

FOCUS *on Global Resources*

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CRL Primary Source Awards

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In This Issue

This issue of *FOCUS on Global Resources* highlights the projects selected for recognition in the 2017 Center for Research Libraries Primary Source Awards program. CRL created the program to promote understanding of the role of historical documentation and evidence in research and teaching. Identifying and recognizing innovative uses of primary sources helps CRL better support the practices and the needs of scholars today.

The projects featured here were selected from a competitive pool nominated by faculty and librarians at CRL institutions. CRL's Collections and Services Policy Committee reviewed all submissions and identified the top projects in three areas: access, research, and teaching. The projects cited illustrate a variety of approaches to mining the primary evidence of history. This year we also recognize three projects for honorable mention.

We hope that the projects described here better enable librarians to support the excellent research and teaching being done throughout the CRL community. I hope that you will consider nominating a deserving colleague (or yourself) for the 2018 awards. Nominations are now open; the [CRL website](#) has details.

—Bernard F. Reilly, Jr.
President

Unloading a Cotton Steamboat, New Orleans, c. 1890. Stereograph card from the Robert Langmuir African American Photograph Collection. Courtesy of the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

CRL Primary Source Awards



2017 CRL Primary Source Awards

Graphic courtesy of David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

The Center for Research Libraries first created the CRL Primary Source Awards in 2009 to recognize innovative uses of primary source materials by faculty, librarians and library staff, students, and other researchers in the CRL community. Nominations are accepted in three areas: access, research, and teaching. This year the CRL Collections and Services Policy Committee selected the following for recognition.

2017 Award for Access

Umbra Search African American History

Cecily Marcus, Principal Investigator, Umbra Search African American History; Curator, Givens Collection of African American Literature, Performing Arts Archives, and Upper Midwest Literary Archives, University of Minnesota

Nominated by: Wendy Pradt Lougee, University Librarian and McKnight Presidential Professor, University of Minnesota

2017 Award for Research

What Must Be Remembered: An Exhibition Inspired by Natasha Trethewey's Native Guard

Pellom McDaniels III, Curator of African American Collections, Special Collections and Archives Research Center, Emory University

2017 Award for Teaching

Fighting the Atlantic Slave Trade

Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Missouri

Nominated by: Rachel Brekhus, Humanities Librarian, University of Missouri

2018 CRL Primary Source Awards

Nominations for the 2018 awards are now open; the CRL website has details. Faculty and staff at CRL libraries are encouraged to consider other staff, faculty, or colleagues as candidates for these awards; self nominations are welcome. ❖

2017 Award for Access



Detail from a poster for *Eden* by Steve Carter, Penumbra Theatre Company (1977): Givens Collection of African American Literature, University of Minnesota Libraries. From Umbra Search.

“Umbra Search African American History”

Cecily Marcus, Principal Investigator, Umbra Search African American History; Curator, Givens Collection of African American Literature, Performing Arts Archives, and Upper Midwest Literary Archives, University of Minnesota

Nominated by: Wendy Pradt Lougee, University Librarian and McKnight Presidential Professor, University of Minnesota

U*mbra Search African American History* contains a widely diverse selection of special collections delivered simultaneously by numerous institutions, serving their own content within their own interfaces, while incorporating community participation. The goal of the project’s developer and founding director, Cecily Marcus, was to offer students, faculty, and local community members access to histories and experiences often silenced, marginalized, or otherwise left in the shadows of history.

The Umbra Search project provides access to collection materials and promotes teaching and research in three ways:

