

Michael J. Becker, Ph.D.

mjbecker@umd.edu

Department of History
University of Maryland, College Park
2115 Francis Scott Key Hall
College Park, Maryland 20742

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Assistant Research Professor, Department of History and Project Manager / Associate Editor, Slavery, Law & Power Project. University of Maryland, College Park. 2024–Present.

Visiting Assistant Professor of History and Research Associate, Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture. The College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. 2023-2024.

Postdoctoral Fellow, Ruth J. Simmons Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice and the John Carter Brown Library. Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. 2022- 2023

Visiting Assistant Professor of History. Bates College, Lewiston, Maine. 2021-2022.

EDUCATION.

Ph.D., Atlantic History, Duke University, 2021.

Graduate Certificates in African & African American Studies, Latin American & Caribbean Studies, and College Teaching

Dissertation: “The Rule of the Lash and the Rule of Law: Enslaved People’s Politics, and the Courts in Jamaica, 1780-1834.”

Committee: David Barry Gaspar (Chair), Susan Thorne, Laura Edwards, Jocelyn Olcott

M.A., History, Duke University, 2015.

A.B., *Magna Cum Laude*, Africana Studies, Brown University, 2013.

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Practices of Freedom: Struggles for Autonomy, Community, and Power Amidst Slavery in Jamaica, 1780-1840. (Manuscript in process).

Chapters & Articles.

With Vikram Tamboli. "Healing, Harming, and Upheaval: The Cases of Mon Ami and August in the Caribbean and the Guianas, 1791-1824." (Manuscript in process).

With Devin Leigh. "Answering Equiano: An Enslaver's Sketch of Igboland in the Age of Abolition." (Under Review).

"'Master Said He Was Over All the Magistrates': Intimacy, Belonging, and Power Struggle within a Jamaican Houseful." *Slavery & Abolition*. Published online June 2024, forthcoming in print. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0144039X.2024.2367127>

"Revolution at the Crossroads: Re-framing the Haitian Revolution from the Heights of Platons," in Toyin Falola and Cacee Hoyer, eds., *Human Rights, Race, and Resistance in the African Diaspora*. (New York: Routledge, 2016). 170-187.

Reviews

Review of Robert Schwaller, *African Maroons in Sixteenth Century Panama: A History in Documents*. H-Caribbean, H-Net Reviews. November 2023.

URL: <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=58732>

Review of Christine Levecq, *Black Cosmopolitans: Race, Religion, and Republicanism in an Age of Revolution*. H-Caribbean, H-Net Reviews. December 2021.

URL: <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=56247>

Review of Daniel Rood, *The Reinvention of Atlantic Slavery: Technology, Labor, Race and Capitalism in the Greater Caribbean*. H-Caribbean, H-Net Reviews. December 2018.

URL: <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=52299>

Review of Colleen Vasconcellos, *Slavery, Childhood, and Abolition in Jamaica, 1788-1838*, in *Caribbean Quarterly*. Vol. 64, Issues 3-4 (2018): 605-607.

TEACHING & RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Instructor

University of Maryland, College Park

2025: "Slavery, Law & Power in the Early Americas and the British Empire" (digital humanities lab course)

2024: "Colonial America and the Caribbean, 1492-1804" (intermediate survey)

The College of William & Mary

2023: "Writing Early American Lives" (first-year writing seminar)

2023: "Caribbean History, 1492-Present" (intermediate survey)

2024: "Slavery, Resistance, and the Archive" (first-year writing seminar)

2024: "American History to 1877" (introductory survey)

2024: "Colonial North America, 1492-1763" (intermediate survey)

2024: "West Africans in the Caribbean" (intermediate seminar, online)

Bates College

2022: "A History of the Caribbean" (survey)

2022: "Rebellion and the Archive: Studying Enslaved People's Resistance" (research seminar)

- 2022: “Marronage: Escaping Slavery, Forging Freedom” (short-term)
2021: “The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade” (intermediate)
2021: “Race, Gender, and Power in the Early Modern Atlantic World” (intermediate)

