

Center for the Study of

SLAVERY & JUSTICE

Annual Report 2016





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FRONT COVER: U.S. STEEL MINER WORKING LYNCH, KENTUCKY, YEAR UNKNOWN. ARCHIVAL PHOTOS PROVIDED BY SOUTHEAST KENTUCKY COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE AND THE APPALACHIAN ARCHIVES. THESE PHOTOS ARE PART OF THE U.S. COAL & COKE AND INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER IMAGE COLLECTION

Director’s Note

Over the past year the issue of the history of racial slavery and the American university has become an active one. It is to be expected. Racial slavery is a central foundation of American society. It constitutes a historical past that reaches into the present, shaping the everyday lives of all of us. And, because we have not yet confronted its legacies and structural afterlives, the issues of anti-black racism continue to mark this society. In the past few months what has been noticeable are the ways in which different universities have had to grapple with this historical past. The most prominent has been Georgetown University. An elite Jesuit institution, in 1838, the University sold 272 slaves as part of a budget exercise. In the aftermath of the *Black Lives Matter Movement* and campus student protests, the University was forced to confront its history. What the University has done, including apologizing for slavery, are important first steps. These steps were preceded by conversations on campus and the issuing of a report. Brown University under the leadership of Dr. Ruth Simmons also began confronting its history with conversations on campus and the issuing of a report. There is a lesson here. The nation can begin to grapple with anti-black racism and its structural effects when we begin to have a hard, frank, and open dialogue about our history. To some this may be facile because in our era of rapid technological innovation, what is required, some would argue are simple technical solutions. But the human experience of history and specifically historical injustices have put on the table the necessity for different thinking about how we construct democracy today – how we pay attention to the margins and those humans marginalized. Inclusion does not mean reaching out to others; it requires both recognition and forms of equality.

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In the end, the recognition of a historical injustice is not simply a moral question nor one of ethics, it is also about how we shape democracy and forms of equality. Thus it is very much a matter of politics in the most profound sense.

In all of this another thing is also clear. It was the push of the protest movement – specifically *Black Lives Matter* – that put these questions on the table, confirming the adage of the African American slave and black abolitionist, Frederick Douglass, that power does not concede without struggle. Today we stand at a crossroads in many ways. As in many periods of change, there are forces waiting to roll back any minimal change. At universities we are faced with

The nation can begin to grapple with anti-black racism and its structural effects when we begin to have a hard, frank, and open dialogue about our history.

questions of implementing and sustaining any forward movement. We at the CSSJ recognize perhaps more than ever that the questions of historical injustices are ones which require scholarly rigor, not detachment. That this rigor should find itself into courses, research activities and programs. It is why for the next year the following activities will be central to our work: a



RUTH CLARK

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Working Group on Comparative Slavery

An important part of CSSJ's role as a research center is to create a space for scholars working on new and innovative research to share their work with other scholars and the Brown community. As a historical phenomenon, slavery was an institution with ramifications all over the world. The CSSJ is a Center that seeks to produce and publicize scholarship highlighting the national and transnational dimensions of slavery. In my role as Associate Director I have organized scholarly talks and workshops to share these new ideas on the comparative and transnational nature of slavery by scholars based in the United States and abroad.

Over the past year, I worked on a series of projects at the CSSJ. In April, I convened the panel *Black Atlantic Crosscurrents* that brought to Brown three scholars (Profs. Lorelle Semley, Mary Hicks, and Nicolau Parés) whose work dealt with connections between the Bight of Benin and the Americas. I also organized an international workshop on *the Global History of the Iberian Slavery Trade* with Professor Antonio de Almeida Mendes from the Université de Nantes. This event brought to Brown University twelve scholars from the United States and Europe working on the global ramifications of slavery and the slave trade in regions under the influence of Iberian powers between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries. The proceedings of the event will be published in the *Journal of Global Slavery*, hosted by Leiden University and published by Brill.

This upcoming year I am collaborating with Profs. Alejandro de la Fuente and Marial Iglesias from the Afro Latin American Research Institute at Harvard University to organize a meeting of the Working Group on Comparative Slavery. This working group operates as an organic network of scholars committed to advancing knowledge on the comparative nature of slavery on a global level. It draws on scholars from several universities in New England, particularly those in the

greater Boston area such as Harvard University, Brown University, Boston University, and MIT. The first meeting of the group took place at Harvard in October 2015, bringing together scholars from Europe, Africa, Latin America and the United States, to discuss "new trends in the historiography of the Transatlantic Slave Trade." The second meeting of the working group will happen at Brown University on October 28-29, 2016 under the auspices of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice (CSSJ) and the Afro Latin American Research Institute at Harvard University. This meeting will center on the issue of slavery and the law, once again congregating scholars from several institutions in the United States and abroad to analyze the comparative nature of regimes of bondage in time and space and bring twelve scholars to campus. We hope that the meeting will pave the way for further scholarly collaboration, production, and dissemination of knowledge on slavery. The strategic goal of the meeting is to establish the CSSJ as one of the key venues to catalyze scholarship on the global ramifications of slavery.

Roquinaldo Ferreira

Associate Director of the Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice and Vasco da Gama Associate Professor of Early Modern Portuguese History



MATT FERRARA

workshop on the comparative histories of slavery; a major conference on the public history of slavery; the teaching of new courses from the Center on slavery; the activation of our new research clusters on race and medical science, and on education and race. At the level of the community the Middles Passage Ceremonies and Port Marker Project – a project that seeks to involve the various communities across the state of Rhode Island – is central and so too will be our greater involvement in working with young people across the state.

We do all these things in the hope that with research, scholarship, and public humanities programming we may begin to shape in some small way the conversations around racial slavery as a form of historical injustice, and how our present is deeply embedded in that past. To confront this historical injustice is to work for a present and future of social justice.

I wish to thank everyone who has worked with us this year to make this another successful one. In particular I single out the staff of the Center who have worked under enormous pressure to sustain the work of the

Center. I look forward to seeing everyone next year at our events and hope that you will find a way to participate in the life of the Center.

Anthony Bogues

Director of the Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice, Asa Messer Professor of Humanities and Critical Theory, Professor of Africana Studies, and Affiliated Professor of History of Art & Architecture



About the Center

The Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice (CSSJ) is a scholarly research center with a public humanities mission. Recognizing that racial and chattel slavery were central to the historical formation of the Americas and the modern world, the CSSJ creates a space for the interdisciplinary study of the historical forms of slavery while also examining how these legacies shape our contemporary world.

For the 2016–2017 academic year, the Center’s work is organized around the following research clusters:

- **Human Trafficking**
This project explores contemporary forms of human bondage and engages in public programing around this issue.
- **A Comparative History of Slavery**
This is a collaborative project between CSSJ and Harvard University, which is focused on creating a network of scholars from a variety of national and international institutions focused on the history of slavery.
- **Investigating the American Criminal Justice System**
This project focuses on prisons and relations between the police and communities of color.
- **Freedom Archive**
This project creates an inventory of materials in Brown University Library’s Special Collections related to slavery and abolition to help scholars more easily access these materials.
- **Global Curatorial Project**
This exhibition and curatorial project presents both the global interconnectedness of Atlantic slavery and the slave trade, as well as illuminates an alternative view about the history of our global modernity.
- **Race, Medicine, and Social Justice**
This cluster will explore the history and persistence of structural racism in biomedicine as it intersects with economic and social conditions. We will focus on reimagining the knowledge we produce about race and health from a social justice perspective.

- **Education and Race**
This project focuses on questions that explore the implications for policy and pedagogy when we deepen our knowledge about the intersections between race, racism, schools and other forms of social inequality.

Visit our renovated 19th century house, which includes a gallery exhibition space, stunning glass wall art piece *Rising to Freedom* and a symbolic garden. To learn more about the work of the Center, please visit: brown.edu/slaveryjustice



Staff/Administration

Anthony Bogues
*Director,
Asa Messer Professor of Humanities and Critical Theory, Professor of Africana Studies, Affiliated Professor of History of Art & Architecture*

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*Associate Director,
Vasco da Gama Associate Professor of Early Modern Portuguese History and Portuguese and Brazilian Studies*

Shana Weinberg
Assistant Director

Maiyah Gamble-Rivers
Manager of Programs and Outreach

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Outreach and Program Coordinator [2015–2016]

Diane Straker
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Cherise Morris '16 AM '17.5
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Associate Professor of History

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Libby Heimark '76, P'11, P'14, P'17

CSSJ Affiliated Faculty

Emily Owens
Assistant Professor of History, CSSJ Faculty Fellow, 2016–2019

Matthew Reilly
Visiting Assistant Professor of Slavery & Justice, 2016–2017

CSSJ Research Cluster Fellows

Lundy Braun
Royce Family Professor in Teaching Excellence, Professor of Medical Science and Africana Studies, Race, Medicine, and Social Justice, Research Cluster Faculty Fellow, 2016–2018

Keith Catone
Principal Associate, Community Organizing & Engagement at the Annenberg Institute & Adjunct Lecturer in Education, Education and Race Research Cluster Fellow, 2016–2018

Alexa LeBoeuf
Senior Program Associate, Community Organizing & Engagement at the Annenberg Institute, Education and Race Research Cluster Fellow, 2016–2018

Elena Shih
Assistant Professor of American Studies and Ethnic Studies, Human Trafficking Research Cluster Faculty Fellow, 2015–2018

Postdoctoral Fellow

Amelia Hintzen
Ruth J. Simmons Postdoctoral Fellow in Slavery & Justice, 2016–2017

Jennifer Page
Ruth J. Simmons Postdoctoral Fellow in Slavery and Justice, 2015–2016

Visiting Scholar

Claire Andrade-Watkins
CSSJ Visiting Scholar

Graduate Fellows

Sandra Arnold AM '18
Graduate Fellow for the Study of the Public History of Slavery

Arielle Julia Brown AM '17
Graduate Fellow for the Study of the Public History of Slavery

Dissertation Fellow

Isadora Mota '17 Ph.D.
Matthew Beach '16 Ph.D.

