

Portland State University

PDXScholar

Young Historians Conference

Young Historians Conference 2019

May 1st, 2:00 PM - 2:15 PM

The Evolution of Slavery-Built Higher Education and Racial Supremacy in American Universities

Olivia A. Ricketts
Lakeridge High School

Follow this and additional works at: <https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/younghistorians>



Part of the [Intellectual History Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Ricketts, Olivia A., "The Evolution of Slavery-Built Higher Education and Racial Supremacy in American Universities" (2019). *Young Historians Conference*. 12.

<https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/younghistorians/2019/oralpres/12>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in Young Historians Conference by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: pdxscholar@pdx.edu.

THE EVOLUTION OF SLAVERY-BUILT HIGHER EDUCATION AND RACIAL
SUPREMACY IN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

Olivia A. Ricketts

Karen E. Hoppes
Hst 203: History of the United States
Portland State University
March 18, 2019

THE EVOLUTION OF SLAVERY-BUILT HIGHER EDUCATION AND RACIAL SUPREMACY IN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

Harvard University— a name that people look up to, a name that rings with prestige, a name with a secret history. Harvard was the first institution of higher education in Colonial America and has been functioning since 1636. However, its history is not as glorious and praiseworthy as one may think. Harvard, like many other institutions succeeding it including distinguished Ivy Leagues such as Yale and Brown, was funded with money gained out of slave labor. For so long this part of their narratives was excluded for unknown reasons. As students at Harvard called it in their report *Harvard and Slavery: Seeking a Forgotten History*, “a deafening silence on the topic... of connections to slavery.”¹ Numerous schools, created at different times throughout United States history, ignored and excluded their ties to slavery and slave money; only now are they admitting their objectionable beginnings. The first to do so was Yale, who, in 2001 released a report written by three doctoral candidates titled ‘Yale, Slavery and Abolition’, prompting a flood of reports from other schools, students, and committees. Yale was the first to draft anything regarding such connections to slavery in American schools, yet it was criticized for being factually inaccurate and lacking context. Shortly after the limited report from Yale was

¹ Sven Beckert, and others, *Harvard and Slavery: Seeking a Forgotten History*, Harvard and Slavery Research Seminar, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 5.

released, Brown University's president Ruth Simmons, the first African American woman to head an Ivy League, ordered a commission to investigate slavery—and antislavery—in Brown's history, becoming the first school to thoroughly study the subject. Their one hundred page report set the standard for all self-reflective university investigations going forward. This included schools like Harvard, Columbia, Princeton, Georgetown, and Universities of Chicago, Georgia, and Mississippi, who have all conducted similar studies into their histories.² Looking at each school throughout American history, there are different levels of involvement and connection with slavery depending on when they were funded. There is a difference in the universities created during slavery's peak compared to those created in its aftermath, yet there was a strong racial ideology at each of these universities.

New research is emerging constantly from institutions around the country as well as historians who are examining this intriguing topic. Most authors argue that the exclusion and ignorance of connections to slavery within universities' histories need to be corrected because history should be viewed through the masses; meaning all races, classes, genders should be included in the narrative. The Harvard Slavery research seminar authors explained the incompleteness of Harvard's history without acknowledging its ties to slavery. Similarly Jennifer O'Neal uncovers untold stories of African Americans at the University of Oregon, telling how vital they are to the history. Alfred Brophy gives an overview of all universities and how these connections impacted everyone involved— especially African Americans— thus should be part

² Columbia University and Slavery, <https://columbiaandslavery.columbia.edu/>; Princeton and Slavery Project, <https://slavery.princeton.edu/>; Georgetown Slavery Archive, <http://slaveryarchive.georgetown.edu/>; Slavery at UGA, University of Georgia <https://digiHum.libs.uga.edu/exhibits/show/slavery/people>; University of Mississippi Slavery Research Group, <http://slaveryresearchgroup.olemiss.edu/> “UM Slavery and the University Working Group: 2-Year Report and Proposal for Future Projects” <http://slaveryresearchgroup.olemiss.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/145/2017/01/UM-Slavery-and-the-University-Working-Group-ReportFINALno-budgetcompress.pdf>

of history. Carla Bosco brings another argument that the elite that ran the schools merely wanted to improve the success of the institution and did not consider the consequences. Craig Wilder goes further and says that the elite in charge were only trying to help themselves and further their college's profit, ignoring the effects on the lower classes and races. Overall, historians acknowledge the missing piece of history from these universities, whether that be from malicious intent or not, and believe it should be set right.

