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Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade: Revisiting the Olaudah Equiano Legacy

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Call for Papers
Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade:
Revisiting the Olaudah Equiano Legacy.
An International Interdisciplinary Conference.
Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria, July 26-27, 2007.

Olaudah Equiano's autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*, published in 1789, is one of the few texts written in English by a person of African descent during the eighteenth century. Until recently, its impact as an account of a journey up from slavery written by one who had personally experienced the middle passage and subsequent enslavement has been monumental. Recent interest in Equiano has been motivated by contemporary developments, such as the work of Vincent Carretta, a professor of English at the University of Maryland at College Park and author of, *Equiano, the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man*, which has raised questions of "where Equiano was actually born and claimed that he "may have invented rather than reclaimed an African identity." The controversy generated by the discovery of Olaudah Equiano's baptismal records has led some to question the authenticity of his place of birth and indeed other slave narratives, especially those which purport to document the middle passage experiences of African slaves aboard slave ships enroute to the New World, call for a critical re-assessment of the existing scholarship.



In this context the aim of the conference is to evaluate potentials and deficits in the scholarship. The conference will also be a platform for an exchange of ideas and an opportunity for researchers and students to present on-going research on Equiano and work within a variety of fields and disciplines. We invite a wide range of scholars working out of different contexts, disciplines, and interests to either reinterpret/revisit any of the major debates in these fields, or ask new questions that seem important. All researchers on Equiano as well as academics who have recently entered the field are encouraged to contribute.

Proposals are invited covering a range of topics as they relate to Equiano's legacy including, but not limited to:

- Race, Roots, and Identity
- Migration, Immigration, Exile
- Sovereignty, Freedom, Justice
- History, Culture, and Ethnicity

- Knowledge production**
- Abolition of slavery.**

Proposals with a short abstract should be submitted by 30 April 2007 online at <http://www.africaresource.com/conferences/index.php?cf=9>. Project Committee: Prof. Catherine Acholonu, The Catherine Acholonu Research Center for African Cultural Sciences, UNCCD Forum of Arts and Culture, PMB 5197, Abuja, Nigeria; tel. 234-80-57751297. Prof. Dorothy Ukaegbu, Department of Anthropology, Community College of Southern Nevada, USA; dorothy_ukaegbu@ccsn.edu. Dr. Chris Osuafor, Department of English and Literary Studies, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria; tel. 234-80-33331628; krisafor@yahoo.com. Prof. Chima J. Korieh, Professor of African History, Department of History, Rowan University, Glassboro, NJ 08028, USA; Korieh@rowan.edu. Prof. Felix Madubuike, Department of History, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria.