

# Ben Wright

Assistant Professor of Historical Studies  
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## Academic Appointments:

Assistant Professor of Historical Studies, The University of Texas at Dallas, 2015-present  
Assistant Professor of History, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, 2014-2015

## Education:

Ph.D., History, Rice University, 2014  
Dissertation: *Gospel of Liberty: Antislavery and American Salvation*  
Adviser: John B. Boles  
M.A., American Studies, Columbia University, 2007  
Thesis: *European Origins and American Innovations in the Passage of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*  
Adviser: Randall Balmer  
B.A. *summa cum laude*, History, Education, Bethel University, 2005

## Books:

Ben Wright and Zachary W. Dresser, eds. *Apocalypse and the Millennium in the Civil War Era* (LSU Press, 2013)  
“Antislavery and American Salvation” book manuscript under contract with the LSU Press series *Antislavery, Abolitionism, and the Atlantic World*. Due to press fall 2017.  
(Accepted by Stanford University Press) Joseph L. Locke and Ben Wright, eds., *The American Yawp: A Free and Online, Collaboratively Built American History Textbook* (americanyawp.com)

## Articles:

“‘The Heathen are Demanding the Gospel’: African Conversion and American Redemption in the Colonizationist Movement,” in *Reconsiderations and Redirections in the Study of African Colonization*, Beverly Tomek and Matthew J. Hetrick, eds. (University Press of Florida, 2017), 50-69.

## Articles submitted for publication

Joseph L. Locke and Ben Wright, “Discourses of Democracy: Rhetoric and Reality in the Rise of the Digital Humanities,” submitted August 1, 2017 to *American Quarterly* for a forthcoming special edition on the digital humanities

## Short articles

“Collaborating to Recreate Pre-Columbian America,” *Common-Place*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (December 2015)  
Ben Wright and Joseph Locke, “A Free and Open Alternative to Traditional History Textbooks,” *Perspectives on History*, 53:3, March 2015

## Reviews and short publications:

(Forthcoming) Book Review: Wendell Phillips, Social Justice, & the Power of the Past. AJ Aisèrithe and Donald Yacovone's, eds., *Journal of the Civil War Era*.

- Book Review: The Land Shall be Deluged in Blood: A New History of Nat Turner's Rebellion by Patrick Breen, *Journal of Southern History*, 83:1, February 2017.
- Encyclopedia entry: "Emancipation Day," in *Dictionary of American History, Supplement: America in the World, 1776 to the Present* by Edward J. Blum ed., et al. Charles J. Scribner's Sons: 2016.
- Book Review: Wellsprings of Liberty: How Virginia's Religious Dissenters Helped Win the American Revolution and Secured Religious Liberty by John A. Ragosta, *North Carolina Historical Review*, August 2011.
- Book Review: Rituals of Resistance: African Atlantic Religion in Kongo and the Lowcountry South in the Era of Slavery by Jason R. Young, *Journal of Southern Religion*, June 2009
- Book Review: Hollywood Be Thy Name: African American Religion in American Film 1929-1949 by Judith Weisenfeld, *Journal of African American History*, 93:3, Summer 2009.
- Book Review: Rounding the Bases: Baseball and Religion in America by Joseph L. Price, *International Journal of Religion and Sport*, June 2009.
- Book Note: John Bachman: Selected Writings on Science, Race, and Religion, Gene Waddell, ed., *Journal of Southern History*. November 2013.
- Book Note: A Journey in Brazil: Henry Washington Hilliard and the Brazilian Anti-Slavery Society, David I. Durham and Paul M. Pruitt Jr. eds., *Journal of Southern History*. November 2012.
- Book Note: Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism: A Reader, Barry Hankins ed., *Journal of Southern History*. April 2009.

