

CONFERENCE PROGRAM AND ABSTRACTS

Historians Against Slavery Biennial Conference 2017

October 7-8, 10am-5pm

International Slavery Museum, Liverpool

Register Online: www.has2017.eventbrite.co.uk

This year, Historians Against Slavery (HAS) is holding its biennial conference outside of the United States for the first time, at the International Slavery Museum (ISM) in Liverpool. The two-day conference is part of a series of events during the 10th Anniversary of the ISM and also marks UK Black History Month 2017. It is co-hosted by HAS, the ISM, the Centre for the Study of International Slavery (University of Liverpool) and the Antislavery Usable Past project (ASUP, Universities of Nottingham and Hull).

SATURDAY OCTOBER 7

From 9am: coffee and registration

10-10.30am: **Welcome Addresses**

Stacey Robertson (Historians Against Slavery)

John Oldfield (The Antislavery Usable Past)

Richard Benjamin (The International Slavery Museum and the Centre for the Study of International Slavery)

10.30-11.45am: Panel I

The Antislavery Usable Past (chair: Zoe Trodd, HAS/ASUP)

Jean Pfaelzer (University of Delaware), “Pacific Slavery and the Long History of Human Trafficking”

This paper exposes a set of links between human trafficking, empire, and ethnic cleansing and reveals movements of resistance. Drawn from the research for a forthcoming book, *California Bound: Slavery in the American West*, it considers the legal, political, and colonial origins of human trafficking in the American West through three gendered, racialized and enduring designs of female capture and forced migration. Each historical transfer and forced migration is a corrective to a global narrative that positions human trafficking as a modern phenomenon and to a national narrative that has viewed slavery in the United States as largely a North/South issue.

Bharat Malkani (University of Birmingham), “The Abolitionist Legacy for Death Penalty Activism”

The legacy of slavery is woven into the fabric of capital punishment in the USA, and it is little surprise to find historical and conceptual links between their respective abolitionist movements. This paper therefore uses the history of slavery abolitionism to explain and evaluate contemporary approaches to death penalty abolitionism. Orthodox accounts characterize today’s anti-death penalty movement as ‘conservative’ and ‘pragmatic’, since abolitionism is generally focused on the unworkability of capital punishment rather than the inherent immorality of state-sanctioned executions. Using the lens of slavery abolitionism, it suggests that death penalty abolitionism is more radical than it first appears, offers means of addressing other issues within the criminal justice system, such as racism, and is continuing the work of the radical slavery abolitionists.

Maeve Ryan (King’s College London), “Towards a ‘Grand Strategy’ of Modern Antislavery”

This paper sets British state action on modern slavery as an essential part of forward-looking ‘Global Britain’, and makes the case that tackling modern slavery should continue to be a policy priority throughout the complex negotiations and adjustments that lie ahead. Britain’s commitment to tackling global slavery is not a ‘nice to have’ policy that can be sidelined when all energies are being focused on making Brexit work. The paper will argue, using insights from the successes and failures of Britain’s anti-slavery past (both in myth and reality), that British anti-slavery policy needs to enter a new, final phase in which the energies and innovations of key stakeholders around the globe are joined up and targeted to maximum effect. Defeating modern slavery and supporting its victims can and should be the success story of our times. This paper begins to think about what a ‘grand strategy’ of global anti-slavery might look like, and what role Britain could play in making it a reality.

11.45am-12pm: break

12-1.30pm: Panel 2

Learning and Teaching the History of Slavery (chair: Stacey Robertson, HAS)

Stephen Rozman (Tougaloo College), “How to Teach and Study Modern Slavery at a Historically Black College”
In 2016, Tougaloo College, whose campus was built on the remains of a slave plantation, received a \$550,000 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant to establish an Institute for the Study of Modern Day Slavery and Antislavery. The first of the HBCUs (historically black colleges and universities) to focus on the topic of modern slavery, Tougaloo aims to give 21st-century meaning to the college’s deep roots in the African American struggle, and make it a major centre of antislavery scholarship, pedagogy, and public policy. One of the Institute’s co-directors will reflect on the process of developing a new curriculum with an interdisciplinary board of faculty members, including community outreach and core courses for its students. How can this initiative address the closely-linked challenges of the “new” global slavery and the oppressive practices passed on by the legacies of the “old” plantation slavery, and develop effective responses to 21st-century enslavement through knowledge of the African American struggle for freedom, justice, and equality?

