On These Grounds: Describing the Experiences of the Enslaved

From Individual Research to Data Model

Sharon M. Leon | Michigan State University | @sharonmleon
Over the past decade, many institutions of higher education have begun to publicly examine and embrace their historical roles in the injustices and legacies of slavery. So far, however, there is no common, shared method for collecting, organizing, and describing historical data from the rich archival holdings of all these institutions. Despite the similarities of record types, information sources, and data elements, each institution is taking its own, often duplicative approach to its history. The absence of a common, shared approach to documenting, describing, and organizing the data derived from the archival records relating these histories limits researchers understanding of the lives and experiences of the enslaved across these institutional contexts, retards search and discovery across collections, and constrains the possibilities of a broader analysis of American educational institutions' historical ties to slavery.

The richness and density of these myriad archives call out the need for a robust data model that can fully represent those events, their contexts, and the individuals—black and white, enslaved and free—who participated in them. Together, the data from these colleges and universities will provide scholars, students, alumni, and descendants with a new understanding of the lived reality of bondage at these institutions of higher education. But the fullest universe of that understanding is not possible without bringing together relevant slavery-era records from the multiple institutions. Despite the vast and varied efforts on individual campuses to grapple with their individual legacies of slavery, to date there has been no coordinated effort to establish a shared data model to describe these events, the people who participated in them, and their institutional contexts. Of the more than sixty institutions actively working on studying their history with enslavement, many have expressed the necessity of a common approach to describing and documenting their archives. Benefits of this coordinated effort go far beyond improved

https://onthesegrounds.org/
In 1838 Thomas Mulledy, S.J. signed his name to an agreement selling the 275 enslaved persons who resided on Jesuit-owned estates in Southern Maryland to Louisiana. The sale served as the culmination of the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus's fraught experience with slaveholding in the colonial and early national period. While much historical work has been written on Jesuit slaveholding, that writing has primarily focused on the implications for the religious community and the moral universe in which these men made their decisions about slavery. Thus far, however, no scholar has studied the full group of people enslaved by the Jesuits in Maryland.

This project focuses on the lives and experiences of the enslaved, rather than on their Jesuit owners. Focusing on the enslaved community itself makes this project ideally suited for digital methods. With an eye to the events and relationships that formed the warp and woof of the daily lives of this enslaved community, Sharon Leon has identified the individual enslaved people present in the documentary evidence beginning in the 1740s and situated them within their families and larger community. The source base for this work consists of a number of collections related to the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus, which are housed at the Booth Family Center for Special Collections at Georgetown University. Many of the key documents are available through the Georgetown Slavery Archive.

In processing and representing this archival research, the project employs linked open data and social network analysis to assess the entire community of enslaved people and their relationships to one another across space and time. This approach allows for both a focus on the distinct individuality of each enslaved person and the ability to pull back to grasp the

https://jesuitplantationproject.org
Universities Studying Slavery

The Universities Studying Slavery (USS) consortium, created and led by the University of Virginia, represents a multi-institutional collaboration focused in sharing best practices and guiding principles about truth-telling projects addressing human bondage and racism in institutional histories. Member schools are all committed to research, acknowledgment, and atonement regarding institutional ties to the slave trade, to enslavement on campus or abroad, and to enduring racism in school history and practice.

https://slavery.virginia.edu/universities-studying-slavery/
Omeka provides open-source web publishing platforms for sharing digital collections and creating media-rich online exhibits.

Explore other Omeka projects

https://omeka.org/
Omeka S

Omeka S is a next-generation web publishing platform for institutions interested in connecting digital cultural heritage collections with other resources online.

Download v3.0.2 or Try the sandbox

INSTALL ONCE
Create and manage many sites with a streamlined installation of Omeka S.

https://omeka.org/s/
Call for Testing Partners

Summary Details

- Submission Deadline: June 1, 2021
- Collaborative Testing Partner Selection by June 22, 2021
- Period of Performance: July 2021-May 2022
- Questions and concerns should be directed to the OTG team at info@onthesegrounds.org

Over the past decade, many institutions of higher education have begun to publicly examine and embrace their historical roles in the injustices and legacies of slavery. So far, however, there is no common, shared method for collecting, organizing, and describing historical data from the rich archival holdings of all these institutions. The absence of a common, shared approach to documenting, describing, and organizing the data derived from the archival records relating these histories limits researchers' understanding of the lives and experiences of the enslaved across these institutional contexts, retards research and discovery across collections, and constrains the possibilities of a broader analysis of American...
“On These Grounds: Collections as Data”

