



NEWS RELEASE

• Apr. 20, 2021 •

- **May 21 online book talk explores pivotal role health care workers play in economy of 21st-century Rust Belt America**

WHAT: The Battle of Homestead Foundation and White Whale Bookstore present an online book talk — “**The Next Shift: Fall of Industry & Rise of Health Care in Rust Belt America**”

WHEN: Friday, May 21, 2021 from 7:30-9:00 p.m.

WHERE: Program is free but viewers must register at www.eventbrite.com

WHO: Featuring author [Gabriel Winant, Ph.D.](#), Assistant Professor of History at University of Chicago; labor journalist [Alex Press](#); union activist [Rosemary Trump](#)

HOMESTEAD, PENNSYLVANIA — Men in hardhats were once the iconic representation of America’s blue-collar work force; now it is women in scrubs. What does this symbolic shift portend for the nation’s economic future?

Using Pittsburgh as a case study, history professor Gabriel Winant’s latest book, ***The Next Shift: Fall of Industry & Rise of Health Care in Rust Belt America*** (Harvard University Press), provides a series of initially unsettling — yet, ultimately hopeful — answers.

On Friday, May 21, 2021, from 7:30-9:00 p.m. in an online program sponsored by the **Battle of Homestead Foundation** and **White Whale Bookstore**, Dr. Winant will discuss how health care workers and their current workplace struggles are shaping the U.S. economy of tomorrow.

The program is free; attendees must register at www.eventbrite.com to receive a Zoom admission link.

Like many formerly manufacturing-based cities across the United States, Pittsburgh’s financial makeup is now dominated by the “service economy” — particularly jobs in health care, a sector that in 2021 employs more Americans than any other industry.

The Next Shift ventures inside Pittsburgh neighborhoods and talks with dozens of working-class Pittsburghers to show how America’s cities have weathered new economic realities. Dr. Winant finds a new labor demographic has emerged in the wake of de-industrialization ... a workforce disproportionately comprised of women and people of color working unpredictable hours for low pay.

Dr. Winant has been keeping close tabs on Pittsburgh's fortunes for awhile. His 2018 Yale University doctoral dissertation was titled *Crucible of Care: Economic Change and Inequality in Postwar Pittsburgh* and explained how the social dislocation of factory job loss has spawned new, unequal labor markets throughout America.

The Next Shift offers unique insights into how we got here and what could happen next. Dr. Winant believes that if health care employees, along with other "essential workers", can translate their newly-recognized economic and social value into true political power, they may become the determining force in reviving the American Dream in the 21st century.

The [Battle of Homestead Foundation](#) is an educational nonprofit promoting Western Pennsylvania's vibrant industrial and labor history starting with the 1892 Homestead Steel Strike and connecting with current labor issues involving economics, the environment, healthcare, racism and other social concerns.

[White Whale Bookstore](#) is a family-owned, general interest independent bookstore in Pittsburgh that serves as a community hub for engagement, conversation and sharing ideas. Their selection of new books includes a broad range of contemporary and literary fiction and nonfiction, poetry, history, philosophy, local authors, independent presses, children's books and much more.

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- * For information on Battle of Homestead Foundation programs visit www.battleofhomestead.org.
 - * Tune in to the Foundation's public affairs podcast series *Essential Work: Exploring the Past, Present and Future of Jobs* podcast series at www.essentialworkpodcast.com
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**** PRESENTER ****

[Gabriel Winant, Ph.D.](#) is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Chicago. His latest book *The Next Shift: The Fall of Industry and the Rise of Health Care in Rust Belt America* was just published by Harvard University Press. He has written for *n+1*, *The Nation*, *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *New Republic*; for *Dissent* he has written on graduate student organizing, on black women and the carceral state, on class politics and on labor history.

**** COMMENTERS ****

[Alex Press](#) is assistant editor at *Jacobin* magazine; her writing on labor and current events has appeared in the *Washington Post*, *In These Times*, *Vox*, *n+1*, *The Nation*, *Bookforum*, *The Outline*, *Medium* and numerous other news and opinion journals.

[Rosemary Trump](#) is a Battle of Homestead Foundation board member whose distinguished career in labor activism includes serving as the first female International Vice President of SEIU, vice president of Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, recording secretary of Western Pennsylvania Area Food Beverage Trades Council and a six-time delegate to the Democratic National Convention.