To examine the shift of slavery's involvement in higher education in America, this paper will study four universities that were funded in different eras of American history. Yale and Harvard both representing colonial era schools, the University of Chicago showing the change in Antebellum era, and finally in the post-reconstruction era, the University of Oregon. These four schools provide excellent examples for their respective time periods as well as being geographically diverse and offer extensive investigations into their histories.

There were three main ways early universities held connections to slavery: intellectual, financial, and social.³ The intellectual connection comes from proslavery thought that was passed from faculty to students, who then took it into the world where they worked in newspapers, courtrooms, and legislation, perpetuating the ideals of slavery.⁴ Additionally, the highly educated people in these universities were looked up to and their ideas valued, thus people mimicked their ideas and opinions. The economic connection is the largest and most obvious of the three, for most universities funding came from money gained off of plantations and slave labor, donations

³ Alfred L. Brophy, "Forum on Slavery and Universities," *Slavery & Abolition*, 39:2s (May 2018) 230.

⁴ John Rollin McCarthy, *The Slavery Issue in Selected Colleges and Universities in Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana: 1840-1860* (Florida: Florida State University Press, 1974), 8. For example, in Ohio, Lane Seminary alumni "played an important role in raising the issue of slavery throughout the region" according to John McCarthy who studied multiple schools in the center of the country.

were received from wealthy slaveholders, and students even paid tuition with slavery-acquired money. The final connection is social ties. It takes into account the lives of those enslaved on campus, those who were owned by the university, and how their dreams and minds were impacted, not to mention all of their descendants. Harvard holds two of the three connections outlined: intellectual and financial.

In the beginning, Harvard was chartered by the Massachusetts General Court in 1636 and because of its location in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, was already close to slavery. The Massachusetts economy played a key role in the Atlantic trade triangle, merchants drawing from the lucrative sugar, rum, and slave trades, providing “food, animals, lumber, ice and other necessities” for West Indies sugar plantations in return.⁵ This allowed owners of trade ships to accrue mass wealth and put it back into their community to institutions like Harvard. Patrons such as Issac Royall Jr. donated land used for the Royall Professorship of Law in 1816, which eventually led to Harvard’s Law school. Royall’s father made a fortune for his family when he moved to Antigua and got involved with the slave trade there. Israel Thorndike owned ships that took goods to and from the Indies and gave a rare collection of books as well as endowments for professorships to Harvard: \$500 for Massachusetts Professorship of Natural History and to the theology school, as well as \$100 to the Professorship in Mineralogy and Geology.⁶ He also sent a son through Harvard, who followed in his footsteps and became a wealthy plantation owner. Built on trade in Barbados, Dorothy Saltonstall and John Frizell donated hundreds of pounds to Harvard.⁷ No doubt slavery soaked money poured into the college. Drawing Harvard closer to

⁵ Beckert, 10.

⁶ Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013), 285.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 86.

slavery was the first documented African American slave in Massachusetts, who's master, "Nathaniel Eaton, was the first instructor and schoolmaster" of Harvard.⁸ "Moor" as he is called, "served Harvard's earliest students."⁹ Even from its very origins, Harvard has been entwined with slavery and oppression of African Americans.

As the years went on, Massachusetts became increasingly restrictive of African American rights. Everything from not being out past nine at night to not being allowed to own pigs.¹⁰ It grew quite severe and in 1755 two slaves were executed in Cambridge, a half-mile from Harvard, accused of poisoning their master. Harvard was not just physically close, but indirectly involved in the trial that ended with the violent punishment of the two slaves, Mark and Phillis: three of the four justices on the case were Harvard graduates.¹¹ These men were trained, informed, and presented to the professional world from the hallowed halls of Harvard, and they sent two slaves to death for something they most likely did not do. This is a clear reflection of Harvard's racism and acceptance of slavery and treating African Americans as animals. As mentioned before, the intellectual connection to and influence on slavery is clearly seen here. These officials used their knowledge and judgment spreading their severe and pro-slavery views to the rest of the community.

Continuing throughout its history, the intellectual connection to slavery resurfaces in regards to public sentiment about abolition. Gaining the trust and money of wealthy slave owners

⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Beckert, 13.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

