

Michael Becker, PhD

Visiting Assistant Professor

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EMPLOYMENT

Visiting Assistant Professor of History, Bates College. 2021 – Present.

EDUCATION

PhD, Atlantic History, Duke University, 2021.

Dissertation: “The Rule of the Lash and Rule of Law: Amelioration, Enslaved People’s Politics, and the Courts in Jamaica, 1780-1834”

Committee: David Barry Gaspar (Chair), Susan Thorne, Laura Edwards, Jocelyn Olcott
Certificates in African & African American Studies, Latin American & Caribbean Studies, and College Teaching.

MA, History, Duke University, 2015.

Examination Fields: The Atlantic World, 1500-1850 (David Barry Gaspar); West & Central Africa, 1400-1900 (Bruce Hall); Theories of the State and State Formation (Jocelyn Olcott).

BA, *Magna Cum Laude*, Africana Studies, Brown University, 2013.

Thesis: “‘What Kind of Free is This?’: The Maroons of Platons and the Political Thought of the Haitian Revolution.” Barrymore Anthony Bagues, Advisor. Anani Dzidzienyo, Second Reader.

PUBLICATIONS

Chapters & Articles

“The Politics of Interpreting Slave Inventories: A Case Study of Ballard’s Valley Plantation, St. Mary’s Parish, Jamaica.” (Manuscript full draft, revising for journal submission)

“Re-interpreting the Legal Logics of Enslaved People’s Property Claims” (Manuscript in process)

“Revolution at the Crossroads: Re-framing the Haitian Revolution from the Heights of Platons,” in Toyin Falola and Cacee Hoyer, eds., *Human Rights, Race, and Resistance in the African Diaspora* (New York: Routledge, 2016). 170-187.

Reviews

Review of Christine Levecq, *Black Cosmopolitans: Race, Religion, and Republicanism in an Age of Revolution*. H-Caribbean, H-Net Reviews. 2021. (In Progress.)

Review of Daniel Rood, *The Reinvention of Atlantic Slavery: Technology, Labor, Race and Capitalism in the Greater Caribbean*. H-Caribbean, H-Net Reviews. December 2018. URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=52299>.

Review of Colleen Vasconcellos, *Slavery, Childhood, and Abolition in Jamaica, 1788-1838*, in *Caribbean Quarterly*. Vol. 64, Issues 3-4 (2018). 605-607.

Selected Other Publications

“Abstract : ‘The Rule of the Lash and the Rule of Law: Amelioration, Enslaved People’s Politics, and the Courts in Jamaica, 1780-1834’” in *The Jamaican Historical Society Bulletin*. (Under review).

“Alumni Profiles Series: Jennifer Morgan. ” Duke Graduate School Blog. (August 12, 2020). <https://gradschool.duke.edu/professional-development/blog/alumni-profiles-series-jennifer-morgan>

TEACHING & RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Instructor

Bates College

2021: “The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade”

2021: “Race, Gender, and Power in the Early Modern Atlantic World”

Duke University

2020: “The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade”

2018: “Comparative Caribbean Emancipations”

2016: “African American History Since 1865”

Teaching Assistant

Duke University

2020-21: “Comparative Approaches to Global Issues”

2015: “American Dreams, American Realities”

2014: “Race: A Global History”

Research Experience

2019-21: Research Assistant, Dr. Miranda Kaufmann, “Caribbean Heiresses” Project

2018-21: Research Assistant, Professor Phil Stern, Duke University

2016-17: Research Assistant, Professor David Barry Gaspar, Duke University

2013-14: Research Assistant, Professors Laurent Dubois and Deborah Jenson, Haiti Digital Library, Duke University

2013: Research Assistant, Professor Barrymore Anthony Bogues, Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, Brown University

CONFERENCES & PRESENTATIONS

Conferences Organized

- 2017: "In Freedom's Name: Rethinking Caribbean Emancipation." With David Barry Gaspar and Kristina Williams. Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
- 2015: "Staging Sovereignty: Knowledge, Narrative, and Spaces of Governance." With Eladio Bobadilla, Erasmo Castellani, Farren Yero, and Kena Wani. Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
- 2014: "Reworking Freedom: Graduate Student Workshop on Re-Centering the Enslaved in Histories of the Americas." With Westenley Alcenat, Yesenia Barragan, and Eric Herschthal. Columbia University, New York City, New York.