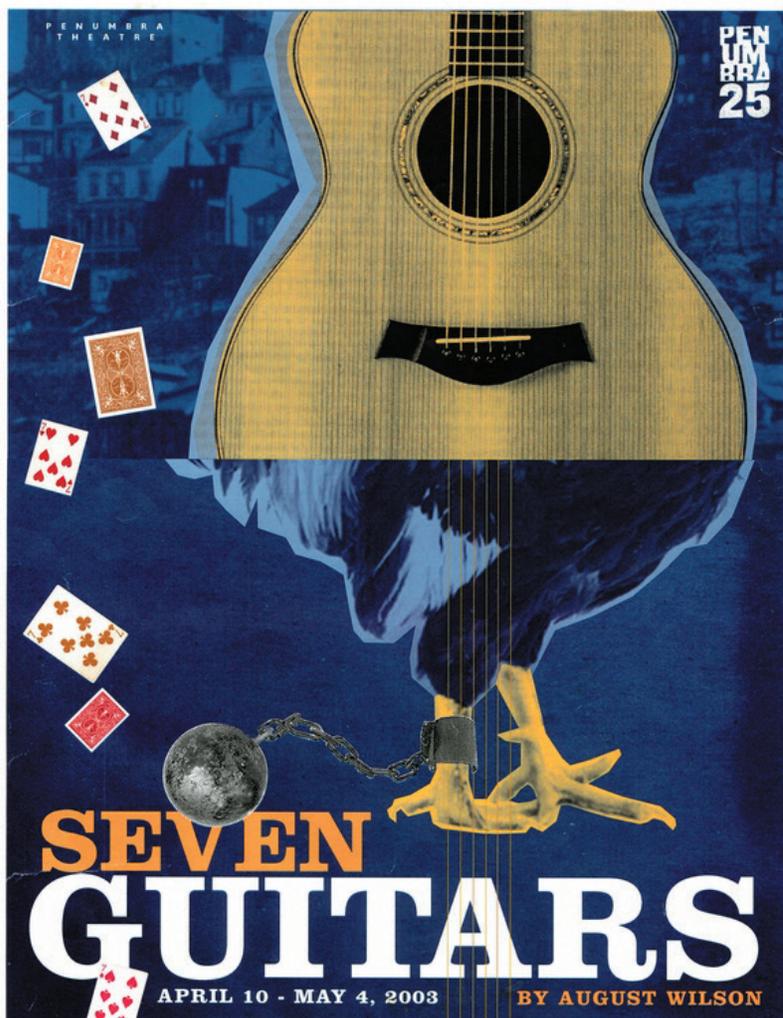
- 1) A free embeddable widget and search tool, umbrasearch.org, that aggregates over 500,000 digitized materials (photographs, manuscripts, video, audio, etc.) from more than 1,000 U.S. libraries and archives;
- 2) digitized African American history materials from across University of Minnesota collections; and
- 3) support for students, scholars, artists, and the public through residencies, workshops, and events around the country.

The umbrasearch.org database contains research materials from thousands of collections including Yale University, the Smithsonian, and founding partner the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA), which provides over half of the materials found in Umbra Search.

To promote the project, a year-long social media campaign, #UmbraSearch365, produced Umbra Search content every day in order to increase exposure. The campaign has proved successful. Since its beta release in March 2015, Umbra Search has averaged 51,000 page views per month, and within a year more than doubled its user base.

The Umbra Search project is leading the digitization of half a million African American history materials across more than 70 University of Minnesota collections that

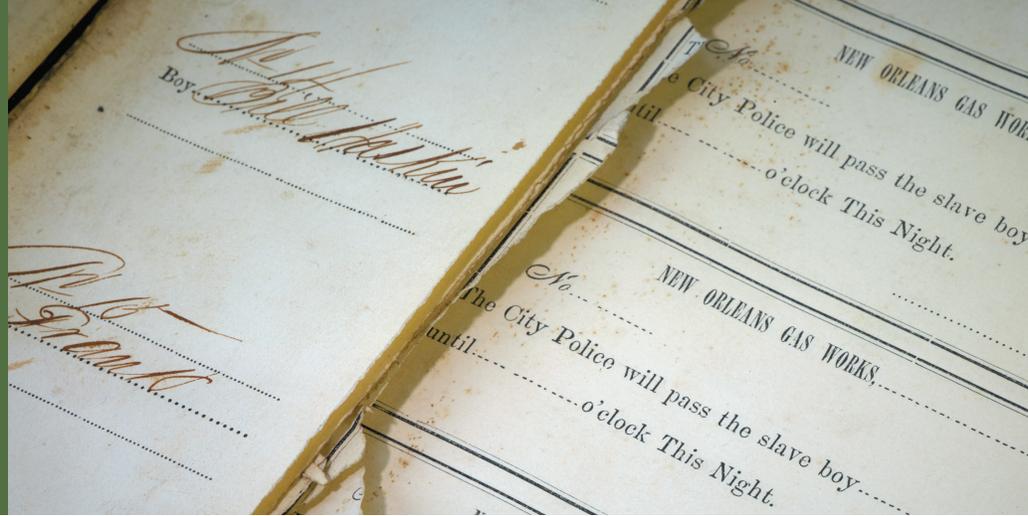
Poster for the 2003 production of *Seven Guitars* by August Wilson, Penumbra Theatre Company (2003): Givens Collection of African American Literature, University of Minnesota Libraries. From Umbra Search.



will be added to Umbra Search and the DPLA over the next two years. This work will provide broad access to records that may otherwise never be described and identified for use in African American history research.

Umbra Search is currently collaborating with the University of Minnesota's Digital Arts, Sciences, and Humanities program (DASH), and the Chicano studies department to plan an additional thematic digital aggregation for Chicano art collections.