was vital to the success of college admissions, thus Harvard did not promote abolition nor did it oppose slavery. One such instance of this relationship was with Dudley Woodbridge, a retired Barbados planter and Harvard alumnus, who had promised to send his oldest son, Dudley to Harvard, but changed his mind writing to Reverend Coleman, an overseer at Harvard, saying he “now resolves him to London in a few days.”¹² This was a difficult loss for the school, as Woodbridge never sent any of his children after that and turned his support to his uncle’s new institution: Yale. Harvard’s heavy dependence on Southern students and their money as well as the need to remain somewhat tolerant of slavery to appease these families and retain donors. Because it was such a polarizing issue, “on the topic of slavery, the administration had long sought to avoid notice by placating Southerners and distancing itself from abolitionists, but this stance was placing it increasingly outside the mainstream of Northern opinion.”¹³ Harvard’s self-proclaimed distance from abolitionists and their ideas, created an interesting atmosphere on campus for faculty and students alike, for each group had members on both sides of the slavery debate. For example, when Ralph Waldo Emerson spoke to the students campaigning for Free soiler John Gorham Palfrey, a number of them hissed at him then ran to pro-slavery administration’s houses and cheered.¹⁴ Even faculty were pressured by Administration to limit any antislavery talk or political involvement. In 1835, Professor Charles Follen was not invited back to his job at Harvard, after publicly favoring abolition and funding the Cambridge

¹² Wilder, 87.

¹³ Carla Bosco, “Harvard University and the Fugitive Slave Act,” *The New England Quarterly*, 79:2 (June, 2006), 228.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 240.

Antislavery Society.¹⁵ In an attempt to continue the society, Henry Ware stepped up to be the first president to the society, but was asked to stop participating if he wanted to stay at the University, sadly leading to his stepping down.

Harvard's tolerant attitude towards slavery was because of its financial dependence on "wealthy Northeastern merchants and Boston 'Cotton' Whigs, many of whom had economic and cultural ties with Southern planters."¹⁶ The same John Gorham Palfrey that Emerson was campaigning for at Harvard was even prevented from being hired unless he ceased his 'political activity' with the Free soilers. As explained by Charles Greeley Lorin, an antislavery activist no less, because Harvard is a national institution, they do not want to alienate a large portion of the population by putting a more radical person in office.¹⁷ The status of national institution was due to Harvard's goal "to bolster its prestige and its revenue by recruiting the sons of rich Southern planters, and the law school which was determined to become an institution of national importance, had also made a concerted effort to enroll Southerners."¹⁸ The southern students were viewed as well-mannered, social, talented, and charming, and were always invited to come to the university.

Overall, students saw no reason to segregate based on slavery beliefs, in fact, most students integrated voluntarily, eating and living together.¹⁹ Yet, northern students saw the other

¹⁵ Beckert, 19.

¹⁶ Bosco, 230.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 231.

¹⁹ Beckert, 18.

side of these delightful southerners as well. Tussles over everything from card games to slavery occurred, especially as the southern student population grew from 6 percent in 1850 to 12 percent in 1854.²⁰ Faculty and Administration were also divided, as many were involved in creating and enacting the Fugitive Slave law, and while some believed in what the act stood for, others took the path of peace. Henry James believed his vote "saved the Country from a Civil War."²¹ A large portion of faculty members reflected the feelings of Samuel A. Eliot, a treasurer at Harvard. Eliot was angry when he heard a fugitive slave, Shadrach Minkins, was rescued before his trial, and helped to escape to Canada. He believed these illegal activities lost the Abolitionists credibility and could lead to the eventual shut down of the cause. A math professor at Harvard named "Benjamin Peirce remarked that the abolitionist philosophy was seriously flawed, since it 'made people dissatisfied with the position for which nature had fitted them.'"²² Some faculty were private abolitionists, such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow who helped hide a slave at one point and was good friends with Charles Sumner, an active Abolitionist at the time. Longfellow's poetry written in 1842 reveals his true feelings: "And oft the blessed time foretells / When all men shall be free; / And musical, a silver bells, / Their falling chains shall be."²³ Longfellow, a Professor of Modern Language at Harvard, had to suppress his abolitionist attitudes because of his place of work, as Harvard attempted to distance itself from such 'radical' ideas.

²⁰ Bosco, 231.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 234.

²² *Ibid.*, 236.

²³ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Poems on Slavery* (Cambridge: J. Owen, 1842), 16.

In 1855, Judge Edward G. Loring, a lecturer at the Harvard School of Law, upheld the Fugitive Slave Act and sent Anthony Burns back to slavery. The trial was to decide if Burns was the slave that Charles Scuttle— Burns’ former master— claimed he was. Eight different witnesses testified they saw Burns in Boston between March 1 and March 18, contradicting William Brent’s testimony that he was in Virginia on March 20.²⁴ Yet there was also other evidence suggesting it was Burns, as he admitted in a conversation to a guard that he arrived to Boston later in March.²⁵ Despite defense lawyer Richard Dana urging the council “May your judgment be for liberty and not for slavery, for happiness and not for wretchedness; for hope and not for despair,” they did not rule in Burns’ favor. Loring himself was not a fan of the law, but upheld it because he believed in the use of law as an institution; additionally he did not want to go against the law simply because it was immoral— it was the standing law after all. Loring’s decision was based solely on the fact that Burns was the person in question, stating “it hath also been proved before me, on the oath of a credible witness, that the said Anthony Burns, ... is the same Anthony Burns mentioned and described in the aforesaid transcript of a record,”²⁶ therefore the law states he must return to his master. The Board of Overseers at Harvard fired Loring soon after his decision. This was the first time Harvard had done something proclaiming a side on the issue of slavery. The Board of Overseers consisted of legislative officials and a broader

²⁴ Douglas O. Linder, “The (Fugitive Slave) Trials of Anthony Burns: An Account”, 2019 Available from <https://www.famous-trials.com/anthonyburns/2425-the-fugitive-slave-trials-of-anthony-burns-an-account>, Internet.

