



CUBAN SLAVERY and the Atlantic World

GILDER LEHRMAN CENTER
for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition
THE MACMILLAN CENTER OF YALE UNIVERSITY
22nd Annual International Conference
November 6 & 7, 2020

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2020

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION 9:30—10:00am

David W. Blight DIRECTOR, GILDER LEHRMAN CENTER; STERLING PROFESSOR OF HISTORY,
OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES, AND OF AMERICAN STUDIES,
YALE UNIVERSITY

Manuel Barcia CHAIR OF GLOBAL HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

KEYNOTE ADDRESS & DISCUSSION 10:00—11:15am

Ada Ferrer JULIUS SILVER PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND LATIN AMERICAN
AND CARIBBEAN HISTORY, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
“Cuba and an Empire for Slavery”

BREAK 11:15—11:30am

THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE AND THE REGIONAL TRADE 11:30am—1:00pm

This panel brings together scholars to discuss the new historiography of the Atlantic and intra-regional human trade, as our understanding of origins, ebbs, and flows, African political and military contexts, and intra-Caribbean subjugation and intercommunication grows ever deeper. Cuban slavery emerges as part of a tight nexus of regional plantation production and this interconnection also at times made fraught liberation possible.

MODERATOR:
David Blight YALE UNIVERSITY

PANELISTS:
John Harris ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, ERSKINE COLLEGE
“Cuban Slave Traders’ Strategies in the Final Years of the
Transatlantic Slave Trade”

Marial Iglesias VISITING RESEARCH SCHOLAR AT THE AFRO-LATIN AMERICAN RESEARCH
INSTITUTE WORKING GROUP ON COMPARATIVE SLAVERY LEADER,
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

& Manuel Barcia CHAIR OF GLOBAL HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
“New Reflections on the Illegal Slave Trade to Cuba”

David Wheat ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY,
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
“A Wolof Aristocrat in Havana and a Slave Trader’s Dying Wish, 1599”

LUNCH 1:00—1:30pm

CUBA PHOTOGRAPHY & MUSIC

Photographs by conference panelist David LaFevor
(For more of David’s work: www.davidlafavor.com)

Music playlist, “Canciones de resistencia y liberación,”
available on Spotify



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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2020 CONT.

WORLDS BEYOND THE PLANTATION 1:30—3:00pm

Several decades of scholarship have brought plantation slavery into context with non- and plantation supporting-spaces in the Caribbean. This panel draws from that work in order to reconstruct a fuller account of subjugation, mobility, and the interrelation between labor systems in Cuba and its neighbors.

MODERATOR:

Anne Eller

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, YALE UNIVERSITY

PANELISTS:

Adriana Chira

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, EMORY COLLEGE

“Black Local Governance on a Sugar Island: El Cobre during the Nineteenth Century”

Aisha Finch

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES AND DEPARTMENT OF GENDER STUDIES, UCLA

“Fugitive Temporalities, Psychic Maroonage, and Sacred Borderlands: Black Cuban Worlds beyond the Plantation”

Michele Reid-Vazquez

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF AFRICANA STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

“Freedom, Mobility, and Urban Spaces in Nineteenth-Century Cuba”

BREAK 3:00—3:15pm

REPRESENTATIONS OF
CUBAN SLAVERY 3:15—4:45pm

This interdisciplinary panel considers the spiritual and temporal worlds of representing Cuban slavery and how these narratives have evolved over time. Through visual art, literature, and spiritual epistemologies, the presenters will consider intersecting conversations about bondage on the island and beyond.

MODERATOR:

Cecile Fromont

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF AFRICAN AND SOUTH ATLANTIC ART, YALE UNIVERSITY

PANELISTS:

Jadele McPherson

INDEPENDENT ARTIST, AND PHD STUDENT IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY AT CUNY GRADUATE CENTER

“Sonic Memories/Sacred Sounds in Transnational Afro-Cuban Communities”

Odette Casamayor-Cisneros

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

“Epistemological Cimarronaje in Contemporary Black Cuban Cultural Production”

Elio Rodriguez

VISUAL ARTIST

“Mami, que será lo que quiere el negro?”



