

New Frontiers of Slavery

Edited and with an Introduction by
Dale W. Tomich



FERNAND BRAUDEL CENTER
STUDIES IN HISTORICAL SOCIAL SCIENCE

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CONTENTS

List of Tables	ix
Introduction <i>Dale W. Tomich</i>	1
<i>Vassouras</i> Yesterday and Today: Revisiting the Work of Stanley J. Stein <i>Dale W. Tomich</i>	5
Agency and Transnational Perspectives on the Constitution of Waged, Unfree, and Free Labor: The Role of Mobility in the Nineteenth Century <i>Yann Moulier Boutang</i>	23
The Discovery of Progress in Cuba: Machines, Slaves, Businesses <i>José Antonio Piqueras</i>	49
Antislavery and Nationalism on the Two Sides of the Atlantic: In Search of Forgotten Links between the Nineteenth-Century Americas and Europe <i>Enrico Dal Lago</i>	77
African Labor in Guyana and the Expansion of the Second Slavery <i>Wazir Mohamed</i>	101
On the Blurred Boundaries of Freedom: Liberated Africans in Cuba, 1817–1870 <i>Inés Roldán de Montaud</i>	127

Plantation Laboratories: Industrial Experiments in the Cuban Sugar Mill, 1830–1860 <i>Daniel Rood</i>	157
Slavery, Frontier, and Diplomatic Relations: Brazil-Uruguay, 1840–1860 <i>Keila Grinberg & Rachel Caé</i>	185
Ruling the Household: Masters and Domestic Slaves in the Paraíba Valley, Brazil, during the Nineteenth Century <i>Mariana Muaze</i>	203
French Travelers and Journalists Debate the <i>Lei do Ventre Livre</i> of 1871 <i>Claudia Santos</i>	225
List of Contributors	249
Index	251

On the Blurred Boundaries of Freedom

Liberated Africans in Cuba, 1817–1870*

Inés Roldán de Montaud

The Origins of Liberated Africans in Cuba

In 1807, Britain outlawed the slave trade and set about abolishing it worldwide. On September 23, 1817, the British government persuaded Spain to sign a treaty forbidding its subjects from slaving on the African coast, north of the equator, from 1820 onward. This treaty authorized the contracting parties' warships to search merchant ships from both countries suspected of carrying illegally traded slaves abroad. The Mixed Commissions for the suppression of the transatlantic slave trade, set up in Havana and Sierra Leone, were to determine the legality of these captures. In the event of a guilty verdict, the slaves found on board would receive a certificate of emancipation and would be handed over to the government on whose territory the

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