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## Uniting the Histories of Slavery in North America

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## Uniting the Histories of Slavery in North America

Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas,  
and School for Advanced Research, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 2012-2013



**A Joint Symposium in 2012-2013, sponsored by the William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies at Southern Methodist University (Dallas, Texas) and the School for Advanced Research (Santa Fe, New Mexico). Until the last decade, the story of slavery in North America resided largely east of the Mississippi river. Since 2000 an array of local and regional studies have alerted us to new forms of bondage in the trans-Mississippi West and the borderlands of the U.S. and Mexico. Still needed is an overarching view that allows scholars to appreciate similarities and differences across all of North America and among their many peoples. With this symposium, we hope to unite the stories of slavery by bringing together historians who focus on slavery east and west of the Mississippi and in the northern and southern U.S. borderlands. We also want to show how studies on past slavery and contemporary human trafficking inform our understanding of each.**

**We have special interest in the following topics: (1) Striking parallels as well as fascinating differences in the dynamics of slavery among Indians and Euro-Americans. European and indigenous peoples competed for exclusive military alliances and trading partners, spurring the demand for slaves and, therefore, both the international and intra-continental slave trades. Indigenous cultural economies in vastly different climates and ecologies reacted to these opportunities and stresses similarly. These peoples increased the hunting of pelt animals and began kidnapping and selling their neighbors to Europeans. It happened in New Mexico, and Texas, but also in Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, South Carolina, and Virginia—and even farther north. (2) Shared dynamics between North American slavery, transnational migration, and contemporary human trafficking. Migration, slavery, and human trafficking in North America share a host of psychological and cultural issues. Indians and their captives moved or were forced to migrate in order to maximize economic and strategic possibilities. For the same reasons, people cross or are forced to cross modern**

**North American borders. Highlighting the parallels and contrasts between these migrations will produce a volume that deepens insights into each and one that is more relevant to students of each kind of phenomenon. (3) Peoples of mixed descent as cultural, economic, and military intermediaries, brokering the exchange of resources. These middlemen and women also were active liaisons when plantation slavery was established. We might describe them as acting in the shadows of large-scale chattel slavery, modern migrations, and human trafficking. (4) Music, dance, and other forms of cultural/artistic expression (art, dance, poetry, etc.) play powerful parts in cultural contests generally, and in slavery particularly. Music gives us particularly powerful illustrations of continuing mutual creolization and where few visual images have come down to us from early times, it is especially important to investigate and compare these kinds of sources. There are also 20th-century examples of the crucial role that music and art can play in migration.**

**A workshop for paper contributors will be held in the Fall of 2012 at The School of Advanced Research in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to be followed in Spring 2013 by a symposium at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Expectations are that SAR will publish the papers as a volume. Co-organizers of the conference and co-editors of the volume are James F. Brooks, President & CEO of the School for Advanced Research and recipient of the 2003 Frederick Douglass Prize, and Bonnie Martin, Cassius Marcellus Clay Fellow at the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition, at Yale University, 2007-2009. Please send a CV and an original proposal by July 15, 2011, to Bonnie Martin at [swcenter@smu.edu](mailto:swcenter@smu.edu). In 1200 words or less, explain how an essay based on your research would serve the goals of the conference. Eight to ten papers will be chosen for the symposium and resulting volume. Bonnie Martin, Clements Center for Southwest Studies, Southern Methodist University, PO Box 750176, Dallas, TX 75275-0176, email: [swcenter@smu.edu](mailto:swcenter@smu.edu), visit the website at <http://smu.edu/swcenter/UnitingSlavery.htm>.**