#### **Academic Presentations:**

- (Forthcoming) "Managing Mass Collaboration in the Digital Humanities," Book History and Digital Humanities Symposium, The University of Wisconsin, Madison, September 2017.
- (Forthcoming) "Nationalism, Denominationalism, and the Benevolent Empire," Society for the Study of United States Intellectual History, Dallas, Texas, October 2017.
- (Forthcoming) "White Southern Evangelicals and the Antislavery Politics of Salvation," Southern Historical Association, Dallas, Texas, November 2017.
- (Forthcoming) "Antislavery Myth and Death in the Middle Passage," American Historical Association, Washington DC, January 2018.
- (Forthcoming) Roundtable Participant: "*The American Yawp*: Digital Humanities, Mass Collaboration, and Synthetic Scholarship," Organization of American Historians, Sacramento, California, April 2018.
- Roundtable Participant: "The Perils and Promises of Collaborative Scholarship" American Historical Association Annual Meeting, Denver, Colorado, January 2017.
- Session leader with Joseph Locke, "Mapping the American History Survey," THATCamp, Denver, Colorado, January 2017.
- "Conversionist and Purificationist Antislavery," Society of United States Intellectual Historians Annual Meeting, Stanford University, October 2016.
- "'they support it merely because they believe it will convert Africa:' Missionary Discourse and the Anti-Colonizationist Crusade," Society of Historians of the Early American Republic Annual Conference, New Haven, Connecticut, July 2016.
- "Conversion and Purification Joined: Religious Imagination and the Creation of the Benevolent Empire," Florida State University Religious History Colloquium; Tallahassee, Florida; January 2015.
- "Academic Communities and Crowd-Sourced History: Creating *The American Yawp*," Texas Digital Humanities Consortium; Houston, Texas; April 2014.
- "The Making of a Proslavery Prophet: Denominational Leadership and the Politicization of Rev. Richard Furman," British American Nineteenth Century Historians Annual Conference; Houston, Texas; April 2014
- "The Heathen are Demanding the Gospel: Conversion and Redemption in Early African Colonization," American Society for Church History Annual Conference; Washington, D.C.; January 2014.
- "Denominational Formation and American Christian Nationalism," Society of Historians of the Early American Republic Annual Conference, Saint Louis, Missouri, July 2013.

“They Were Seen by Our Vessel to Throw Their Slaves Overboard: Antislavery, the West Africa Squadron, and Death in the Middle Passage,” Free and Unfree Labor: The First Annual Rice University – Universidade Estadual de Campinas Seminar; Houston, Texas; May 2013.

“The Heathen are Demanding the Gospel: Conversion and Redemption in Early African Colonization,” Brownbag Series, McNeil Center for Early American Studies; University of Pennsylvania; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; November 2012.

“Conversion, Benevolence, and Nationalism in the Early American Denominational Imagination,” Conference on Faith and History, Gordon College; Wenthams, Massachusetts, September, 2012

“Stephen Grellet and Conversionist Antislavery,” American Historical Association Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois, January 2012

“I Proclaimed Against the Great Sin of Slavery: Stephen Grellet and the Ideology of Early Antislavery,” Columbia University Faculty Seminar in American Religious History, Columbia University, New York, New York, October 2011

Conference Director, Millennialism and Providentialism in the Era of the American Civil War, Rice University; Houston, Texas; October 2010

“Samuel Hopkins, Antislavery, and the Power of Perceived Persecution in Social Reform,” University of Texas-Austin American Studies Conference, Austin, Texas; September 2009

“Revolutionary Enthusiasm to Antebellum Gridlock: Two American Clergymen and the Problem of Slavery”; Southwestern Historical Association Annual Conference; Denver, Colorado; April 2009

“Baby Won’t You Please Come Home: Civil Rights, Migration, and the Death of Harlem”; Urban Historical Association Annual Conference; Houston, Texas; November 2008

“Our Neighborhood: The PS 154 Oral History Project in Harlem,” Organization of American Historians Annual Conference; New York, New York, March 2008

Moderator and respondent, “Music in the Making”; Annual Conference of the Columbia Journal of American Studies; New York, New York, April 2007

“John Leland & James Madison: A Legacy of Religious Liberty; Minnesota State Political Science Association Annual Conference”; Saint Cloud, MN; November 2005

#### **Invited Presentations:**

(Forthcoming) “Christianity, Capitalism, and Human Trafficking,” Gardner Webb University, September 2017.

