

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: Queen’s University Belfast</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: History</p>
<p>Title of case study: Transforming the History Classroom: Engaging Secondary-Level Educators in New Research on US Slave Emancipation.</p>
<p>1.Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Between 2006 and 2010 Brian Kelly directed a major research project on US slave emancipation involving strategic collaborations with civil society, public discourse and non-HE curriculum design partners in the United States. Pursuing an expansive approach to broad dissemination on the web, in print and through a series of well-staged conferences and educators’ workshops, this project has engaged hundreds of teachers, heritage and cultural workers, and curriculum experts in secondary education. Drawing these diverse constituencies into the collaborative production of high-quality, web-based teaching resources, project partners have played a leading role in reshaping history pedagogy on a critical topic as the US enters a long run of public commemorations marking the Civil War and its aftermath.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The AHRC-funded <i>After Slavery Project (AS)</i> involved three historians with complementary research profiles in the fields of labour, African American and US southern history: Kelly as PI, Susan O’Donovan (formerly Harvard University, now University of Memphis); and Bruce Baker (Royal Holloway University of London).</p> <p><u>Context and Objectives</u></p> <p>The research context was shaped by the ascent of a post-civil rights-era sensibility in studies of slave emancipation—an advance on racially-biased earlier scholarship but one that left prominent scholars pondering whether there was anything “left to be done”. AS’s research agenda developed out of a shared concern that critical problems <u>had</u> been left unattended—in particular that a weak appreciation for the socio-economic dimensions of emancipation left unexplained the wide disparities in freed slaves’ ability to shape society after the Civil War. Its commitment to capturing these complexities determined the scope of the project’s research: a ground-level study of the whole of the former slave South was considered unmanageable, but detailed research on the Carolinas—with their striking geographical, demographic and productive diversity—could illuminate the causes of unevenness in freedpeople’s agency.</p> <p>Acquiring a substantial collection of microfilm and other source materials, AS developed strategic links with leading research institutes across the eastern US. Collectively the team explored several hundred manuscript and documentary collections in 15 archives in 6 US states and the District of Columbia. The research outputs to date (Section 3) capture the range of circumstances across the Carolinas and showcase the kind of nuanced reappraisal of slave emancipation that scholars might pursue for the region as a whole.</p> <p><u>Research Outcomes</u></p> <p><i>After Slavery</i> has made two critical interpretive contributions in a vibrant and crowded field. In a variety of forums it has reasserted the advantages of understanding emancipation through the framework of labour history—an approach pioneered in the 1930s and embedded in some excellent recent scholarship, but which AS has articulated consistently, and through sustained engagement with diverse, non-HE constituencies often ignored by university-based historians. This emphasis on the social and economic dimensions of slave emancipation has made possible a second notable contribution. Drawing upon its own research and on some of the best recent work, <i>After Slavery</i> has advanced a new synthesis that acknowledges both the shared experiences of emancipation across the South and the wide variety of situations that freed slaves encountered locally.</p>

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3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Kelly and Baker, eds. Foreword by Eric Foner. After Slavery: Race, Labor and Citizenship in the Reconstruction South (University Press of Florida, 2013) [Edited Collection: introduction by Kelly and Baker, chapters by Kelly and 9 others] Supplied by HEI on request.

Kelly, 'Class, Factionalism, and the Radical Retreat: Black Laborers and the Republican Party in South Carolina, 1865-1900', in After Slavery: Race, Labor and Citizenship in the Reconstruction South (2013), 199-220. [chapter in edited collection]. Included in REF 2.

Kelly, 'A Slaveholder's Republic in the Tumult of War', *Reviews in American History* 40:4 (2012): 637-45. [review essay in leading US journal] Supplied by HEI on request.

Kelly and John H. White, 'The After Slavery Website: A New Online Resource for Teaching US Emancipation', *Journal of the Civil War Era* 1:4 (2011): 581-94. [article on pedagogy and online learning in field-leading US journal]. Supplied by HEI on request.