Association of Southeastern Research Libraries
April 15, 2021

Mary Beth Corrigan
Booth Family Center for Special Collections
mc248@georgetown.edu
On These Grounds

- Not just a descriptive method, but we are creating a database
- Really part of a generational effort to create open sources of information
- Used in computational studies, maps, network visualizations in addition to genealogical research, biographies, local history, and other interpretive histories
- Model testing: definition of fields and standardization of values that will apply to a diversity of events
“History from the bottom up” -- Cliometric methods

Beginning in the early 1970s

- Created datasets primarily from the population, manufacturing, agricultural, mortality, and slave schedules of the census.
- Supplemented by other sources of information, including city directories, maps, vital statistics, and commodity prices.

Limitations of these methods

Cliometricians criticized because of their blind faith in the objectivity of their sources.

- Overlooked narratives, newspapers, manuscripts that helped establish the perceptions and experiences of marginalized peoples.
- Accepted their sources at face value without examining the biases of the creators of documents.
- Selected sources in tabular format with data, limiting the types of sources used.
- Additional work required to make up for the gaps in the sources.
Interoperability (Not) of Cliometric Datasets

The cliometricians valued intellectually generosity:
- Shared methods and discussed sources in publications (books and journals)
- Possible to replicate their results

Datasets were not shared among researchers:
- Mainframes and stand-alone computers discouraged the sharing of data
- The selection of fields and coding of variables depended upon individual researchers’ interests
- Coding methods were not standardized
- Definitions varied, particularly occupational and age classifications
- Data preservation plans were non-existent

The Afro-American Communities Project undertaken in 1990s
- Partnership of George Washington University and the Smithsonian Institution Museum of American History led by James Oliver Horton
- Coding of the population schedules of the census for major cities 1850-1920 (1/10 sample of households)
- Data shared with other scholars, but it was not truly open because there was no plan to distribute it
- No preservation plan so that the datasets are now lost
Enslaved.org

- Open source collection of databases compiled to study slavery
- Allows individuals to be searched across all project databases
- Enables the visualization of relationships between individuals: connecting them to each other, to locations and to events
- Standardize vocabularies between these databases to make possible the consolidated searches
- Preservation of databases by Harvard dataverse
- Presents narratives and biographies using sources from the databases that humanizes the data
- Anticipates growth during 2021
Always Already Computational: Collections as Data

Santa Barbara Statement written by the Institute for Museum and Library Services supported by the archivists, technologists, subject experts, and cataloguers

- Explored how to use digital and born digital collections as computational data
  - text mining
  - data visualization
  - mapping
  - image analysis
  - network analysis

- Obligations of collections as data stewards
  - Lower barriers to use
  - Ethical commitment to work against historic and contemporary inequities
  - Shared documentation about decisions such as selection
  - Interoperability: alignment with community standards and infrastructure to promote partnerships and sharing
  - Iterative: datasets are never final and can be added to
  - Diversity of sources
OTG
Event-based model

- Allows for inclusion of people who did not create the documents and remained unnamed in documents
- Interoperable by using Linked Object Data
- Uses community descriptive standards which includes library standards
- Allows diverse sources to be included in the dataset
- Promotes discoverability by providing access to finding aids, digitized copies, and transcripts
- Enables researchers to see patterns and connections between documents across repositories
Diversity in Participants and Documents

- Seeks a broad range of participants from universities with a history of enslavement
  - Model testing is designed to anticipate a broad range of records.
  - Lead institutions have a broad range of sources
    - Georgetown: financial records, sacramental records, plantation ledgers
    - University of Virginia: Board of Visitors minutes, faculty minutes, faculty chairman journals, proctor’s ledgers
  - Currently seeking four institutional partners to participate in the model testing
  - This project is ongoing and iterative
    - Extent of documentation should not be a barrier
    - Level of control: Finding aids should be available but transcripts and digitization are not required.
    - Involves archivists, librarians, historians, technicians

Members of Georgetown community during crowdsourcing event
Contributions of Archival Practice

Strong archival description will support the entry of data
- Creators/authors should be clear
- Scope and content notes describe the roles of the creator and function of the document
- Consistency in language used in series and file folder titles
- Locations and dates should also be available
- Indices, transcripts, and other supplementary description can be useful and their use will be explored during model testing

Each record created in OTG will include full source information to enable further research on individual entries:
- Written citation and URLs to finding aids and digitized documents
- Available transcriptions of documents
- Searchable for ALL researchers
Contributions of Library Practice