²⁵ Earl Maltz, "The Trial of Anthony Burns (1854)." *Encyclopedia Virginia*. (Virginia Foundation for the Humanities: 2017), Available from https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Burns_Anthony_The_Trial_of_1854#its4, Internet.

²⁶ Decision of Commissioner Loring in the Anthony Burns Case, (June 2, 1854), Massachusetts State Court.

representation from across the state, thus reflected the anti-slavery views of Massachusetts, not the scheming politics of Harvard. The anti-slavery legislature also removed Loring from his position as a Massachusetts probate judge. They made a statement about the decision saying, “Massachusetts required her judges to bring instincts to the bench favorable to liberty and justice and not against them.”²⁷ At Harvard, the decision caused fights to break out among students on opposing sides of the Board’s decision and slavery in general. Yet, it was this point that Harvard shifted from being tolerant of slavery to radically opposing it.

Yale College began in 1701, funded by a colonial clergy. Similarly to Harvard, from its origin, Yale was linked to slavery, as the ministers and citizens of the society were slave owners. It is no surprise then that “three of the financial endowments that allowed Yale to thrive in its early days depended upon slavery: Yale’s first endowed professorship, Yale’s first scholarship fund, and Yale’s first endowed library fund.”²⁸ The professorship came from Philip Livingston, a successful slave trader who took over his father’s business in Madagascar and Barbados. Livingston donated money to Yale when he was “at the height of his involvement in the slave trade.”²⁹ Bishop George Berkeley donated his entire plantation to Yale in 1731, which was used for the next 50 years to fund the first scholarships as it continued to be worked by slaves.³⁰ The third endowment for the Library was from Reverend Jared Eliot, a slave owner who owed much of his wealth to slave labor. Another person who shaped Yale’s connection to slavery was

²⁷ Maltz.

²⁸ Antony Dugdale, and others, *Yale, Slavery and Abolition* (New Haven: Armistad Committee, 2001), 3.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 4

³⁰ *Ibid.*

President Timothy Dwight, who during his time, "produced more pro-slave clergy than any other college in the nation."³¹ This is due to the limited faculty at the time, causing the college to look to Dwight as the "senior scholar". Dwight's views towards slavery and, in turn, his teachings greatly impacted Yale and its entwining with slavery.

Although the pro-slavery attitudes were prominent, there were abolitionists at Yale, such as James Hillhouse, Yale's treasurer for fifty years; Cassius Clay, Henry Clay's nephew; and Simeon Jocelyn, who attempted to start the "Negro College". In 1831, Jocelyn began fundraising for a "Negro College" in New Haven, Connecticut to give African Americans access to higher level learning. However, when he voiced his idea, Mayor Dennis Kimberly called together an influential committee of 13, ten of whom held Yale degrees as well as other connections to the school.³² These men argued that a Negro College was "incompatible with the prosperity, if not the existence of the present institutions of learning, and will be destructive of the best interests of the city" and that it threatened the stability of the United States.³³ This is another example of the intellectual connection to slavery, as schools and their alumni held influence in the community, which allowed the perpetuation of slavery even further. Interestingly, the men who fought for slavery like John Calhoun and Samuel Morse were honored with buildings in their names, but

³¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

³² *Ibid.*, 16. The full committee included David Daggett Yale's only Professor of Law, Issac H. Townsend future leader of Yale law, Nathan Smith Yale graduate and politician, Ralph I. Ingersoll Yale graduate and politician, Dennis Kimberly Yale graduate and mayor of New Haven Connecticut, Samuel J. Hitchcock Yale graduate and one of the founders of the Yale Law School, Augustus Street Yale graduate and donor, Judge William Bristol Yale graduate and politician, Judge Simeon Baldwin Yale graduate and retired Supreme Court Judge, Dr. Punderson Yale graduate and doctor, and Jehiel Forbes, Samuel Wadsworth, and John Durrie who were not connected to Yale.

³³ *Ibid.*, 17.

abolitionists were not. The lack of representation in the memoriam of alumni is evidence of the college's negative opinion towards anti-slavery ideals.

