The Studies of Slavery and Its Legacies Project

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Goals of the Project

• Develop perspective-taking skills
• Critically appraise sites of historical memory
• Foster ethical action based on archival research
• Ultimately, to foster more inclusive campuses
Meeting in Atlanta

- Visit to the Atlanta University Center archives
- Tour of Oakland Cemetery
- Visit to Stone Mountain for the evening light show
Gathering in Sewanee

• Examination of Sewanee’s memorials
• Discussion of buildings and place names such as Armfield Bluff, Gorgas Hall, and Quintard Hall
• Visitations to segregated cemeteries, churches, and schools.
Student Archival Research and Presentations

- Sewanee students’ performance related to the Lovell Family archives
- Morehouse students’ research of the lives of chattel slaves
- Spelman students’ research of their families’ memories of chattel slavery and historical meaning of Confederate symbols
Participants’ Reflections

• Crossing racial and cultural boundaries:
  • “The trip opened my eyes to seeing that some white people actually want to fight oppression in America.”
  • “For me it was just physically being at a HBCU. It was really an eye-opening experience.”
  • “Black students do not have a lot of opportunities to speak about race and racism with Whites. This is not easy for us, too.”

• Ethical responsibility:
  • “By using the names and ages of those enslaved by John Quitman in a memorial setting, we 1) brought them out of the archives and into the public eye and 2) gave the viewers/listeners a way of forming an emotional connection to history by imagining who these people might have been, and even more importantly, imagining one's self in their position.”
Achievements and Difficulties

• Achievements:
  • Fostered difficult dialogues across difference
  • Exchanges challenged Sewanee students to become more sensitive to racial perspectives in their archival research
  • Personal transformation of participants
  • Embedding transformative experiences in the curriculum

• Difficulties:
  • Academic calendars not aligning
  • Gaining buy-in from students
  • Maintaining equality among the participating institutions
  • Sensitivity and vulnerability in exploring racial subjects