Library standards are part of community standards

- Names of individuals (creators, authors, institutions in records) -- creation of agent records
- Geographic locators
- Where available use of existing subject authorities (Library of Congress, Wikidata, VIAF)
- Creation of agent records ultimately will streamline data entry.
- We are mindful of the problems posed by such authority records, particularly the Library of Congress subject headings. We are discussing whether this will result in the creation of new headings.
- Use of personal agents, institutional agents, and subject categories will promote the discoverability of documents
A Generational Contribution

- Places marginalized peoples at the center of the description
- High value placed upon discoverability, interoperability, openness, and transparency
- Because of the diversity of sources used, OTG will enable researchers to capture a broad range of experiences
- The data entry will need to be simple enough so that the activity does not require high-level skills. We need to think like organizers. How do we encourage and empower people to try this?
Interested in collaborating with OTG?

Call for testing partners: onthesegrounds.org/s/OTG/page/call-for-testing-partners

For more information

Check onthesegrounds.org

Lithograph of Academical Village (Rotunda, Pavilions, and the Lawn) of the University of Virginia (Edward Sachse, 1856)
The *On These Grounds* Ontology:

A Linked Open Data model for archival collections related to slavery

Emily Baldoni
Metadata Librarian, Digital and Special Collections
Georgetown University
EmilyBaldoni@georgetown.edu
The OTG Ontology: Some Basics

- A Linked Open Data (LOD) model
  - Intended to facilitate free, open (re)use of data
  - Omeka S as a Linked Open Data (LOD) publishing platform
  - Reuse of properties from other vocabularies whenever possible
  - Built around basic LOD principles:
    - Use of RDF statement structure:
      - `<Subject>`  `<Predicate>`  `<Object>`
    - Use of URIs as names for things
Subject \rightarrow Predicate \rightarrow Object
Event: Isaac runs away, January 29 1814

Has participant

Isaac
Event: Isaac runs away, January 29, 1814

Source: Father McElroy's diary

Georgetown

Event: Isaac is jailed, January 30, 1814

Source: Runaway ad, National Intelligencer

Event: Isaac is sold, January 31, 1814

Fr. John McElroy

Unnamed Buyer

Harford County, MD

Baltimore, MD

Isaac

Fr. Neale
Model Structure

- **Event types**
  - A classification of events found in the documents

- **Properties**
  - The data about events and people that we want to record

- **Testing Round 1 (October 2020-March 2021): Comparison of “Simple” and “Complex“ versions of the model**
  - **Simple**: A single class with a controlled vocabulary of Event types
  - **Complex**: An Event class with subclasses; More granular properties for individual Event types
Event Types

- Commercial transaction
- Education
- Enslaved status transaction
- Health
- Inventory
- Labor
- Legal
- Life-course
- Membership
- Narrative
- Provisions
- Religious
- Resistance
- Travel
- Violence
Event sub-types
(a few examples)

- Enslaved Status Transaction
  - Dispute
  - Enslavement
  - Exchange
  - Manumission
  - Purchase
  - Sale
  - Transfer

- Religious
  - Baptism
  - Communion
  - Confession
  - Last Rights
  - Marriage
  - Music
  - Ordination
  - Preaching
Basic Event Properties

- Title
- Description
- Event Type
- Keywords
- Action Status
- Date

- Date Comment
- Location
- Cause
- Outcome
- Source
- Related
Additional Properties

