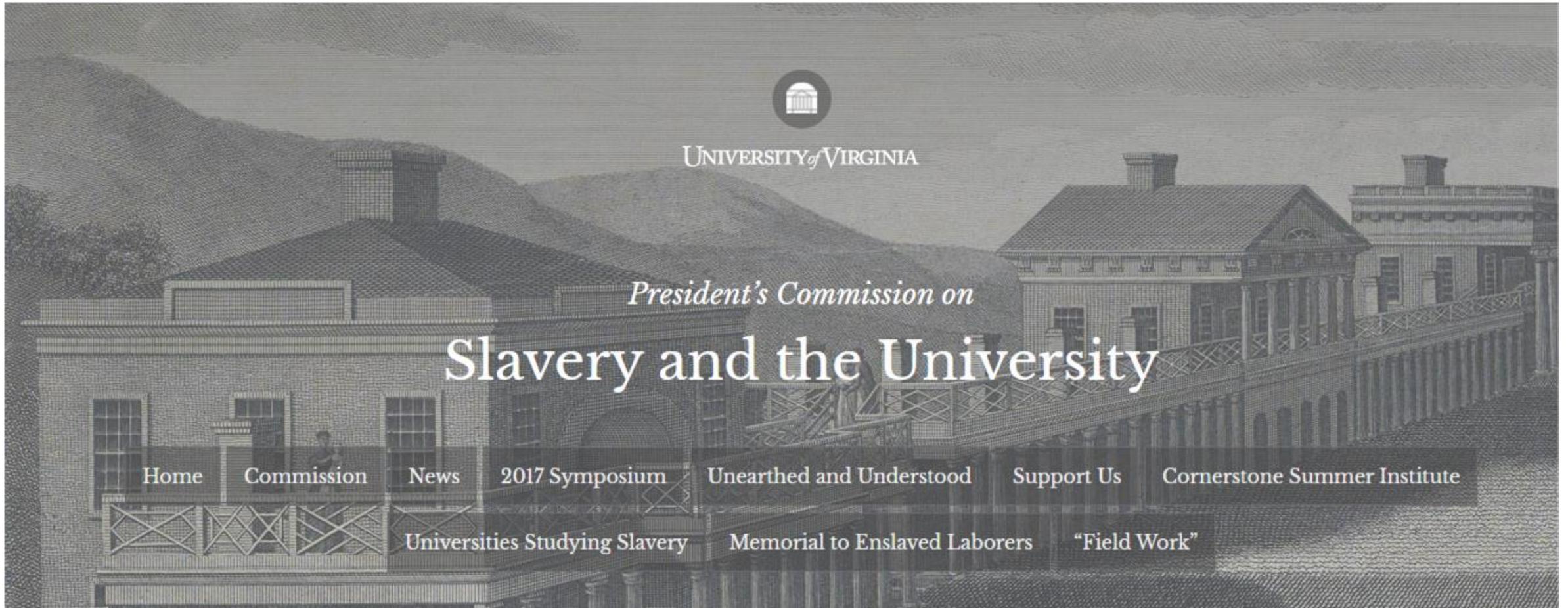


Social justice goals and impact in the archive

A case study of “Universities Studying Slavery”



“Universities Studying Slavery” homepage: <https://slavery.virginia.edu/universities-studying-slavery/>

Ashley Williams

Universities Studying Slavery consortium

- 63 member-universities at time of writing, now 80 (including University College Cork)
- Purposive sampling
 - Ivy League (featured in press in the U.S. since the mid-2000s)
 - Universities in the American South
 - Range of size: small, medium and large
- 8 universities approached; 4 universities responded

Research participants

All resources listed are available online

- Brown University (Rhode Island)
 - 2006 Report of the Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice
 - Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice
 - Extensive digitisation of records relating to university's links with the slave trade
- College of Charleston (South Carolina)
 - Center for the Study of Slavery in Charleston
 - Avery Research Center
- Columbia University (New York)
 - Columbia and Slavery
- Washington & Lee University (Virginia)
 - Working Group on the History of African-Americans at W&L