Catherine Armstrong (Loughborough University), “The Lecturer’s Perspective on Teaching Slavery”
This talk discusses the pros and cons of an approach to teaching slavery that moves away from a narrow focus on the United States experience, and instead uses a broad global and chronological focus. The undergraduate course in question, ‘Slavery in a Global Context,’ includes Ancient Greece and Rome, India and China, medieval feudalism and serfdom in Russia, the Atlantic world, and the persistence of slavery worldwide in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Students are shown that slavery has not been consigned to the history books, rather that they must apply their learning about historical contexts to understanding why slavery exists today and how to work to stop it. The paper will also examine how teaching slavery can be enhanced by learning methods from the teaching of other painful historical topics such as the Holocaust.

Robert Fieldsend (Loughborough College History Teacher), “The Teacher’s Perspective on Teaching Slavery”
This talk will focus on education about why slavery existed, and why learning about the cause and consequence of slavery is more powerful than the facts and figures. At A-Level, students discover the factor that drove slavery was greed and exploitation. They encounter human lives being traded for fiscal gain. This paper explores the significance of teaching the “why” about slavery, and argues that the true mission for the educator is to discover and share this “why,” in order to ask why dehumanisation and human exploitation continues to happen today.

Francesca Hannay (Loughborough University Student), “The Student’s Perspective on Learning about Slavery”
This paper by an undergraduate student lays out her learning journey, from learning about North American slavery in a history class when she was 14 years old, to selecting courses as an undergraduate. It explains from a student perspective why it’s important to understand that slavery isn’t just history, and why good education on slavery is more necessary than ever today.

1.30-2.15pm: lunch

2.15-3.30pm: Panel 3

Abolitionist Motives (chair: Kevin Bales, ASUP)

Michael Rota (University of St. Thomas), “The Psychology of Moral Judgment and the Abolition of Slavery”
The 18th and 19th centuries witnessed the emergence and unanticipated success of a popular movement, concentrated in Great Britain and the Northern United States, to abolish the slave trade and outlaw slavery. Why did the abolitionist movement arise when and where it did? This paper draws from research from the field of empirical psychology on the way in which human beings form and maintain moral judgments, the relevance of in-group/out-group distinctions for the elicitation of empathy and altruistic behaviour, and the phenomena of self-deception, to show why residents of Great Britain and the Northern United States in the 18th and 19th centuries were in an unusually good position to perceive the moral wrongness of slavery, and act on that perception.

Kristofer Allerfeldt (University of Exeter), “Marcus Braun and the History and Politics of Abolition”

This paper explores Marcus Braun and his motives for fighting sex trafficking in the early 1900s. A larger than life character, Braun’s work as special investigator within the US Bureau of Immigration did much to fuel the outrage that led to the Mann Act of 1910—an act that formed the backbone of American anti-trafficking law throughout the entirety of the 20th century and, arguably, even the 21st. The paper will assess his career and abolitionism as a lens for understanding how abolition fervour and the role of individuals in steering public opinion and legislation.

Andrea Nicholson (University of Nottingham), “Placing Slave Narratives at the Heart of Modern Antislavery Policy”

This paper addressed the importance of slave narratives to abolition and questions why contemporary slave narratives have not been harnessed when forming state strategies and structures. Survivors often express their hopes post enslavement in terms of how they can realize their freedom and human rights. The paper will examine what survivors say about themselves post enslavement and what this means for the contemporary antislavery agenda. It identifies the strategies that survivors suggest, the issues they encounter, and what freedom means to them in practical terms.

3.30-3.45pm: break

3.45-5.15pm: Panel 4

Slaveholding Then and Now (chair: Michael Landis, HAS)

Susan O’Donovan (University of Memphis), “Black Ambassadors and the Gendered Geographies of Slavery”

This paper focuses on a particular sub-group of what has turned out to be an intensely mobile population of slaves: the mostly female slaves who were made to accompany their owners on sometimes lengthy journeys to far away and free-labour places. Drawing from a current a book-length study of slaves and their role in an escalating debate over slavery, freedom, and nation, the paper explores the political, social, and epistemological consequences of slaveholders’ reluctance to go from home alone. What did it mean that white women and men - slaveholders all - routinely introduced their most precious possessions into subversive situations, and then hauled them back home to slavery?

