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Brown-Harvard Conference on Slavery and Capitalism

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Brown-Harvard Conference on Slavery and Capitalism

Providence and Cambridge, April 7-9, 2011

This conference is intended to explore the centrality of slavery to national economic development in the decades between the American Revolution and the Civil War. Presentations will explore New England investment in the plantation economies of the Caribbean; the technological and managerial innovations in plantation management that coincided with northern industrialization; and the origins of modern finance and credit in the buying and selling of enslaved men and women and the crops they produced. This new research suggests that the hotbeds of American entrepreneurship, speculation, and innovation might as readily be found in Mississippi or Virginia as in New York or Massachusetts. The issue is not whether slavery was or was not capitalist (an older debate), but rather the impossibility of understanding the nation's spectacular pattern of economic development without situating slavery front and center.



The conference begins on Thursday, April 7th, with a keynote address by President Ruth Simmons of Brown University. Paper presentations will follow on Friday the 8th at Brown University. The conference then moves to Harvard for additional papers on Saturday, April 9th. This event is free and open to the public. All the information (including the program and registration form) is here: <http://brown.edu/web/slaveryconf/>.