Duke University

- 2020: “The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade” (intermediate)
2018: “Comparative Caribbean Emancipations” (first-year Writing 101 seminar)
2016: “African American History since 1865” (survey)

Teaching Assistant

Duke University

- 2021, 2020: “Comparative Approaches to Global Issues” (survey)
2015: “American Dreams, American Realities” (survey)
2014: “Race: A Global History” (intermediate)

Research Experience

- 2019-2023: Research Assistant, Dr. Miranda Kaufmann, “Caribbean Heiresses” Project
2018-21: Research Assistant, Professor Phil Stern, Duke University
2016-17: Research Assistant, Professor David Barry Gaspar, Duke University
2013-14: Research Assistant, Professors Laurent Dubois and Deborah Jenson, Haiti Digital Library Project, Duke University
2013: Research Assistant, Professor Barrymore Anthony Bogues, Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice, Brown University

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

Invited Lectures and Seminars

- 2024: With Devin Leigh. “Imagining Igboland: Competing Ethnographies of Southeastern Nigeria in the Age of the Abolition, c. 1789-1796.” The College of William & Mary. Williamsburg, Virginia.
2023: “For Charity, For Music, and For Other Purposes: Building Black Francophone Community in 1820s Kingston, Jamaica.” Brown Early American Graduate Student Seminar. Brown University. Providence, Rhode Island.
2023: “Hunger and Hierarchy: Provision Grounds and Enslaved Peoples’ Survival in Early 19th Century Jamaica.” Ruth J. Simmons Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice Fellows’ Seminar Series. Brown University. Providence, Rhode Island.
2023: “*Bayly v. Ewart*: A Suit for Freedom from Apprenticeship and the British Empire’s Slave Registry Act.” Slavery, Law & Power Coffeehouse Seminar. (Virtual)
2022: “Struggle, Negotiation, and Resistance: Studying Social Relations during Slavery.” John Carter Brown Library Fellows Seminar. Brown University. Providence, Rhode Island. (Virtual)

- 2022: “Reparations for Slavery in Historical Perspective.” Invited Lecture for the Reparations Finance Lab. (Virtual)
- 2021: “ ‘Master Said He Was Over All the Magistrates’: Amelioration, Reputation, and Enslaved Jamaicans’ Legal Advocacy.” Invited Lecture for Department of History, Bates College. Lewiston, Maine. (Virtual)
- 2021: “Nationalism and the Age of New Imperialism.” Guest Lecture in course by Professor Leigh Campoamor, “Comparative Approaches to Global Issues.” Duke University. Durham, North Carolina. (Virtual)
- 2020: “Climate Collapse and the Rise of Disaster Capitalism: A Caribbean Case Study.” Guest Lecture in course by Professor Deonte Harris, “Comparative Approaches to Global Issues.” Duke University. Durham, North Carolina. (Virtual)
- 2020: “ ‘To Guard with Increased Vigilance the Purity of the Slave Code’: Criminal Procedure and Slave Trials in Jamaica.” Presented to the Duke Latin American & Caribbean History Grad Student Workshop. Durham, North Carolina. (Virtual)
- 2019: “ ‘Whatever Property They May Be Able to Acquire’: Enslaved People’s Claims to Property in Jamaica’s Slave Courts, 1780-1834.” Presented at the Staff / Graduate Seminar of the Department of History and Archaeology. University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica.
- 2018: “ ‘Against Their Owner’: Enslaved People in Their Own Defense and Jamaica’s Councils of Protection.” Presented at the John Carter Brown Library Fellows Seminar. Brown University. Providence, Rhode Island.
- 2014: “The Political Thought of the Haitian Revolution and the Maroons of Platons.” Guest Lecture in course by Professor Barrymore Anthony Bogues, “The Haitian Revolution: Archives, Art, and Revolution.” Brown University. Providence, Rhode Island.
- 2014: “ ‘All Haitians Are Black’: Re-making Race in the Haitian Revolution.” Guest Lecture in course by Professor Adriane Lentz-Smith, “Race: A Global History.” Duke University. Durham, North Carolina.
- 2014: “Deplòtonnen sa Ayisyenpanse sou revolisyon peyi ak entèpretasyon sa ki kouche nan achiv. ” Presented at International Creole Day. Duke University. Durham, North Carolina.