Kelly, 'Emancipations and Reversals: Labor, Race and the Boundaries of American Freedom in the Age of Capital', *International Labor and Working Class History* 75:1 (2009): 1-15. [essay in international labour history journal]. Included in REF 2.

Kelly, 'Labor and Place: The Contours of Grassroots Black Mobilization in Reconstruction South Carolina', *Journal of Peasant Studies* [special issue on 'Rethinking Agrarian Studies'] 35:4 (2008): 653-87. [research-based article in special issue of international journal]. Included in REF 2.

Grants:

AHRC 2006-2010: £209,439

AH/D001943/1, PI: Brian Kelly

Title: After Slavery: Race, Labor and Politics in the Post-Emancipation Carolinas

South Carolina Humanities Council, 2010, 2013: \$10,000, \$850

Conference, Teachers' Workshop (Charleston, March 2010; February 2013)

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

In application materials submitted to the AHRC in 2005, AS outlined both its determination to pursue an innovative research agenda and a commitment to putting broad public engagement at the heart of its work, emphasizing its **dissatisfaction over the gulf between advances in new scholarly research on emancipation and the persistence of an older, largely discredited rendering of the past** in secondary-level education and in public discourse. Its work in the period since has been directed at contributing in a meaningful way to closing that gap, and to that end AS has been engaged over the long term with a broad constituency of US-based high school educators and curriculum experts, labour, community and cultural organizations, heritage workers and US National Park Service personnel, and commemorative projects. **Strategically its focus has been on changing the way secondary school teachers think about this period.**

The project's impact strategy rested on **three essential elements**: the launch of an aesthetically appealing, intellectually credible website intended for classroom and popular use; the organization of a series of high-profile (US) conferences and workshops that would promote enduring collaborations between leading research historians and the diverse constituencies mentioned above; and an ambitious campaign to engage high school educators across the Carolinas in designing a new curriculum and producing high-quality online teaching resources on slave emancipation for classroom use.

The project's educational website (www.afterslavery.com) has served as its public face since early 2008, and in August 2009 added a tablet-friendly "Online Classroom" with ten learning units—each comprised of annotated documents with "questions to consider" and suggested readings. In the first six months of the launch the site received over 7000 individual 'hits'. Its page

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rank has risen from 4/10 at launch to 6/10 at present (by comparison, the much better-resourced REF2014 home page is rated just marginally higher at 7/10). The site has been peer-reviewed, with the preeminent online reviewer in the US (MERLOT) rating the pre-tablet site at 4+/5 stars and describing it as “a model of the scholarship of teaching that can benefit faculty teaching and student learning around the world.”

The project’s web presence created substantial opportunities for engaging key non-HE constituencies—in particular for **building durable relationships with secondary-level educators in the US**. In September 2010 AS formalised a partnership with the *Lowcountry Digital Library* at the College of Charleston—now the permanent home for the site, with plans to use it as the “cornerstone of an elaborate and interactive online classroom” to “foster research on the Carolinas from primary school projects to advanced scholarship.” In the spring of 2013 AS conducted a series of seminars and designed a unit on Reconstruction for *America in Class*, the online learning interface managed by the (US) National Humanities Center, with an audience of hundreds of secondary-level educators. Over the course of the project AS has built a strong relationship with *National History Day*, the leading organisation for primary and secondary-school educators in the US. In 2010 NHD conducted a survey on the AS website involving 76 national award-winning school teachers in the US, with extremely positive results: 92% responded that the site was “extremely useful” for adding to their knowledge of the period; 89% agreed there was an urgent need for the web material to be “infused into the American classroom” and 76% responded that it was “extremely likely” they would use the AS website in their teaching. Teachers commented favourably on the quality of the writing and the range of source materials: typical comments included remarks that the site was “informative to a teacher...who doesn’t have time to do personal research,” that the site “makes a huge difference in student understanding” and that “my teaching improved because of this overview.”

