discuss **Alma Rittenberry**, a native of Birmingham. His presentation will highlight her advocacy and immersion in the Progressive Era good roads movement, which called on government and voluntary associations to create long distance automobile highways and tourism opportunities between northern and southern states.

Dr. Sheena Harris is an associate professor of history and coordinator of the Africana Studies Program at West Virginia University. Prior to joining WVU in 2021, she served as associate professor and the inaugural Director of Student Engagement Initiatives at Tuskegee University. Harris's book, *Margaret Murray Washington: The Life and Times of a Career Clubwoman* (University of Tennessee Press, 2021), is the first biography of Washington.

Dr. Marty Olliff is a professor of history and the director of the Wiregrass Archives at Troy University Dothan Campus. He is the author of *Getting Out of the Mud: Alabama's Good Roads Movement and Highway Administration, 1898-1928* (University of Alabama Press, 2017), which features Alma Rittenberry. Olliff's presentation is based on the research for his article, "'The Most Famous Good Roads Woman in the United States': Alma Rittenberry of Birmingham," published in the April 2010 issue of *The Alabama Review*.

**The October 13 program will be livestreamed on the ADAH's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/alabamaarchives](https://www.facebook.com/alabamaarchives)) and YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/alabamaarchives](https://www.youtube.com/alabamaarchives)).** For more information about the series, call (334) 353-4689 or email [alex.colvin@archives.alabama.gov](mailto:alex.colvin@archives.alabama.gov).

The Alabama Department of Archives and History is the state's government records repository, a special collections library and research facility, and home to the Museum of Alabama, the state history museum. It is located in downtown Montgomery, directly across the street from the State Capitol. The Archives and Museum are open Monday through Saturday, 8:30 to 4:30. The EBSCO Research Room is open Tuesday through Friday and the second Saturday of the month from 8:30 to 4:30. To learn more, visit [www.archives.alabama.gov](http://www.archives.alabama.gov) or call (334) 242-4364.

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