Conferences Organized

- 2017: “In Freedom’s Name: Rethinking Caribbean Emancipation.” With David Barry Gaspar and Kristina Williams. Duke University. Durham, North Carolina.
- 2015: “Staging Sovereignty: Knowledge, Narrative, and Spaces of Governance.” With Eladio Bobadilla, Erasmo Castellani, Farren Yero, and Kena Wani. Duke University. Durham, North Carolina.
- 2014: “Reworking Freedom: Graduate Student Workshop on Re-Centering the Enslaved in Histories of the Americas.” With Westenley Alcenat, Yesenia Barragan, and Eric Herschthal. Columbia University. Manhattan, New York.

Panels Organized

- 2024: “Microhistories of Enslaved People and Slavery: Promises and Challenges.” American Historical Association Conference. San Francisco, California.

- 2022: “Enslaved People and the State in the Colonial Caribbean.” American Historical Association Conference. New Orleans, Louisiana.
- 2020: “Gender, Politics, and Law in the Age of Emancipation.” With Kristina Williams and Tayzhuhan Glover. North Carolina Conference on Latin American Studies. University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Charlotte, North Carolina. Cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2020: “Enslaved People’s Politics, Imperial Rule, and Amelioration in the Caribbean.” American Historical Association Conference. Manhattan, New York.
- 2019: “Slavery, Mobility, and the Law in the Americas.” With Elise Mitchell. American Historical Association Conference. Chicago, Illinois.

Other Conference Activity

- 2024: “Slavery, Law & Power in Early America and the British Empire: A Digital Humanities Project.” (Poster Presentation). American Society of Legal History Conference. San Francisco, California.
- 2024: With Devin Leigh. “Imagining Igboland: Competing Ethnographies of Southeastern Nigeria in the Age of the Abolition, c. 1789-1796.” Presented at “Imagining Emancipation in the Atlantic World, 1750-1888.” University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- 2024: “Virginia’s 1705 Slave Code in British Imperial Context.” Virginia Forum. Richmond, Virginia.
- 2024: “Hunger and Hierarchy: Provision Grounds and Enslaved Peoples’ Survival in Early 19th Century Jamaica.” American Historical Association Conference. San Francisco, California.
- 2023: Panel Chair and Moderator, “Gender and the Disruptive Politics of Care in the Black and Indigenous Early Modern Caribbean.” Omohundro Institute for Early American History and Culture Conference, “For 2026: Contested Freedoms.” William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.
- 2023: “*Bayly v. Ewart*: Refashioning the Slave Registry Bill in the Apprenticeship Era British Empire.” Presented at “Imagining Emancipation in the Atlantic World, 1750-1888.” University of Exeter, Exeter, United Kingdom.
- 2023: Panel Moderator, “Mangrove as Caribbean Method in Two Acts.” Caribbean Epistemologies Symposium. Stanford University. Palo Alto, California.
- 2023: Panel Commentator, “The Legacies of Racial Slavery in North America and the Caribbean.” At “Slavery, Democracy, and Racial Violence in the Americas” Workshop. Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.
- 2023: “Photography and Slavery’s Ruins in Early 20th Century Jamaica.” Presented at Archival Kismet Spring 2023 Conference. Mississippi State University. Starkville, Mississippi. (Virtual)
- 2023: “The Rule of Law and Edward Long’s White Supremacy.” Presented at the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies Conference. St. Louis, Missouri.
- 2022: “Education and Repair: Teaching Maroon Histories in the U.S. Context.” Presented at the Charles Town Maroon Conference. Charles Town, Jamaica. (Virtual)
- 2022: “Safety in Community: Fugitive Enslaved People in Nineteenth Century Jamaica.” Presented at the Association of Caribbean Historians Conference. Kingston, Jamaica. (Virtual)

