

**AASLH Interpreting Slavery Webinar
Chat Transcript
4-19-16**

Kate Aitchison (Toronto): challenges your own beliefs of who you are or think you are

Savannah Grandey (Columbus, GA): It challenges a major part of their understanding of the world/the past

Ulysses S. Grant NHS (St. Louis): It potentially signs blame or guilt to cherished ancestors.

Penny Zaleta (Long Island): It seems to damage their own sense of self

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): There is guilt and there is also the culture of moonlight and magnolias that people do not want to give up.

Ashleigh Oatts (Athens): They feel it is being forced on them (which it isn't)

Shawn Halifax (Ravenel): It's painful to learn you've been lied to. Challenges the personal identities of many visitors

Pam Carlisle (Bossier City, LA): Shame and feeling need to defend ancestors' honorability

Zac Cunningham (Fredericksburg, VA): feeling that people who taught them about past failed them or lied to them

Michael Warren (Pineville): Just not open to a new narrative.

Joseph Cronin (Norwood): it questions what else might have a new narrative

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Sophia Milosevic Bijleveld (New York): they can be so central to the identity of a site

Jackie Peterson (Seattle, WA): could damage family/community relationships

Robert Lanier (Nashville): I really understand the whole guilt thing

Karen Whitehair (Indian Head, Maryland): People want high school textbook, not the messiness that is history.

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): We do deal with the idea of who gets to tell the story, I encounter a whole lot of "why are you telling this story?"

Jennifer Wender (Richmond): Can we get a link to that article?

LT Host: <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/will-history-only-remember-the-founders-as-slaveowners/>

Jennifer Wender (Richmond): Thanks!

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): And also, at my site, we are all white (and two of us are Yankees) so sometimes it is a case of why are YOU telling this story.

Ashleigh Oatts (Athens): And a great rebuttal to that article:
<http://thepastpresently.org/2016/04/19/whose-history-belongs-in-a-house-museum/>

LT Host: Thanks Ashleigh. I was heading out to grab that one.

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LT Host: Don't forget to tweet your thoughts #interpretingslavery

Sharon Corey (Georgetown, S.Carolina): and on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Anarchist-Guide-to-Historic-House-Museums-395482833870048/>

Robert Lanier (Nashville): I think we have to note that ideology is involved here as well as political correctness. I think sites are afraid of public reaction because of this

Jackie Peterson (Seattle, WA): I see that quite a bit too Robert

LT Host 2: great answer Kristin

Patrick Hotard (El Dorado, AR): Patronizing attitude is a problem with many academics and some museum staff.

Robert Lanier (Nashville): Bingo!!

LT Host: Freeman Tilden's Book - <http://www.amazon.com/Interpreting-Our-Heritage-Freeman-Tilden/dp/0807858676>

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): Oh, gosh, yes. I do tell folks from the start, "we talk about slavery on this tour."

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): And then I gauge their reaction to that little piece of news.

Robert Lanier (Nashville): Handing out a historical narrative as a take away is a good idea. You can also post it online for pre-visit viewing

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Jackie Peterson (Seattle, WA): Great example Kristin

Jackie Peterson (Seattle, WA): Primary source docs are great if you can get access to them

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): Right, Jackie, I do not have access to a whole lot of original documents for the family. But I can use examples from around us--and I do tell people that we lack source documents, but here is what I use.

Harpers Ferry Center National Park Service (Harpers Ferry): Is this list only for white visitors? This is not a new learning crisis for everyone.

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): Yes, it is!!!!

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): I like your story here Kristin.

Jackie Peterson (Seattle, WA): Agreed - we shouldn't assume that people of color have a complete understanding of their own history. I battle this frequently in the PNW.

LT Host: Stephen Small's book - <http://www.amazon.com/Representations-Slavery-Ideology-Southern-Plantation/dp/1588340961>

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): How many folks here know about the Slave Dwelling Project?

Robert Lanier (Nashville): yes

Jackie Peterson (Seattle, WA): I do and I love what they do David!

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LT Host: <http://slavedwellingproject.org/>

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): It does indeed rock.

LT Host 2: push marketing!

LT Host 2: Go! Go! Go!

LT Host 2: This is a very important book for our series and for the field.

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): Marketing is a good thing!

LT Host: interpretingslavery.com

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): Which is right before the AAM meeting in DC.

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): Brilliant. A new reason to go up early!

Jackie Peterson (Seattle, WA): yes! great timing!

LT Host: <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/gunhal/event/769223/>

Kristin Gallas (Lowell, MA): book discount code: 4M16KGJDP

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David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): You are asking my question Bethany--thank you.

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): Because when we started this topic I was told "If you are going to talk about 'them' make it quick."

Jackie Peterson (Seattle, WA): David - that is crazy!

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): I almost had kittens.

Isha Vyas (New Brunswick): What do you suggest when researchers cannot find names of slaves?

debbie smith (lancaster): How do we keep visitors from thinking

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): But, the person who said that has done a 180!