Right at Home

My two years as the Graduate Fellow for the Study of the Public History of Slavery at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice was a truly unforgettable experience. The very first day I met with Professor Bogues, he told me, “As a fellow, it makes the most sense for you



to do youth programs. I think it is the way for you to leave your mark here at Brown.” I couldn’t agree more! It seems rare that one finds a team of people who see your potential and give you full autonomy in designing a program.

In the last two years I have been able to develop two year-long programs for high school students, in addition to hosting student groups here at the Center and presenting to students in their home institutions about slavery and its legacy. As a young woman of color I am naturally interested in the legacy of slavery and what it means for people of color today. I think my interest is something that makes my work with young people very meaningful. When youth hear both “slavery” and “400 years ago” there is often a disconnect, but through programs such as the *Civil Rights Movement Initiative* and *Uncovering the Institution: The American Dream, to be*

sold not told, young people are forced to step back into the past to understand their present. It is by no means an easy task but by having programs that run the bulk of the academic year, I am able to continuously form a community and bond with young people in a way that cannot be achieved in one-time programming. There is a lot of laughter and a lot of tears, but in the end the growth is magical.

Being a fellow at the Center has also served as a catalyst in my own personal growth. I have benefitted immensely from the skills that I have gained being a part of the curatorial team. During the second semester of my first year of grad school I was able to help curate the 2015 Commencement Exhibit, *A Peculiar Aesthetic: Representations and Images of Slavery*. By the end of the year 2016, I will have been a part of the curation of five exhibits. Exhibitions at the Center illustrate how expansive scholarly research can be. The opportunity to support Karida Brown’s Commencement Exhibit, *The Black Shackle: African Americans and the Coal Economy* was affirming. The exhibit shared the story of her family and the coal mining economy in Appalachia Kentucky, illuminating the importance of including hidden narratives and different types of knowledge production. Now, as the Manager of Programs and Outreach, I find myself taking those same skills I learned during my fellowship into my programs with young people and the community. I am currently working with high school students in the city of Providence to curate their own exhibit that aims to engage a public audience in a discussion around the school-to-prison-pipeline and how it affects students of color in the city’s public and charter school system. As a Providence native, my hope is that the CSSJ continues to create space on campus through its programming for diverse community audiences and continues to engage the community as a legitimate producer of knowledge.

Maiyah Gamble-Rivers

The Year in Review



As we begin our fourth year, the Center’s impact on the campus and wider community continues to grow. While we remain focused on our mission of supporting and sharing scholarly work, as well as public humanities educational initiatives, 2015–2016 inaugurated several new programs for CSSJ. These new efforts allow us to explore the history and legacies of slavery in a deeper, more nuanced way, understanding this past and present it as a global story.

Our new programs focused on the Cape Verdean experience and Rhode Island's connections to these islands; human trafficking today and connections with anti-slavery abolitionist movements of the past. We continued our international collaborations with our emerging museum network; developed an education series about the Civil Rights Movement specifically for local high schoolers; and catalyzed a community initiative to establish educational markers to recognize the history of the slave trade locally.

What follows is a snapshot of the work CSSJ supported last year – both new and continuing initiatives. We would like to thank the speakers who participated in our 76 public programs this year. We are also appreciative of the many contributions to this annual report from scholars, program participants, and students. You will find their words in the following pages.

We are looking forward to the 2016–2017 academic year and hope you can join us for a program. We will be having several large initiatives including a major conference on public history of slavery co-sponsored by the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture, as well as Yale University's Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition.

Shana Weinberg
CSSJ Assistant Director

A more comprehensive archive of our past and future programming can be found at brown.edu/slaveryjustice.



Transatlantic Legacies Full Circle

Working with CSSJ Visiting Fellow Dr. Claire Andrade-Watkins, Professor of Africana and Postcolonial Media Studies at Emerson College, we welcomed home Tony Ramos, an East Providence-born Cape Verdean performance and media artist, for the Providence premiere of his work *Transatlantic Legacy: Full Circle*. This two-day event and accompanying exhibition allowed us to explore the history of this former Portuguese colony, and meet some of our Cape Verdean neighbors for the first time.

New Directions in the History of U.S. Slavery Series

Co-sponsored by the Department of History and CSSJ, this series brought four emerging scholars to campus to speak about various topics. Titles included: *Slavery, Incarceration, and the Making of Modern New Orleans*; *African-American Children and the Southampton Rebellion of 1831*; *Selling Pleasures in the New Orleans Slave Market*; and *Middle Passage Studies & The Future of Memory*.

Human Trafficking Research Cluster

Organized this year by CSSJ Faculty Fellow Prof. Elena Shih, who is spearheading the Center's inaugural work on human trafficking, several speakers visited throughout the year to speak on a variety of issues including the anti-trafficking industrial complex, community action research methods, and the impact of laws and narratives around child labor and migrant labor in different societies. The human trafficking research cluster examines the links and disconnects between "modern-day" and historical forms of slavery and historic and contemporary abolitionism.

Emerging Scholar Series

Our Emerging Scholars Series seeks to bring new doctorates to campus to share their work. This year these scholars spoke on a variety of topics, including antebellum minstrel shows and 'market *marronage*' – the phenomenon of enslaved women escaping bondage through their participation in the informal economy.

Supporting Innovative Scholarship

CSSJ provides an important venue that allows scholars to share their innovative work. This past year CSSJ supported several programs including the *Black Atlantic Crosscurrents* panel, which showcased recent and exciting scholarship. The panel devoted particular attention to the Bight of Benin and Brazil, two of the most important axes of the Black Atlantic, focusing on African religious, economic and cultural agencies. The *Iberian Slave Trade: A Global Perspective* workshop focused on the slave trade carried out by Iberian powers (Portugal and Spain), and explored the global ramifications of the forced migration of Africans to the Americas and India.





Brown Bag Lunch talks

Our popular lunch talk series allows scholars, practitioners, and activists to speak about their work to a small group of students, faculty, staff, and community members. This year we enjoyed talks from individuals like Ambassador Raymond O. Wolfe, former Jamaican Ambassador to the United Nations. Ambassador Wolfe spoke about the process of creating the new memorial to recognize the history of slavery at the United Nations Headquarters. Renowned scholar Dr. Sylviane A. Diouf visited the Center in December, and spoke about her book *Slavery's Exiles: The Story of the American Maroons*. She shared her research uncovering the individuals, families, small groups, and communities that took refuge and built new lives in the woods and swamps of the Southern United States before the Civil War. Jennifer Tosch, founder of the Black Heritage Tours in Amsterdam, spoke about developing a new tour that connects the shared, intertwined, and hidden history of Native American – African – Dutch Heritage during the 17th Century Dutch colonial period in New York (formerly, New Netherland).

Rhode Island Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Marker Project

The Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project (MPCPMP) is a nonprofit that seeks to honor the two million captive Africans who perished during the transatlantic crossing known as the Middle

Passage and the ten million who survived to build the Americas. This national organization works with local communities to help bring together key stakeholders to work together to create public educational markers and inclusive remembrance ceremonies that acknowledge this past. CSSJ has supported the national organization's work since our first year, and we were pleased when there was a push to start this work in Rhode Island. Since the Rhode Island chapter began in early 2016, CSSJ has served as the convening body for the state and Providence chapter. As part of the effort to make the markers a response to community need, we helped facilitate a conversation at Beneficent Church in June 2016, beginning a conversation to better understand how people locally think this history should be commemorated. This is an exciting project that will continue to gain momentum next year.

Film Screenings

CSSJ partnered with the Providence Community Library and the Center for Reconciliation to hold weekly film screenings including *Ghosts of Amistad*, *Nightjohn*, *Selma*, and *Belle*, during February, commemorating Black History Month.

Civil Rights Movement Initiative

Youth from Providence's Hope High School participated in the inaugural *Civil Rights Movement Initiative*. Through weekly classes at CSSJ, this initiative aims to get high school students to think of the Civil Rights Movement not as something that happened in the past but as a bridge to understand the present. The program culminated with a trip to important freedom struggle sites in the South and allowed students to meet veterans of the movement.

International Collaborations

An exhibition at the John Hay Library, *Vestiges of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, which included the first public display of a pair of slave shackles on loan from our partners at the International Slavery Museum



in Liverpool, UK. The shackles are of a type used to transport captured Africans across the Atlantic to the Americas. They also served a powerful weapon in campaigns to end the transatlantic slave trade led by abolitions such as Thomas Clarkson.

In March, the Center, in collaboration with the Iziko Museums of South Africa, produced the *Singing Freedom Catalogue*, a comprehensive educational resource that explores how music was a crucial form of resistance and inspiration in the struggle against apartheid. The catalogue is a companion piece to the exhibition on display at the Slave Lodge Museum, an exhibition space that was formerly used to house slaves when they came to port in Cape Town, South Africa. The catalogue is an important tool for engaging youth in the outlying townships that are often unable to visit the museum.