The issue of slavery, however, persisted within the United States, leading from Colonial Era that Harvard inhabited, to the Antebellum Era of the Civil War. As slavery was very much still part of American life, it is no surprise a new school with financial connections to slavery was funded in 1856: the University of Chicago. At this point, legislators in Illinois rarely issued college charters, for they did not want religious institutions run by those with anti-slavery opinions, believing they corrupted “pious young men and females into an ignorant and blind support of the schemes of plunder and treason of the abolitionists--which have their origin in the lust for Money.”³⁴ Thus, schools mostly were funded from private donations. Stephen A. Douglas was one such man who donated his wealth accrued from his father-in-law's plantation to create the University of Chicago. Douglas married Robert Martin's daughter, Martha, and received the deed to the plantation, however, it was placed in Martha's name so Douglas, a rising politician at the time, could secretly profit without the ties to slavery. The couple soon moved to Chicago where Douglas bought multitudes of properties, earning him even more money. Once he earned enough he felt he should partake in philanthropy, he donated 10 acres of land in “Bronzeville” to a baptist organization to start a school: Old University of Chicago. Soon, the school, “using its slavery-funded endowment as collateral, ... began taking out a series of bank loans against the Douglas land to fund its operations.”³⁵ Because of their slavery-funded beginning, many northerners were hesitant to donate to the University, so the institution attempted to cut ties with

³⁴ McCarthy, 15.

³⁵ Caine Jordan and others, ““A disgrace to all slave-holders”: The University of Chicago's Founding Ties to Slavery and the Path to Reparations”, *The Journal of African American History*, 103:1-2 (2018), 169.

Douglas by invalidating the debt on their loan and renegotiating with the bank to foreclose on the property so they could re-open a new institution.³⁶ However, essentially everything stayed the same after some paperwork with the bank. The university trustees and donors then named Douglas' funded school the Old University of Chicago and renamed their new institution funded by their own earnings the University of Chicago. The new organization used same institutional structures, donors, faculty, and held the same reputation, despite having moved campuses and attempting to distance themselves from Douglas' slavery tainted money and name. Interestingly, the university only recognizes the founding date as 1890 when this transaction was made, not 1856 when Douglas originally gifted the endowment.³⁷

Beside the original founding of the university, the University of Chicago did not have endless ties to slavery as Harvard did. It really boils down to the original endowment and the continual use of materials from the 'old' university and Douglas' name. The movement away from using slavery to support the school within this new era is due to the rise of Abolitionism and the Free Soil party that was based in Illinois. Those living above the Mason-Dixon line began to lean towards anti-slavery policy, which grew into more than seven Anti-slavery societies and eventually the Free Soil and Liberty parties.³⁸ The success of the movement in Illinois is due to the multitudes of dedicated clergymen as well as the belief in "saving power of the United States government, if the principles of the Declaration of Independence were once

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 170.

³⁷ Caine Jordan and others, "A Case for Reparations at the University of Chicago," (Report, University of Chicago, 2017), 1.

³⁸ Norman Dwight Harris, *History of Negro Slavery in Illinois and of the Slavery Agitation in that State*, [book on-line] (Chicago: A C McClurg & Co, 1904, accessed 12 March 2019); available from, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/yale.39002002910157>, Internet.

thoroughly enforced.”³⁹ The overall attitude of people in Chicago at the time reflected this anti-slavery mood, thus they were reluctant to support Douglas’ slavery-funded university. This also mirrors the changing attitude of the country as a whole regarding slavery during the Antebellum era that included the Civil War.

Even further contrasting both of these earlier schools, the University of Oregon funded post reconstruction also had connections, if not to slavery, but to racial supremacy. The further America moved from slavery, the less it was intertwined with universities, yet Oregon’s racial supremacy issue can still be examined in a similar light as a dwindling descendant of the slavery issue the other schools saw. Mostly, the University of Oregon had a social and intellectual connection to racism. Although Oregon had newly created its constitution which banned slavery, it also excluded African Americans from the territory.⁴⁰ Intellectually, the attitudes on campus were racist and exclusionary, because of the history and makeup of the state. Similar to Harvard and the University of Chicago, those with higher education were pillars of society and were therefore mirrored for their viewpoints. Financially, Oregon was funded by the federal government as well as community fundraising within Eugene.⁴¹ The university got its beginnings when the federal government provided a land grant to Oregon for a state university in the 1850s. However, at the time there were multiple religious colleges and very few people who felt the

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Oregon State Archives, Article I Unwritten Sections 34 and 35, *Transcribed 1857 Oregon Constitution*. “The anti-slavery provision and the provision against free Negroes were added to the Bill of Rights as unnumbered sections by vote of the people at the time of adoption, in accordance with Article XVIII, Section 4, of the Constitution. They have since been treated as Sections 34 and 35 of Article I. They are in Article XVIII, *infra*, but Section 35 was repealed November 2, 1926.”

