




**AFRICANA
RESEARCH
CENTER**

Emerging Scholar Speaker Series (Week One)

**216 Willard Building
January 30, 2017
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

9:00-9:45 a.m.

**Shannon C. Eaves, Ph.D.
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill—U.S. History**

“Caught in a Web of Pain and Contempt: Consequences of the Sexual Exploitation of Enslaved Women on Slaveholding and Enslaved Communities”

In my current book project, *Illicit Intercourse: How the Sexual Exploitation of Enslaved Women Shaped the Antebellum South*, I argue that a culture of rape and exploitation influenced the day-to-day interactions and negotiations between slaveholders and the enslaved. This culture was created and reinforced by the commodification and sexualization of black bodies, resulting in a southern economy that thrived on enslaved people's sexual reproduction and viewed enslaved women's bodies as a conduit for economic security. As a result, the South's legal system, along with cultural attitudes, made it socially permissible, if taboo, for white men to rape, coerce, and sexually harass enslaved women with little legal or social repercussions. The collective consciousness of enslaved women's vulnerability to this sexual exploitation created a web of pain, insecurity, jealousy, and contempt that entangled both slaves and slaveholders. This talk will illuminate some of the consequences of this tangled web on slaveholders and slaves' intimate relationships, households, and struggles for power.

9:45-10:30 a.m.

**Marcus P. Nevius, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University—History**

“‘Born free’: Southside Virginia's Antebellum Free Black Communities and Petit Marronage”

Since the 1970s, anthropologists, archaeologists, and historians have developed two terms – grand marronage and petit marronage – to distinguish between different groups of absconders who fled from slavery. Generally, grand marronage refers to those groups who formed long-standing communities recognized by treaties with colonial powers; this form of marronage existed primarily in the Caribbean and South America. More recently still, historians have examined evidence of marronage in different North American contexts. This talk, drawn from my recent book project “a city of Refuge”: *Petit Marronage and Slave Economy in Virginia and North Carolina, 1790-1860*, centers petit marronage within the historiography of North American maroons. Through a presentation of my preliminary findings in the Norfolk County (Virginia) Register of Free Negroes and Mulattoes, this talk reveals the ways in which petit marronage reflects yet another facet of slavery and freedom's complex relationship. While penned in the hand of county clerks, this register reveals the vital statistics of an important free black population in Southside Virginia, a region dominated by the Great Dismal Swamp, and a landscape in which maroons hid and slaves labored concurrently.

10:30-11:15 a.m.

**Alaina E. Roberts, Ph.D. Candidate
Indiana University—Philosophy / History**

“Defining Freedom: Emancipation in the Chickasaw Nation”

The end of the Civil War brought the former slaves of Chickasaw Indians relief that their involuntary labor was coming to an end, but also a predicament—would they stay in the nation in which they had toiled? Or would they strike out on their own, venturing into other Indians nations or the United States? The choices Chickasaw freedpeople made were symbolic of the geographic and ancestral ties they felt to the Chickasaw Nation. Unbeknownst to them, their choices regarding mobility during and directly after the war would have a crucial bearing on the nationality they could claim, and the practical benefits they could obtain from membership in an Indian nation—land and suffrage. As Chickasaw freedpeople's family members, support networks, and spaces of memory remained in the Chickasaw Nation, so too did the majority of Chickasaw freedpeople, regardless of the prejudice and instability they faced in the West.

11:15 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

**Stephanie J. Gomez-Menzies, Ph.D. Candidate
University of California, San Diego—Literature**

“Performing Antigone: Afro-Puerto Rican Resistance in Public Memory and Local Myth in the tale of Adolfin Villanueva”

On February 6th, 1980, Adolfin Villanueva was murdered by police as she attempted to protect her family from eviction in Loiza, Puerto Rico, a municipality with a large Afro-Puerto Rican population. Adolfin's protection of her home encapsulates the struggle of race, class, and police brutality for Loiza. Her stand echoes what many in the community see to be their battle: the struggle and sacrifice of Black citizens against the reality of a detached government. This talk, drawn from my dissertation *Antigone's Ghosts: Performance, Thanatopolitics and Citizenship*, examines why we should understand Adolfin's transformation into local myth in the public memory as a performance of Antigone. Adolfin's life and death has become mythologized in the local community and commemorated by various theatre artists. Specifically, I consider Zora Moreno's *Coqui coriundo vira el mundo* (1981) and Rosa Luisa Márquez's *La pasión y muerte de Adolfin Villanueva* (1989). In Moreno and Márquez's remembrings of Adolfin, they espouse a decolonial and transnational feminist perspective that affirms not only a Black woman but a Black mother as a producer of knowledge for the community. The transformation of Adolfin into myth seeks to destabilize the patriarchal myth of the gran familia puertorriqueña by centering a Black, matriarchal figure as the source of strength and resistance in the Puerto Rican public memory.

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