2016 Annual Debra Lee Lecture

Professor Barbara Ransby is a scholar of the Black Freedom Movement and a longtime activist. Her talk reflected on the Black Lives Matter Movement and the organizations involved in creating and building this movement.

The Debra L. Lee Lecture Series is an annual event which invites the most distinguished scholars and activists to Brown to discuss historic and contemporary issues related to the legacy of slavery in the Americas and the world. This annual series is made possible through the generous donation of Ms. Debra L. Lee '76 Chairman and CEO of BET Networks, and co-chair of CSSJ's External Advisory Board.





The Doubleback

FREEDWOMENS' GAZE

The Doubleback: Freedwomens' Gaze was a site specific series of appearances and performances aimed at historical confrontation. Starting from archival knowledge of Fanny, Phyllis and Rose Chace, three Black women who were enslaved by the Chace family in 18th century Providence, this project engaged various public spaces as a way of learning about the local influence of the Chace family. The performance series (December 2015–May 2016) was an investigation into communal storytelling as a modality of biographical repatriation. Beginning in September of 2015, I began archival research on these women and the material legacy of the Chace family that owned them. That fall I showed up in historical costume at spaces of significance to the Chace family, silently offering texts about the historical significance of each site to slavery and these three women. As an outgrowth of that work, I launched a blogsite to document the various ways she experienced encounters with passersby at each site (www.thedoubleback.tumblr.com). In the winter of 2016, I developed a curriculum around these materials and taught workshops and led a tour for students from Youth In Action. As a culminating site investigation of *The DoubleBack Project*, I developed a performance- and witness-driven conversation at the

Cathedral of St. John's Cemetery, where these women are buried. The performance was an inquiry into the personal and industrial labor of remembering, applying transhistorical solidarity and ritual performance knowledges to play in the holes of the historical archive and build new histories around the memory of Phyllis, Fanny and Rose Chace. The performance was devised in partnership with Adrian Blount, Catherine Braxton, Reza Clifton and Cherise Morris. The performance was accompanied by an outdoor found-object exhibition that showcased photos from the 9 month process. Over 60 community members attended the site-responsive performance in May 2016. The witness-driven conversation was a talkback with myself and scholar of New England slavery, Joanne Pope Melish, followed by a fully participatory group discussion brainstorming a working definition of the word "reconciliation" for the Center for Reconciliation. This project has come into existence through support from the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, the John Nicholas Brown Center, and the Center for Reconciliation as host institutions and community partners.

Arielle Julia Brown AM '17
Graduate Fellow for the Study of the Public History of Slavery

Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice

The Liquid Plain

SLAVERY IN RHODE ISLAND

Drawing on the collective memory of freedom struggles in the past, Naomi Wallace's play, *The Liquid Plain*, articulates the moral economy and social visions of an aggrieved and insurgent people. Set on the docks of Rhode Island, this historical drama draws on Marcus Rediker's *The Slave Ship* (2007) to offer a "possible" history of two moments, 1791 and 1837. Borrowing her title from Wheatley's verse, Wallace taps this poetic language to encourage audiences to think critically about how the fugitive struggles of enslaved Africans have generated what historian Robin D. G. Kelley calls "freedom dreams."

A previous performance of *The Liquid Plain* in New York had a profound effect on me. So when I began my postdoctoral fellowship at Brown last year, I initiated a conversation with Anthony Bogues, director of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, about organizing an event centered on this work. Staged at Africana Studies' Rites and Reason Theater on May 28, 2016, the occasion was a highlight of CSSJ's commencement activities. The event featured a poetry reading by Evie Shockley and a performance of two scenes by LisaGay Hamilton and Jeff McGill, followed by a panel on the poetics and politics of the play that included the artists as well as scholars Kelley, Rediker, Bogues, and myself.

Evie Shockley, the 2016 Heimark Artist-in-Residence, began with a reading of a new poem penned for the occasion, "black mechanics (or, offshore manufacturing avant la lettre)." With passion and precision, the work incorporated insights from Rediker's *The Slave Ship*, the *Report of the Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice*, and historical documents from local archives. Critically acclaimed actress LisaGay Hamilton (Bristol) and founder of the Theater at Hollywood and Vine, Jeff Gill (James D'Wolf), performed two scenes of *The Liquid Plain* that highlighted the centrality of slave labor and its terror

*While for Britannia's distant shore
We sweep the liquid plain,
And with astonish'd eyes explore
The wide-extended main.*

Phyllis Wheatley, "A Farewell to America" (1773)



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locally in Rhode Island and more expansively throughout the U.S. empire.

In the panel that followed, Robin D. G. Kelley noted that the play was “one of the most extraordinary things I’d read on the transatlantic slave trade.” Kelley lauded the play for showing that Black freedom struggles are not driven by revenge, “but rather justice.” Marcus Rediker reflected on the great moral responsibility Wallace demonstrated in writing about the slave trade and slavery, “The big question is: can we talk about the terror that was instrumental to building this country? Because that, folks, is what the slave trade was all about.”

Shockley described the significance of the play’s centering on the story of Black women, in contrast to the history of slavery that has so long been a masculine one. “This play putting not one, not two, but three women who experienced slavery at its core makes it an artistic representation of slavery that is all the more necessary,” Hamilton noted her appreciation for Wallace’s text. “When I read it my mouth was on the

floor.” The playwright’s message provided her with the freedom, as an actor, to dig deeper.

“Politics is history,” Wallace reflects, “and history is what sparks my imagination. That’s where my fire comes from.” The history of slavery offered in *The Liquid Plain* should also spark our political imaginations to consider the persistence of pervasive violence in our world. The work also demands that we take seriously the significance of the poetry of social movements as we debate political alternatives to this terror.

Prof. Jordan T. Camp

Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for the Study of Race & Ethnicity in America (CSREA) & Watson Institute for International Studies



ARTIST’S REFLECTION

The invitation to serve as the 2016 Heimark Artist-in-Residence at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice came as a signal honor. I was delighted to be charged with creating an original poem for an event centered on the connections between Naomi Wallace’s deeply moving and provocative play, *The Liquid Plain*, and the history of slavery in Rhode Island. Having seen the play in its Signature Theatre production in New York City, I fully appreciated its power and the importance of the histories underlying it: specifically, one woman’s callous murder at the hands of a slave ship captain, and the centuries of transatlantic slave trade, more broadly. For the Center’s event, LisaGay Hamilton would reprise her role as the woman’s avenging niece, opposite Jeff Gill playing the captain in his later years, in a staged reading of one of the play’s climactic scenes. Their reading would be followed by a panel of scholars (including Robin Kelley and Marcus Rediker, as well as the CSSJ’s Anthony Bagues and Jordan Camp) and artists (Hamilton and me) discussing with our audience the play, the issues it raises, and the Rhode Island history that informs the story and its context. My poem would open the event.

What an enviable *and* unenviable challenge! I wanted to write a piece that would set the stage, so to speak, for what would surely be a stunning performance and a stimulating conversation, by finding my own way into this territory of painful yet necessary remembering. That spring, in the period leading up to the event, I

dove into the historical work that had most directly inspired Wallace’s play, Rediker’s *The Slave Ship: A Human History*, and into the documentation of Brown University’s former connections to the slave trade and its present-day efforts toward accountability for that past. I began drafting a poem that uses the words and melody of a traditional blackgirls’ playground chant as the thread linking irony (the Brown brothers’ slave ship was called the *Sally*) to triumph (an African girl renamed after the ship that transported her into slavery became the poet, Phillis Wheatley, whose lines supplied the title of Wallace’s play), and linking the economics of slavery (a deadly gamble with human lives) to the ongoing legacy of black commodification (an analysis clarified sharply by Rediker’s account of the slave trade).

Though I arrived with a complete draft, the poem—ultimately titled “black mechanics (or, offshore manufacturing avant la lettre)” —was only fully realized during, and as a result of, my week in residence at the Center. I led a workshop at the Providence Community Library Rochambeau branch for university and Providence community members interested in considering whether to *Tango or Tangle with History?* in writing poems. This event gave me the opportunity to think more concertedly about whether and how my own lines would dance through their thorny subject matter. And I was able to attend the opening of the *Black Shackle: African Americans and the Coal Economy*, a potent exhibit curated by Karida Brown, that had just been installed in the Center’s gallery space. The photos and oral histories of the Kentucky- and Tennessee-based miners and their families informed—indeed, haunted—my final revisions. I’m grateful to Libby and Craig Heimark for their generosity in funding my residency, and to all those associated with the CSSJ whose thoughtful conversations with me enriched not only this poem, but my artistic practice as well, in important and lasting ways.