Social justice in archival literature

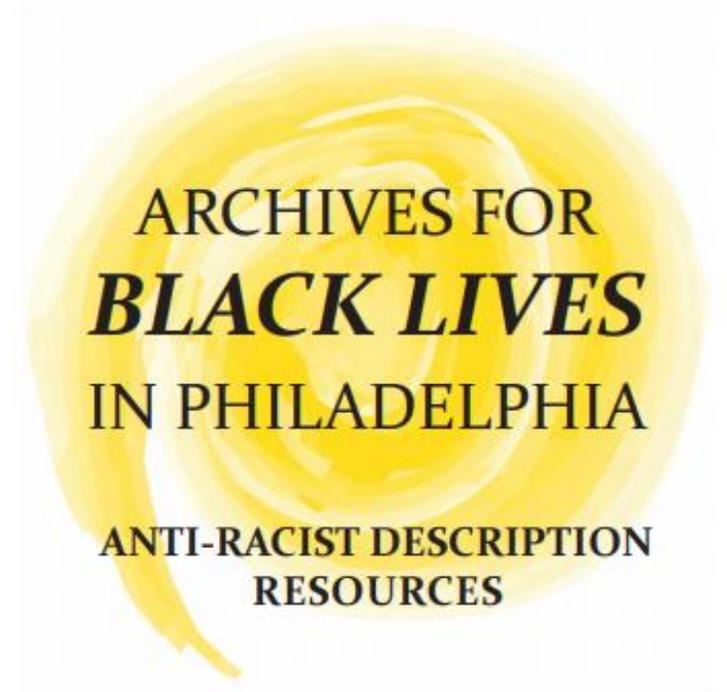
- Defining “social justice” in archival literature
- To university archivists interviewed, social justice was seen as a priority and goal but not defined exactly. Part of broader conversation surrounding activism, representation, equity and inclusion.

Measuring social justice impact

- “social justice exhibits both individual and collective impacts and (...) can be studied at multiple societal levels (macro, meso, and micro).”
 - Duff, W.M., Flinn, A., Suurtamm, K.E. *et al.* Social justice impact of archives: a preliminary investigation. *Arch Sci* **13**, 317–348 (2013). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-012-9198-x>

MICRO LEVEL

- Deep dives into archival collections. Item-level (re)investigation of records
- Description / re-description
- Discoverability and digitisation



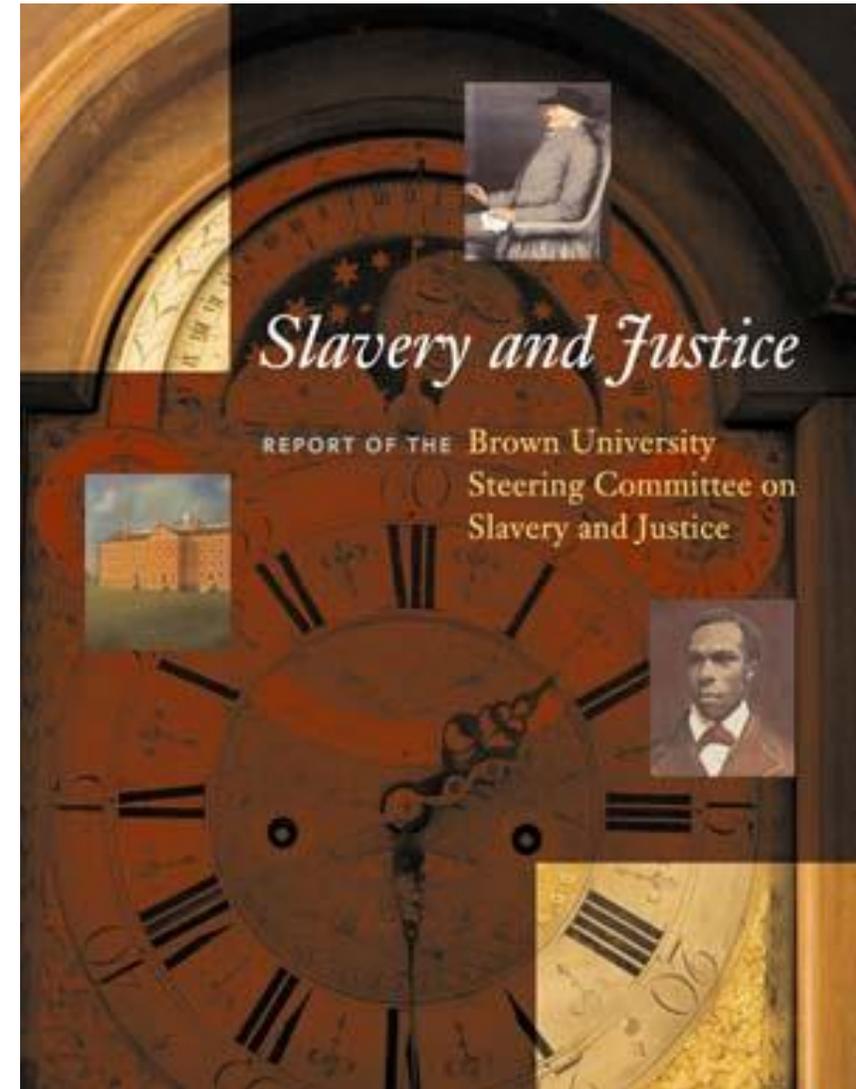
*Created by Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia's
Anti-Racist Description Working Group*

