



ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEASTERN RESEARCH LIBRARIES

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ASERL Launches Shared Exhibit To commemorate 400th anniversary of the arrival of first Africans sold into bondage in the English Colonies

NOVEMBER 1, 2019 – ATLANTA – Today the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) has launched its first-ever shared online exhibit to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first Africans sold into bondage in the English Colonies. The exhibit includes materials from 33 ASERL member libraries and three libraries that are members of the HBCU Library Alliance.

The exhibit, “Enslaved People in the Southeast,” was curated by a team of nine archivists and contains more than 100 items related to the American slavery and its after-effects. Items in the exhibit include auction records and other bills of sale, plantation records, materials from the abolitionist movement, and photographs and other items from the Jim Crow South.

“It is fitting that there have been many recognitions of the 1619 anniversary,” noted Anne Prestamo, ASERL’s Board President and Dean of Libraries at Florida International University. “Much of the slave trade happened in the states where ASERL libraries are now located. As an alliance of research institutions in the region, it’s within ASERL’s mission to share our members’ collections as part of this nationwide effort to commemorate this somber anniversary.”

Special Collections Interest Group co-chair Tanya Zanish-Belcher added, “The Curatorial Team is grateful to all the institutions who contributed to this exhibit which displays the totality of enslavement and the importance of our confronting and engaging with our past. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Curatorial group in writing the narrative and descriptions that give life to this material and provide much-needed context. Thanks are due to Jessica Perkins Smith and Suzan Alteri for their leadership in planning and organizing this important effort.”

The ASERL online exhibit can be found at <https://bit.ly/2JETOLF>. Additional items may be added to the exhibit in coming months. Institutions interested in contributing can contact the Special

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Collections group co-chairs Tanya Zanish-Belcher (zanisht@wfu.edu) and Jessica Perkins Smith (jsmith@library.msstate.edu).

About ASERL

Founded in 1956, ASERL is one of the largest regional research library consortia in the United States, serving 38 institutional members in 11 states. ASERL is housed in the Robert W. Woodruff Library at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. By working together, ASERL members provide and maintain top-quality resources and services for the students, faculty, and citizens of their respective communities. See www.aserl.org for more information.

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