⁴¹ Henry D. Sheldon, *History of University of Oregon* [book on-line] (Portland, OR: Metropolitan Press, 1940, accessed 9 January 2019); available from [https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.\\$b112543](https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.$b112543); Internet.

need for higher education, so its creation was drug out for almost twenty years from its original proposal due to slow legislation and low public support. The state legislature finally brought the idea up again in 1872, prompting citizens of Eugene to organize the Union University Association and petition a bill for the location of the university. Additionally, they promised a board of trustees, six to be appointed by the governor the other three by the UUA, and a non-secular curriculum for students and faculty.⁴² The bill passed in both houses and the UUA jumped into action, planning committees and sites for the university. Running into multiple funding issues over the years, the University of Oregon was finally open in October 1876.

Due to the exclusion laws in the Oregon Constitution, there was no discussion of the matter of African Americans or slavery, for it was assumed no African Americans were to attend the University of Oregon. Which proved true, until 1917 when Mabel Byrd became “the first African American enrolled at the University of Oregon.”⁴³ Although the university allowed her to enroll, they did not provide her housing on campus, so Byrd was forced to stay at Joseph Schafer’s home, a history professor, where “she worked as a domestic for the Schafer Family.”⁴⁴ Here one can consider the aforementioned social connection to racism when looking at how Byrd’s education was affected by her treatment. Even within the housing she had access to, she was treated as lesser than her white counterparts. Really, throughout the early years of the University of Oregon’s history, there was little mention of African Americans at all, showing their exclusionary attitudes. There is no official report from the school on the overall

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Jennifer O’Neal and Zach Bigalke, “Untold Stories: Black History at the University of Oregon”, *Unbound*, University of Oregon Special Collections & University Archives.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

connections, but recent investigations into founding members of the university have been conducted.

Current day, the effects of slavery are seen in the efforts to repair the wrongs done and marks left by those connections. At Harvard, the seminar investigation into its past proved very educational and lucrative. In that report, suggestions were made by the current students to erect a monument of one of the many slaves Harvard saw walk through its hallways, or to have a discussion regarding certain places on campus that intersect with slavery, such as Elmwood House. Elmwood, residence to Harvard's presidents, was built by Thomas Oliver, a prominent Antiguan plantation owner who most likely had slaves of his own there. Of course, these were suggestions from students, and Harvard has also responded to students calls to remove the Royall family crest from Harvard Law School's seal. The crest of the aforementioned Issac Royall Jr. who's donation of plantation earned money led to the creation of the infamous Law school at Harvard, did not sit well with students. After much deliberation, the seal was removed, yet this seems to be the extent of Harvard's actions and reparations.

Yale, as previously stated, was one of the first schools to admit to its unsavory beginnings. Yale spear-headed the trend of delving into a school's history, and has done very detailed work on coming clean about their own history. Since the initial report, they have gone far in making reparations. They have taken to eliminating physical reminders of the racism and slavery that litter the campus, such as revising a stained glass window depicting John Calhoun next to a shackled slave and replacing a painting of Elihu Yale beaconing to a slave with a single portrait of the school's namesake. The biggest change on campus is the renaming of Calhoun College to Hopper College after Grace Murray Hopper, esteemed computer scientist and Yale

graduate.⁴⁵ They also ended certain traditions like “calling the heads of the colleges “masters,” a traditional title at the university without roots in slavery.”⁴⁶ On top of the changes on campus, Yale has created a collection of primary sources regarding slavery, allowing for easier studying and investigating of the connections between United States institutions and slavery. David Blight, Professor of American History at Yale, spoke of the college’s precept in handling this concern, saying “Memorialization, representing the past, needs to cause pain.”⁴⁷ Their overall goal is to acknowledge all of their history, even if it is unfavorable, and to avoid erasure of their past.

The University of Chicago has reparations underway, spearheaded by Reparations at University of Chicago (RAUC). The authors of this piece say that the University of Chicago has a unique opportunity for reparations compared to other schools, as it owes everything to slavery, not just a few buildings built by slaves or donations from slaveholders or an instance of slavery for fundraising. RUAC is working with the community on the South Side and those affected to create an awareness and talk about how to create a new identity going forward. They have organized meetings, marches, workshops, and are empowering change on the South Side. The authors claim the University of Chicago can offer a model for other universities facing the same issue: listen, gather facts, then act according to the community.