Talitha LeFlouria (University of Virginia), “Race, Gender, and Mass Incarceration in the New South”

Drawing from the speaker’s recent prize-winning book, *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South*, this paper will set contemporary mass incarceration in the context of the post-Civil War convict leasing system, the early modern prison movement, chain-gang systems and the New South economy. It argues that the incarcerated labor of Black women in Reconstruction-era Georgia, which rebuilt the South’s infrastructure and industrial economy under brutal conditions, was enabled by the social language and legal mechanisms around Black lives that persist in America’s modern mass incarceration complex. The paper shows mass incarceration and convict leasing as new forms of enslavement, and reveals the root causes of African American injustice in America: race, class and gender oppression.

Elizabeth Swanson (Babson College), “Denial and Indifference in Historical Proslavery and Contemporary Rhetoric”

This paper compares antebellum proslavery arguments and contemporary sex worker rights arguments, revealing defence, denial and indifference. It outlines a shared prioritizing of market access—expressed via property rights in the former and access to markets in the latter—as a means to profit generation. Drawing on a range of literary, historical, and social media sources, the paper shifts the frame of the debate about sex trafficking from its typically designated antecedent, early 20th century “white slavery,” to plantation slavery in the antebellum south, and argues for a more nuanced, human rights oriented approach to the commercial sex trade.

Austin Choi-Fitzpatrick (University of San Diego), “What Slaveholders Think”

Drawing on 15 years of work in the antislavery movement, this paper asks: How do contemporary slaveholders rationalize the subjugation of other human beings, and how do they respond when their power is threatened? Unpacking what slaveholders think about emancipation is critical for scholars and policy makers who want to understand the broader context, especially as seen by the powerful. Insight into those moments when the powerful either double down or back off provides a sobering counterbalance to scholarship on popular struggle. Incorporating the experiences of such pivotal actors into antislavery research is an important step toward crafting effective antislavery policies and intervention.

5.15-5.30pm: break

5.30-7pm: **Conference Keynote**

John Stauffer (Harvard University), "History is the Activist's Muse"

Response from Kevin Bales (University of Nottingham), "Using History"

SUNDAY OCTOBER 8

From 9am: coffee

9.30-10.45am: Panel 5

Recovering 'Disrupted Histories' (chair: Olivette Otele, HAS)

Jean Hebrard (School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences), "Rosalie, Freedom, Law and Dignity in the Era of the Haitian Revolution"

Around 1785, a woman was taken from her home in Senegambia and sent to Saint-Domingue. Those who enslaved her there named her Rosalie. Her later efforts to escape slavery were the beginning of a family's quest, across five generations and three continents, for lives of dignity and equality. This paper shows how the saga of Rosalie and her descendants traverses three great antiracist struggles of the nineteenth century: the Haitian Revolution, the French Revolution of 1848, and the Civil War and Reconstruction in the United States. It charts how each generation tried to use the power and legitimacy of documents to help secure freedom and respect, and argues that the strategies they used to overcome the constraints of slavery, war, and colonialism reveal the contours of the lives of people of color across the Atlantic world during this turbulent epoch.

Martha S. Jones (University of Michigan), "The Celia Project, Slavery and Memory"

This paper introduces the Celia Project, a collaborative research project that is generating new scholarship on the history of sexual violence, women, and slavery in the United States through an exploration of the case of *The State of Missouri v. Celia, A Slave* (1856). Celia's case opens new conversations about women and slavery; race, gender, and sexual violence; slavery and memory; and slavery and the law. The Celia Project brings together social, cultural, and legal historians with literary scholars to collectively produce new analyses of Celia and the multiple implications of the case.

Myriam Cottias (French National Centre for Scientific Research), "The Memory of Slavery in France, from National Silence and Local Identities to Reparations"

Taking stock of actions around the memory of slavery, this paper examines how various influential groups have been formed and developed over the last 20 years. It looks specifically at the way that the state and non-profit organisations in overseas territories and in mainland France interact and define the main themes for the debate over slavery memory, including the question of reparations.

