West Africa Historical GIS and the Liberated Africans Project

Henry B. Lovejoy
Visiting Assistant Professor Michigan State University
Lecturer McMaster University

Maryland Institute of Technology in the Humanities
Spring 2016 Digital Dialogues
MITH Conference Room - 8 March 2016 - 12:30 PM
Torius Africae tabula, & descriptio universalis, etiam ultra Ptolemai limites extensa.
Ramusio and Gastaldi’s Map: “Prima Tavola” (1563)
Willem Blaeu (1644)
“A map shewing the progress of, discovery & improvement, in the geography of North Africa” (1798)
John Tallis (1851)
Johnson’s “Map of Yoruba Country” (1921)
Fage's Map: “States of the Guinea Forest and Savanna, XVIIth to XIXth Centuries” (1958)
Fage’s Map: “The States of the Sudan in the XIXth Century” (1958)
Law’s Map: “The Oyo Kingdom at its Greatest Extent, c. 1780” (1977)
Oyo Empire at Its Greatest Extent, c. 1780

The Oyo Empire and Its Neighbors, c. 1780
The Sokoto Caliphate and Its Neighbors, c. 1850
The Ascension of Ilorin and Owu Wars, 1817-1822
The Egba Crisis, 1823-1830
Oyo’s Collapse, 1831-1836
An estimated **268,000 Individuals** Departed the Bight of Benin between 1816 and 1850

Approximately **28,000 Individuals** died during the Middle Passage
The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database has information on almost 36,000 slaving voyages that forcibly embarked over 10 million Africans for transport to the Americas between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. The actual number is estimated to have been as high as 12.5 million. The database and the separate estimates interface offer researchers, students and the general public a chance to rediscover the reality of one of the largest forced movements of peoples in world history.
## West Africa Historical GIS Data Sample

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QGIS with Time Manager Plugin
West Africa Historical GIS

- Input from African universities and historians to build a massive geo-referenced database
- Requires an online GIS platform to ingest and collate data from primary (oral and written) and secondary sources
- Collaboration with programmers
- Interdisciplinary - Geographers advice on mapping uncertainty about populations with non-written histories
- Funding to build an online platform to link into other websites
Individuals registered in Sierra Leone from the Bight of Benin after 1808, 21,000+
Individuals registered in Cuba from the Bight of Benin between 1826 and 1841, 3,500+
Individuals registered in Brazil from the Bight of Benin after 1830, 2,000+
The Liberated Africans Project

www.liberatedafricans.org
Collaborators of the Liberated Africans Project

- **Sierra Leone** (+150,000 individuals, 5 Courts and +600 Cases)
  Richard Anderson, Suzanne Schwarz, Henry Lovejoy

- **Caribbean** (+30,000 individuals, +5 Courts and 100 Cases)
  Henry Lovejoy, Maria del Carmen Barcia, Marial Iglesias Utset, Jorge Felipe, Randy Sparks,
  Sean Kelley, David Trotman

- **Brazil** (+14,000 individuals, +3 Courts and 50 Cases)
  Daryle Williams, Nielson Bezerra, Daniela Cavalheiro

- **South Africa** (+10,000 individuals, 2 Courts and 50 Cases)
  Patrick Harries

- **East Africa** (+10,000 individuals, +5 courts, 50 Cases)
  Matt Hopper

- **United States** (+3,000 individuals, +5 courts, 30 Cases)
  Sharla Fett

- **St. Helena and Luanda** (200 individuals, 2 Courts, 10 Cases)

**Consultants:** David Eltis, Suzanne Schwarz, Randy Sparks, Walter Hawthorne, Steve Behrendt, Jane Landers, Olatunji Ojo, Ugo Nwokeji, Vanessa Oliveira, Katrina Keefer

**Programmers/Designers:** Henry Lovejoy, Dean Rehberger, Lindsey Gish, Alicia Sheill
Relational Databases of the Liberated Africans Project

- **Courts** – Linked to a place, i.e. Freetown, Havana, Rio, etc...
- **Cases** – Trial records linked to a court, i.e. captured baracoons, canoes, slave ships (ships link to Voyages)
- **Registers of Liberated Africans** (when available) – Linked to a case as well as Voyages, African Names Database, African Origins
- **Individual Heroes or Life Events** – Linked to a case, Registers of Liberated Africans, non-Trial Records, i.e. Apprenticeships reports, church records (baptism, death, marriage, etc...), resettlement records, military records, school records, court records (arrest, imprisonment, etc...)
- **Court Officials** – Linked to courts and cases (judges, arbitrators, secretaries, African interpreters, ship crews, etc...)
- **Image Gallery** – Linked to courts and cases by cataloguing prints, photographs, paintings and sketches of brandings and scarifications
- **Legislation** – Policies, procedures, treaties, rules, international law
Correspondence from the Foreign Office 84 Series about the Suppression of the African Slave Trade, 1817-1900

Database currently lists over 30,000 letters the Foreign Office in England and British representatives, commissioners, naval officers, and other officials serving abroad.

