The History of Racism, Slavery and their Aftermath

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Call for Papers

The History of Racism, Slavery and their Aftermath: Recognizing the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade.


The 32nd annual Great Lakes History Conference, sponsored by Grand Valley State University, will be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan on October 26th and 27th, 2007. All fields of history as well as other disciplines are invited to submit proposals related to this year's theme: "The History of Racism, Slavery and its Aftermath: Recognizing the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade." We invite scholars from a wide range of fields and disciplines to exchange ideas and research on this topic.

We are pleased to announce presentations by two distinguished keynote speakers. Our speakers will include Prof. Wilma King from the University of Missouri. Prof. King is an award-winning historian specializing in the history of African-American women, youth and childhood. Her books include Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth Century America and African-American Childhodds in Historical Perspective. In addition, we are pleased to announce David Brion Davis from Yale University will provide a keynote. Prof. Davis is one of the leading scholars on the history of the slave trade. His extensive publications include In the Image of God: Religion, Moral Values and Our Heritage of Slavery and Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World, published last year. Prof. Davis is also a frequent contributor to the New York Review of Books.

We welcome papers and arranged panels addressing this year's topic. We encourage comparative work across regions and chronological boundaries. The conference will be organized around themes that have dominated recent scholarship. Papers are encouraged to touch on, but are not limited to, the following:

- The origins of the Atlantic slave trade
- The abolition of the slave trade
- Abolitionist movements in Europe and the Americas
- History of the Middle Passage
- History of racism in Europe and the Americas
- Comparative perspectives on slavery in the Americas, Caribbean
- Social, cultural, political and economic perspectives on slavery
- Slave culture and history of everyday life
Slavery and the US Civil War
Comparative histories of racism and genocide (e.g. slave labor and genocide during World War II in Europe and Asia)
Slavery in the 20th century (sexual and economic exploitation)
Legacies of slavery and racism (social, political, economic, cultural-psychological)
Perspectives on reparations debates
Representations of slavery and racism in film
Slavery and racism in literature.

If you are interested in presenting a paper, please send an abstract of approximately 200 words and a curriculum vitae by June 25, 2007. Please include your address, email, and phone number. Those interested in commenting on a session should send a CV and indicate areas of expertise. Papers must take no longer than 30 minutes in a 2-paper session or 20 minutes in a 3-paper session. Sessions will last 90 minutes.

Conference headquarters will be at the L.V. Eberhard Center of Grand Valley State University in downtown Grand Rapids. Hotel accommodations will be available at the Days Inn of Grand Rapids, which is across the street from the Eberhard Center. The conference is within easy walking distance of museums and restaurants. Grand Rapids is served by most major and regional airlines.
Please address all inquiries and abstracts to: Jason Crouthamel or Craig Benjamin, crouthaj@gvsu.edu benjamic@gvsu.edu, Dept. of History, Grand Valley State University, 1018 MAK, 1 Campus Drive, Allendale, MI 49401, (616) 331-2931.