Evie Shockley

Associate Professor of English, Rutgers University-New Brunswick, 2016 Heimark Artist-in-Residence



EXCERPT FROM THE POEM
BY EVIE SHOCKLEY
2016 Heimark Artist-in-Residence

**black mechanics
(or, offshore manufacturing
avant la lettre)**

*strut miss sally sally sally
strut miss sally all night long*

a ship named *phillis* produced
a girl named *phillis*. why not
a *sally* from the *sally*, a “*garle*

Slave” manufactured in accordance
with best practices : made to swallow
her allotment of foul water and her daily

portion of yam or *dab-a-dab* against
the fevers and flux : ripped or stolen
from her parents’ arms, but danced

past the despair of the “*Woman Slave*”
who “*hanged her Self between decks*” :
perhaps pressed into service

as one of the captain’s *favorites*—or, perhaps
finding the die cast for a different process
of molding. if this *sally* : not left “*all*



Most dead” on the windward coast
to compensate the *linguister* for nine months’
work traveling between tongues : not

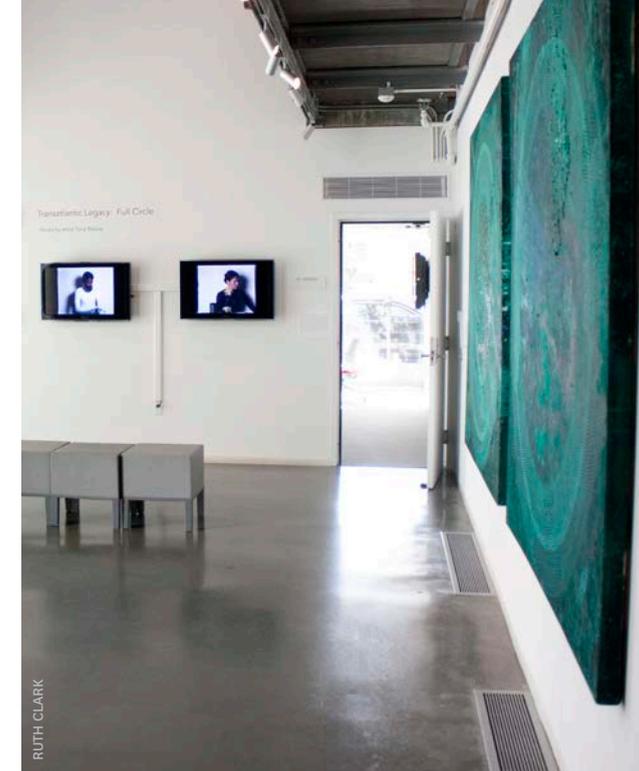
one of the 8 insurrectionists
“*Destroyed*” by crew fire : not one
of those afterward “*so Desperited*”

they drowned or starved themselves : not
one of the 20 who, after a seven weeks’
crossing, died upon arrival in the *west indies*—

if this *sally* set her “*Negrow Garl*”
foot on antiguan soil, she found, perforce,
her place in the large machine

that turned her handiwork into sugar,
the sugar into rum, and so many gallons
of rum, in turn, into senegambian

or *negrow garles*, into “*3 Slaves
2 men & 1 woman,*” a miracle of modern
industry: transatlantic transubstantiation.



Exhibitions

Transatlantic Legacy: Full Circle

This exhibition featured works by Cape Verdean artist Tony Ramos, spanning a forty year trajectory of recording, documenting, and creating a narrative that connects dots and points of space, time, history, and memory.

The Art of Mali Olatunji: Painterly Photography from Antigua and Barbuda

This exhibition examined the work of Mali Olatunji, a fine arts photographer from the Caribbean territory of Antigua and Barbuda.

Vestiges of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

This exhibition displayed a set of 18th century leg shackles accompanied by narratives of African American men and women enslaved in the United States during the 19th century. The slave shackles were on loan from a CSSJ partner, the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, UK. Presented in collaboration with the Brown University Library.

Annual Report



Hurt People Hurt People: A Transformative Justice Art Space for (Micro) Aggressions

This art installation was an opportunity for all, regardless of identity, to share personal stories and read the stories of others. The work of art aimed to promote self-reflexivity: reflecting on where you are in order to grow in love, in healing, and in solidarity.

The Black Shackle: African Americans and the Coal Economy

This exhibition examined the stories of the African Americans who migrated from the rural South to make their home in the coal fields of West Virginia, Tennessee, and Eastern Kentucky. *The Black Shackle* grew out of the Eastern Kentucky African American Migration Project (EKAAMP), a unique partnership between the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Karida Brown, and Appalachian communities. Brown, a descendant of coal miners, has recorded more than 200 oral history interviews with individuals who live in or grew up in the region. The Southern Historical Collection archives these recordings, along with photographs, organizational records, and family papers that community members have offered to her.



A NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

The Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice (CSSJ) was a lighthouse in the storming sea, a wellspring of intellectuality, and my scholarly home during my time as a graduate student at Brown University. The variety of programs, scholars, actors, artists, activists, community members, and exhibitions that the CSSJ hosted left an indelible mark on me personally and on my scholarship. My work is an intellectual pursuit of historical reparations—centering histories and peoples that have been rendered invisible in the archive through the power of storytelling, artistic expression, and public engagement.

The CSSJ invited me to serve as the lead curator for the 2016 Commencement exhibition, *The Black Shackle: African Americans in the Coal Economy*, based on my dissertation research on the intergenerational migration of black coal miners through the central Appalachian region of eastern Kentucky. For me, the opportunity to work with the Center’s extremely talented and dedicated curatorial team to produce this work was the ultimate denouement to earning my Ph.D. in Sociology at Brown this year. The experience gave me the opportunity to elevate my expertise as a curator—a role that has become central to my scholarly practice as a Public Sociologist—and it also gave me the opportunity to engage the Brown University and broader Providence, Rhode Island communities in my research.

However, the most rewarding outcome of the exhibition by far was the chance to experience the *Black Shackle*’s opening reception during Commencement weekend with my parents and young niece. As the children of black coal miners from Harlan County, Kentucky, the exhibition spoke directly to an untold piece of history that is so near to their hearts and lived experience. We continued to visit the CSSJ over the course of the weekend to behold the layered histories that the exhibition represented. Reflecting on the exhibition, my mother, Arnita Davis Brown, shared:

“Now as far as Saturday’s exhibition at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, it was the epitome of

the trip. That exhibition of all the memorabilia and historical photos was truly captivating for us and people who had never encountered a coal miner. The portrait above the fireplace of my mother and her sisters will make me smile forever. My dad would be smiling with his tobacco in his cheek over seeing himself in the garden with his collard greens. The catalogue of *The Black Shackle* is a keepsake to be shared in classrooms, homes and everywhere.”

As I assume my role as Assistant Professor of Sociology at UCLA this fall, I will surely take the lessons, opportunities, and intellectuality that the CSSJ poured into me. No matter where my intellectual and professional journey takes me, I will be a Friend of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice.

Karida L. Brown

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles





Youth Programming

During the 2015–2016 academic year, the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice began two new yearlong programs, engaging high school students from the city of Providence, in addition to engaging students in a Providence elementary school. In the last year we have more than tripled our youth outreach, serving more than 150 students in the city of Providence. Moving forward into the new academic year we expect that number to grow.

Throughout the Fall semester as the Center’s second year Graduate Fellow, Maiyah Gamble-Rivers, led a six-week workshop series on the Civil Rights Movement for students from Hope High School. After learning about different aspects of the Civil Rights Movement, five students from Hope accompanied thirty high school students from the city of Baltimore on a weeklong Civil Rights trip throughout the south. Students were confronted with sites and memories of the movement, engaging with activist such as Andrew Young, Roscoe Jones, Cleopatra Goree, Barbara Mines, Catherine Burks-Brooks and Dr. Sybil Hampton. Students also had the opportunity to engage with students in the Mississippi Delta whose day-to-day encounters with the legacy of slavery changed the perceptions of many students from the north. Students from Providence returned to the city with a new outlook on education and the country. During

“By observing the similarities between the deaths of Emmett Till and Trayvon Martin in terms of verdict and public impact, I have gained a fuller perspective of how death can incite both a call for action and social change.”

Jessica, Age 17

“I’m excited to curate an exhibit ... people will see things through our point of view, instead of people telling us what’s what. We are the ones who experience the stuff I hope people will understand the school to prison pipeline and how it affects us. We suffer!”

Mia, Age 15

their Youth Lunch talk at Brown University all the students from Hope expressed their desire to include some form of social justice in their work as they all look forward to starting their college careers this 2016–2017 academic year.

This past summer eleven high school students moved onto Brown’s campus for CSSJ’s weeklong program *Uncovering the Institution*. During the week students unpacked the American Dream, trying to answer the question, “what does the American Dream look like for young people of color in the 21st century?” Using the works of Audre Lorde, James Baldwin, and Lorraine Hansberry, students explored the histories and the legacy of voting, race, migration and labor, the community policing of black and brown bodies, and student protests nationally and globally. For many of the students participating, education was key to achieving the American Dream. After reflecting on their own educational experiences and going through the lectures and workshops, they concluded that maybe the American Dream is just an ideal. Making it to college does not free you from structural oppression but instead leads you to a different experience of struggle. Students will spend the fall semester with Maiyah curating their own youth exhibit, exploring the School-to-Prison Pipeline and how this form of structural oppression complicates the quest for the “American Dream.”



Community Voices

An History Educator's Dream Field Trip

This past February, my Civil Rights elective had the opportunity to visit the CSSJ. Students had a chance to tour the Center and learn about Brown's deeply rooted connection to the transatlantic slave trade. Students explored the *Hurt People Hurt People* exhibit on microaggressions. In a separate workshop, some students had the chance to work directly with Maiyah, one of the curators of the exhibit, to contribute their own microaggressions stories. The day culminated in a lunch discussion with CSSJ's very own students who had recently went down South to tour Civil Rights sites.

During the tour, students were exposed to primary sources that helped them piece together the history. By telling the story of the CSSJ through primary sources, my students had an authentic experience that made the history come alive, rather than sit through a lecture on the history of Brown. Maiyah also told her story of being at Brown as a first generation black woman from Providence, and connected the Center's work to larger issues of diversity and inclusion at Brown. In my students' reflections after the trip, many commented on how her

story was really interesting and how they wanted her to talk more about her experiences at Brown.