“Mass Collaboration and the Open Humanities,” Association for Information Science and Technology Arts and Humanities Digital Symposium, April 2017.

“Democracy and the Digital Humanities,” Department of History, Bethel University, December 2016.

“Religion and American Antislavery: From the Politics of Conversion to the Conversion to Politics,” Clements Library, University of Michigan, October 2015.

“Christians and Slavery, Past and Present,” Calvin College, October 2015.

“Democratizing the Digital Humanities,” Department of History Speaker Series, Michigan State University, October 2015.

“Organizing for Abolition: Using Antislavery Scholarship to Support Student Activism,” Antislavery Activists Conference, Gettysburg College, March 2015.

“Presenting Learning to the Public: Using Word Press as an Assessment Tool,” University System of Georgia Faculty Development Lecture, March 2015.

“Problems and Perils of Open Textbooks: The American Yawp as Case Study,” Digital Scholars Lab / Digital Scholarship Lab, University of Virginia / University of Richmond, March 2015.

“American Evangelicals and Antislavery Action: Past and Present,” Gardner Webb University, February 2015.

“Combating Textbook Costs with Digital Collaboration: The American Yawp as Case Study,” Affordable Learning Georgia, University of Georgia, December 2015.

“American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery and Racism from the American Revolution to the Civil War,” Gettysburg Foundation; Gettysburg National Military Park; Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; August 2014.

“Digital Pedagogy in the Classroom”; Program in Writing and Communication; Rice University; Houston, Texas; March 2013.  
“The Rise and Fall of Race in America,” Black History Month Lecture Series, University of Saint Thomas, Houston, Texas; February 2011.  
“Immigration, Urbanization, Industrialization and the Transformation of American Religion,” Lone Star College-North Harris, Houston, Texas; December, 2008.  
“Vatican II and American Catholicism,” Columbia University, New York, New York; November, 2007.

### **Digital Scholarship:**

Co-editor, *The American Yawp*, (<http://www.americanyawp.com>)  
Co-editor, “The Abolition Seminar: Fighting Slavery and Racial Injustice from the American Revolution to the Civil War,” an interactive website from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library Company of Philadelphia ([abolitionseminar.org](http://abolitionseminar.org))  
Managing editor, Teaching United States History ([teachingushistory.co](http://teachingushistory.co))  
“Opiate or Exodus: Revisiting Slave Religion”, *Columbia Journal of American Studies*, June 2007.

### **Fellowships and Awards**

Kate B. and Hall J. Peterson Fellowship, American Antiquarian Society, 2016  
Upton Foundation Fellowship in American History, Clements Library, University of Michigan, 2015  
Digital Humanities Award, Best Use of Public Engagement, for *The American Yawp*, 2014  
Sojourner Truth Service Fellowship, Historians Against Slavery, 2014-2016  
James Forten Fellowship, Library Company of Philadelphia, 2014  
Mary Hayes Ewing Publication Prize in Southern History, Rice University, 2014  
NEH Summer Seminar Assistantship, Library Company of Philadelphia, 2013  
Andrew W. Mellon Research Fellowship, Massachusetts Historical Society, 2012  
Gest Research Fellowship, Quaker Collection, Haverford College, 2012  
Andrew W. Mellon Research Fellowship, Historical Society of Pennsylvania and Library Company of Philadelphia, 2012  
Filson Research Fellowship, The Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky 2012  
Bruce Dunlevie Teaching Fellowship in the Humanities, Rice University, 2011  
Andrew W. Mellon Research Fellowship, Virginia Historical Society, 2011

