

Project adds 11,400 intra-American journeys to Slave Voyages database

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"I hope the new intra-American Slave Voyages database inspires more educational institutions to focus on the interconnectedness of slave trading across Atlantic empires," says Alex Borucki, UCI associate professor of history and co-principal investigator. "It adds to the scholarship on the slave trade and provides new insights into how people experienced their captivity." Credit: Steve Zylius / UCI

Blending the power of big data and history, an expanded and redesigned version of [Slave Voyages](#) – one of the most utilized resources in the digital humanities – is now available. Housing both trans-Atlantic and intra-American slave trade databases, the Slave Voyages website illuminates the ubiquity of the slave trade from the 16th century to the 19th century. A research team co-led by the University of California, Irvine focused on the intra-American database, adding 11,400 records on slave voyages within the Americas – stretching from Boston to Buenos Aires, Argentina, and involving both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

"Arrival on the Atlantic coast didn't mark the end of the crossing for at least 20 percent of captives, who soon boarded ships for distribution throughout trade routes within the Americas," said Alex Borucki, a UCI associate professor of history who co-led the expansion of the intra-American [database](#).

Funded initially by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 2016, Borucki and co-principal investigator Gregory O'Malley, associate professor of history at UC Santa Cruz, set out to broaden the scope of the open-access Slave Voyages website to promote scholarly and [public awareness](#) of how the traffic of enslaved Africans and their descendants shaped several regions of North, Central and South America.

Borucki contributed much of the data from his own research, including nearly 750 entries on voyages from Brazil to Argentina and Uruguay from journal articles and his book *From Shipmates to Soldiers: Emerging Black Identities in the Rio de la Plata* (University of New Mexico Press, 2015), as well as an additional 250 entries on forced journeys from the Caribbean to Venezuela from his planned book *Slaves, Silver & Atlantic Empires: The Slave Trade to Spanish South America, 1680-1810*.

"This project encouraged me to contact scholars who study the slave

trade in Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, Cuba and Puerto Rico," Borucki said. "This is truly a collective endeavor involving scholars from Latin America, Europe and the United States, and the number of database entries will continue to increase as additional researchers and the public contribute."

For the more than 1,000 scholars and interested individuals who visit Slave Voyages daily, the enhanced website brings history to life with new features including videos, maps and 3-D animation.

"I hope the new intra-American Slave Voyages database inspires more educational institutions to focus on the interconnectedness of slave trading across Atlantic empires," Borucki said, "given that the website now offers full translations in Spanish and Portuguese that will increase usage in the United States, Latin America, Europe and Africa."

A cross-UCI and -UC system collaboration, expansion of the intra-American database also involved UCI history graduate students Katherine Cosby, Shoshanna Lande and Max Speare; and UCI economics graduate student Fabrizio Marodin. They played a vital role in information gathering, data curation and translating into Spanish and Portuguese essays introducing the improved database.

The Slave Voyages website was founded 10 years ago by Emory University, which continues to host it.

Provided by University of California, Irvine

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