Students also spent time in the exhibit reading stories and listening to audio clips. The exhibit actually inspired some of my students to work on final group projects. One group solicited stories from fellow students at their high school who experienced microaggressions as girls of color and compiled them into a school display. Another group did a school-wide survey on opinions regarding white privilege and discussed how some survey comments were racialized microaggressions in their post-project reflection. The chance to interact with an exhibit that college students put together challenged my students to rethink what public humanities means and who gets to tell stories.

My favorite part was the lunch discussion with CSSJ's Civil Rights class. Maiyah had taught a six week course on Civil Rights to a group of high school seniors who then took a tour of Civil Rights sites in the South. The lunch was a talkback where the five young women presented on their experiences to an audience of Brown students, faculty, and my students. During the Q&A, several of my students raised their hands to ask questions, and at the end of the session, all audience members were asked to stand and sing a freedom song together. Many of my students commented that their trip sounded really fun and that they wish they could have done a trip just like that. As an educator, it was incredible to hear the CSSJ students' reflections on their trip. Their authentic experience with Civil Rights history, and the connections they made with other students down south, is what humanities educators strive for every single day. Many thanks to the CSSJ and Maiyah for making this experience possible. I only hope this work continues to grow for educators and students in the greater community!

Jenny Li

Social Studies Teacher-Activist in Providence



SEBASTIAN VILLANUEVA

Civil Rights Movement Initiative

During the past year, I have been very involved with Brown University's Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, where I have learned about African-American history, using the past as a bridge to understand the present. As part of the program this January four Hope High School students, Maiyah Gamble-Rivers, and I traveled down south and spent one week exploring many historical cities associated with the Civil Rights Movement. One city that stood out to me the most was Birmingham, Alabama. In Birmingham we met Ms. Catherine Burks-Brooks. She told an inspirational story about her days as an active Freedom Rider during the Civil Rights Movement, challenging segregation during the 60's by riding interstate buses through the Deep South. She spoke of her resilience, how she never thought about giving up or turning back despite how many times she was spat on or how many rocks hit her. She said that she knew the struggles she faced today would "lead to a better future tomorrow." I was shocked to see the lengths human beings would go through in order to preserve the horrifying premise of segregation. Ms. Burks-Brooks' story gave me motivation. With it I grew more appreciative of the advantages

I have been given in life. I realized that even though the hard part has already been done and the fight has already been fought, the Civil Rights Movement is not over. It is hard to understand the past behind us when we are constantly distracted by the future ahead, but going on the Civil Rights Trip has taught me that we need to break down the barriers of discrimination which prevent our society for reaching its true potential. As Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." I want to be able to live in assurance that, like King said, I am not being judged by the color of my skin but by the content of my character. And although I am aware that it is impossible to completely cleanse mankind from the negativity that is somehow a part of us, I believe that we can come close to bringing equality and justice for people of color.

Traveling down south and studying the Civil Rights Movement served as my "ultimate assist." The journey enhanced my knowledge base of African-American history and helped prepare me for the next stage in my life. I have been inspired to pursue a career where I will be able to strengthen my voice and take action for social justice. Every time I hear or read about an unjust society, I grow more certain of my vocation. I love to write. I love the idea of being able to voice my opinions, and I love being able to share them with others. I plan to further my education this fall at Boston University where I will major in Journalism and potentially minor in Public Relations. I believe that as a journalist I will be able to serve as a voice for those who have long been silenced within my communities. I want to be heard and I want to make a change. I want to make use of my voice to move people.

Hafzat Akanni

Boston University '20



RUTH CLARK

RHODE ISLAND MIDDLE PASSAGE CEREMONIES
AND PORT MARKER PROJECT

Bringing Public Recognition, Dignity and Humanity to the Enslaved

In 1974, the ruthless apartheid regime had already banned Stephen Biko, imprisoned Nelson Mandela, and it continued to require all people to hold identity cards upon which were written “white,” “black” or one of the various subgroups of “coloured.” This was the year that my family left South Africa to move to England. Recently, I stumbled across my South African identity card with both shock and an all too familiar sense of guilt. On the light-green background, under both “S.A. Burgher” in dark green and my identity number in black, the Department of Home Affairs had imprinted in bright, bold red: “Blanke – White person.” This red typeface allowed brutal apartheid-enforcement officials to quickly read first the racial classification of a person and then only afterwards the name of this human being. Much like in the United States and Europe today, the white people in power rarely asked those with the same racial characteristics to show their identity cards, unless of course there was a feature that caused doubt. Black lives didn’t matter, nor did the lives of people of Indian, Indonesian, Chinese and other Asian and African descents. Only white lives mattered, and my identity card reminded me that I was one of those lives.

Though I have been interested in colonial and post-colonial studies throughout my academic career, there was something about rediscovering my identity card

that flipped a switch. Suddenly, I found myself wanting to work directly on a project that would resuscitate with timeless, transcendent subjectivity the courageous African people whose identity cards did not read “Blanke” and whom my own generation as well as my parents, grandparents and great grandparents’ generations beat to the bone. I was no longer on the same continent but I knew that the South African Xhosa, Zulu, Ndebele, Sotho-Tswana, Basotho and other ethnically “black” African experiences resembled the experiences of the men, women and children who were born into slavery in the Northern and Southern American plantations. I also knew that the Khoisan histories resembled those of mass extermination lived by American Natives. Finally, the parallels between the Middle Passage and the East Indian passage that the Indian, Indonesian and Malagasi people endured in Dutch slave ships allowed me to listen with keen attention to Ann Chin’s initial presentation of the Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project (MPCPMP).

In the five months that I have been involved with the Rhode Island MPCPMP, I have had the opportunity of interacting with some of the most thoughtful people whom I have ever encountered and also the most knowledgeable about the slave trade in Rhode Island. We all share the goal of bringing public recognition to the tenacious dignity and humanity of all the native



Africans who lived, died and survived the abhorrent slave trade. We also share the goal of holding accountable those who could carry identity cards such as mine, and who conceived and profited from legally (and illegally) sanctioned institutions of oppression. It is my hope that the ceremonies and port markers will be just the beginning of a meaningful process of truth and reconciliation in Rhode Island. Ideally, I would like to see this process give timeless voice to every single enslaved person that traversed the Atlantic. I would also want it to give opportunities for admission and repentance to all those who benefited and continue to benefit from the broken bones upon which the Rhode Island economy has been built. Nelson Mandela and Stephen Biko would demand no less.

Prof. Karen de Bruin
Associate Professor of French, University of Rhode Island

We all share the goal of bringing public recognition to the tenacious dignity and humanity of all the native Africans who lived, died and survived the abhorrent slave trade.

Confronting the Archive

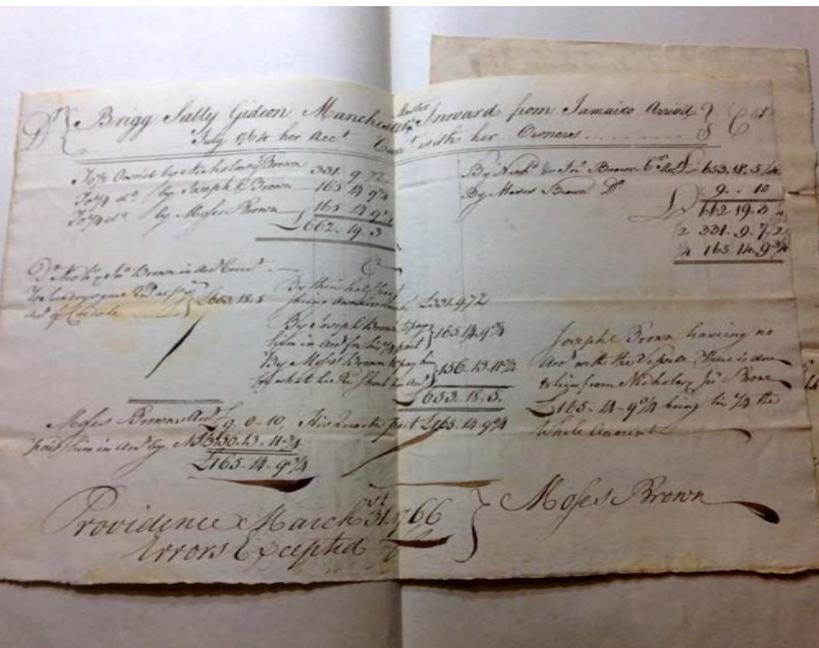
RESEARCHING THE ENSLAVED AND
THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

The archive—a collected well of materials and records—tells us about some person(s), place, or event.

I went looking through the “Brown Family Business Records” in an effort to determine how many sea vessels have landed and docked in Providence with captured and enslaved Africans aboard.

I was looking for any and every scrap of decipherable paper that detailed the imprisonment and sale of African people. With such an immense archive in front of me, I had no choice but to dive in.

The archive is organized into boxes and folders within boxes, which are then catalogued in documents and di-



vided in chronological order. The search catalogue had scarce mentions of the “Slave Trade” crammed between more ambiguous terms like “Rum” and “Hispaniola.” For some reason, I find it hard to extricate the terms ‘rum,’ ‘Hispaniola’ and ‘slave trade’ from one another.

I was struck by the dearth of explicit references there were to the enslavement of Africans in the archive. Any acknowledgements of enslaved people—not enslaved bodies—but the ‘slaves’ themselves was even sparser.

