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In Search of Skeletons

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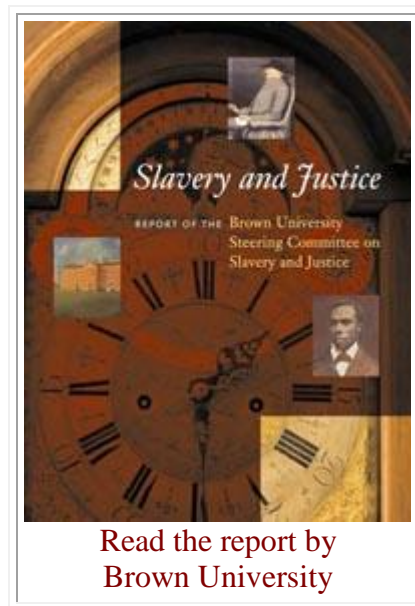
In Search of Skeletons

By Elizabeth Redden

November 27, 2006

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Brown University's October report elucidating the institution's early ties to slavery has stepped up the pressure on other colleges to delve deeply into their own pasts and fully acknowledge their institutional links to slavery, Nazi Germany and other disgraced ideas.



Colleges are accustomed to taking more contemporary moral stances, whether by divesting from Sudan or "kicking Coke" to protest alleged labor and environmental practices. But a new model for social responsibility -- based on a careful look at the past -- has gained a foothold at the nation's elite colleges.

Following the release of Brown's report, Alfred L. Brophy, author of *Reparations: Pro and Con* (Oxford, 2006) and a law professor at the University of Alabama, predicted that other Ivies would quickly follow suit: First to enter

the arena, Brophy predicted, would be Yale University, where graduate students initiated their own inquiry into institutional ties to slavery in 2001, determining, among other things, that many of Yale's residential colleges had been named for slave owners and pro-slavery leaders. Harvard University, with its famous history faculty and ties both to slavery and the anti-slavery movement, would follow closely, with Princeton University, the Ivy that in the era before desegregation catered to Southerners much more so than its New England peers, not far behind. [[read more >>>](#)].