- 2022: “Fear of a Black Republic: The Lecesne-Escoffery Conspiracy Scare and Imagining an Independent Haiti in 1820s Jamaica.” Presented at the American Historical Association Conference. New Orleans, Louisiana. (Virtual)
- 2021: “Enslaved People and the Debt of the Planter Class in Early 19th Century Jamaica.” Presented at the Latin American & Caribbean Section of the Southern Historical Association Conference. New Orleans, Louisiana. (Virtual)
- 2021: “Enslaved People’s Claims to Property in Jamaica, 1780-1834.” Presented at the Caribbean Studies Association Conference. Georgetown, Guyana. (Virtual)
- 2020: “‘Scandalous Neglect, Ignorance and Turpitude’: Jamaican Magistrates, Criminal Procedure, and the Trial of Enslaved People.” Presented at the North Carolina Conference on Latin American Studies. University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Charlotte, North Carolina. Cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2020: “‘Master Said He Was Over All the Magistrates’: Amelioration, the Law, and Two Enslaved Women’s Struggles for Justice.” Presented at the American Historical Association Conference. Manhattan, New York.
- 2019: “‘Against the Peace of our Lord the King, His Crown and Dignity’: Enslaved People, the British Empire, and the Law in Early 19th Century Jamaica.” Presented at the Charles Town Maroon Conference. Charles Town, Jamaica.
- 2019: “‘Incorrigible Runaways’: Enslaved People’s Mobility and the Courts in Mid-19th Century Jamaica.” Presented at the American Historical Association Conference. Chicago, Illinois.
- 2018: “Re-thinking the Legal Logics of Enslaved People’s Possessions in Early 19th Century Jamaica.” Presented at the African American Intellectual History Society Conference. Brandeis University. Waltham, Massachusetts.
- 2018: “‘The Better Government of Slaves’: Amelioration and the Trials of Planters for Abuse in Jamaica, 1788-1834.” Presented at the Conference of Latin American Historians. Washington, D.C.
- 2016: “‘They come and treat us as if we were the brigands...’: Colonial Cognitive Dissonance and Narrating Maroon Revolution.” Presented at “Marronage and Maroonage in Culture, History, and Society.” College of Charleston. Charleston, South Carolina.
- 2015: “‘Your Slavery, My Freedom and My Happiness are Inseparable’: Representing Colonial White Fear During the Haitian Revolution.” Presented at “Staging Sovereignty: Knowledge, Narrative, and Spaces of Governance.” Duke University. Durham, North Carolina.
- 2014: “‘This Land Has Not Been For You What It Has For Us’: Thinking the Haitian Revolution from Below.” Presented at the UNC-Duke Consortium in Latin American and Caribbean Studies Conference. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill / Duke University. Chapel Hill / Durham, North Carolina.
- 2014: “Revolution at the Crossroads: Re-framing the Haitian Revolution from the Heights of Platons.” Presented at “Reworking Freedom: Graduate Student Workshop on Recentring the Enslaved in Histories of the Americas.” Columbia University. Manhattan, New York.

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

External

2019: Fulbright Student Fellowship for Jamaica, US State Department.

- 2018: Paul W. McQuillen Fellowship. John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.
 2018: Friends of Princeton Library Research Grant. Princeton University.
 2017: Albert J. Beveridge Grant for Research in History of the Western Hemisphere. American Historical Association.
 2014: Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship for Haitian Creole. Studied at Enstiti Travay ak Syans Sosyal. Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Internal

- 2020: History Department Nominee, Dean's Award for Excellence in Teaching. Duke University.
 2018: Graduate Research & Teaching Award. Center for International Studies, Duke University.
 2018: Aleanne Webb Dissertation Research Fellowship. Duke University.
 2018: Summer Research Fellowship. Duke University.
 2017: Research Travel Grant. Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies, Duke University.
 2016: Graduate Research & Teaching Award. Center for International Studies, Duke University.
 2015: Summer Research Fellowship. Duke University.
 2014: Summer Research Fellowship. Duke University
 2013-2018: James B. Duke Fellowship. Duke University.
 2013: Distinguished Senior Thesis Award. Brown University.
 2013: Anna Julia Cooper Award for Best Academic Performance. Department of Africana Studies, Brown University.
 2013: W. E. B. DuBois Award for Best Honors Thesis. Department of Africana Studies, Brown University.