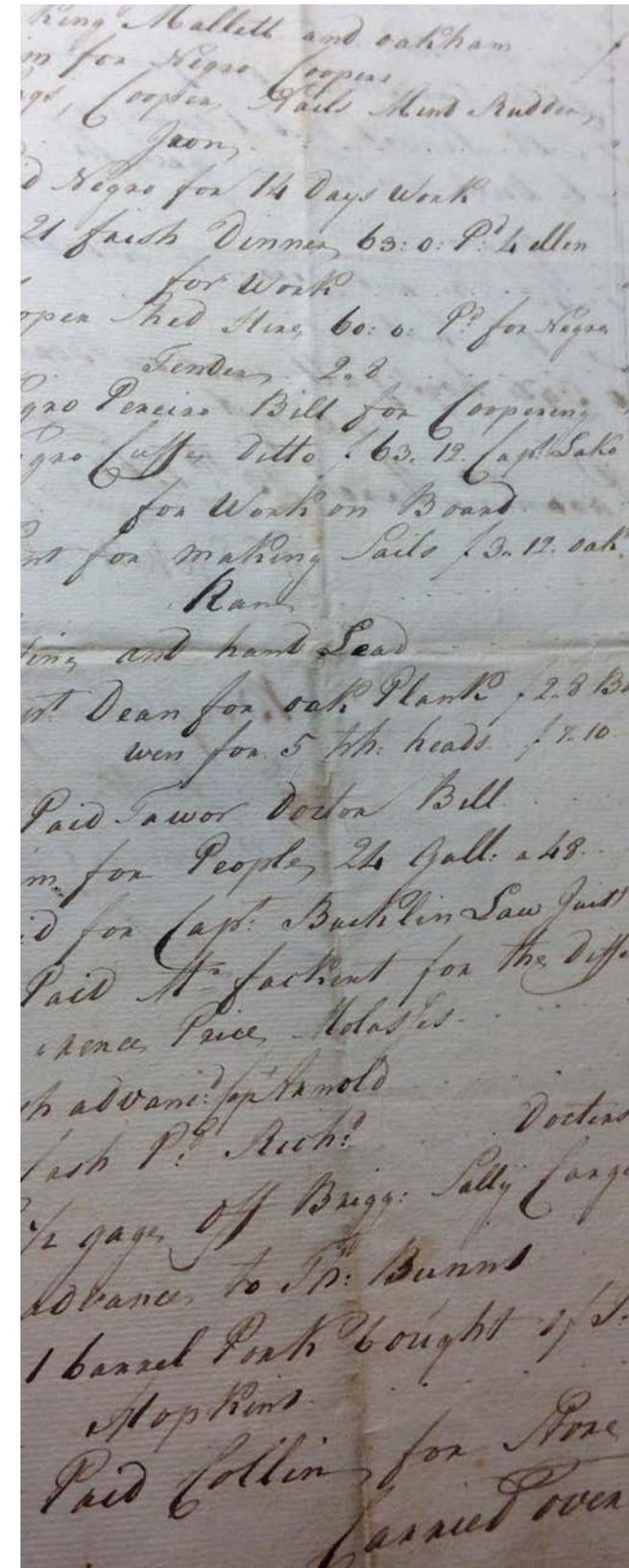
I punctuate that term, ‘slave,’ to recognize the subjectivity of language. Toni Morrison once stated that “Definitions belong to the *definers*, not the defined,” and to the definers, these folk were merely slaves, 3/5 human. But I’d like to hope that those folk who were defined as ‘slaves’ knew themselves as something other than that—as siblings, children, defenders, healers, or by their African names and societal roles, or something entirely beyond language. Box by box, expedition by expedition, papers on papers tinted brown and stale-smelling from the passage of time, with barely any mention of our people.

Were these seafarers too ashamed of what their exploits would reflect about them in remembrance? Or were they products of the times, who hadn’t mentioned slavery much, because it pervaded every aspect of their realities? When they kept track of ventures and timetables they would know that, regardless of written record, everything as they knew and figured it hinged on the bondage of Black folk.

I developed the habit of photographing every letter that contained the word “Negro” or note that referenced “Guine.” My iPhone became a collector of atrocities; a curator of violence; its own archive.

Never knowing what you will or won’t find, each box is a toss-up. I happened upon the box that contains the slave trading book for the voyage of *The Sally*, a heralded expedition and one of the best-documented slaving voyages in history.

The book was in its own sub-box within the box, with its binding, delicate, held intact. The front cover was heavy and blemished by the weight of its contents. My reaction was so visceral I couldn’t even photograph



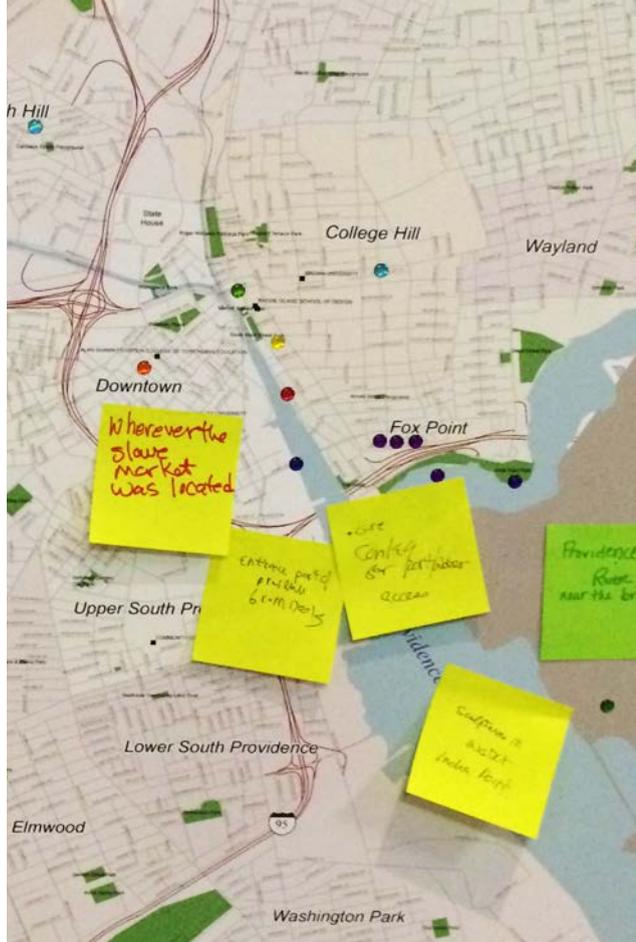
the book for my research notes. I held my hands rigid, careful to avoid touching my face, or neck, or any of my clothing until I had spent at least ten minutes scrubbing the stains of history off of them.

One can read as much as one wants about slavery, but confronting the archive, placing your hand on the same document that someone once held to record the sale of Black people, is a wholly distinct experience unto itself.

Wading in the archive, I felt the scorn of what seemed like centuries. I got frustrated, mining 400 years and counting of anger and pain and sadness that is deep in the darkness of wherever we come from.

Part of ensuring transformative justice in our future world is to repair the injustices of our past and *our past recordings*. The archive bestows power, and as people committed to justice, we must rummage through the archives that exist and are readily accessible; rework those archives that are unsettled; and rebuild and reassemble new, creative archival formations and methods that include us all.

Cherise Morris AM '16
CSSJ Student Researcher



I Found My People

ORGANIZING THE COMMUNITY
TO REMEMBER THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

Sitting in on my first Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project meeting at the CSSJ, I watched the Providence group file in, many sharing hugs and laughs, and found myself thinking “Has everyone forgotten the really dark, depressing reason why we’re all here?”

An undergraduate student still very new to the world of archival research and public history, I expected my time at CSSJ would be spending hours in deep, dark archival rooms pillaging through documents in search for the invoice or letter that would tie yet another Rhode Islander to the insidious, brutal, dehumanizing trade of African and African American enslavement. While I got to spend a lot of my time doing just that, what I gained interning at CSSJ was so much more.

To put it simply: I found my people.

I found a place where there were people, like me, who felt the weight of our past on a day-to-day basis. People who recognized the importance of slavery in the present day, who saw present acts of injustice not as singular and disconnected but as a part of a greater legacy. People who were ready to engage in discussions about reparations, people willing to acknowledge the strained relationships between institutions and individuals. I found people who, in the face of all of this, could hug and laugh and find joy in each others’ presence. And I found people who sought to not only know but to share and teach—to help better mold the world not only by rightfully holding those who profited from and continue to profit from slavery accountable, but by educating even those same people to make better decisions as mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, friends, and citizens on this earth.

My time at CSSJ working with the MPCPMP group was more than just doing the archival research, but was about implementing actual change in a community.

I don’t think it all clicked until the Community Discussion, the culmination of six weeks of dedicated planning and organizing. Despite my amazing time at CSSJ, I was honestly worried about the community meeting. The past public discussions around slavery that I had been part of almost always erupted with heavy emotion or fell back on apologetic, watered-down discussions around our country’s past. I expected around 30 people to show up, share ideas, and maybe sit in awkward silence, or maybe engage in very heated, loosely historically-based arguments. Maybe someone would try to disturb the meeting by voicing disgust at the idea of enslaved Africans finally being recognized and commemorated for supporting the economic, social and political structure of Rhode Island.

As an intern, I was being asked my specific opinion about the organization of the evening’s event, the structure of the facilitation, the timing, the visuals. My ideas were heard and implemented, my words were utilized as the main source of information participants took home with them, my assistance was needed to

keep things organized throughout the night. I felt I was a part of the team in ways I’ve never felt at any work experience before. And all the work that had gone into the event paid off. The 30 people I had hoped for more than tripled, with over 100 people showing up. Community members engaged in spiritually-uplifting ritual, sharing thoughtful, reflective ideas about the meaning behind the creation of port markers. I saw people opening up to the ideas of others. I saw people feeling comfortable to share their innermost thoughts on an institution whose legacy shapes all of our lives. I saw people taking ownership for that legacy. I saw somberness but I also saw laughter. Walking out of Beneficent Church, I felt uplifted. In the same way, my time here has been that same feeling. A feeling which reminds me that there are people in this world who see the past reflected in the present, and who feel the call to do something once they see, rather than to hide or to ignore.