10.45-11am: break

11am-12.15pm: Panel 6

Dark Heritage and the Slavery Archive (chair: Talitha LeFlouria, HAS)

Charles Forsdick (University of Liverpool), "On the Emergence of a Dark Tourism Field"

The paper explores the emergence of academic studies on "dark tourism" over the past 20 years, and analyses terminology relating to the phenomenon. It focuses on the translatability of the phenomenon across cultural and linguistic contexts and describes how this term continues to describe an ambivalent and often controversial activity, raising a series of ethical questions. It highlights the predominance of Anglophone work in this field and considers how intercultural and comparative approaches allow us to analyse competing versions of the past, and also to show how the commemoration of "dark heritage" varies according to national historiographies. The paper concludes with a discussion of recent trends and current research, including affirmation of postmodern perspectives, new avenues of reflection around visual culture, and growing interest in intercultural approaches.

Wendy Asquith (University of Nottingham), "Dark Heritage Intersectionality and the Overlapping Histories of Enslavement and Incarceration"

The paper explores how the development of studies on "dark tourism" has tended to emphasize the subcategories of this practice in discrete ways, often by failing to recognize that histories and memories coexist at the same sites, either in parallel or successively. Taking the example of the heritage of slavery and that of incarceration, the paper suggests that it was necessary to examine how, in the field of "dark heritage", different narratives of the past become entangled. The paper examines how and why "dark tourism" has tended to underestimate the stakes of this intersectionality, analyses examples of such intersectionality at sites of "dark tourism," and explores how these intersecting stories are managed via heritage practices on the ground.

Katie Donington (University of Nottingham), "Slavery, Memory and Representation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo"

This paper focuses on a collection of 509 photographs produced by British missionary Alice Seeley Harris. A selection of 60 of her images were used in the Congo Atrocity lantern show. In the early 20th century, the show toured Britain raising awareness of the abuses occurring in the Congo Free State under King Leopold II. Rooted in the relationship between humanitarianism and empire, the paper is centrally concerned with issues of representation; the ways in which past antislavery visual culture sustained racialised tropes that, far from anti-colonial, were bound up with the imperial project. This paper will discuss some of the theoretical and practical issues of digitally archiving and exhibiting these images and the curatorial and community-based strategies employed to negotiate them.

12.15-1.30pm: **Conference Keynote**

Jean-Francois Manicom (International Slavery Museum), "Curating Slavery in the Caribbean and Europe: Challenges, Aims and Perspectives"

1.30-2.15pm: *lunch*

2.15-3.30pm: Panel 7

Remembering 1807 (chair: Matthew Mason, HAS)

John Oldfield (University of Hull), "1807-2007 in Historical Perspective"

This paper looks afresh at the background to the 2007 bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act and, in particular, at the role of the Heritage Lottery Fund in framing the discourse arounds 1807-2007. The paper briefly touches on the range and diversity of projects funded by the HLF in 2006 and also their impact. It will provide a context for the new 'Remembering 1807' archive, launched at this conference and introduced at greater length by Dr Mary Wills.

Mary Wills (University of Hull), "Archiving Commemorative Activity"

This paper introduces 'Remembering 1807', a new digital resource by the Antislavery Usable Past project, which maps the commemorative activity that took place around the UK in 2007 to mark the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act of 1807. The archive enables users to explore the huge range of events and initiatives – from theatre and performances to exhibitions, creative writing, festivals, community workshops, art and photography – organised by heritage organisations, schools, youth and community groups from all corners of the UK. The paper analyses some of the hundreds of materials produced in 2007, and collected in the course of this project, and investigates what this research can offer to discussions about the place of the transatlantic slave trade, slavery and abolition in the UK's public memory, and the ways in which this digital resource can inform future commemorations.

Jessica Moody (University of Portsmouth), "Commemorating Abolition, 1907-2007"

This paper considers the longer historic context of commemorating the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in Liverpool. Here, an intriguing commemorative coincidence complicates the picture. In 1207, Liverpool was designated a 'free borough' by King John, and from 1907 onwards, Edwardian Liverpool began celebrating its 'birthday' in grand displays of civic patriotism. The place and position of Liverpool's own significant involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, and the mnemonic connections leaved by this shared anniversary, illustrate the complicated process of negotiating the history and memory of Liverpool and slavery alongside fostering a sense of

civic pride, performed through commemorative rituals. This paper explores the developments and variations within these shared anniversaries across key markers and up to 2007.

3.30-3.45pm: *break*

3.45-5pm: Plenary Conversation

The International Slavery Museum at 10 Years (chair: John Oldfield, ASUP)

Richard Benjamin (International Slavery Museum)

Alex Balch (University of Liverpool)

Olivette Otele (Bath Spa University)