

# *History of Universities Seminar*

## *Summer 2021*

### *Convenors*

Miles Taylor (University of York, UK)  
Ku-ming (Kevin) Chang (Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan)  
Heike Jöns (Loughborough University, UK)  
Tamson Pietsch (University of Technology Sydney, Australia)

### *Contact email*

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### *Timing*

Wednesdays, 2.00-3.30 pm (BST/UTC+1), online via Microsoft Teams

### *Webpage for registration*

<https://www.histgeog-uni.net/history-of-universities-seminar/>

**16 June 2021**

## **Universities and slavery: a roundtable discussion**

### **Slavery and the foundation of the University of Bristol**

Richard Stone (University of Bristol)

Bristol was a key port in the early days of the Atlantic Slave Trade, but institutions around the city have only just started to grapple with the financial and ethical implications of this disturbing source of the city's wealth. After receiving a petition from students in 2017 to rename the iconic Wills Memorial Building, the University of Bristol began the process of looking into its connections to wealth derived from slavery, and considering how they should be addressed. This paper presents the findings of my initial research into Bristol's connections to enslavement, along with some reflections on the process. Archival work has shown that as much as 89 per cent of the University's inaugural funding can be connected to slavery in some way. This includes donations from the Wills Family, who traded in tobacco produced by enslaved people, and the Fry family, chocolatiers who were involved in a scandal regarding slave grown cocoa beans at the time the University was founded in 1909. Traces and memories of these multifarious links to enslavement can be found in the University's logo, its buildings, and its nomenclature. The story, however, is a complicated one, with some of those most donors most complicit in furthering enslavement also revealed to have supported abolitionism. Presenting these complex narratives to a public audience is one which has thus needed much reflection.

**Richard Stone** is a Lecturer in the History Department at the University of Bristol. His research focuses on the Atlantic Slave Economy and its economic legacies, and his first book, *Bristol and the Birth of the Atlantic Economy, 1500-1700* is under contract with Boydell and

Brewer. He has been examining the links between the University of Bristol and slavery since 2017, and this research has both helped to shape institutional policy, and been cited widely in the international press.

**Slavery and the University of Glasgow:  
assessing financial legacies in an Atlantic frame**

Stephen Mullen (University of Glasgow)

With the publication of the report ‘Slavery, Abolition and the University of Glasgow’ on 16 September 2018, there came an acknowledgement that individuals connected to New World slavery – and their descendants - donated capital to the institution between 1697 and 1912. Glasgow became the first British university to declare historical income derived from transatlantic slavery on such a scale. This paper provides insights into the role of the historian in the process: the archival work in the records of Old College – as the University was known in the 18th and 19th century – in order to understand more about two key stages: a) bequests donated by individuals involved with chattel slavery, and b) the capital campaign which allowed the University to move to the Gilmorehill campus in 1870. However, further research into the university's domestic revenue schemes underlines British universities must take notice of the local environments in which they historically flourished in, as well as the gifts from benefactors with both direct and indirect connections to the slave economies. This paper, and the report on which it was based, offers a model that assesses how contemporary institutions profited from transatlantic slavery.

**Stephen Mullen** is an historian of slavery and its legacies in the British Atlantic world, with an emphasis on Scotland and the Caribbean. He is alumnus of the Universities of Strathclyde and Glasgow, completing a PhD at the latter institution in 2015. His monograph, *The Glasgow Sugar Aristocracy: Scotland and Caribbean Slavery, 1775-1838*, is forthcoming with the Royal Historical Society. Since 2015, Stephen has been a Postdoctoral Researcher and Lecturer in History at the University of Glasgow.

**Brown University’s Slavery and Justice Report: on paper and in practice**

Françoise Hamlin (Brown University, Rhode Island)

In 2003 Brown’s president, Ruth Simmons, the first woman and first African American to lead an ivy league institution, established a steering committee to evaluate the university’s link to the slave trade and the resulting legacy. This evaluation became the 2006 Report of the Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice. As this is one of the first of such studies, I will summarize the report and its history as well as outline the recommended implementations and its effects.

**Françoise Hamlin** is an Associate Professor of History and Africana Studies at Brown University. She earned her doctorate in African American Studies and American Studies at

Yale University, her Masters from the University of London, and her B.A. from the University of Essex (both in United States Studies). Hamlin is the author of *Crossroads at Clarksdale: The Black Freedom Struggle in the Mississippi Delta after World War II* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012), winner of the 2012 Berkshire Conference of Women Historians Book Prize and the 2013 Lillian Smith Book Award. *These Truly Are The Brave: An Anthology of African American Writings on Citizenship and War* is a co-edited anthology published by the University of Florida Press in 2015. It was a finalist for the QBR 2016 Wheatley Book Award in Nonfiction, and was republished in paperback in 2018. Hamlin's new research focuses on youth, trauma, and activism. Her most notable fellowships and awards include: the C. Vann Woodward Dissertation Prize; the Du Bois-Mandela-Rodney Fellowship at the University of Michigan; the Charles Warren Center Fellowship at Harvard University; a Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship; and the Frederick Burkhardt Residential Fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies. In addition, she has won major mentoring and teaching awards at Brown University.

### Comment

Sabine Cadeau (Centre of African Studies, University of Cambridge)

**Sabine Cadeau** is a historian of the Caribbean and the broader African Diaspora. She is interested in histories of slavery, empire, race, citizenship and human rights. Her forthcoming book *More Than a Massacre: Racial Violence and Citizenship in the Haitian-Dominican Borderlands* is under contract with Cambridge University Press. *More than a Massacre* traces a successively worsening campaign of explicitly racialized anti-Haitian repression that began in 1919 under the American occupiers, accelerated in 1930 with the rise of Trujillo, and culminated in 1937 with the slaughter of an estimated twenty thousand civilians. Relatively unknown by contrast with contemporary events in Europe, the Haitian-Dominican experience has yet to figure in the broader literatures on genocide and statelessness in the twentieth century. A parallel project, titled 'Victims in Their Own Words: Remembering the Forgotten 1937 Haitian Massacre', is a documentary history based on interviews with massacre survivors and their descendants. Dr Cadeau is currently a postdoctoral fellow in the University of Cambridge Legacies of Enslavement Inquiry. Her current research explores the University of Cambridge's historic connections to slavery and colonialism. She has been working with financial records and other sources in Cambridge libraries, colleges, museums, and other archives. At Cambridge she organizes regular public events on the legacies of enslavement and she organizes the 'Slavery and Its Afterlives' seminar series hosted by the Legacies of Enslavement Initiative and the Centre of African Studies. Dr Cadeau received her PhD in Caribbean Atlantic World history and Modern Latin America from the University of Chicago in 2015. From 2017-2019, she was visiting assistant professor in Caribbean history at the University of South Florida at Tampa. From 2016-2017 she was a postdoctoral fellow in Yale University's Program in Agrarian Studies. From 2015-2016, she was a postdoctoral fellow at Rutgers University. Her research has been supported by the Andrew Mellon Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, and the Woodrow Wilson Foundation.