As the descendant of enslaved people, it is a history I cannot ignore. My eternal gratitude to CSSJ for reminding me I am not alone.

Jordan Berkeley Brewington

Columbia University ’17, CSSJ Summer 2016 Intern

Our Fellows

Reflections from Our Fellows 2015–2016



Researching Human Trafficking

The inaugural year of the human trafficking research cluster organized programming to attract interdisciplinary interest and to increase collaborative critical inquiry into the study of human trafficking. This included organizing monthly speaker events open to the public, leading undergraduate and graduate students through community-based research projects related to human trafficking, sponsoring an annual Undergraduate Teaching and Research Awards (UTRA), and collaborating with related centers and institutes on campus (including the Sarah Doyle Women's Center, Students Against the Prison Industrial Complex, and Brown Center for Students of Color) and with local community organizations (COYOTE RI). We received a Collaboration Grant from the Watson Institute for International Studies to organize a daylong seminar on the "Anti-Trafficking Rescue Industry," featuring an esteemed sex worker rights activist Carol Leigh. Over the course of the academic year, we sponsored and organized eight different public lectures by scholars and activists who visited the CSSJ from a range of global and social contexts. The talks covered topics including labor exploitation amongst domestic workers in Dubai, sex worker organizing in the Philippines, empirical and theoretical continuities and disconnects between claims of "modern-day slavery" and historical forms of slavery, and child labour in artisanal gold mines in Ghana, to name a few. As the field of human trafficking studies continues to grow, we hope our work will demonstrate the need for prioritizing an intersectional framework which illuminates how race, class, gender, nation, and sexual forms of power and inequality that govern contemporary anti-trafficking work.

Elena Shih

Assistant Professor of Women's and Gender Studies, American Studies, CSSJ Human Trafficking Research Cluster Faculty Fellow

Feminist Research, Engendering Blackness, and the Impact of Police Militarization

"Feminist Research, Engendering Blackness, and the Impact of Police Militarization," organized by myself and graduate student Lydia Kelow-Bennett, was an attempt to focus more scholarly attention on black women and girls' experiences with state violence, specifically with the militarized police forces now occupying US cities. In the aftermath of an established national discourse around the effects of the militarized policing and killing of black men and boys, the black women and girls who also suffer similarly violent consequences are often overlooked. Their experiences with state-sanctioned police violence and leadership in anti-violence struggles have remained invisible and largely understudied. We wanted to partake in a new wave of black feminist scholarship that documented the structural violence in this country and beyond from the perspective of black women.

For Lydia, the grant resulted in the acquisition of an exciting bibliography that framed her dissertation proposal entitled, "Conjuring Liberation: Intervention of Black Feminist Radicalism," which she defended in December 2015. The work focused on the theoretical constructions of black women and its consequences in black liberation struggles. She used the resources the CSSJ grant provided to do the initial research for the dissertation proposal, and to clarify the questions about the project. After reading books across various disciplinary fields that center black women's ideas and experiences, she expanded her research to cover questions such as the role of black women's reproductive freedoms in black liberation movements and critiques of mainstream black feminism. In essence, the CSSJ grant provided Lydia with the space and resources to do the thinking that goes beyond urban violence and looks to unearth the complex ideas that frames the violence itself.



For myself, the CSSJ grant provided the resources to further solidify my feminist research on black women's experiences with policing. A significant portion of this grant allowed me to organize a bibliography of texts on black women and girls. During this process, I learned that there is a recent explosion of scholarship on issues that range from housing struggles to school reform, which ultimately shaped my decision to continue previous work on land and housing rights as intricately tied to the militarization of black urban neighborhoods.

The CSSJ grant allowed us to complete preliminary research for our own individual research projects centered on improving our understanding of black women's experiences and life conditions. In general, the help of CSSJ allowed us to organize bibliographies, carry out research that center black women and their experiences with state violence, and inform our theoretical and methodological approaches moving forward. More importantly, in this young Africana Studies Ph.D. program, these kinds of research collaborations with faculty are crucial for the professional development of graduate students.

Keisha-Khan Y. Perry

Associate Professor of Africana Studies, 2015 CSSJ Faculty Associate

Levee Mule Holler

Thanks to Faculty Associate grant funding from CSSJ for my project I was able to expand my research into the history and practices of African-Americans who worked with mules on the Mississippi River levees. This expansion brought the work into a discussion of interracial sociology and journalism as well as the commodification of living beings and the troubled history of harnessing Nature as it flows in the Mississippi River.

These topics (among others) were shared, discussed, explored and expanded in the Brown community and in the Providence community through two public events. The first event was a lunch talk led by me and hosted by CSSJ. We had a wonderful turnout and a great discussion following a viewing of the research. The second event was a work-in-progress performance at Rites and Reason Theatre in the Africana Studies Department at Brown.

The performance was created by Brown undergraduate students as well as local performance artists. We were supported by Carl Sirah, a Mississippi native and graduate playwright, who helped contextualize our research and performance. I presented my research in rehearsals and the artists wrote monologues, songs, spoken word pieces and movements inspired by the research. We presented the piece to the public on two nights. Following the second performance we held a



FolkThought with our audience which offered feedback to the performance, new directions for research and discussions of how many people were unaware of the history of the levee camps, the workers and their relationships with mules. The performances and FolkThought were filmed and are archived at Rites and Reason Theatre.

The CSSJ's grant enabled me to launch this project which has been funded for further development by the Cogut Center. Charlotte Carrington-Farmer, a contributor to Levee Mule Holler, spoke at CSSJ this past spring on the Narragansett Pacer. She will be joining the research team of Levee Mule Holler when we revise and perform it again at Rites and Reason in the fall of 2016. None of this would have happened had it not been for the support of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. I am deeply grateful for this support.

Connie Crawford

*Adjunct Lecturer in Theatre Arts and Performance Studies,
2015 Faculty Associate*

The Slave Symbolic Garden

Why make a garden in an academic center dedicated to the study of slavery? It may seem counter-intuitive to associate a garden or even the insurgency of “weeds,” with the historical injustice of chattel slavery. However, by creating a garden, to explore not just the notions of social justice and freedom arising from slavery in the Americas, we also explore questions of cognitive justice. What did the enslaved know, what thoughts might have sustained them not just in moments of revolt, but in their daily life of bondage. The small symbolic garden as well as the seed assemblage “Plants of Bondage/Liberation Flora” on display inside the building have become distinct features of the CSSJ. In 2015, a CSSJ Faculty Associate grant helped me to continue research across a range of literatures, from environmental history to oral narratives of the enslaved, from African-American poetry to the material culture of the plantation. I located more descriptions of flowers favored by enslaved women in their small plots and gardens; plants used for medicine, food, environmental and religious practices. I was also able to obtain and place in the garden new plants, particularly botanicals that enslaved Africans would have learned from Native Americans in New England. In this effort I was guided by consultations with local Native American scholars, and with a colleague in Brown's biology department, Professor Fred Jackson.

Visitors to the garden—students, their parents, morning walkers in the neighborhood—can often be found stopping by for brief respite or contemplation. Colleagues teaching in American Studies and Literary Arts have invited me to speak with their classes about the symbolism in the garden. The garden and the seed assemblage have become a crossroads for other ideas, and inspiration to interdisciplinary work. Scholars and community persons meeting with Center staff and myself used the seed assemblage as a touchstone for conversations about how to represent the knowledge of the enslaved in their own institutions. This includes conversations with visitors varied as the director of the Little Compton Historical Society, the editorial board of



the literary and arts journal *Callaloo*, and the director of the Slave Lodge museum, in Cape Town, South Africa. The Slave Lodge now proposes to create its own symbolic garden, and has invited me to consult on that project. The video of the seminar I presented in 2015 on “‘The disarray of nature’: Expressive forms and symbolism in the CSSJ slave garden” was the genesis of other invitations, e.g. a keynote talk at the Eco humanities Symposium on Cities in Crisis, Nature and Culture at the Crossroads in early 2016 held at the History Miami Museum and hosted by Florida International University. The garden and seed assemblage were also the vantage point from which I wrote a forthcoming book chapter “Plants of Bondage, Liberation Flora and the Colonial Sciences – Reflections for STS,” prepared for the volume, *What Do Science, Technology, and Innovation Mean from Africa*, edited by C.C. Mavhunga.

Gerri Augusto

Gerard Visiting Associate Professor of International and Public Affairs and Africana Studies, Visiting Associate Professor of Africana Studies, 2015 CSSJ Faculty Associate

An Invaluable Experience

My year at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice has been invaluable for my development as a scholar. The highlight was an end-of-year book manuscript workshop on a revised version of my dissertation, *Reparations and State Accountability*. Scholars at Brown and two outside scholars flown in specifically for the purpose of the workshop gave constructive, detailed feedback that has made the project better in countless ways. Throughout the year, I was also given the opportunity to receive feedback on parts of the manuscript at conferences, including the 2015 California Roundtable



on Philosophy and Race in Dayton, Ohio, and at “Repairing the Past, Imagining the Future: Reparations and Beyond,” an interdisciplinary conference in Edinburgh, Scotland. In addition, I began a new project extending my dissertation research called “Responding to Police Violence through Punishment, Compensation, and Reparations.” This work was presented at a Political Violence Workshop sponsored by the University of Connecticut, and featured on the blog of Harvard Kennedy School’s Justice and Poverty Project.

