

**EUREKA! GOLD RUSHES, UNIVERSITIES, AND GLOBALISATION  
IN THE BRITISH WORLD, 1840-1910**

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This talk examines a set of public universities that opened after 1848 across California, Australasia, South Africa, and Canada. It argues that these institutions – termed the ‘goldfield foundations’ – owed the speed of their formation, if not their existence, to the period’s global gold and mineral rushes. During the first capital-intensive years of university development, new mineral wealth added liquidity to colonial finance and enriched the main sources of university income. At the same time, the social upheaval caused by gold rushes stimulated regionalism and drives to re-establish Old World hierarchies in ways that made university-building attractive. Exploring these institutions’ interconnected development has important implications for the study of empire, extractive capitalism, and globalisation. The relationship between higher education and mineral extraction in the nineteenth century was co-constitutive. Goldfield universities’ rapid growth depended upon the imperial and global circuits of ideas, people, and capital that flowed from the rushes. Yet, once opened, these universities became tremendous drivers of globalisation themselves, producing techniques of extraction, expertise, and technologies that propelled the global mining industry and prolonged the mineral rushes that had first established them.

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Dr Caitlin Harvey is a Research Fellow of Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge. Her research examines the history of migration, race, settlement, and education in a British imperial and global context. Her current book project, *Bricks and Mortar Boards: University-Building, Settlers, & the Growth of Higher Education, 1820-1920*, examines the rapid expansion of university education across Britain’s colonies of settlement and their self-governing successors – Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States – from new universities’ shaky beginnings at the start of the nineteenth century to their firm foundations and continued growth a century later. Her research has been published in *The Journal of Women’s History*, *the Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, and the *Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) Journal Sociales* in Paris.

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**History of Universities Seminar**

Convened by Miles Taylor (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany), Ku-ming (Kevin) Chang (Academia Sinica, Taiwan), Heike Jöns (Loughborough University, United Kingdom) and Tamson Pietsch (University of Technology Sydney, Australia). Hosted by the Humboldt University of Berlin on Zoom: <https://www.histgeog-uni.net/history-of-universities-seminar-2/>.