EXTERNAL COURSEWORK & INDEPENDENT TRAINING

- 2024: COLL 100/150 Faculty Workshop (first-year seminars in writing-in-the-disciplines and non-written communication in the disciplines). The College of William & Mary. Williamsburg, Virginia.
 2021: Colby-Bates-Bowdoin Course (re)Design Institute. Bates College. Lewiston, Maine.
 2021: Slavery, Law & Power Working Group. Omohundro Institute Coffeehouse Series. Virtual.
 2018: History of Capitalism Summer Bootcamp. Cornell University. Ithaca, New York.
 2014: Teaching Triangles Peer Mentorship in College Teaching. Duke University. Durham, North Carolina.

SERVICE

- 2023-Present: Associate Editor, Slavery, Law, and Power in the British Empire and Early America Digital History Project.
 2022: Reviewer, Undergraduate Research and Teaching Award Applications. Brown University.
 2021: Honors Thesis Reader. History Department, Bates College.
 2021: Reviewer, Undergraduate Research Journal. Department of History, Duke University.
 2021: "Researching and Writing an Honors Thesis." Panel presentation in course by Professors Dotun Ayobade and Lisa Biggs, "Africana Studies Junior Seminar." Brown University.
 2020: Presenter, "Winning the Fulbright." Duke History Graduate Students Association.
 2019: Presenter, "My Fulbright Experience." Office of Undergraduate Scholars and Fellows, Duke University.

2014-15: Graduate Student Representative, Duke History Department Colloquium Committee.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Historical Association
American Society for Legal History
Association of Caribbean Historians
Caribbean Studies Association
Jamaican Historical Society

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French: proficient reading, writing, speaking.
Haitian Creole: proficient reading, writing, speaking.

REFERENCES

Professor David Barry Gaspar (dissertation chair)

dgaspar@duke.edu

Professor of History

Department of History

Duke University

Box 90719

306 Classroom Building

1356 Campus Drive

Durham, North Carolina 27708

Professor Barrymore Anthony Bogue (postdoctoral supervisor)

barrymore_bogues@brown.edu

Asa Messer Professor of Humanities and Critical Theory.

Director, Ruth J. Simmons Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice.

Professor of Africana Studies and the History of Art and Architecture.

Brown University

Box 1904

Providence, Rhode Island 02912

Professor Adrienne Petty (director of undergraduate studies at William & Mary)

ampetty@wm.edu

Associate Professor of History

Department of History

William & Mary

Blair Hall, Room 332

250 James Blair Drive

Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

Professor Caroline Shaw (department chair at Bates)

csshaw@bates.edu

Associate Professor of History
Department of History
Bates College
Pettengill Hall, Room 119
4 Andrews Road
Lewiston, Maine 04240

Professor Susan Thorne

sthorne@duke.edu

Associate Professor Emerita of History
Department of History
Duke University
Box 90719
336 Classroom Building
Durham, North Carolina 27708

Professor Laura Edwards

laura.edwards@princeton.edu

Class of 1921 Bicentennial Professor in the History of American Law & Liberty
Professor of History
Department of History
Princeton University
136 Dickinson Hall
Princeton, New Jersey 08544

Professor Jocelyn Olcott

olcott@duke.edu

Margaret Taylor Smith Director of Gender, Sexuality & Feminist Studies
Professor of History and International Comparative Studies
114A East Duke Building
Box 90760
Durham, North Carolina 27708