- Properties that describe the primary enslaved participant (Freedom Status, Enslaver, Age, etc.)
- Properties that designate other participants in the Event (Witness, Officiator, Buyer, Seller, etc.)
- Specialized properties for specific Event types
  - Commercial exchanges (Currency, Price, Good or Service, etc.)
  - Movement (Destination, Origin)
  - Health events (Symptom, Treatment)
Data entry via Omeka S templates
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Keywords</td>
<td>Action Status</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dcterms:title</td>
<td>dcterms:description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813-11-30, Unnamed enslaved persons, Inventory</td>
<td>In a diary entry from November 1813, John McElroy notes that the &quot;number of our family&quot; includes &quot;13 Colored Persons&quot;. [[Transcript: &quot;The Number of our Family at present is 101 persons viz 88 White + 13 Colored persons.&quot;</td>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed ▼</td>
<td>1813-11-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814-01-01, Unnamed enslaved persons, Inventory</td>
<td>In a diary entry from January 1814, John McElroy counts &quot;12 servants&quot; out of 102 people residing at Georgetown College. [[Transcript: &quot;The Total number of Persons residing in the College this day is 102 their names may be seen in the Latter part of the day book for 1813. In the above number there are 5 Priests - two Scholastics - Nine Lay Brothers - 9 Seculars, (Masters &amp; tradesmen) - 65 Scholars and 12 Servants&quot;</td>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed ▼</td>
<td>1814-01-01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814-12-31, Unnamed enslaved persons, Inventory</td>
<td>In a diary entry from December 1814, John McElroy counts &quot;17 Servants&quot; out of 116 people residing at Georgetown College. [[Transcript: &quot;The Number of Persons residing in the house at present is at 116, of which 4 are Priests, 8 Scholastics, 10 Lay Brothers, 77 Scholars + 17 Servants, having had an increase of about 14 persons during the past year.&quot;</td>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed ▼</td>
<td>1814-12-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-10-12, Unnamed enslaved persons, Inventory</td>
<td>The Procurator of the Maryland Province informs the Assessors for Prince George’s County (Robert C. Brooke and Joseph J. Jones) that &quot;four old slave servants, 1 man &amp; 3 women, all disabled &amp; above the age of 70&quot; remain at White Marsh Plantation. [[Transcript: &quot;There remain belonging to us only four old slave servants 1 man &amp; 3 women, all disabled &amp; above the age of 70. The 2 Priests, who live in the house close by the Church, have their 2 horses to visit their congern besides a very old one &amp; 3 cows for the use of their family. The Revd Ed. McCarthy, who is here on a visit considers that the whole household, furniture, of every article taxable, is not worth more than $140 or 150.&quot;</td>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed ▼</td>
<td>1840-10-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions?

Emily Baldoni
Metadata Librarian, Digital and Special Collections
Georgetown University
EmilyBaldoni@georgetown.edu
Testing the Model

Stacey Lavender, University of Virginia Library
Process

- Documents from each institution
  - ~40 events each
  - As many event types as possible
- Test both models
- Manual entry and CSV
- Give regular feedback
Monticello, December 27, 1821

Sir,

In answer to your note of a few days since, in order to annoy me by further importunity I have decided to take certain steps. I have written to the subject of your inquiry, and asked for an answer. I have also written to the subject of your inquiry, and asked for an answer. In the mean time I intend to proceed to the subject of your inquiry, and ask for an answer. In the mean time I intend to proceed to the subject of your inquiry, and ask for an answer. In the mean time I intend to proceed to the subject of your inquiry, and ask for an answer.

I remain, with respect,

Your obedient servant,

[Signature]

Mr. J. W. Brockenbrough
Example

- 2 letters from Edmund Bacon to A.S. Brockenbrough
- 8 events involving Isham, Lewis, John, and Wilson
  - Two event types for each man
    - Commercial transaction
    - Travel
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Created</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1809-03-28, Julia Ann, Life-course (Birth)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Sam Smith</td>
<td>Dec 12, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1809-03-28, Sarah Ann, Life-course (Birth)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Sam Smith</td>
<td>Dec 12, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843-09, Unnamed enslaved person, Labor</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Emily Baldoni</td>
<td>Dec 11, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847-06, Children of Charles Taylor, Health (Illness)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Emily Baldoni</td>
<td>Dec 11, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847-04, Children of Charles Taylor, Health (Illness)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Emily Baldoni</td>
<td>Dec 11, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792-09-07, James, Health (Medical treatment)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Emily Baldoni</td>
<td>Dec 11, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792-05-31, Sukey, Health (Medical treatment)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Emily Baldoni</td>
<td>Dec 11, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822, John, Travel (Temporary)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Stacey Lavender</td>
<td>Dec 11, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822, Wilson, Travel (Temporary)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Stacey Lavender</td>
<td>Dec 11, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792-05-30, Byrne, Health (Medical treatment)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Emily Baldoni</td>
<td>Dec 11, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822, Lewis, Travel (Temporary)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Stacey Lavender</td>
<td>Dec 11, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821-12, Isham, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Stacey Lavender</td>
<td>Dec 11, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821-12, John, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Stacey Lavender</td>
<td>Dec 11, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821-12, Lewis, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Stacey Lavender</td>
<td>Dec 11, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821-12, Wilson, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Stacey Lavender</td>
<td>Dec 11, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-02-23, Enslaved man returned to plantation</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Mary Beth Corrigan</td>
<td>Dec 10, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-02-04, Enslaved man delivered from jail to potential buyer</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Mary Beth Corrigan</td>
<td>Dec 10, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818-01-22, Enslaved man placed in jail</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Mary Beth Corrigan</td>
<td>Dec 10, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835-12-10, William, Violence (Physical assault)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Stacey Lavender</td>
<td>Dec 10, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850, Unnamed enslaved girl, Violence (Sexual Assault)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Stacey Lavender</td>
<td>Dec 10, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832-11, Rachel, Religious (Baptism)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Stacey Lavender</td>
<td>Dec 10, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832-11, Isaac, Religious (Baptism)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Stacey Lavender</td>
<td>Dec 10, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824-06-24, Harlot Edelin, Commercial transaction (Enslaved hire)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Emily Baldoni</td>
<td>Dec 9, 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Title:** 1821-12, Wilson, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)