### **Teaching Experience:**

Assistant Professor, Department of Historical Studies, University of Texas at Dallas, Fall 2015 - present  
Assistant Professor, Department of History, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Tifton, Georgia, Fall 2014 - present  
Instructor, Department of History, Rice University, Houston, Texas, Summer 2011, Fall 2013-Spring 2014  
Instructor, Program in Writing and Communication, Rice University, Houston, Texas, Spring 2013-Spring 2014  
Online Instructor, Department of History, Norwich University, Spring 2014  
Assistant Instructor, Abolitionism: NEH Seminar for Teachers, Library Company of Philadelphia, Summer 2013  
Dunlevie Teaching Fellow in the Humanities, Department of History, Rice University, Houston, Texas, Fall 2011  
Instructor, Department of History, University of St. Thomas, Houston, Texas, Fall 2011  
Instructor, Department of History and Social Science, Lone Star College, Houston, Texas, Summer 2010  
Teaching Assistant with Allen Matusow, Rice University, Baker Institute for Public Policy, Spring 2013-Spring 2014

Teaching Assistant with Randall Balmer, Columbia University, Department of History and Religion,  
Fall 2007  
High School Teacher, Social Studies Department, Cambridge-Isanti High School, Cambridge,  
Minnesota, Spring 2006

**Courses Taught:**

Undergraduate courses

- United States to 1848
- United States to 1865
- United States to 1877
- United States 1848 to Present
- United States 1865 to Present
- The Civil War and Reconstruction
- Introduction to Digital Humanities
- Religion and Race in American History
- Slavery and Abolition
- The Rise and Fall of Atlantic Slavery (<http://riseandfalloffslavery.wordpress.com>)
- The History of the End of the World (<http://historyoftheend.wordpress.com>)

Graduate courses

- America in the Nineteenth Century
- Digital Humanities
- Slavery in America

Graduate independent studies

- Religion and Race in American History
- The Civil War and Reconstruction

**Undergraduate honors theses advised:**

- Spring 2016, Ash Seidl-Staley, "The Scottish Quadrangular Slave Trade 1672-1766"
- Spring 2017, Michael Scalley, "Changes in Anglo-American/Comanche Relations in Early 19th Century Texas"
- Spring 2017, Vivien Ngo, "Visualizing Ports in the Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Digital Humanities Project"

**Dissertation committee member:**

- David Howard, "Divergent Voices: The Historical Language of Baptist Religious Artifacts in the American South, 1865-1914"

**Press:**

- Print interview with Scott McLemee, "Free American History!" *Inside Higher Ed* (March 11, 2015) <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/03/11/interview-editors-american-yawp-free-history-textbook-published-online>
- Print interview with Rachel Beltzhoover and M. Omar Siddiqi, *The American Historian* (February 2015) <http://tah.oah.org/content/conversation-ben-wright/>
- Video interview with David Thomson, *The Civil War Monitor*, Behind the Lines Video Series, (September 20, 2013) <http://www.civilwarmonitor.com/behind-the-lines/an-interview-with-ben-wright-and-zach-dresser>
- Print interview with Paul Putz, "Apocalypse and the Millennium in the American Civil War Era: An Interview with the Editors: Religion in American History Blog (September 20, 2013) <http://usreligion.blogspot.com/2013/09/apocalypse-and-millennium-in-american.html>

**Academic digital humanities consulting:**

Advisory Board Member, *Literature in Context*, a digital humanities project led by Dr. John O'Brien at the University of Virginia  
Digital Humanities Consultant, *Thomas Paine Archives*, a digitization project sponsored by the Thomas Paine Institute at Iona College

**Professional Experience:**

Digital media consultant, Historians Against Slavery; Fall 2013-2016  
Editorial assistant, *The Journal of Philosophy*, Columbia University New York, NY; Fall 2006-2008, 2010-2011  
Research assistant, Rice University History Department, Houston, TX; 2008- 2010  
Professional Development Seminar Coordinator, Rice University History Department 2009- 2010  
Research assistant, Columbia University Oral History Research Office, New York, NY; 2006- 2008  
Oral history consultant, The Narrative Trust, New York, NY; 2008-2009  
Oral history consultant, The Apollo Theater Foundation, New York, NY; 2008

**Professional Memberships**

American Historical Association  
Organization of American Historians  
American Society for Church History  
Southern Historical Association  
American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies  
Society of Historians of the Early American Republic  
Conference on Faith and History  
Historians Against Slavery  
Society for U.S. Intellectual History