Over 5,000 Volumes

Source: Daniel Domingues, University of Missouri
Foreign Office Correspondence about the Suppression of the African Slave Trade, 1817-1900

Source: Daniel Domingues, University of Missouri
### African Names Database

**http://slavevoyages.org/resources/names-database**

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Welcome

African Origins contains information about the migration histories of Africans forcibly carried on slave ships into the Atlantic. Using the personal details of 91,493 Africans liberated by international courts of Mixed Commission and British Vice-Admiralty Courts, this resource makes possible new geographic, ethnic, and linguistic data on peoples captured in Africa and pulled into the slave trade. Through contributions to this website by Africans, members of the African Diaspora, and others, we hope to set in motion the rediscovery of the backgrounds of the millions of Africans captured and sold into slavery during suppression of transatlantic slave trading in the 19th century.

To begin searching these records of liberated Africans, try the Guided Search below. Enter an African name that you know (such as Quarko, Kremu, or Fatima) and select a country (or countries), then click Explore. Checking either the male or female box will filter your search.

1. Enter a name:
Africans with the same or similar name will be found.

2. Select one or more countries
Check the box next to a country name in the list below. This will narrow the search to corresponding African ports from which the Africans embarked.
- Angola
- Benin
- Cameroon
- Congo
- Congo (Democratic Republic of the)
- Equatorial Guinea

3. Select gender (optional)
- Male
- Female

By selecting gender, you will narrow the search to show only male or female Africans.

Explore!
Endangered Archives: Interactive Map

Select a marker on the map to view project details.
Zoom in and out using the + and - buttons or the slider.
Zoom in to see more detail - there are several projects in some locations.
Navigate around by using the controls in the top left corner of the map window, or by clicking and dragging the map with your mouse.
Alternatively use the Advanced Search page to search by Region, Language, Material Type etc.
Ecclesiastical & Secular Sources for Slave Societies

http://www.vanderbilt.edu/esss/

400,000 Documents across Latin America
Under Construction
The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas: A Visual Record

Jerome S. Handler and Michael L. Tuite Jr.

The 1,280 images in this collection have been selected from a wide range of sources, most of them dating from the period of slavery. This collection is envisioned as a tool and a resource that can be used by teachers, researchers, students, and the general public - in brief, anyone interested in the experiences of Africans who were enslaved and transported to the Americas and the lives of their descendants in the slave societies of the New World.

We would like to emphasize that little effort is made to interpret the images and establish the historical authenticity or accuracy of what they display. To accomplish this would constitute a major and different research effort. Individual users of this collection must decide such issues for themselves. However, we have made every effort to ensure bibliographic accuracy and the correct identification of both primary and secondary sources from which the images have been obtained, as well as correct identification of the area, country, or region to which the image refers. The dates we assign may refer to the date an image was published, at other times to when an author visited an area; in other cases, we could only assign a general time period. Despite our efforts at bibliographical and chronological accuracy, errors remain, and we welcome any comments, suggestions, or corrections.

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www.slaveimages.org

Among other prints, paintings, and photographs in Maritime Museums and personal collections
The SHADD Collection

SHADD

Studies in the History of the African Diaspora - Documents

Mary Ann Shadd (Cary)
The Louisiana Slave Database

www.ibiblio.org/laslave/
Slave Biographies

Slave Biographies: The Atlantic Database Network is an open access data repository of information on the identities of enslaved people in the Atlantic World. It includes the names, ethnicities, skills, occupations, and illnesses of individual slaves. Phase one of a multi-phase project is presented here. Users of the website can access data about slaves in colonial Louisiana and Maranhão, Brazil. They can download datasets, search for ancestors, and run statistical analysis. Read More...

www.slavebiographies.org
Projects for Fugitive Slave Advertisements

- Freedom on the Move
- The Geography of Slavery in Virginia
- NC Runaway Slave Advertisements
- Runaway Slave Advertisements During the Revolutionary War Era
- Documenting Runaway Slaves (DRS)
- Louisiana Runaway Slave Advertisements, 1836-1865
- Among others for North America, Latin America and the Caribbean
Conclusions on the Current State of DH Projects for the History of Africa and the African Diaspora

1. Currently in a period of mass digitization which requires new methods of organization beyond archival protocols

2. Open access and crowd sourcing

3. Standardizing and integrating the silos of information

4. Mapping uncertainty and interdisciplinary action

5. Funding and sustainability

6. DH certifications and credit/evaluation for faculty and students
West Africa Historical GIS and the Liberated Africans Project

Henry B. Lovejoy
Visiting Assistant Professor Michigan State University
Lecturer McMaster University

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