

As someone who specializes in a fairly obscure and seemingly inaccessible topic—the history of slavery in the Caribbean—my work relies heavily upon the abundance of resources available through Fondren library. Within the confines of a single semester travel to the archives is simply not feasible, so I always must make the best of local tools for research. This point was on full-display during the process of constructing my recent project “Visions of Complete Mastery and Subtle Tranny.” This essay focused on how slaveholding practices, abolitionist rhetoric, and emancipation in the British Caribbean influenced how Southerners defended slavery between 1804 and 1860. My project would not have been possible without Fondren’s research resources.

First among the sources I took advantage of were the historical newspapers that are available online through the library; the papers I used ranged from St. George’s, Grenada to New York, and they were published between 1803 to 1858. I could not have completed my work without their ready-availability. Next, I used the various periodical series available through Fondren. Specifically, I used the Gale database and America: History and Life. These collections gave me access to pro and anti-slavery polemics such as *Cotton is King* (1860) and *Emancipation in the West Indies* (1838), respectively. Further, access to data management and presentation tools, such as Social Explorer, proved foundational for my broader analysis. For example, working with the raw census data without such tools would have been significantly more cumbersome and time-consuming.

Access to secondary materials, particularly those that were not readily-available in a traditional format, was similarly important to my project. Justene Hill Edwards’ dissertation “Felonious Transactions,” which I accessed through the online dissertation catalog, is one of the most important scholarly works that my project engaged with. In addition, I procured the other

keys work that I engaged with, Edward Rugemer's *The Problem of Emancipation*, through interlibrary-loan.

Fondren's materials and subscriptions were not alone wholly sufficient for my project to materialize. The online research guides were an essential tool that I relied upon. The "British Empire," "African American Studies," and "American History" guides all aided me during the earliest phase of my work. This point is particularly important because this project was my first attempt to bridge the scholarly gap between historians of the South and those of the Caribbean. My previous research had solely focused on the latter; during my efforts to expand my scope to include the South I was well-served by the library research guides. Much of historical research is a process of eliminating what *is not* useful for our work. The research guides were a great way to start the process of creating a manageable source-base from the millions upon millions of volumes available in digital and traditional formats here at Rice. Put simply, I could never have completed this project in the manner that I did without the resources available at Fondren.