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# Yale & Slavery in Historical Perspective

Gilder Lehrman Center

for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition
THE MACMILLAN CENTER AT YALE UNIVERSITY

23rd Annual Conference · October 28-30, 2021

An Account of the Charges of Building the New College (Connecticut Hall) to September 8th 1752

#### Thursday, October 28, 2021

4:15pm - 4:30pm **WELCOME** 

Peter Salovey President, Yale University

4:30pm - 6:00pm KEYNOTE CONVERSATION: UNIVERSITIES, SLAVERY, AND MEMORY

**David W. Blight**\* Chair of the Yale and Slavery Working Group; Sterling Professor of History; and Director of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery

Resistance & Abolition at the MacMillan Center at Yale University

Elizabeth Alexander President of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Jonathan Holloway President of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

"Lift Ev'ry Voice" by Shades of Yale

### Friday, October 29, 2021

8:45am - 9:00am WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

**Peter Salovey** President, Yale University

David W. Blight\* Director, Gilder Lehrman Center; Sterling Professor of

American History, Yale University

9:00am - 10:30am SLAVERY & THE UNIVERSITY

Leaders of slavery studies at their respective universities will explore comparative experiences associated with projects designed to probe the depths of their institutions' histories, memorializations, and interpretations. Panelists are invited to share insights from which Yale and other institutions might learn.

Moderator: David W. Blight\*

**Daina Berry** Oliver H. Radkey Regents Professorship in History, University of Texas at Austin: "The Texas Domestic Slave Trade Project and the Founding of 'A University of the First Class'"

**Dorothy Roberts** George A. Weiss University Professor of Law and Sociology and the Raymond Pace and Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander Professor of Civil Rights, University of Pennsylvania: "The Penn and Slavery (and Its Afterlives) Projects"

**Kirt von Daacke** Assistant Dean and Professor of History, University of Virginia: "UVA's 1819 Project"

**Deborah Gray White** Board of Governors Distinguished Professor of History, Rutgers: "The Price of the Ticket: Paying for Diversity and Inclusion"

<sup>\*</sup> Denotes member of the Yale & Slavery Working Group

Friday, October 29, 2021 cont.

10:30am - 10:45am BREAK (MUSIC: Yale & Slavery in Historical Perspective Playlist)

10:45am - 12:15pm

# SLAVERY AND THE ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE OF COLONIAL AND 19TH CENTURY CONNECTICUT

Yale University emerged in the midst of the colonial eighteenth century British Empire, based in a British colony that was founded through the conquest of Native American lands. The colonies of New Haven, Connecticut, and New England at large were immersed in the realities of slavery, both through settler colonial conflict with Indian cultures and livelihoods and through robust trade with the slave-based economies of the West Indies. This session will explore the economics and legacies of these encounters.

**Moderator: Edward Rugemer\*** Associate Professor of African American Studies & History, Yale University

**Christine M. DeLucia** Associate Professor of History, Williams College: "Indigenous Lives, Lands, and Colonial Dispossessions"

**Anne Farrow** Journalist, editor, researcher, and public history consultant, author of *The Logbooks: Connecticut's Slave Ships and Human Memory* and co-author of *Complicity: How the North Promoted, Prolonged and Profited from Slavery:* "Follow the Money"

Marcus Rediker Distinguished Professor of History, University of Pittsburgh, presenting a summary of the work of the late Eric B. Kimball (formerly Assoc. Professor of History, University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg): "Connecticut Merchants and West Indian Slavery"

12:15pm - 1:30pm

**LUNCH BREAK** (MUSIC: Yale & Slavery in Historical Perspective Playlist)

12:30pm - 1:20pm

# BREAK-OUT SESSION: DISCUSSION OF "NEW LIGHT ON THE GROUP PORTRAIT OF ELIHU YALE, HIS FAMILY, AND AN ENSLAVED CHILD"

Please note: separate registration is required for this event (https://tinyurl.com/48sakam6)