Panels Organized

- 2022: "Enslaved People and the State in the Colonial Caribbean." American Historical Association Conference. New Orleans, Louisiana.
- 2020: "Gender, Politics, and Law in the Age of Emancipation." With Kristina Williams and Tayzhuhan Glover. North Carolina Conference on Latin American Studies. University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Charlotte, North Carolina. Cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2020: "Enslaved People's Politics, Imperial Rule, and Amelioration in the Caribbean." American Historical Association Conference. Manhattan, New York.
- 2019: "Slavery, Mobility, and the Law in the Americas." With Elise Mitchell. American Historical Association Conference. Chicago, Illinois.

Selected Conference Presentations

- 2022: "Fear of a Black Republic: The Lecesne-Escoffery Conspiracy Scare and Imagining Independent Haiti in 1820s Jamaica." To be presented at the American Historical Association Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- 2021: "Enslaved People and the Debt of the Planter Class in Early 19th Century Jamaica." To be presented at the Latin American & Caribbean Section of the Southern Historical Association, Memphis, Tennessee. Postponed from 2020 to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2021: "Enslaved People's Claims to Property in Jamaica, 1780 – 1834." Presented at the Caribbean Studies Association, online. Rescheduled from 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2020: "'Scandalous Neglect, Ignorance and Turpitude': Jamaican Magistrates, Criminal Procedure and the Trial of Enslaved People." North Carolina Conference on Latin American Studies. University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina. Cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2020: "'Master Said He Was over All the Magistrates': Amelioration, the Law, and Two Enslaved Women's Struggle for Justice." Presented at the American Historical Association Conference. Manhattan, New York.

- 2019: “ ‘Against the Peace of our Lord the King, His Crown and Dignity’: Enslaved People, the British Empire, and the Law in Early 19th Century Jamaica.” Presented at the 11th Annual Charles Town Maroon Conference, Charles Town, Portland, Jamaica.
- 2019: “ ‘Incorrigible Runaways’: Enslaved People’s Mobility and the Courts in Mid-19th Century Jamaica.” Presented at the American Historical Association Conference. Chicago, Illinois.
- 2018: “Re-thinking the Legal Logics of Enslaved People’s Possessions in Early 19th Century Jamaica,” Presented at “Black Thought Matters,” 3rd annual conference of the African American Intellectual History Society. Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts.
- 2018: “‘The Better Government of Slaves’: Amelioration and the Trials of Planters for Abuse in Jamaica, 1788–1834.” Presented at the Conference of Latin American Historians. Washington, DC.
- 2016: “ ‘They come and treat us as if we were the brigands...’: Colonial Cognitive Dissonance and Narrating Maroon Revolution.” Presented at “Marronage and Maroonage in Culture, History, and Society,” College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina.
- 2015: “ ‘Your Slavery, My Freedom and My Happiness Are Inseparable,’ Representing Colonial White Fear during the Haitian Revolution.” Presented at “Staging Sovereignty: Knowledge, Narrative, and Spaces of Governance,” Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
- 2014: “ ‘This Land Has Not Been For You What It Has For Us’: Thinking the Haitian Revolution from Below.” Presented at UNC - Duke Consortium in Latin American and Caribbean Studies 10th Annual Consortium Conference, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill/Duke University, North Carolina.
- 2014: “Revolution at the Crossroads: Re-framing the Haitian Revolution from the Heights of Platons.” Presented at “Reworking Freedom: Graduate Student Workshop on Recentring the Enslaved in Histories of the Americas,” Columbia University, New York City, New York.