**Description:**
William, an enslaved man, is offered for hire to University of Virginia Proctor Arthur S. Brockenbrough by Edmund Bacon, along with three other enslaved men (see related events). Bacon sets the price at $70 per man for the term of one year. Bacon also reserves the right to bring Wilson and two of the other men back early, if the fall in the event that he moves to the Western part of the country and wants to bring them with him. The letters also include a discussion of Wilson and the others visiting their wives during the term of the hire (see related events). Bacon also expects that the men "be clothed in common way and fed well."

Partial transcript:
"Now you have seen all four and if you chose to take them at $70 round you can do so otherwise the subject is with me at an end Lewis John & Wilson will be subject to be given up at the fall if I require but [Isha[n] you can certainly keep till Christmas."

**Type:** Commercial transaction: Enslaved hire

**actionStatus:** Potential

**Date:** December 1821

**Location:** University of Virginia

**Source:**
December 16, 1821 and December 27, 1821 letters from Edmund Bacon to Arthur S. Brockenbrough, Papers of the Proctor of the University of Virginia, 1817-1828 (Arthur Spicer Brockenbrough), Accession #RG-5/3, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

**Finding Aid:**
- [1821-12, John, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)](link)
- [1821-12, Isham, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)](link)
- [1821-12, Lewis, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)](link)
- [1822, Wilson, Travel (Temporary)](link)

**Primary Enslaved Participant:** Wilson

**Enslaved Status:** Enslaved

**Author:** Edmund Bacon

**Seller:** Edmund Bacon

**Leaser:** Arthur Spicer Brockenbrough

**Duration:** 1 year

**Currency:** USD

**Price:** 70

**Price Specification:** In addition to the price, it is specified that the men will be "clothed in the common way and fed well."

**Visibility:** Public

**Item sets:** UVA Simple Events, Round 1 Testing

**Sites:**
- [OTG Dev Description](link)

**Created:** Dec 11, 2020

**Owner:** Stacey Lavender
**Title:** 1821-12, Wilson, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)

**Description:** William, an enslaved man, is offered for hire to University of Virginia Proctor Arthur S. Brockembrough by Edmund Bacon, along with three other enslaved men (see related events). Bacon sets the price at $70 per man for the term of one year. Bacon also reserves the right to bring Wilson and two of the other men back early. In the fall, in the event that he moves to the Western part of the country and wants to bring them with him. The letters also include a discussion of Wilson and the others visiting their wives during the term of the hire (see related events). Bacon also expects that the men "be clothed in common way and fed well."

Partial transcript:

"Now you have seen all four and if you chose to take them at $70 round you can do so otherwise the subject is with me at an end Lewis John & Wilson will be subject to be given up at the fall if I require but [Isham] you can certainly keep till Christmas."

**Type:** Commercial transaction: Enslaved hire

**actionStatus:** Potential

**Date:** December 1821

**Location:** University of Virginia

**Source:**
December 16, 1821 and December 27, 1821 letters from Edmund Bacon to Arthur S. Brockembrough, Papers of the Proctor of the University of Virginia, 1817-1828 (Arthur Spicer Brockembrough), Accession #RG-5/3, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

**Finding Aid:**

**Related:**
- 1821-12, John, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)
- 1821-12, Isham, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)
- 1821-12, Lewis, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)
- 1822, Wilson, Travel (Temporary)