Amistad Research Center, a nationally recognized African American historical resource institution based in New Orleans, is also a founding partner of Umbra Search. Amistad's Executive Director, Dr. Kara Tucina Olidge states, "By providing access to thousands of digitized materials, Umbra Search makes it possible to do research at libraries all across the country without getting on a plane. We are honored to be an Umbra Search partner." ❖



Slave Passbook of New Orleans Gas Works, c. 1860. African American Miscellaneous Collection. Courtesy of the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

“What Must Be Remembered: An Exhibition Inspired by Natasha Trethewey’s ‘Native Guard’”

Pellom McDaniels III, Curator of African American Collections, Emory University

In a collaborative effort to explore the complexities and nuances surrounding the Civil War during its 150th anniversary (1861–1865), Emory University’s Center for Creativity and the Arts (CCA) and the Alliance Theatre, both in Atlanta, GA, created a play based on Natasha Trethewey’s Pulitzer Prize winning poetry collection *Native Guard*. Developed in conjunction with the play, the *What Must Be Remembered* exhibition serves as a point of access to familiarize patrons with the people directly affected by the outcome of the Civil War, the intended and unintended consequences of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, and their impact on the freedom and liberation of African Americans as a whole.

Pellom McDaniels III, Curator of African American Collections, Emory University, is the recipient of this year’s Primary Source Award for research. “I wanted the project to contribute to the larger discussion and understanding of the numerous ways in which to view the Civil War as an integral part of the story of America, especially the impact of the war on the ability of former slaves and their children to claim access to the freedoms associated with full citizenship,” said McDaniels, who conducted his research at Emory University’s Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library.

The exhibition also coincides with the sesquicentennial of Reconstruction (1865–1877) as a reflection of a time of great possibility for African Americans who learned to negotiate under a tremendous amount of internal and external pressure. Through a series of visual compositions (arranged by Paige Knight, digital photography coordinator, Robert W. Woodruff library at Emory University), the exhibit pulls together elements related to African American history and the advancement of the liberation process.

From a stereograph of African American men unloading a “Cotton Steamboat in New Orleans” to an albumen print of children in their best clothes, this exhibit explores some of the complexities related to African American life during the antebellum and post-bellum periods of American history. Each composition is further contextualized and illuminated by quotes from African American civil

and human rights advocates Sarah Parker Remond (1826–1894), Frederick Douglass (1818–1895), John Mercer Langston (1829–1897), William H. Croghan (1841–1931), and Anna Julia Cooper (1858–1964).

Award reviewers noted that *What Must Be Remembered* is an exceptional example of collaboration between a historian and a visual artist using primary source materials. By taking material evidence from the lives of enslaved African Americans and applying an interpretive lens, a fuller understanding of the African American experience is achieved. Also, the project engages multiple ways of knowing to explore history and the lived experiences of people in the past. Leveraging the arts and humanities together, the project seeded multiple products that can influence citizens and scholars. ❖

Cabinet card of children, c. 1880s–1890s. The Robert Langmuir African American Photograph Collection. Courtesy of the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.



2017 Award for Teaching



The Anti-Slavery Society Convention, 1840. Painting by Benjamin Robert Haydon. ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

“Fighting the Atlantic Slave Trade”

Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Missouri

Nominated by: Rachel Brekhus, Humanities Librarian, University of Missouri

A good educator knows that the best way to teach is to somehow bring the “experience” to the classroom. *Fighting the Atlantic Slave Trade* is a sophomore seminar course created by Dr. Daniel Domingues da Silva, assistant professor at the University of Missouri, with support from the Campus Writing Program. The university’s Canvas learning management system supplied students access to a total of 150 18th- and 19th-century primary source materials on the British abolitionist movement from a variety of free online repositories, university-subscribed databases, and tangible library-owned rare items and reprints, including pamphlets, sermons, speeches, satirical drawings, reports, registries, committee prints, petitions, court testimony, letters, and tracts.

For an initial journal assignment students created a persona or character based on biographical sketches of historical figures in leading abolitionist Thomas Clarkson’s circle. All personas were to be London-based members of Clarkson’s Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade (founded in 1787), but individual backgrounds varied; students might choose to write from the perspective of religious and political reformers, merchants, Enlightenment philosophers, or former slaves.