Over a period of three years *After Slavery* **organized five major gatherings prioritising engagement between research historians and non-HE constituencies**. A 2010 Charleston conference—with 240 registrants from 23 states the largest ever conference on Reconstruction—brought together teachers and curriculum experts, National Park Service site interpreters, veterans of the local labour and civil rights movements, and prize-winning journalists, and included a dozen panels on public history, commemoration, and popular memory, along with two well-attended (travel-subsidized) teachers’ workshops. The keynote by Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Steven Hahn—hosted by the President of the South Carolina (SC) AFL-CIO (equivalent of the British TUC) and held in the Longshoremen’s Union Hall—served as the launch of an AS-curated exhibit on slave emancipation in Charleston. Co-sponsors included a long list of cultural and public policy organizations, including the state’s African American Historical Alliance and the SC Department of Education.

Since then AS has organised **four highly successful teachers’ workshops** in the Carolinas, including two regional workshops with 40 teachers registered for each. The second of these—on “Teaching the New History of Emancipation”—was held in early February 2013 and featured a keynote by 2012 Pulitzer, Bancroft and Lincoln Prize-winning historian Eric Foner, but also involved panelists from the National Park Service, US National History Day, the Palmetto History Program (secondary-level teachers), the Slave Dwelling Project, plantation site interpreters, digital learning experts, archivists and public historians. Its success led to two workshops in March 2013 aimed at involving teachers in producing a package of new online teaching resources for the beginning of the 2013-14 school year. The website now includes a full set of high-quality teaching aids suitable for high school use, and will be rolled out in a **pilot exercise involving 75 public school teachers** in August 2013.

Beyond its engagement with non-HE educators, AS has positioned itself at the very centre of a series of initiatives aimed at marking the sesquicentennial of the Civil War in the US. Kelly has been appointed to the Steering Committee of the *Jubilee Project*, an ambitious Carolina-based public history project commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, and has been **closely involved in designing a full program of events reaching across diverse non-HE constituencies** in South Carolina over the current year. In that role he has presented

related lectures at more than a dozen academic and non-academic venues in the US since autumn 2012.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Reports

AHRC Research Project Final Report [on file]

notes “wide-ranging impact”, “strong range of US collaborations” and “strong dissemination”, concludes that “large range of outcomes in high impact area suggests good value for money.”

US National History Day National Survey [quoted in section 4; full survey on file]

2. Reviews and Testimonials:

Website: “excellent content...questions for each unit [in] the online classroom are excellent and appropriate...interactive maps and timelines are engaging.” **(MERLOT)** “This turning point in our history [is] mostly absent from the high school classroom.... *After Slavery* helps to fill [a] void in the curriculum by introducing cutting edge scholarship and well-chosen primary sources to bring voice to this untold story.” **Director of Curriculum, US National History Day** “I can’t begin to tell you how much I appreciate your sending the link...immediately sent it out to all of our 200 historians in the National Park Service and have been flooded with notes of how much our people appreciate the resource.” **Chief Historian, US National Park Service**

2010 Conference: “a highly innovative and immensely successful conference. The idea of the plenary at the [Charleston longshoremen’s] union hall was a real inspiration [and] set an exemplary standard for the profession. Many thanks also for thoughtfully arranging the plantation tour ... especially pleased to meet Lu Ann Jones of the National Park Service, who was ... on her way to Beaufort for a visit related to the project of a [heritage] site focused on Reconstruction in the lowcountry”. **Director, Institute for Southern Studies**

“This conference opened my eyes to the world outside of my classroom where history is not just [testing requirements] and a textbook. I learned so much ... and have already used the stories and perspectives in a couple different lessons.... Our curriculum coordinator e-mailed us with the information and that is why I signed up.... All of these conversations led me to look into graduate school for fall 2011.” **Teacher, Liberty Middle School, South Carolina**

Users/Referees:

1. Historian, Park History Program: US National Park Service
2. Representative for Higher Education: South Carolina Council for the Social Studies
3. Grants & Programs Officer: The Humanities Council South Carolina
4. High School Teacher: Richland County (South Carolina) Public Schools