⁴⁵ Salovey, Peter “Decision on the Name of Calhoun College,” Yale University: Office of the President, February 11, 2017 <https://president.yale.edu/speeches-writings/statements/decision-name-calhoun-college>

⁴⁶ Remnick, Noah, “Yale Grapples With Ties to Slavery in a Debate Over a College’s Name”, *New York Times*, CLXIV: 56,986 (September 11, 2015), A19.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

In 2015, the University of Oregon, created an investigative board to delve into the history surrounding founders Matthew Deady and Frederick Dunn after students and faculty had been calling for the renaming of the hall under their namesakes. It was discovered by many at the university that Deady and Dunn had racist or proslavery attitudes and actions, thus the investigative board wrote a 34 page document explaining their findings and conclusion. The board concluded that Deady, although he held racist views towards blacks as well as misogynist views, he was overall an upstanding public figure with opinions that reflected his time, while also having views on Native Americans and Chinese that “were strikingly progressive for his time.”⁴⁸ Dunn, the Exulted Cyclops of the Eugene Ku Klux Klan No. 3, was very active in removing Catholics from public and teaching positions.⁴⁹ In 1920, there were no permanent African American residents in Eugene, so there is little evidence to say Dunn was racist, but by supporting the Klan and signing his allegiance, he indirectly supported those “One-Hundred Per Cent Americanism” ideals.⁵⁰ The board decided to keep Deady’s name on its building and renamed Dunn Hall ‘Unthank Hall’, after the first African American to graduate from the architecture school at the university.⁵¹ The extensive research into each man was admirable on the University’s part, showing their efforts to improve their image and not hide from the past.

⁴⁸ David Alan Johnson and others, “Report on the History of Matthew P. Deady and Frederick S. Dunn,” University of Oregon, 22.

⁴⁹ “List of Oregon Klan Officers, by City”, Ku Klux Klan Collection, Mss 22, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

⁵⁰ Johnson, 28.

⁵¹ Andrew Field, “Dunn Hall is now renamed Unthank Hall”, *Daily Emerald*, Vol: Online, June 4, 2017.

Racism and slavery are so intertwined in American history that our country would not be what it is today without it, even our schools. As Wilder puts it, slavery “was located in the entangled economies, histories, institutions, and lineages of the South, the free states, Europe, the Caribbean, and Africa.”⁵² Now, as copious higher education institutions in America are discovering their ties to racism and slavery, historians can see there was a shift in the level of entwinement these schools had with such issues. This shift is due to the growth of abolitionist ideas, for as slavery became less popular with the general population, its involvement in universities dwindled as well. Looking from the Colonial institutions of Harvard and Yale, who had major connections to slavery, intellectually, economically, and socially; then at Antebellum Era University of Chicago with a slightly decreased level of involvement; and finally post reconstruction at the University of Oregon, which has the remnants of slavery connections in the form of blatant exclusion and racism, one can see the devolution of the links between universities and slavery. Starting with the earliest university in America, Harvard Professor Sven Beckert’s seminar offers excellent base knowledge on how entwined Colonial schools were with slavery. He and his students embarked on “a quest that began with fears of finding nothing ended with” a massive new topic of research and investigation.⁵³ Not only was Harvard financially supported by slavery, but intellectually and socially. It turned out Harvard and its students had slaves on campus, used their labor to benefit the university, graciously accepted donations from patrons who’s money or land was collected through slavery, and allowed pro-slavery faculty to spread their ideas to students who took those attitudes into the public. Yale was created soon after Harvard and held similar issues in its creation. It too was endowed on money from slave owners

⁵² Wilder, 283.

⁵³ Beckert, 3.

who acquired their wealth through their plantations.⁵⁴ Many buildings were named after people who supported slavery and encouraged the slave trade as well.

As the country aged, slavery continued with it and prevailed in the universities in the Antebellum era too, such as the University of Chicago; its \$7 billion endowment came from the profit of the Martin plantation in Mississippi.⁵⁵ Looking further into the future at the post reconstruction era, the University of Oregon had less of a connection to slave money and slavery, but still had airs of racial supremacy in its creation. The university itself did not have an African American student until 1917, its creation being in 1876. There is a clear decrease in the involvement of slavery in higher education institutions as America gets further from slavery itself. However, no matter their level of connection, the task facing these schools now this is all out in the open is to repair the damage done -- if even possible. With the admittance of their unsavory connections, all four have begun some type of reparations, acknowledging the past and looking to the future.

This hidden history of slave money endowments and slaves on campus or racism toward African Americans, no matter the level of severity, should not be ignored any longer. Even students on the campuses of Harvard, University of Chicago and University of Oregon as well as numerous other schools across the country are “not only objecting to the lack of recognition of slavery within the school’s collective memory, they are also objecting the active commemoration

⁵⁴ Dugdale, 3-5.

