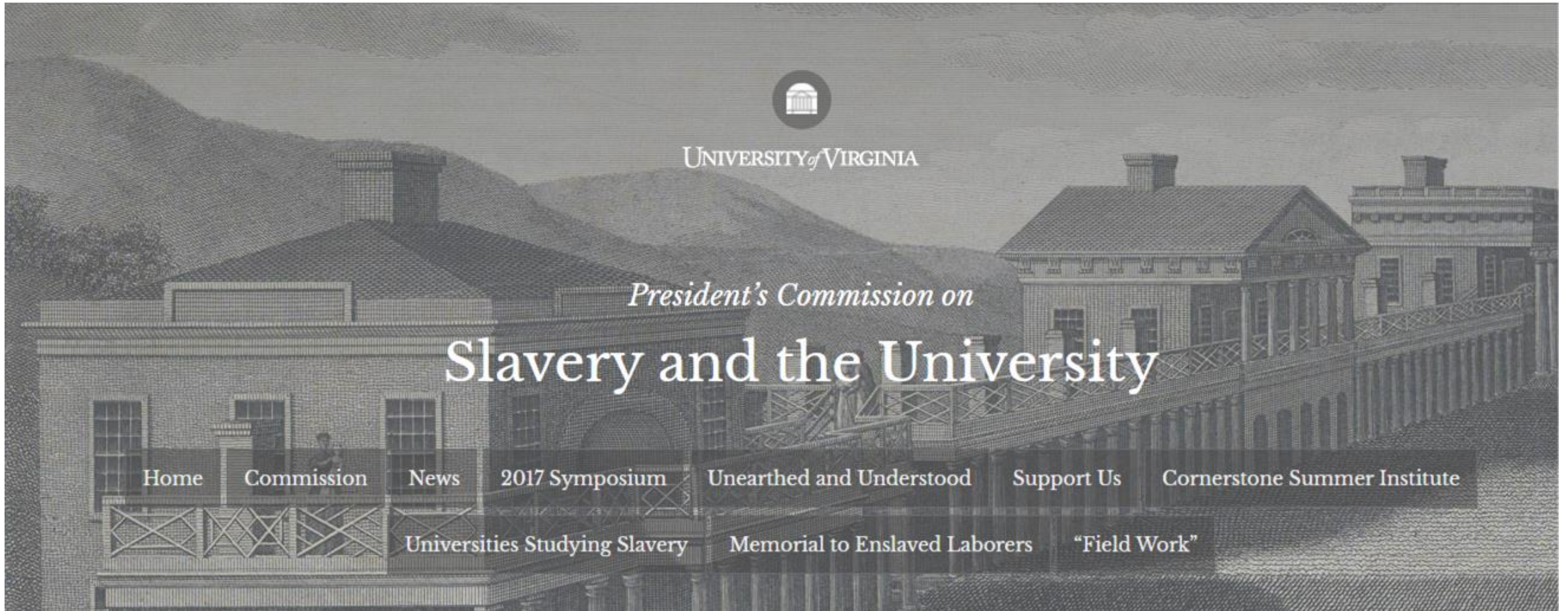


Social justice goals and impact in the archive

A case study of “Universities Studying Slavery”



“Universities Studying Slavery” homepage: <https://slavery.virginia.edu/universities-studying-slavery/>

Ashley Williams

Universities Studying Slavery consortium

- 63 member-universities at time of writing, now 80 (including University College Cork)
- Purposive sampling
 - Ivy League (featured in press in the U.S. since the mid-2000s)
 - Universities in the American South
 - Range of size: small, medium and large
- 8 universities approached; 4 universities responded

Research participants

All resources listed are available online

- Brown University (Rhode Island)
 - 2006 Report of the Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice
 - Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice
 - Extensive digitisation of records relating to university's links with the slave trade
- College of Charleston (South Carolina)
 - Center for the Study of Slavery in Charleston
 - Avery Research Center
- Columbia University (New York)
 - Columbia and Slavery
- Washington & Lee University (Virginia)
 - Working Group on the History of African-Americans at W&L

Social justice in archival literature

- Defining “social justice” in archival literature
- To university archivists interviewed, social justice was seen as a priority and goal but not defined exactly. Part of broader conversation surrounding activism, representation, equity and inclusion.