Invited Lectures & Seminars

- 2021: “‘Master Said He Was Over All the Magistrates’: Amelioration, Reputation, and Enslaved Jamaicans’ Legal Advocacy.” Invited Lecture for Department of History, Bates College.
- 2021: “Nationalism and the Age of New Imperialism.” Guest Lecture in course by Professor Leigh Campoamor, “Comparative Approaches to Global Issues,” Duke University.
- 2020: “Climate Collapse and the Rise of Disaster Capitalism: A Caribbean Case Study.” Guest Lecture in course by Professor Deonte Harris, “Comparative Approaches to Global Issues,” Duke University.
- 2020: “‘To Guard with Increased Vigilance the Purity of the Slave Code’: Criminal Procedure and Slave Trials in Jamaica.” Presented to the Duke Latin American & Caribbean History Grad Student Workshop.
- 2019: “‘Whatever Property They May Be Able to Acquire’: Enslaved People’s Claims to Property in Jamaica’s Slave Courts, 1780-1834.” Presented at the Staff / Graduate Seminar of the Department of History and Archaeology, University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica.

- 2018: “‘Against Their Owner’: Enslaved People in Their Own Defense and Jamaica's Councils of Protection,” John Carter Brown Library Fellows Seminar, Providence, Rhode Island.
- 2014: “The Political Thought of the Haitian Revolution and the Maroons of Platons.” Guest Lecture in course by Professor Anthony Bogues, “The Haitian Revolution: Archives, Art, and Revolution,” Brown University.
- 2014: “‘All Haitians are Black’: Re-making Race in the Haitian Revolution.” Guest Lecture in course by Professor Adriane Lentz-Smith, “The Global History of Race.”
- 2014: “Deplòtonnen sa Ayisyen panse sou revolisyon peyi yo ak entèpretasyon sa ki kouche nan achiv.” Presented at International Creole Day, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

External

- 2019: Fulbright Student Fellowship for Jamaica, US State Department.
- 2018: Paul W. McQuillen Fellowship, John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.
- 2018: Friends of the Princeton Library Research Grant, Princeton University.
- 2017: Albert J. Beveridge Grant for Research in the History of the Western Hemisphere, American Historical Association.
- 2014: Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship for Haitian Creole. Studied at Enstiti Travay ak Syans Sosyal, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Internal

- 2020: History Department Nominee, Dean’s Award for Excellence in Teaching, Duke University.
- 2018: Graduate Research & Teaching Award, Center for International Studies, Duke University
- 2018: Aleanne Webb Dissertation Research Fellowship, Duke University
- 2018: Summer Research Fellowship, Duke University
- 2017: Research Travel Grant, Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies, Duke University
- 2016: Graduate Research & Teaching Award, Center for International Studies, Duke University
- 2015: Summer Research Fellowship, Duke University
- 2014: Summer Research Fellowship, Duke University
- 2013-2018: James B. Duke Fellowship, Duke University
- 2013: Distinguished Senior Thesis Award, Brown University
- 2013: Anna Julia Cooper Award for Best Academic Performance, Africana Studies, Brown University
- 2013: W. E. B. DuBois Award for Best Honors Thesis, Africana Studies, Brown University

EXTERNAL COURSEWORK & INDEPENDENT TRAINING

- 2018: History of Capitalism Summer Bootcamp, Cornell University
- 2014: Teaching Triangles Peer Mentorship in College Teaching, Duke University

SERVICE

2021: “Researching and Writing an Honors Thesis.” Panel presentation in course by Professors Dotun Ayobade and Lisa Biggs, “Africana Studies Junior Seminar,” Brown University.
2020: Presenter, “Winning the Fulbright.” Duke History Graduate Students Association.
2019: Presenter, “My Fulbright Experience.” Office of Undergraduate Scholars and Fellows, Duke University.
2014-15: Graduate Student Representative, Duke History Department Colloquium Committee.

Professional Associations

American Historical Association
Association of Caribbean Historians
Caribbean Studies Association
Conference of Latin American Historians
African American Intellectual History Society
Jamaican Historical Society

Foreign Languages

French: proficient reading, writing, speaking.
Haitian Creole: proficient reading, writing, speaking.

References

Professor David Barry Gaspar (dissertation chair)
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Professor Laura Edwards
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