October 2019

[https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/
2019/10/ardr_final.pdf](https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/ardr_final.pdf)

MESO LEVEL

- Teaching from the archive
- Presence and participation of archivists in university-wide committees
- Making visible changes to campus, exhibiting archival documents



Cover of Brown University's Slavery and Justice Report. Available online:
https://www.brown.edu/Research/Slavery_Justice/documents/SlaveryAndJustice.pdf

Archival record displayed at Washington & Lee

'A list of negroes belonging to the Estate of John Robinson', fragment

<https://my.wlu.edu/presidents-office/issues-and-initiatives/institutional-history/working-group-on-african-american-history/timeline-of-african-americans-at-wand/list-of-john-robinson-slaves>

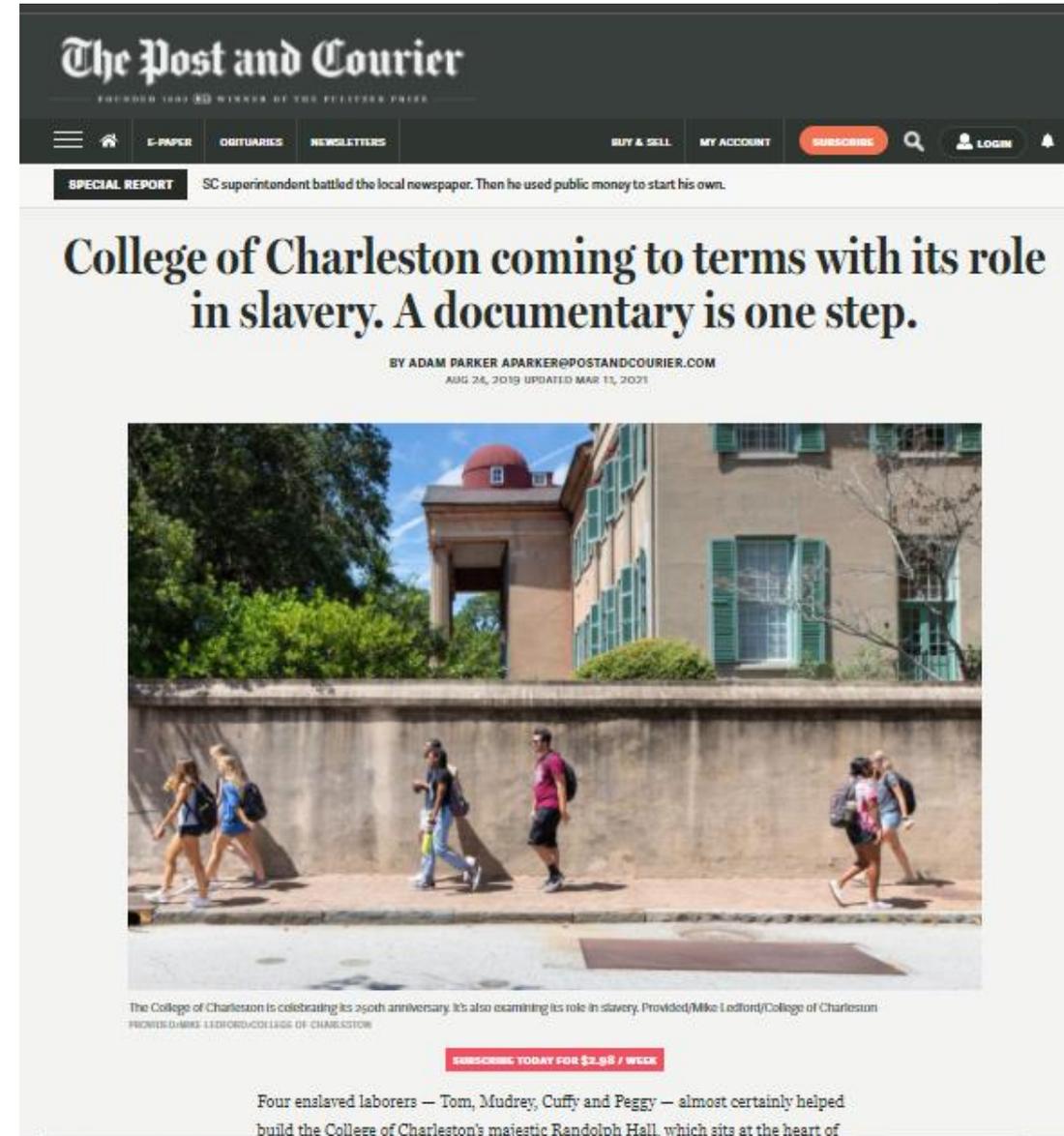
A List of Negroes belonging to Estate of John Robinson Dec? at death