Measuring social justice impact

- “social justice exhibits both individual and collective impacts and (...) can be studied at multiple societal levels (macro, meso, and micro).”
 - Duff, W.M., Flinn, A., Suurtamm, K.E. *et al.* Social justice impact of archives: a preliminary investigation. *Arch Sci* **13**, 317–348 (2013). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-012-9198-x>

MICRO LEVEL

- Deep dives into archival collections. Item-level (re)investigation of records
- Description / re-description
- Discoverability and digitisation



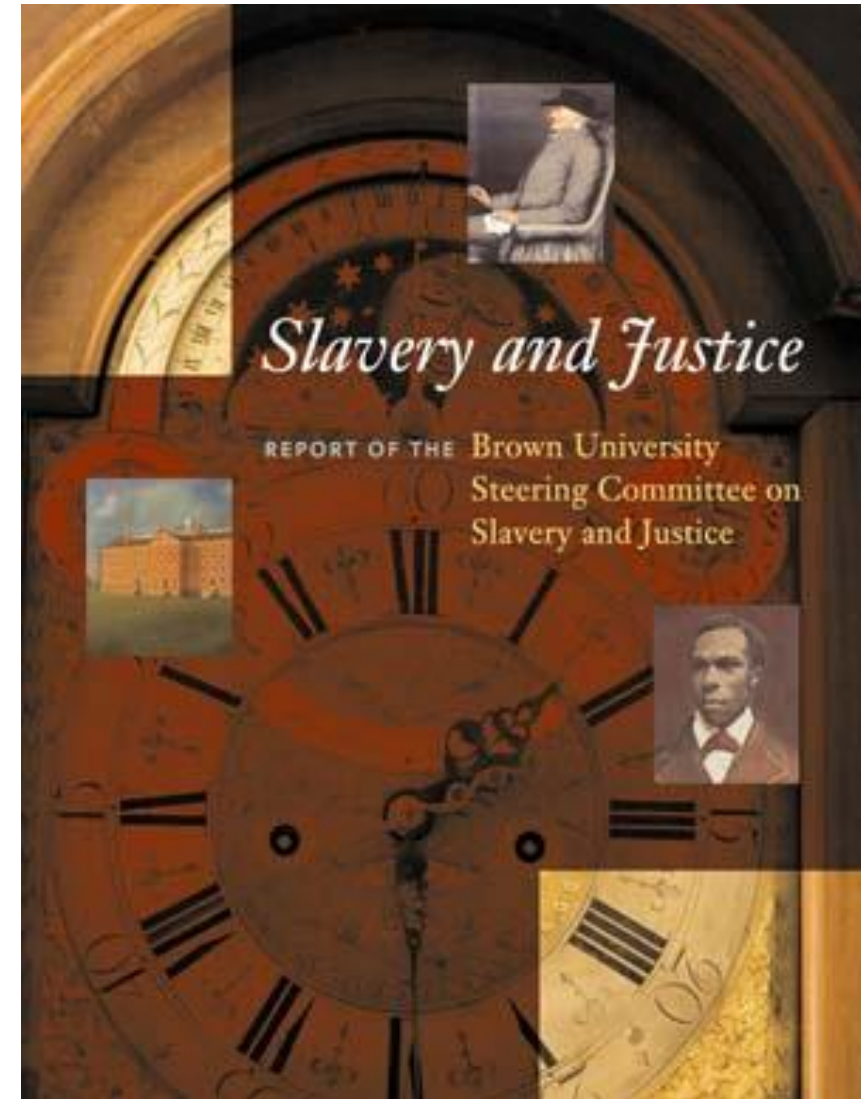
*Created by Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia's
Anti-Racist Description Working Group*