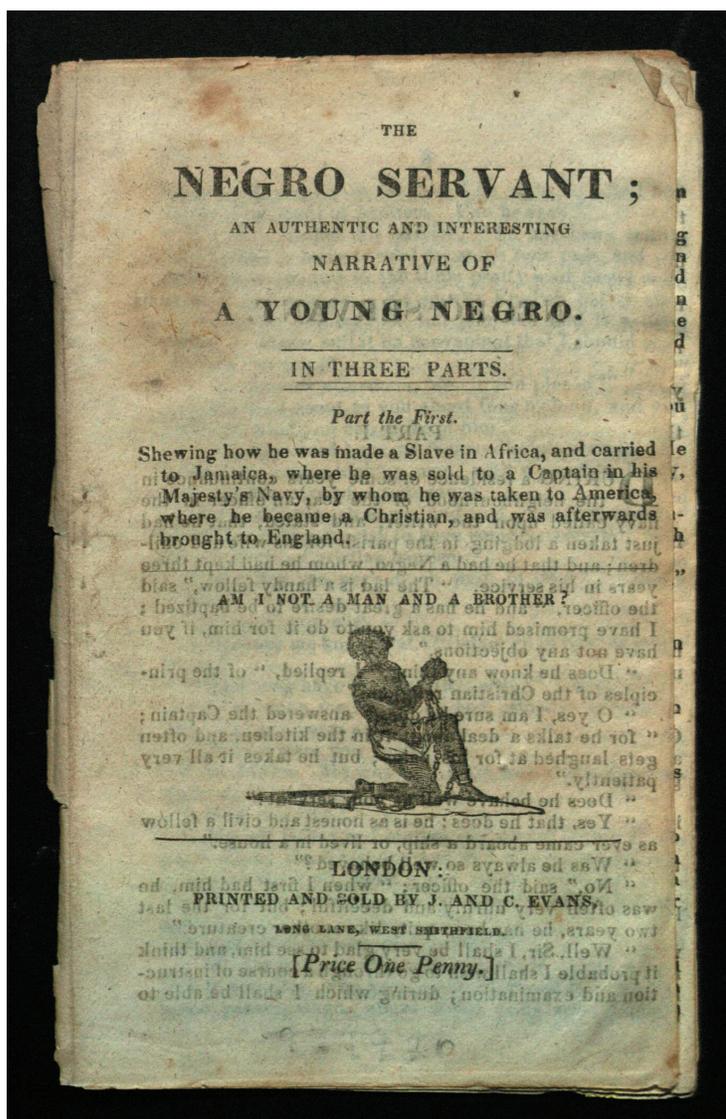
In later assignments students were instructed to create a written product with appropriate evidence and arguments for a particular 18th- or 19th-century audience, initially basing their writing on a single primary source, and then on a structured list of linked primary sources. After completing each week’s writing, students wrote a journal entry, in which they detailed the challenges they encountered in understanding and using primary sources, and—as their characters—reflected on their latest goals for abolition, their current projects, the political climate, and their personal fears and hopes for the movement.

Students were placed in the center of a transformational journey that enabled them to engage in an activity that enhanced their learning experience. An award reviewer wrote, “Abolition work (and hence history) becomes a lived experience in this course.”

One student wrote (in an article under review for publication): “Students struggled to answer the same questions voiced by abolitionists. Can imperialism be used for

good, or is it the source of all evils? How, and with what, do you replace a major component of the economy? How do you persuade producers, consumers, and legislators to abandon profit in favor of morality? These questions and others provided a continuous challenge over the course of the semester. The unique format of the course encouraged students to move beyond research and fully engross ourselves in the campaign. Increased empathy, for both the abolitionist and millions of men, women, and children victimized by the transatlantic slave trade, proved an unavoidable consequence of this project. With that empathy came the understanding that the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade did the unthinkable, triumphing over wealthy opponents, powerful lobbyists, and public indifference. As a result of 'Fighting the Atlantic Slave Trade' students witnessed that by utilizing writing and research activists can overcome the most daunting obstacles to change the world." ❖

The Negro Servant, an Authentic and Interesting Narrative of a Young Negro. London, c. 1800. Courtesy of Ellis Special Collections, University of Missouri Libraries.



2017 Honorable Mention

Three additional nominated projects are recognized for their outstanding qualities:

2017 Honorable Mention for Access

The Prague Spring Archive

Ian Goodale, Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies and Digital Scholarship Librarian, University of Texas at Austin

2017 Honorable Mention for Research

Canterbury Tales: Bodley 686 Project

Andrew Kraebel, Assistant Professor, Trinity University

Nominated by: Anne Jumonville Graf, First Year Experience Librarian, Trinity University

2017 Honorable Mention in Teaching

Covering Emmett Till: Regional Newspaper Coverage of the Death and Aftermath of a Mississippi Lynching

Davis W. Houck, Fannie Lou Hamer Professor of Rhetorical Studies, Florida State University

Nominated by: Velma Smith, University Librarian, Florida State University

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