

PREFACE

One of the significant challenges facing college students is the ever-rising costs of assigned class textbooks in recent years. It is a challenge that African and African American Studies (AFA) at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) has sought to address. On August 26, 2016, AFA faculty met to discuss the textbook issue and how to attract students to the program, retain them, and improve the quality of instruction. At the end of the meeting, AFA faculty first decided to replace the costly textbook assigned to students in AFA 201: The African Experience with high-quality, open-access articles available through EKU Libraries free of charge to students. Starting with the Spring 2017 semester, all AFA 201 faculty assign open-access articles to their students. Second, AFA faculty decided to embark on the publication of an open-access edited textbook and to make it available to students enrolled in AFA 202: The African American Experience free of charge. Shortly after the meeting, a call for submissions was released, and proposals for chapter contributions came in from worldwide. Accepted proposals then turned into full-length articles that went through a rigorous review process by the editors.

Slavery to Liberation: The African American Experience results from AFA's commitment to providing scholarly reading materials at no cost to EKU students. The first edition was released in 2019, and a second edition was released in 2022 to provide an even more thorough overview of the African American experience by covering topics such as music, intersectional feminism, Black Nationalism, and Pan-Africanism.

Published by EKU Libraries, the book intends to give both instructors and students in African American Studies a comprehensive and up-to-date account of African Americans' cultural and political history, economic development, artistic expressiveness, sexuality, and religious and philosophical worldviews in a critical framework. Written in accessible language, *Slavery to Liberation* offers a sound

interdisciplinary analysis of select historical and contemporary issues surrounding the origins, manifestations, and challenges of White supremacy in the United States.

This book is suitable for undergraduate and graduate students seeking to expand their knowledge of the entirety of the Black experience in the United States. Scholars teaching African American courses focusing on Black history, literature, identity formation, education and social change, and race and politics will find this book particularly useful. The interdisciplinary methods and approaches we adopted in this book will enhance students' critical thinking, writing, and speaking skills—tools they will need to excel in their lives and careers. By placing race at the center of the work, the book offers significant lessons for understanding the institutional marginalization of Blacks in contemporary America and their historical resistance and perseverance.

Special thanks are due to Sara Zeigler, former Dean of the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences (CLASS), former Rose Perrine, Associate Dean of CLASS, and Betina Gardner, former Dean of Libraries, for their unflinching support not only for the project but for AFA at ECU. Their commitment to the growth of AFA is exemplary, and the program is indebted to them. This book benefited from the tireless efforts, enthusiastic support, and professionalism of ECU librarians. Victoria Koger and Linda Sizemore supported this project from the beginning, a commitment that Kelly Smith came to embrace when she became the AFA Library liaison. By investing their time and expertise and going beyond their call of duty, Koger, Sizemore, and Smith ensured the project's timely completion. We thank them profoundly. We are particularly grateful to Sandra Añez Powell. Originally from Venezuela, she now serves as an independent diversity consultant in Richmond, Kentucky, as well as a painter whose work includes the cover page of the first edition of the book. Finally, thanks to Melissa Abney, ECU Libraries' graphic artist, for designing the front and back cover of the book's current edition.

Finally, and no less importantly, we thank the contributors to the project for trusting us with their manuscripts and for their patience throughout the editorial process. Our contributors brought their expertise to help our readers understand the diversity and richness of African America's histories, peoples, and cultures. They are

affiliated with higher education institutions around the globe, including ECU, Ball State University, San Francisco State University, Leiden University, Virginia State University, Georgetown University, the University of Oklahoma, DePauw University, the University of Texas at Arlington, Stark State College in Ohio, Trinity Washington University in Washington, D.C., Elizabeth City State University, Tennessee State University, and the University of Pennsylvania.

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