**Primary Enslaved Participant:** Wilson

**Enslaved Status:** Enslaved

**Author:** Edmund Bacon

**Seller:** Edmund Bacon

**Leaser:** Arthur Spicer Brockembrough

**Duration:** 1 year

**Currency:** USD

**Price:** 70

**Price Specification:** In addition to the price, it is specified that the men will be "clothed in the common way and fed well."
Wilson was an man enslaved by Edmund Bacon and hired out to University of Virginia Proctor Arthur S. Brockenbrough in 1822. Wilson appears in letters written from Bacon to Brockenbrough.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Alternate label</th>
<th>Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1821-12, Wilson, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)</td>
<td>Primary Enslaved Participant</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822, Wilson, Travel (Temporary)</td>
<td>Primary Enslaved Participant</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822, Wilson, Travel (Temporary)</td>
<td>Primary Enslaved Participant</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822, Wilson, Commercial transaction (Enslaved Hire)</td>
<td>Primary Enslaved Participant</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1821-12, Wilson, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)

**Title:**
1821-12, Wilson, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)

**Description:**
William, an enslaved man, is offered for hire to University of Virginia Proctor Arthur S. Brockenbrough by Edmund Bacon, along with three other enslaved men (see related events). Bacon sets the price at $70 per man for the term of one year. Bacon also reserves the right to bring Wilson and two of the other men back early, in the fall, in the event that he moves to the Western part of the country and wants to bring them with him. The letters also include a discussion of Wilson and the others visiting their wives during the term of the hire (see related events). Bacon also expects that the men "be clothed in common way and fed well."

Partial transcript:
"now you have seen all four and if you chose to take them at $70 round you can do so otherwise the subject is with me at an end Lewis John & Wilson will be subject to be given up at the fall if I require but [Isham] you can certainly keep till Christmas."

**Type:**
Commercial transaction: Enslaved hire

**actionStatus:**
Potential

**Date:**
December 1821

**Location:**
University of Virginia

**Source:**
December 16, 1821 and December 27, 1821 letters from Edmund Bacon to Arthur S. Brockenbrough, Papers of the Proctor of the University of Virginia, 1817-1828 (Arthur Spicer Brockenbrough), Accession #RG-5/3, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

**Finding Aid:**

- 1821-12, John, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)
- 1821-12, Isham, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)
- 1821-12, Lewis, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)
- 1822, Wilson, Travel (Temporary)

**Primary Enslaved Participant:**
Wilson

**Enslaved Status:**
Enslaved

**Author:**
Edmund Bacon

**Seller:**
Edmund Bacon

**Leaser:**
Arthur Spicer Brockenbrough

**Duration:**
1 year

**Currency:**
USD

**Price:**
70

**Price Specification:**
In addition to the price, it is specified that the men will be "clothed in the common way and fed well."
1822, Wilson, Travel (Temporary)

Class: Event
Title: 1822, Wilson, Travel (Temporary)
Description: Wilson, an enslaved man offered for hire to University of Virginia Proctor Arthur S. Brockenbrough by Edmund Bacon for a term of one year (see related event), planned to return home visit his wife during the course of that year. In letters outlining the terms of the hire, Bacon included instructions that the men involved be allowed to make arrangements to come see their wives.

Partial transcript:
"I have consented that if the men can make arrangements with you about coming to see their wives that you may take the whole four at $70 [round]"

Type: Travel: Temporary
actionStatus: Potential
Date: 1822
Source: December 16, 1821 and December 27, 1821 letters from Edmund Bacon to Arthur S. Brockenbrough, Papers of the Proctor of the University of Virginia, 1817-1828 (Arthur Spicer Brockenbrough), Accession #RG-5/3, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

Finding Aid
Related: 1821-12, Wilson, Commercial Transaction (Enslaved Hire)
Primary Enslaved Participant: Wilson
Enslaved Status: Enslaved
Owner: Edmund Bacon
Author: Edmund Bacon
Leaser: Arthur Spicer Brockenbrough
Call for Testing Partners

Summary Details

- Submission Deadline: June 1, 2021
- Collaborative Testing Partner Selection by June 22, 2021
- Period of Performance: July 2021-May 2022
- Questions and concerns should be directed to the OTG team at info@onthesegrounds.org

Over the past decade, many institutions of higher education have begun to publicly examine and embrace their historical roles in the injustices and legacies of slavery. So far, however, there is no common, shared method for collecting, organizing, and describing historical data from the rich archival holdings of all these institutions. The absence of a common, shared approach to documenting, describing, and organizing the data derived from the archival records relating these histories limits researchers’ understanding of the lives and experiences of the enslaved across these institutional contexts, retards research and discovery across collections, and constrains the possibilities of a broader analysis of American