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): Isha, inventories for people are a great starting place

Robert Lanier (Nashville): I think we need to be prepared to make people angry...on all sides of the story

Joseph Cronin (Norwood): if there was one specific topic you find to be the biggest "hot button issue" what would you say it is?

Harpers Ferry Center National Park Service (Harpers Ferry): How do we connect issue of race today with issue of race of the past? #Black Lives Matter

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Jackie Peterson (Seattle, WA): Agreed - loads of Freedmens Bureau records have been recently released that you may be able to track back

debbie smith (lancaster): How do we encourage visitors to see more than the slavery issues. Will more narratives help?

Shawn Halifax (Ravenel): What are some examples of insitutional/agency support for staff dealing with interpreting difficult, sometimes painful, personal history?

Joseph Cronin (Norwood): what causes the biggest offense to visitors

Kim Clark (Providence): takes courage for a white docent to look a black visitor in the eye and deliver this delicate material. Sincere effort to express it fairly

Joseph Cronin (Norwood): maybe one to avoid or attack ehad on

Patrick Hotard (El Dorado, AR): Should all sites which have an association with slavery emphasize slavery or can each site pursue its own mission in its own way

Jackie Peterson (Seattle, WA): That is a fantastic book Kristin

Pam Carlisle (Bossier City, LA): Isha - Local equivalent of different conveyance Records (frequently wills)

Isha Vyas (New Brunswick): Thank you everyone for answering my questions! Great suggestions!

Jackie Peterson (Seattle, WA): I think showing continuity is important - the persistance of oppression and how it has morphed over time

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LT Host: Shawn - can you clarify what you mean by institutional/agency support?

Candy Moulton (Encampment): Can you give us more specific recommendations on tracing roots and obtaining documents to use in interpretation when many names of the enslaved are not clear so you cannot search specific people through such sites as ancestry.com?.

Kim Clark (Providence): Stephen Hopkins' will listed the names of his slaves

Shawn Halifax (Ravenel): For all of our interpreters at McLeod Plantation in Charleston, but particularly the African American interpreters, they experience blatant racism from people experiencing learning crises-making the burden even greater

Harpers Ferry Center National Park Service (Harpers Ferry): How do we make the story of slavery a more international story? Connecting black history on a global level.

Savannah Grandey (Columbus, GA): Whitney Plantation in Louisiana makes good use of WPA slave narratives

Jackie Peterson (Seattle, WA): WPA is a great source as well

Chris Cook (New Orleans): Whitney uses slave narratives from other states because Louisiana's WPA narratives were never published.

LT Host: Court records often help identify names in bills of sale.

Jackie Peterson (Seattle, WA): old newspapers as well

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Kim Clark (Providence): We focus on the countless hours days years of toil that was the slaves' contribution to our Founding Fathers' achievements

Kim Clark (Providence): And the structures like Brown's University Hall, built by slaves

Stephanie Boyle (Washington): Can you recommend any resources for interpreting slavery to children. We get a diverse audience of school children at our site.

Chris Cook (New Orleans): Thank you!

Pam Carlisle (Bossier City, LA): Honestly here, interpreting slavery is almost easy compared to Reconstruction. Have you worked on that too? Seriously, if you read some of the US. govt documents, literally genocided was happening here. And this is in the history on the official city website. The citizens were ready for peace but it seemed peace was not ready for them. War haggard and weary, the virile youth of Cane City wanted only to farm their land and make a new start in peace. However, they found the state and local governments in the hands of carpetbaggers, scalawags and illiterate former slaves – more interested in their own economic gain than in rebuilding the war torn South.

David Serxner (Raleigh, NC): this was brilliant.

Kristin Gallas (Lowell, MA): Stephanie - that's our next book - stay tuned!

Sharon Corey (Georgetown, S.Carolina): great webinar - thanks Kristen

Cathy Slusser (Bradenton): thank you!

Harpers Ferry Center National Park Service (Harpers Ferry): Thank you!!!

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Pam Carlisle (Bossier City, LA): Sorry I didn't mean to copy an dpast all that quote

Kristen Swanberg (Boston): Thank you!!

debbie smith (lancaster): Thoughtful presentation. Thank you.

Jackie Peterson (Seattle, WA): Thanks all!

Jennifer Wender (Richmond): Thanks, Kristen. This was very helpful.

Danielle Steinmann (Stockbridge, MA): Thank you!

Kim Clark (Providence): Please leave the site up for a few minutes more so we can read all the comments!

Robyn Harris (Tuskegee): Thank you !!!!!

Kate Aitchison (Toronto): thank you!

Isha Vyas (New Brunswick): Thank you very much for a very informative webinar!

Krystal Willeby (Richmond): Thanks!

Shawn Halifax (Ravenel): Thank you

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Sophia Milosevic Bijleveld (New York): Thank you for this webinar. Very intrested by the global perspective and connections around the theme of slavery

Patrick Hotard (El Dorado, AR): Thanks for the webinar