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In 2006, the Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice published a report exploring the university's historical relationship with slavery, the complicity of many of the university's founders and benefactors in the slave trade and slavery, and the ways in which the university benefited from racial bondage. Since then, a significant number of universities in North America and Europe have followed suit, and the Universities Studying Slavery Consortium now has more than one hundred members from the United States, Canada, Scotland, England, Ireland, and Colombia. Many have issued their own reports, often modeled on Brown's pathbreaking study. At institutions like the University of Pennsylvania and Princeton University, undergraduates have played a leading role in the research, usually guided by historians, while elsewhere historians and postdoctoral researchers have undertaken this work. Overseen and usually written by professional historians, university slavery reports adhere to the conventions of scholarly research and writing. Most are relatively short and are focused on revealing forgotten histories, and on proving to students, alumni, trustees, and broader publics that universities depended on and benefited from slavery and the profits made from slave labor.

Yale and Slavery: A History is qualitatively different from these reports, as it is a scholarly monograph authored by the Pulitzer Prize-winning historian of slavery, David W. Blight. As such, it represents a step change in the ongoing process of coming to terms with how institutions of learning rested on the labor of enslaved people, placing the subject firmly and undeniably in the realm of historical scholarship. Blight builds on the work of a team of student researchers, and he draws on the expertise of Yale librarians, archivists, and members of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition. Blight then crafted all of this work and information into a book rather than a report, taking university self-assessments to a whole new level. It is a fascinating study of the enslaved, enslavers, and those who benefitted from slavery, as well as their descendants—and how all of these people shaped Yale University. The writing is so strong, and the stories of particular individuals so compelling, that the book transcends institutional history and self-referencing. This is an important contribution to the history of slavery in the United States.

Organized into twelve chronological chapters, the book includes a series of five "interludes": the first a list of the names of more than two hundred enslaved people directly connected to Yale; another tracing the story of the Manning family's experiences in slavery and freedom in the South and then in New Haven and at Yale; and the final one using the showing of *The Birth of a Nation* in New Haven in 1915 to explore the persistence of racism. The book begins before the founding of the college, with decades of warfare between English settlers and indigenous inhabitants often resulting in the enslavement of people captured by the invaders. During these years, the first Africans arrived in Connecticut, generally by way of Barbados and the English Caribbean, already a developing trading partner of New England. Blight explores how Yale was founded and grew in the context of the development, acceptance, and expansion of racial slavery, illustrating this with the slave ownership of people intimately connected to Yale like Jonathan Edwards and John Davenport. (Blight is probably right in his conjecture that enslaved servants were present at the first meeting of the college's trustees at the turn of the eighteenth century.) We learn of enslaved people like Isabella and Cesar Diego, claimed by Timothy Woodbridge, who owned more humans than any of his fellow trustees, but we know little other than the names of these folk, and sometime not even that.

As with most histories of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century slavery, there is an embarrassment of material about White enslavers and the condition of slavery, while virtually nothing about the enslaved who were recorded as property more than as people. But in a study such as this, the invisibility of slavery and the enslaved is a vital part of the story, and more than any of the university reports into slavery that I have read, this book succeeds in creating a deeply researched scholarly overview of the slavery-university nexus in a leading North American educational institution. Blight is adept at illustrating the ways that enslaved people and their labor were essential to New England in general, and to Yale in particular, and his book is filled with pointed evocations of such connections, as in his observation that "The sounds, smells, blood, and agonies of the West Indian sugar mill may not have been sensed in churches on New England town greens, but their lethal combination built the pews and the high pulpits" (p56).

While many of the reports published over the past two decades are focused on how slavery supported the growth and educational mission of universities, *Yale and Slavery* is as much about race and racism as it is about slavery. Throughout the work, but most especially in the final third, the experiences of Black people connected to Yale—as students, employees, New Haven residents, and eventually as academics—are front and center. Having illustrated how slavery—premised on the developing racial ideology that justified bondage—was a foundation of Yale, Blight explores they ways in which this historical entanglement shaped institutional racism and racial exclusivity that far outlasted the peculiar institution. Thus, for example, the John C. Calhoun Memorial Scholarships, established in 1915, were a tangible reminder of a seemingly

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timeless association between Southern alumni and the university, a "Southernization" of Yale (p300).

As much as anything else, *Yale and Slavery* makes clear that more than two centuries of studies and understanding of American higher education that ignored slavery and race were incomplete and indeed fatally flawed. Just as slavery and race are fundamental to the history of the United States and its institutions, so too are they integral to universities such as Yale. That history continues to play out daily on campus, in academic offices, dining rooms, and dormitories, on sports fields, and of course in classrooms. In June 2016, Yale dining room worker Corey Menafee broke stained-glass windows depicting an idealized image of enslaved laborers working on a cotton plantation that provided a decorative backdrop to the Calhoun undergraduate college dining room. For more than eighty years, students (including an increasing number of Black men and women) and college employees (many of them Black) had eaten and worked under these windows. White people had scarcely given them a second thought, while Black people like Menafee were all too aware of the racist tropes embedded in the imagery, and the ways in which the inequities of racial slavery could be echoed by the class and racial hierarchies still present on campus. Blight's study is most important not for his rich illumination of a forgotten past but for the pointed assessment of its significance for the present and future.

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