	Names	age	appraised value			
	Charles	84	00	00	given to his wife, Martha	
1	Daniel shoemaker	74	25	-	out for victuals & clothes	
	Robin	70	-	-	Dead	
2	Barney	70	-	-	out for victuals & clothes	
	Tom	76	-	-	Dead	
	Paac	71	-	-	Dead	
3	Landon (nearly blind)	41	20	-	beats out corn	1
4	Keziah	66	10	=	cook for indigo & mus on the estate	
	Barbara	62	-	-	Dead	
5	Breary	68	20		worth nothing	3
6	Lucky	57	15		00	4
7	Nero club foot	50	50		00	5
8	Edmund wagon	56	50		hired	10
9	Tom Sawyer x	54	50		victuals & clothes	
10	Moses Miller	44			Change	6
11	Adam x	50	175			7
12	Jerry Quarles	35	400		hired	60 00
13	Stephen B.S. x	30	500		Ran away not heard from	
14	Mickey	19	325		hired	17 00
15	Bon	9	200		hired	20
	Tempa	7	150		Dead	
16	Chapman	2	100		out for victuals & clothes	

MACRO LEVEL

- Changing the narrative
- Community, regional, national outreach

The Post and Courier article by Adam Parker, 24 August 2019.
https://www.postandcourier.com/features/college-of-charleston-coming-to-terms-with-its-role-in-slavery-a-documentary-is-one/article_36d39926-c427-11e9-bafc-e3d4e87ff534.html



The Post and Courier

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College of Charleston coming to terms with its role in slavery. A documentary is one step.

BY ADAM PARKER APARKER@POSTANDCOURIER.COM
AUG 24, 2019 UPDATED MAR 11, 2021



The College of Charleston is celebrating its 250th anniversary. It's also examining its role in slavery. Provided/Mike Ledford/College of Charleston
PHOTO BY MIKE LEDFORD/COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

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Four enslaved laborers — Tom, Mudrey, Cuffy and Peggy — almost certainly helped build the College of Charleston's majestic Randolph Hall, which sits at the heart of

In conclusion

- “encourage students to use these materials to activate and empower themselves” – Aisha Haykal, Avery Research Center, College of Charleston
- Ongoing conversations with Library administration, College administrators to best ascertain “how can the College use its resources to empower, impact the citizens of Charleston”—A. Haykal
- “looking outward and investing in neighbouring communities”—Thai Jones, Columbia University
- “helping [local non-profits and social justice organisations] organise and make accessible their own records within their organisation, or (...) have Special Collections help them maintain those at our Special Collections Library” – Jennifer Betts, Brown University
- “I firmly believe that seeing the original record—history—that’s the real catalyst. That’s going to help us make the changes.” – Tom Camden, Washington & Lee University