October 2019

[https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/
2019/10/ardr_final.pdf](https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/ardr_final.pdf)

MESO LEVEL

- Teaching from the archive
- Presence and participation of archivists in university-wide committees
- Making visible changes to campus, exhibiting archival documents



Cover of Brown University's Slavery and Justice Report. Available online:
https://www.brown.edu/Research/Slavery_Justice/documents/SlaveryAndJustice.pdf

Archival record displayed at Washington & Lee

'A list of negroes belonging to the Estate of John Robinson', fragment

<https://my.wlu.edu/presidents-office/issues-and-initiatives/institutional-history/working-group-on-african-american-history/timeline-of-african-americans-at-wand/list-of-john-robinson-slaves>

A List of Negroes belonging to Estate of John Robinson Dec? at death

	Names	age	appraised value			
	Charles	84	00	00	given to his wife, Martha	
1	Daniel shoemaker	74	25	-	out for victuals & clothes	
	Robin	70	-	-	Dead	
2	Barney	70	-	-	out for victuals & clothes	
	Tom	76	-	-	Dead	
	Paac	71	-	-	Dead	
3	Landon (nearly blind)	41	20	-	beats out corn	1
4	Keziah	66	10	=	cook for indigo & muslin & other goods	
	Barbara	62	-	-	Dead	
5	Breary	68	20		worth nothing	3
6	Lucky	57	15		00	4
7	Nero club foot	50	50		00	5
8	Edmund wagon	56	50		hired	10
9	Tom Brewer x	54	50		victuals & clothes	
10	Moses Miller	44			Change	6
11	Adam x	50	175			7
12	Jerry Quarles	35	400		hired	60 00
13	Stephen B.S. x	30	500		Ran away not heard from	
14	Mickey	19	325		hired	17 00
15	Bon	9	200		hired	20
	Tempa	7	150		Dead	
16	Chapman	2	100		out for victuals & clothes	

MACRO LEVEL

- Changing the narrative
- Community, regional, national outreach

The Post and Courier article by Adam Parker, 24 August 2019.
https://www.postandcourier.com/features/college-of-charleston-coming-to-terms-with-its-role-in-slavery-a-documentary-is-one/article_36d39926-c427-11e9-bafc-e3d4e87ff534.html


The Post and Courier
FOUNDED 1847 20 WINNERS OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

E-PAPER OBITUARIES NEWSLETTERS BUY & SELL MY ACCOUNT SUBSCRIBE LOGIN

SPECIAL REPORT SC superintendent battled the local newspaper. Then he used public money to start his own.

College of Charleston coming to terms with its role in slavery. A documentary is one step.

BY ADAM PARKER APARKER@POSTANDCOURIER.COM
AUG 24, 2019 UPDATED MAR 11, 2021



The College of Charleston is celebrating its 250th anniversary. It's also examining its role in slavery. Provided/Mike Ledford/College of Charleston
PHOTO BY MIKE LEDFORD/COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

SUBSCRIBE TODAY FOR \$2.98 / WEEK

Four enslaved laborers — Tom, Mudrey, Cuffy and Peggy — almost certainly helped build the College of Charleston's majestic Randolph Hall, which sits at the heart of

In conclusion

- “encourage students to use these materials to activate and empower themselves” – Aisha Haykal, Avery Research Center, College of Charleston
- Ongoing conversations with Library administration, College administrators to best ascertain “how can the College use its resources to empower, impact the citizens of Charleston”—A. Haykal
- “looking outward and investing in neighbouring communities”—Thai Jones, Columbia University
- “helping [local non-profits and social justice organisations] organise and make accessible their own records within their organisation, or (...) have Special Collections help them maintain those at our Special Collections Library” – Jennifer Betts, Brown University
- “I firmly believe that seeing the original record—history—that’s the real catalyst. That’s going to help us make the changes.” – Tom Camden, Washington & Lee University