Throughout the 250-year history of slavery in North America, enslaved people tried to escape. Once newspapers were common, enslavers posted “runaway ads” to try to locate these fugitives. Such ads provide significant quantities of individual and collective information about the economic, demographic, social, and cultural history of slavery, but they have never been systematically collected. We are designing and beginning data collection for a database that will compile all North American slave runaway ads and make them available for statistical, geographical, textual, and other forms of analysis. Some elements of data collection will be crowdsourced, engendering a public sense of co-participation in the process of recording history, and producing a living pedagogical tool for instructors at all levels, in multiple disciplines.
Data Modeling
## Data Modeling

### Runaways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RunawayID</th>
<th>SlaveName</th>
<th>SlaveGender</th>
<th>SlaveAge</th>
<th>SlaveHeightInches</th>
<th>SlaveWeightPounds</th>
<th>SlaveBuildDesc</th>
<th>SlaveMarksPhysicalAttributes</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Date_Transcription</th>
<th>ColorID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RunawayID</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### RunawayEvents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RunawayEventID</th>
<th>OwnerID</th>
<th>StateCaughtID</th>
<th>SoldFromStateID</th>
<th>SoldFromCountyID</th>
<th>SoldFromCityID</th>
<th>DateEntered</th>
<th>SlaveWearingDesc</th>
<th>SlaveLanguageSpoken</th>
<th>WasSlaveRecentlySold</th>
<th>HeadedDesc</th>
<th>wasHeadedHome</th>
<th>ranAlone</th>
<th>RanWithNumber</th>
<th>motherAndChildren</th>
<th>Ran_Mid-ForcedMigration</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>SlaveMarksScarsMutilation</th>
<th>isAgeApproximate</th>
<th>wasCaught</th>
<th>Reward</th>
<th>RunawayID</th>
<th>Runaway_AD_ID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RunawayEventID</td>
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</table>

### Notes

- Runaway_ID
- Runaway_AD_ID

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Components

Anyone with a Javascript enabled browser will be able to participate in the creation of the FOTM database.

Developers can interact with the database through FOTM APIs to create custom applications of their own.
Components

Database Server

PostgreSQL

FOTM Database

ODBC

ODBC
Because elephants are just plain better than dolphins.
Components
Crowdsourcing

Ten Dollars Reward.

Ran away from Mr. John Mackay's Plantation, two Negro Slaves Dave and his wife Aggy, and may possibly make for Mobile, as the fellow was employed as a hand on the steam boat Herald, last winter, under Capt. Fry and Capt. Young. He is a likely fellow, about 6 feet high, of dark complexion, quick spoken, and inclined to have a bushy head. The woman is very cross-eyed; no other marks recollected. If the said slaves should be apprehended in or about Mobile, to be delivered to T. & G. Holt, and if apprehended in any other county, lodge them safe in any jail, and the above reward will be paid.

Martin Greer
Data
The Runaway Event

This section seeks to understand the details about the runaway's flight.

What state was the slave caught in?

What state was the slave sold from?

What county was the slave sold from?

What city was the slave sold from?

What state did the slave run from?

What county did the slave run away from?

What city did the slave run away from?

Was the slave recently sold?

Where was the runaway headed?

Did they run alone?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't know

How many people did this runaway run away with?

Did the slave run mid-forced migration?

How old was this slave at the time they ran?

Had the slave been caught before?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't know

Was there a reward listed? What was the amount?

Data Entry and Prototyping
Future Work

- De-duplication workflow with supporting apps
- Gamification of user interface
- Data visualization and reporting
- Linked Open Data publishing
Building Freedom On
The Move

Social Science History Association Annual Meeting | 2013.11.22

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