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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2020

SLAVERY, FREEDOM, AND THE LAW 9:30—11:00am

This panel explores how enslaved and free people of color used the legal system to expand the tenor of their rights within a plantation society. What avenues for freedom did the law afford or foreclose and how did Afro-descendants redefine what was legally possible? How did the pursuit of freedom through the courts shape processes of race-formation?

MODERATOR:
Manuel Barcia

CHAIR OF GLOBAL HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

PANELISTS:
Ariela Gross
& Alejandro de la Fuente

JOHN B. AND ALICE R. SHARP PROFESSOR OF LAW AND HISTORY, USC
ROBERT WOODS BLISS PROFESSOR OF LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY AND ECONOMICS; PROFESSOR OF AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES AND OF HISTORY; DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES; DIRECTOR, AFRO-LATIN AMERICAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE, HUTCHINS CENTER FOR AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN RESEARCH, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

“Becoming Free, Becoming Black: Race, Freedom, and Law in Cuba, Virginia, and Louisiana”

Rebecca Scott

CHARLES GIBSON DISTINGUISHED UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND PROFESSOR OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

“Inventing a Root of Title to Property in a Person: Saint-Domingue Refugees in Santiago and Baracoa (1803-1809)”

David LaFevor

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY AND DIGITAL HUMANITIES, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

“Exile, Rendition, Forgery, and Kidnapping in Cuba and the United States: Bending the Laws to End the Slave Trade in the 1860s”

BREAK 11:00—11:15am

CUBAN EMANCIPATION AND STATE-MAKING 11:15am—12:45pm

This panel reflects on the far-reaching impact of Cuban emancipation on liberal democracy and political rights. How did experiences of emancipation shape ideologies and practices of citizenship? Panelists will discuss forms of popular mobilization for inclusive citizenship that emerged after emancipation and how they shaped state institutions.

MODERATOR:
Anne Eller

YALE UNIVERSITY

PANELISTS:
Melina Pappademos

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY; DIRECTOR OF THE AFRICANA STUDIES INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

“Black Activism at the Crossroad of the Republic”



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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2020 CONT.

David Sartorius ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY,
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
“Runaway Citizenship: Stowaways and Paper Trails between
Spain and Cuba”

Raquel Otheguy ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE
“Black Cubans and the Development of Public Education in Cuba”

LUNCH 12:45—2:00pm

CUBA PHOTOGRAPHY & MUSIC

Photographs by conference panelist David LaFevor
(For more of David’s work: www.davidlafevor.com)

Music playlist, “Canciones de resistencia y liberación,”
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CONCLUDING ROUNDTABLE:
LEGACIES AND MEMORY OF SLAVERY
IN CUBA AND THE AMERICAS

2:00—3:30pm

Cuba was the penultimate country in the Western Hemisphere to abolish slavery, and the last one to receive enslaved men, women and children from Africa, via the transatlantic slave trade. As a result, the legacies and memory of slavery and the slave trade are very much present in the island today, and also among the Cuban diaspora. This round table aims to explore these legacies and historical memory, while engaging with current processes and movements that are taking place, simultaneously, on both sides of the Atlantic. From the roles of statues and monuments as places of memorialisation and homage, to the suppression of some “inconvenient” parts of that legacy and memory, panelists will debate the current state of things in the island and the diaspora, and will attempt to look ahead, at the possible scenarios where these discussions are likely to lead.

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PANELISTS:
Manuel Barcia CHAIR OF GLOBAL HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
Alejandro de la Fuente ROBERT WOODS BLISS PROFESSOR OF LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY AND
ECONOMICS; PROFESSOR OF AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES AND
OF HISTORY; DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES; DIRECTOR, AFRO-LATIN
AMERICAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE, HUTCHINS CENTER FOR AFRICAN AND
AFRICAN AMERICAN RESEARCH, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Jane Landers GERTRUDE CONAWAY VANDERBILT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY,
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Rebecca Scott CHARLES GIBSON DISTINGUISHED UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR OF HISTORY
AND PROFESSOR OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN