The Texas Runaway Slave Project
East Texas Research Center
Stephen F. Austin State University
Nacogdoches, Texas

Kyle Ainsworth, Project Manager
Texas Conference on Digital Libraries
April 28, 2014
Project Overview/Timeline

Start-Up (Project Manager)
• Initial Research (December 2012 – April 2014)
• Reviewed 2,031 issues from 55 Texas newspapers.
• Have found 228 distinct advertisements, articles and capture notices documenting 245 runaway slaves.

Website (Content Manager)
• Planning and Development (September 2013).
• Live! October 6 2013 - http://digital.sfasu.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/RSP

Future
• Grant-funded student research May-June 2014.
Sources

1. **Digitized Newspapers** – The University of North Texas (UNT) hosts two platforms, The Texas Digital Newspaper Project ([https://tdnp.unt.edu/](https://tdnp.unt.edu/)) and the Portal to Texas History ([http://texashistory.unt.edu/](http://texashistory.unt.edu/)), which have, at present, 7,594 issues scanned and searchable from Texas newspapers prior to 1865.

2. **Microfilmed Newspapers** – The plan is to use the microfilm available at the East Texas Research Center and through Interlibrary Loan, and then travel if the materials are not in circulation.

3. **Original Newspapers** – Institutions with major collections of pre-1865 Texas newspapers include the University of Texas at Austin, the Panhandle-Plains Museum in Canyon, Texas, and Yale University.
Methodology

1. **Assessment** – The Texas Digital Newspaper Project and the Library of Congress’s Chronicling America websites show that there are at least 10,000 issues of available Texas newspapers (1813-1865) that may contain runaway slave materials.

2. **Search** – The UNT-hosted websites utilize OCR software, but this has not turned out to benefit to the TRSP project much. The keyword search is good for establishing a starting point, but ultimately each individual newspaper issue must be browsed to get a complete and accurate record.

3. **Description/Metadata** – The TRSP has 37 searchable fields, as well as a JPEG image and transcript for each runaway.

4. **Imaging**
   a. Digitized Newspaper – Word screenshot of the webpage.
   b. Microfilmed Newspaper – Microfilm scans.

5. **Transcription** – Corrected transcription in the description field and a PDF true transcription.

6. **Access** – This project is ongoing. Instead of waiting for a complete dataset, the team decided to get the research thus far collected out and available to users.
The Texas Runaway Slave Project (TRSP) is a database of runaway slave advertisements, articles and notices from newspapers published in Texas. The project has so far documented the names of over 160 individual runaway slaves. [more]
Search

Users given varying levels of access from the homepage.

From General Tools...

- Browse This Collection
- By Print Medium

To More Detailed Research Queries...

- Advanced Search
- By Pre-Selected Metadata Fields
Results

- Item profile in ContentDM
  - Each advertisement, article and notice for the same runaway goes into the record with its own image and transcript.
  - The metadata is not combined. It changes as the user selects each thumbnail to reflect source changes.
  - ContentDM only displays description fields with information.

- Item description in ContentDM
Interactive Map Collection
Google Maps

- Data input via Google Drive spreadsheets and Fusion Tables.
- Customization of layout allows the display or non-display of any desired field.
- There are variable access points through approximate geographical locations as related to information found within the source materials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper Title</th>
<th>Newspaper Editor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Bastrop Advertiser</td>
<td>Stanley, John T.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bellville Countryman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Location of Submitter: Davis, Garvin County, Oklahoma
ContentDM Record: [http://goo.gl/d5iUlPw](http://goo.gl/d5iUlPw)
**Content Upload**

- Information compiled in spreadsheet format.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host Institution</th>
<th>Hyperlink Type</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page, Column</th>
<th>Reward ($)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas Digital New</td>
<td><a href="http://texasad">http://texasad</a></td>
<td>$200 Reward</td>
<td>pg. 4, col.4</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>$200 DOLLARS REWARD. I will give the above reward for the delivery to me of two African Negroes, named Gumby and Zow, who absconded from my plantation, Oyster Creek, county of Brazoria, some time since. The above slaves are about 36 years of age—one about 5 feet 10 inches, the other 5 feet 8 inches—the largest has a broad face, the other a wild look. Sept. 27th—104 EDWIN WALLER.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Digital New</td>
<td><a href="http://texasad">http://texasad</a></td>
<td>$200 Reward</td>
<td>pg. 4, col.4</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Repeat, see 5/19/1838 ad for Gumby and Zow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Digital New</td>
<td><a href="http://texasad">http://texasad</a></td>
<td>$50 Reward</td>
<td>pg. 4, col.4</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>$500 Reward. I will give the above reward for the delivery to me of two African Negroes, named Gumby and Zow, who absconded from my plantation, Oyster creek, county of Brazoria, some time since. The above slaves are about 36 years of age—one about 5 feet 10 inches high, the other 5 feet 8 inches high—the largest has a broad face, the other a wild look. Sept 27th, 1837...104 EDWIN WALLER.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Digital New</td>
<td><a href="http://texasad">http://texasad</a></td>
<td>$50 Reward</td>
<td>pg. 3, col.4</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Repeat, see 5/19/1838 ad for Gumby and Zow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Batch uploading made possible via tab-delimited text files.
Content Editing

- Items uploaded to website via ContentDM Project Client.
- The Project Client is easy for students to learn and manipulate for the needs of the project.
- Metadata generated via tab-delimited text files able to be edited and items able to be combined in ContentDM Admin.
- The content manager is working out the kinks to combine items within the tab-delimited file so that the work does not have to be done in ContentDM.
ContentDM

Administration

• Varying search methods are able to be produced, from basic to advanced.

• Sorting allowed and modified administratively per necessity or even demand.

User Benefits

• Full access to object and item-level metadata.
• Transcript(s) accompany each item. Users allowed to retrieve copies of individual items and to offer original transcriptions, notes and comments.
The Summerlee Foundation

Grant Purpose: Research the remaining 6,500 newspaper issues available digitally in the collection of the Texas Digital Newspaper Program.

Amount Awarded: $10,000

Labor: 5 student researchers, $12.50/hour

Duration: 2-3 months, Summer 2014.

Expected Output: 4000-4500 issues reviewed
Tangential Outcomes

Portraits of Freedom

An art exhibit featuring work by SFASU students and faculty drawn from the detailed runaway slave advertisements aggregated by the Texas Runaway Slave Project.

Compositions completed by students and faculty in the School of Art. This might include, but is not limited to, works of painting, drawing, photography, printmaking, sculpture, and art metal.
Portraits of Freedom

Why Is this Important

Scholars have written extensively about how slaves lived (their family structure, folkways, leisure time, music, religion, etc.) and interacted with their owners (labor, resistance, sexual relations, etc.) but there is very not much about who these people were. What was their personality? What did they look like? What did they wear and what were the things they carried? These are just some of the questions that runaway slave advertisements and capture notices in newspapers can address and that art can illustrate and interpret.

Why Now

June 19, 2015 is Juneteenth (Emancipation Day in Texas) and the Sesquicentennial (150-year anniversary) of that emancipation with the end of the Civil War.
$100,00 Reward.

Will be given for the delivery at Nacogdoches Texas, or fifty dollars if secured in any safe jail in this Republic or in the United States, for a Negro man who runaway from me, 3 miles north of the town of Nacogdoches on the 31st of Julys last, of the following description: he is about 29 or 30 years of age, five feet 9 or 10 inches high, of a common black not very dark color; will weigh about 150 pounds, stout built, has marks of the whip on his back; his name is Randall, quite polite when spoken to, he carried off with him all his wearing apparel, consisting of one pair of kip Brogans, 2 hats one an old the other rather worn, three cloth coats, 1 a frock coat, bottle green, 2 dress coats blue, several pair of pants and shirts, also a fiddle, a good rifle gun: he may change his name, and perhaps will make his way to Mississippi. I bought said negro of a man named Richard Buckley of Mississippi, said Buckley bought him of Peyton Ward of the same state, any person who will apprehend said negro and secure him as aforesaid shall receive the above reward.

JOHN F. GRAHAM.
Nacogdoches, Aug. 2 1841 no 12 4.
A few favorites...

**$200 REWARD.**

I WILL give the above Reward for the delivery to me of two African Negroes, named GUMBY, and ZOW, who absconded from my plantation, Oyster Creek, county of Brazoria, some time since. The above slaves are about 30 years of age—one about 5 feet 10 inches, the other 5 feet 8 inches—the largest has a broad face, the other a very wild look.

EDWIN WALLER.

September 27, 1837.

**Fifty Dollars**

WILL be given for delivering to me on Bailey's Prairie, seven miles from Columbia, a negro man named Joe, belonging to the succession of the late Wm. Barret Travis, who took off with him a Mexican and two horses, saddles and bridles. This negro was in the Alamo with his master when it was taken; and was the only man from the colonies who was not put to death: he is about twenty-five years of age, five feet ten or eleven inches high, very black and good countenance; had on when he left, on the night of the 21st April ult. a dark mixed satinet round jacket and new white cotton pantaloons. One of the horses taken is a bay, about 14½ hands high, very heavy built, with a blaze in his face, a bushy mane and tail, and a sore back; also the property of said succession, the other horse is a chestnut sorrel, above 16 hands high. The saddles are of the Spanish form, but of American manufacture, and one of them covered with blue cloth. Forty dollars will be given for Joe and the small bay horse, (Shannon,) and ten dollars for the Mexican other horse and saddles and bridles.

If the runaways are taken more than one hundred miles from my residence, I will pay all reasonable travelling expenses, in addition to the above reward,

JOHN R. JONES, Ex'r of W. B. Travis.

Bailey's Prairie, May 21st, 1837.

**Important to Slave Owners.**

THE subscriber will keep at his Livery Stable, in the town of Bastrop, a No. 1 pack of Hounds well trained for catching runaway negroes. Any person wishing Negroes caught can be accommodated at the following terms:

- Use of Dogs per day in this county, $7.50
- For catching negro in this county, 15.00
- Use of Dogs per day out of this county, 10.00
- For catching negro out of this county, 25.00

M. M. LONG.

Bastrop, Feb'y 28th, '56.

**One Hundred Dollars Reward.**

RANAWAY from the subscriber at the city of Nacogdoches, on the 6th instant, a very likely negro man named ISHAM, aged 23 years; one of the most stout active men of his age, fond of showing his strength and activity by vaulting, turning half summersets, etc., with a very brazen and rather wild look; about 6 feet high, and as well built as an Indian; in walking he turns his toes out, has a well shaped foot, unusually so for a negro of his size; no scars recollected, except, perhaps, a few lash marks, and one on the right hip from a rising.

The above reward will be given for the apprehension and delivery of said slave, and the person who decoyed him off, if lodged in some jail in said State that I may get them, or fifty dollars for the slave alone, if delivered to me at Nacogdoches, Texas, or twenty-five dollars if delivered in any jail within said State or any other State. Said slave is supposed to design his course to Mexico or the Indian Nation in company with a large Mexican, rather white.

S. M. ORTON.

July 12th, 1853.18.

**$100 REWARD.**

Reward of Seventy five dollars will be give for the apprehension of a negro boy (copper color) named Walo-shin, aged 16 years, about five feet high, speaks the Chocataw Language entirely. The first joint of one of his fore fingers is a little bent down causing a cut from an axe when small, his teeth are very broad and not very close to each other. The said Boy was stolen on the 7th inst. on the North side of Gaines's Creek in the Chocataw Nation (supposed) by a white man named Melona a marster—from Missouri or Arkansas, on his way to Texas.

The said Boy's thighs, are marked by scratches done with needles or pins.

A Reward of twenty five dollars will be given for the apprehension of the thief, or one hundred dollars for both, delivered at Boggy Depot, "Chocataw Nation.

WILLIAM C. WIBLE.
R. M. JONES.
Boggy Depot.
Chocataw Nation.

December 21st 1846—50—37-9t.