Courtney J. Martin Director, Yale Center for British Art

Abigail Lamphier Senior Curatorial Assistant, YCBA

David K. Thompson Coordinator of Cataloguing, YCBA

Edward Town\* Head of Collections Information and Access, YCBA

1:30pm - 3:00pm

#### SLAVERY, RELIGION, AND YALE

During its first century and more, Yale's identity and purpose were deeply tied to its religious mission and the training of Christian ministers. The enslavement of African and Native American people was interwoven into this mission, as was the beginning of antislavery debates. This session will explore a foundational element of Yale's history and early leadership.

**Moderator: Willie Jennings\*** Associate Professor of Systematic Theology and Africana Studies, Yale Divinity School

**Catherine Brekus** Charles Warren Professor of the History of Religion in America, Harvard Divinity School: "Christianity and Slavery in Early New England"

#### Friday, October 29, 2021 cont.

1:30pm - 3:00pm SLAVERY, RELIGION, AND YALE cont.

**Ken Minkema\*** Executive Editor, Jonathan Edwards Center, Yale Divinity School: "New England Religion and Attitudes on the Slave Trade"

**Frank Mitchell** Curatorial Adviser, The Toni H. & Wendell C. Harp Historical Museum at The Dixwell Community House: "Keep the Faith, Baby! Religion, Race, and Remembering"

**Charles Warner, Jr.**\* Chairman, Connecticut Freedom Trail; History Committee Chair, Dixwell Congregational UCC: "Pulpits, Purpose, and Politics: The History of the Dixwell Congregational Church and Black Leadership in New Haven"

3:00pm - 3:15pm BREAK "Amen/We Shall Overcome" by Shades of Yale

3:15pm - 4:45pm FINDING SLAVERY IN THE ARCHIVES

This session will reveal and analyze numerous findings emerging from the Yale & Slavery Working Group's extensive archival work, led by our research team leaders, one on each of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Panelists will focus on particular episodes, leaders, and themes of Yale's involvements with slavery, its abolition, and its commemoration. The presentation will be framed by a discussion of contemporary archival practices and the challenges and possibilities of working through archival absences and biases.

**Moderator: Crystal Feimster\*** Associate Professor of African American Studies; History; and American Studies, Yale University

**Michael Lotstein**\* University Archivist, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University: "Symbolic Annihilation: Issues in Modern Archival Cataloging"

**Teanu Reid\*** PhD Candidate, African American Studies and History, Yale University: "Yale, Rum, and Slavery"

**Bennet Parten\*** PhD Candidate, History, Yale University: "Reading the Archive around the 1831 Negro College"

**Steven Rome**\* Yale College '20; Sixth-grade teacher at Cold Spring School, New Haven: "Tracing Slavery's Shadow in Yale's Twentieth Century"

## Saturday, October 30, 2021

9:00am - 10:30am RACE, ART, AND ICONOGRAPHY AT YALE AND BEYOND

With experts from Yale and other universities, this session will examine artistic representations on campuses of people, places, and events associated with slavery and racial ideologies. Panelists will consider the place of iconography and memorialization over time as institutions have made aesthetic and moral choices in how to represent their pasts.

**Moderator: John Stuart Gordon\*** Benjamin Attmore Hewitt Curator of American Decorative Arts, Yale University Art Gallery

**Cheryl Finley** Director, AUC Art History + Curatorial Studies Collective; Distinguished Visiting Professor, Department of Art & Visual Culture, Spelman College: "Black Art Futures"

Saturday, October 30, 2021 cont.

9:00am - 10:30am RACE, ART, AND ICONOGRAPHY AT YALE AND BEYOND cont.

> Louis P. Nelson Professor of Architectural History and the Vice Provost for Academic Outreach at UVA: "Re-Seeing Slavery at UVA"

Romita Ray Associate Professor of Art History, Syracuse University: "Silence!"

