

CFP: Enslaved: Peoples of the Historic Slave Trade

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Type:

Conference

Location:

Michigan, United States

Subject Fields:

African American History / Studies, African History / Studies, Atlantic History / Studies, Black History / Studies, Immigration & Migration History / Studies

Enslaved: Peoples of the Historic Slave Trade
Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan
March 8-9, 2019

This is a call for papers for an international conference, "Enslaved: Peoples of the Historic Slave Trade." The major objective of this conference is to encourage collaboration among scholars utilizing databases to document and reconstruct the lives of individuals who were part of historic slave trades. This conference will focus primarily on the enslavement and trade of people of African descent before the twentieth century, but we welcome papers from scholars studying other slave trades. We are interested in proposals from scholars who are presenting, interpreting, coordinating, integrating and preserving data about individuals--of slave, free or other status. Databases may be in various stages of development and construction from beginning to complete.

Please send a brief description of your slave database including place, time, type or types of documents, number of records and fields, graphics if any, how it has or can be used to ask and answer new questions, and to link to other slave databases. Limit 500 words. If you wish to be considered for a travel award, please provide a brief statement of need and preliminary budget with your application. If you plan to submit and require a visa to travel to the United States, please notify us before the deadline so that we can provide a letter of invitation/acceptance for your visa application.

Please email abstract and CV to enslavedconference@gmail.com by September 30th. Proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis.

In 2018, Michigan State University (MSU) in partnership with the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University, Slave Societies Digital Archives at Vanderbilt University, the University of Colorado Boulder, University College London, the Harriet Tubman Institute at York University, and University of Maryland, received critical support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to build a digital hub for students, researchers, and the general public to search over numerous databases to reconstruct the lives of individuals who were part of the historic slave trade. Using Linked Open Data (LOD), we seek to provide a platform for researchers to upload, analyze, visualize and utilize data, and link that data to other databases which will create a richer resource than the individual databases alone. African enslavement was fundamental to the making of Europe, Africa, the Americas, the Middle East, and

parts of the Asian subcontinent.

During the past two decades, there has been a significant shift in perceptions about what we can know about enslaved Africans, their descendants, and those who asserted ownership over them throughout the world. Those on the cutting edge of the digital humanities and social sciences have set about identifying, digitizing, analyzing and making these resources available on innovative public history and cultural heritage websites. As a result, a growing number of collections of original digital manuscript documents, digitized material culture, and databases, that organize and make sense of records of enslavement, are free and readily accessible for scholarly and public consumption. At the same time, these projects fail to merge the data across the datasets, resulting in isolated projects and databases that do little to aid scholars in analyzing these sources. Our task as historians is more than to preserve images of primary sources, but to interpret those sources by finding new ways to organize, share, mine and analyze as well as to preserve original materials which might otherwise be discarded or lost.

Contact Info:

enslavedconference@gmail.com

Contact Email:

enslavedconference@gmail.com