⁵⁵ Caine Jordan and others, ““A disgrace to all slave-holders”: The University of Chicago’s Founding Ties to Slavery and the Path to Reparations”, *The Journal of African American History*, 103:1-2 (2018), 163.

of figures complicit in historical injustice.”⁵⁶ The historical figures that are memorialized for their good deeds of funding education in America need to be looked at in every way, and that means the negative sides as well. This “problem so ugly and so personal that it invited dishonesty” has come to the time to be addressed, no matter how difficult and uncomfortable.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Lindsey K. Walters, “Slavery and the American university: discourses of retrospective justice at Harvard and Brown”, *Slavery & Abolition*, 38:4 (April 2017), 727.

⁵⁷ Wilder, 283.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Beckert, Sven, Katherine Stevens, and the students of the Harvard and Slavery Research Seminar. *Harvard and Slavery: Seeking a Forgotten History*, Harvard and Slavery Research Seminar. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011.
- Bosco, Carla. "Harvard University and the Fugitive Slave Act" *The New England Quarterly*, 79:2 (Jun., 2006), 227-247. Database on-line. Available from JSTOR, Article: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20474439>.
- Brophy, Alfred L. "Forum on slavery and universities: Introduction," *Slavery & Abolition*, 39:2 (May 2018), 229-235.
- Dugdale, Antony, J. J. Fueser, and J. Celso de Castro Alves. "Yale, Slavery and Abolition", (New Haven: The Amistad Committee, Inc., 2001), 3.
- Field, Andrew. "Dunn Hall is now renamed Unthank Hall", *Daily Emerald*, Vol: Online, June 4, 2017.
- Harris, Norman Dwight. *History of Negro Slavery in Illinois and of the Slavery Agitation in that State*, [book on-line] (Chicago: A C McClurg & Co, 1904, accessed 12 March 2019); available from, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/yale.39002002910157>, Internet.
- Johnson, David Alan, Quintard Taylor, Marsha Weisiger. "Report on the History of Matthew P. Deady and Frederick S. Dunn" University of Oregon, 2016.
- Jordan, Caine, Guy Emerson Mount, and Kai Perry Parker. "'A disgrace to all slave-holders': The University of Chicago's Founding Ties to Slavery and the Path to Reparations", *The Journal of African American History*, 103:1-2 (2018), 163-178. Database on-line. Available from University of Chicago Press Journals, Article: 10.1086/696362
- _____. "A Case for Reparations at the University of Chicago," RAUC Report, University of Chicago, 2017, 1.
- Linder, Douglas O. "The (Fugitive Slave) Trials of Anthony Burns: An Account", 2019 Available from <https://www.famous-trials.com/anthonyburns/2425-the-fugitive-slave-trials-of-anthony-burns-an-account>, Internet.
- Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. *Poems on Slavery*. Cambridge: J. Owen, 1842.

Massachusetts State Court. Decision of Commissioner Loring in the Anthony Burns Case, (June 2, 1854).

McCarthy, John Rollin. *The Slavery Issue in Selected Colleges and Universities in Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana: 1840-1860* (Florida: Florida State University Press, 1974).

Maltz, Earl. "The Trial of Anthony Burns (1854)." *Encyclopedia Virginia*. (Virginia Foundation for the Humanities: 2017), Available from https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Burns_Anthony_The_Trial_of_1854#its4, Internet.

O'Neal, Jennifer and Zach Bigalke. "Untold Stories: Black History at the University of Oregon", *Unbound*, University of Oregon Special Collections & University Archives.

Oregon Historical Society. "List of Oregon Klan Officers, by City", Ku Klux Klan Collection, Mss 22, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

Oregon State Archives. Article I Unwritten Sections 34 and 35, *Transcribed 1857 Oregon Constitution*.

Salovey, Peter. "Decision on the Name of Calhoun College," Yale University: Office of the President, February 11, 2017 <https://president.yale.edu/speeches-writings/statements/decision-name-calhoun-college>

Sheldon, Henry D. *History of University of Oregon* (book on-line). Portland, OR: Metropolitan Press, 1940, accessed 9 January 2019; available from [https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.\\$b112543](https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.$b112543); Internet.

Walters, Lindsey K. "Slavery and the American university: discourses of retrospective justice at Harvard and Brown", *Slavery & Abolition*, 38:4, (April 2017), 719-744.

Wilder, Craig Steven. *Ebony and Ivy*, New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013.
"Yale Grapples With Ties to Slavery in a Debate Over a College's Name." *New York Times*, CLXIV: 56,986 (September 11, 2015), A19.