Barbara Earl Thomas Artist, Writer, Thinker- Seattle, Washington: "The Past Holds the Present"

10:30am - 10:45am **BREAK** (MUSIC: Yale & Slavery in Historical Perspective Playlist)

10:45am - 12:15pm HISTORY OF MEDICINE AND SCIENCES AT YALE

> As early as Yale established the study of medicine and natural science, it left a record of the institutionalization of ideas about race. This panel examines the production of scientific knowledge and curricula as key elements in the construction of ideologies of racial differences and the social hierarchies that accompany them. This session will explore that history for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and through the university's pivotal role in the eugenics movement of the early twentieth century.

Moderator: Deborah Coen\* Professor of History, Chair of the History of Science & Medicine Program, Yale University

Yale History of Science and Medicine students\* Sami Elrazky (Yale College '22), Nithya Krishnamurthy (Yale College '22), Mariko Rooks (School of Public Health '22), and Charlie Tran (Yale College '22)

Daniel Martinez HoSang Associate Professor of Ethnicity, Race & Migration, Yale University and Dora Guo Yale College '23: "Eugenics Comes to Yale: Dean Milton Winternitz and the American Eugenics Society"

Carolyn Roberts\* Assistant Professor, History of Science & History of Medicine; African American Studies, Yale University: "Surgeons, Medical Education, and the British Slave Trade"

Paola Bertucci\* Associate Professor, History of Science and Medicine Program, Curator of the History of Science and Technology Division, Peabody Museum, Yale University: "Science and Historical Memory at Yale"

12:15pm - 2:00pm **LUNCH BREAK** (MUSIC: Yale & Slavery in Historical Perspective Playlist)

BREAK-OUT SESSION: STUDYING SLAVERY AND RACE AT YALE 12:30pm - 1:45pm Please note: separate registration is required for this event (https://tinyurl.com/vd6777am)

Moderator: Risë Nelson Director, Afro-American Cultural Center and Assistant Dean, Yale College

Bhasha Chakrabarti Yale School of Art '22

Patrick Hayes Yale College '24

Donasia Gray Yale College '23

This semester, Professors Crystal Feimster and Edward Rugemer are teaching a new class, "Slavery, Race, and Yale," through African American Studies and History. In this



#### Saturday, October 30, 2021 cont.

12:30pm - 1:45pm

#### BREAK-OUT SESSION: STUDYING SLAVERY AND RACE AT YALE cont.

session, Dean Risë Nelson moderates a conversation with several students in the class. They will discuss their experiences of exploring Yale's institutional connections to racial slavery; the history of the relationship between Yale and New Haven's Black community, and living memories of slavery. The students will share some details about their own research projects, what led them to sign up for the course, what questions they think are most important. And, as members of the Yale community, what hopes and expectations might result from a deeper understanding of this history?

2:00pm - 3:30pm

## CONCLUDING ROUNDTABLE: RACE, SLAVERY, AND YALE'S CONSTRUCTION OF ITS MEMORY

This panel of experts and writers with wide-ranging interests in the legacies of slavery will address the broad subject of how universities or other institutions face their past or present engagements with racial ideologies and racist practices. A particular focus will be how Yale has forged its own historical memory over time in regard to these topics. Presenters are invited to share ideas for how Yale and other universities can move forward.

Moderator: David W. Blight\*

James Forman, Jr.\* J. Skelly Wright Professor of Law, Yale Law School

Adrienne Joy Burns\* Physician Assistant, Smilow Cancer Center, Yale; The Amistad Committee

**Willie Jennings\*** Associate Professor of Systematic Theology and Africana Studies, Yale Divinity School

Michael Morand\* Communications Director, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

Kymberly Pinder Stavros Niarchos Foundation Dean of the Yale School of Art

**Craig Wilder** Barton L. Weller Professor of History, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

"Redemption Song" by Shades of Yale