The intangible benefits of being a postdoctoral fellow at CSSJ were numerous. Frequent lunch talks in the CSSJ seminar room gave me a more interdisciplinary outlook, and attending CSSJ-sponsored events like a film series by the artist Tony Ramos provided unforgettable experiences. There was even latitude to organize my own events. When a colleague and I were interested in the Jim Crow era expulsion of Black families from Southern cities, we arranged a community screening of the documentary *Banished*, with a Q&A that turned into a deep conversation about grappling with legacies of racial injustice. But more than anything else, the culture and community in the open office at 94 Waterman Street facilitated memorable conversations, new ideas, and collaborations that will extend well beyond the 2015–2016 academic year. I am truly grateful for the postdoctoral fellowship, and the opportunities and experiences it made possible!

Jennifer Page
Ruth J. Simmons Postdoctoral Fellow 2015–2016

Accessing Slave Narratives

Former fugitive slave and renowned abolitionist William Wells Brown once said, “Those who do not appreciate their own people will not be appreciated by other people.” Privileged as I am to attend a prestigious university like Brown, I was determined to find place and space for myself within the Brown community that would allow me to uncover parts of my history; to claim culture and identity. I was longing to learn and grow. After taking a course during the spring semester, entitled “Writing to the Black Diaspora: Speaking Truth to Power,” I was inspired to work with CSSJ to conduct further research around slave narratives. I spent the summer of 2016 researching these narratives and looking at how local historic museums engage with the history of the enslaved people who once lived there.

Because slavery is such a large part of America’s history, and a large part of the history and development of Brown University, I felt a strong obligation and duty to make an effort to represent the lives of my fellow African American people. I have come to acknowledge the benefits that I receive as a student who is able to walk on this campus and thrive off of this university’s academic opportunities when this was certainly not the case long ago during the dark ages in which slavery prospered. Oftentimes, I felt disconnected from Brown’s campus: aware of extreme sensations of discomfort and displacement due to this problematic history, yet not fully able to take action or make any contributions because of the lack of knowledge that I possessed on Providence’s history with the Atlantic



Slave Trade. While these feelings of discomfort remain, and perhaps have been intensified as a result of the research I have conducted, I feel better equipped to convey this information to fellow students who may share similar ideas and passions as I do. Interning at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice has allowed me to gain greater access to Brown’s relation to slavery as well as inspiring me to advocate for the accessibility of this history to other students in the attempt to increase the ways in which we learn about different cultures and histories.

Aisha Zamor ’19
CSSJ 2016 Summer Intern

New Fellows

GRADUATE FELLOW FOR THE STUDY
OF THE PUBLIC HISTORY OF SLAVERY

Sandra Arnold AM '18

Sandra Arnold is the founder and director of the Periwinkle Initiative (www.periwinkleinitiative.org), a public humanities and education initiative dedicated to preserving the cultural heritage of enslaved Americans. The Initiative's core project is the *National Burial Database of Enslaved Americans* – which will be the first national repository to document burials and burial grounds of those formerly enslaved in the United States.

Sandra is a public historian from rural Tennessee where members of her family were once enslaved. She is currently an institutional partner with the *UNESCO Remember Slavery Initiative*, and has co-produced public programs with the *United Nations Remember Slavery Programme*. Sandra earned her B.A. in History from Fordham University. Her additional research and interests include racial reconciliation, photography, and filmmaking.



RUTH J. SIMMONS POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW
IN SLAVERY AND JUSTICE

Amelia Hintzen

Dr. Amelia Hintzen holds a Ph.D. in History from the University of Miami and a B.A. from Carleton College. Combining historical, anthropological, and geographic methods, Amelia's work explores the intersections of labor, migration, citizenship, and race within the Caribbean and Latin America. Her dissertation examines the historical development of Haitian-Dominican communities on Dominican sugar plantations, and how these spaces shaped national understandings of race, ethnicity, and national belonging. Her work has been published in the *NACLA Report on the Americas*, the *Journal of Haitian Studies*, and the *New West Indian Guide*. She has also published in the Dominican Republic about the Dominican government's contemporary attempts to strip citizenship from Dominicans of Haitian descent. In addition to her research, she has worked with Haitian-Dominican advocacy organizations to help them incorporate historical information and material into their work. Archival documents from her research have been submitted as evidence before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, included in documentary films, used in print advocacy campaigns, and discussed on Dominican news programs.

CSSJ FACULTY FELLOW

Emily Owens

Emily Owens joins the history department and the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice as an historian of US slavery and the history of gender and sexuality. Her current book project, *Fantasies of Consent: Sex, Affect, and Commerce in 19th Century New Orleans*, historicizes the culture and economy of the antebellum New Orleans sex market. Its central question is: "How do we write the history of black female sexuality?" It also targets the sex trade under slavery to approach that question. The book argues that the primary objects for sale in the sex market of antebellum New Orleans were not sex itself, but rather a set of feeling-experiences attached to those sex acts. Through close readings of Louisiana State Supreme Court cases and Louisiana law, as well as new research in lower court records, newspapers, and manuscript sources, *Fantasies of Consent* unpacks the kinds of pleasures that women of color were called upon to produce for white men within the sex economy, and the pleasures they themselves were able to inherit. The book argues that both sets of pleasures emerged from and were therefore sutured to the violence of the market, demonstrating the simultaneity of pleasure and violence in the story of sex and slavery.

As a faculty fellow at the CSSJ, Owens will teach a first-year seminar on the history of American slavery, titled "Slavery, Race and Racism" in Fall 2016.

In 2015–2016, Owens was a Visiting Scholar at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cambridge, MA. She received her Ph.D. in African American Studies, with a primary field in history, from Harvard in 2015.





VISITING ASSISTANT
PROFESSOR OF
SLAVERY & JUSTICE
Matthew Reilly

Prof. Reilly is an anthropological archaeologist specializing in studies of race and class in the Caribbean, specifically on the island of Barbados. He received his Ph.D. in

2014 from Syracuse University. His methodological and theoretical training is grounded in historical archaeological approaches to the Atlantic World. His forthcoming book, *Archaeology below the Cliff: Race, Class, and Redlegs in Barbadian Sugar Society*, analyzes the place of marginalized “poor whites” on the plantation landscape. This research informs his broader interests in how race was and is operationalized in the Atlantic World and how processes of racialization continue to plague societies across the globe. Prof. Reilly is currently jointly developing a community-based, collaborative project in Barbados incorporating educational initiatives and heritage management strategies to think about the future of plantation spaces and what they mean for island communities. Prof. Reilly is delighted to be part of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice and looks forward to forging interdisciplinary partnerships with those similarly interested in better understanding and transforming how race, class, colonialism, slavery, capitalism, and history affect our society.

DISSERTATION FELLOW
Isadora Moura Mota

Isadora Moura Mota is a Ph.D. candidate in the History Department at Brown University. Born and raised in Brazil, she completed a B.A. in History at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in 2003 and a M.A. at the Center for the Social History of Culture at the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP) in 2005. Her research interests include nineteenth-century Brazilian history, comparative slavery and emancipation in the Atlantic World, as well as the study of race in Latin America. She is currently writing a dissertation on Afro-Brazilians’ geopolitical literacy and the role of British abolitionism and the American Civil War in the history of emancipation in Brazil.



ANN COLES '63 AND TOM BALE '63

Invite You to Become a Friend of the Center

As Brown undergraduates, we – Ann Coles and Tom Bale – participated actively in the struggle for social justice in the Civil Rights movement that defined that decade. Fifty years later we discovered the newly created Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, and realized that the ideals that meant so much to us are far from forgotten at Brown. The Center became a beacon for us, drawing us back in recognition of unfinished business on the Brown campus, in Providence, and in the nation at large. The Center spells out how much there is to learn about slavery in the Americas, and how this legacy is connected to the racism that

still bedevils our global society in present day life. We created the Friends in an attempt to reach out to alumni to encourage them to learn along with each of us from the many programs the Center has developed. For us, the Center has become a centerpiece of the new civil rights that help define our University.

The Friends of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice raise critical funds that support the Center’s scholarly and public humanities programs and think strategically about how to raise the Center’s visibility among alumnae.

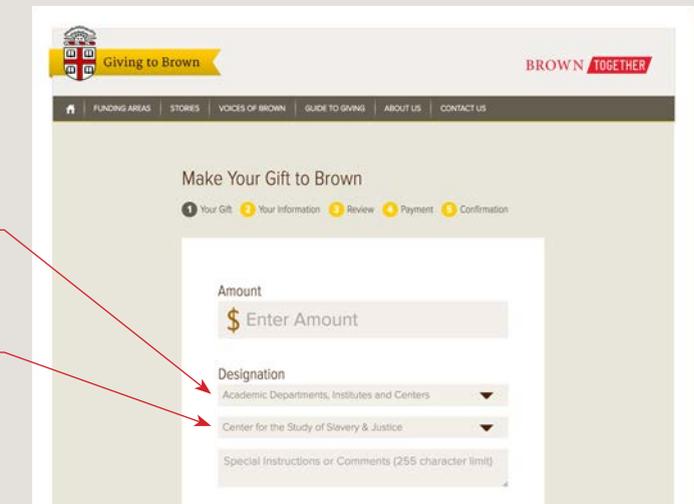
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