



# SLAVE WRECKS PROJECT

## ANNUAL REPORT

October 1, 2023-September 30,  
2024

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| <b>Slave Wrecks Project</b>                                                           |                                                              |
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# THEATER SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

## I. Africatown, Alabama

Main Partners: Diving with a Purpose (DWP); Archaeology in the Community (AITC)

*NOTE: This activity coordinated by SI-NMAAHC CSGS Staff is reported on separately by CSGS since it does not fall under this contract*

## II. Biscayne Bay, Florida

Main Partners: National Park Service (NPS), Youth Diving with A Purpose (YDWP)

*NOTE: This activity coordinated by SI-NMAAHC CSGS Staff is reported on separately by CSGS since it does not fall under this contract*

## III. Brazil

Main Partners: AfrOrigens, University of Serigipe, Quilombola Santa Rita de Bracui



### The Camargo Project:

#### ***Research:***

Following up on the intensified field search for the Camargo site in July and August 2023, the site was located in the subsequent December 2023 field campaign and subsequently began to be delineated with diagnostic sampling in May 2024. Over the course of this past year SWP worked closely with archaeologists from the University of Sergipe and AfrOrigens to successfully locate the 19<sup>th</sup> century slaver shipwreck of the Brigue Camargo, launch its documentation, and pursue supplemental funding

through the submission of a collaboratively developed grant submitted to the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, whose award was announced in August 2024.

Built in the United States, and captained on its final voyage in 1858 by a US citizen from Maine (Captain Nathaniel Gordon), the Camargo is the last known ship to bring enslaved Africans to Brazil, its history uniquely testifying to the deep entanglements between Brazil and the United States that contributed to the prolongation of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the more extensive sourcing of enslaved from East Africa during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

During a series of field seasons that combined magnetometry with other search and documentation techniques, the site was identified, and the basic parameters of this zero-visibility diving site were established. Most notably, the length of the ship was established, and charred timber was verified (and the latter was sampled), providing important additional independent diagnostics (to location) for confirming the identity of the vessel (since its length at construction is known and the site corresponds to within a foot of these measurements, and the vessel is documented to have been burnt when scuttled). More details are provided in the Technical and Field Report in Annex.

#### ***Community and Public Engagement:***

As outlined in extensive detail in the successful AFCP grant (see in Annex), intensive collaboration with the local descendant community of the Quilombola Santa Rita de Bracui is central to this initiative. This multi-dimensional collaboration includes training youth in diving, participation in research and site protection, collaboration in public education, dissemination, and interpretation, and policy-maker engagement.

Amongst the most notable activities undertaken this year was a joint visit to the site and the Quilombola Santa Rita de Bracui with AfrOrigens and the SWP Co-Directors in May 2024 by the Secretary of the Smithsonian, Lonnie G. Bunch III, and the US Ambassador to Brazil, followed by a major public symposium at the National Archives in Rio de Janeiro. During this trip, several other significant discussions with Brazilian government ministries and the mayor and staff from the local prefecture of Angra dos Reis also occurred. Dive training and photo-documentation training, developed in collaboration with the organization WITNESS, were also conducted with several Quilombola youth.

#### ***Press/Media Coverage:***

The identification of the site and the high-profile public engagement activities resulted in a high volume of media coverage of the SWP/AfrOrigens collaboration, particularly so in the top-shelf Brazilian Press including major stories by *VEJA* and by the major Brazilian television (TV Globo) amongst others, but also in a major story in April of 2024 by *The Washington Post*. These are found in the full list of SWP Media Coverage for this 2023-2024 FY in Annex.

## **IV. Mozambique**

Main Partners: UEM-CAIRIM, Marc-André Bernier, Diving with A Purpose (DWP), AfrOrigens, ACHA, IZIKO



### **L’Aurore Project:**

#### ***Research:***

Two field seasons were conducted during this fiscal year, one in January 2024 and another in August 2024. Both integrated the maritime archaeological investigation of the site of the slave ship L’Aurore, which wrecked in 1789, with SWP-Academy training (phase 3 and 4) of our most advanced SWP-A cohort.

The fieldwork conducted on the site focused on excavation (as opposed to non-destructive documentation) for the first time – into both the research and the SWP-Academy training. The primary findings involved the discovery of the ship’s positioning and the fact that remains of the decks, including the one on which enslaved persons would have been imprisoned, are still accessible. Conservation assessments were conducted with a view to site protection needs and the process that would be needed to secure artefacts (including possible structural elements, e.g., from the aforementioned deck) for eventual exhibition purposes. More detailed descriptions of the work on site are provided in the following annexes: *SWP Mozambique 2024 Archaeological Technical Report; Conservation Briefs (Bergeron; Boshoff)*; as well as in the *SWP Mozambique 2024 Field Activity Report – January, July/August*.

#### ***Training and Capacity Building:***

In this FY we implemented advanced archaeological training for our most advanced SWP-Academy cohort comprised of the leads from Senegal, the US, Mozambique, and Brazil, as well as base training in project management, strategic program development and planning, data management, technical and scientific reporting. Of note: the base SWP-Academy training curriculum has now been translated into 3 languages (English, French, Portuguese). For more details, please see the annexed *SWP Mozambique 2024 Field Activity Report*.

We continued to advance the Community Monitors dive training and are in the process of reworking the model for purposes of broader implementation and external funding proposal development. SWP also supported our Mozambican partners CAIRIM in their effort to provide region-wide training – a vital step in ensuring their longer-term sustainability. For more details, please see the annexed *SWP Mozambique 2024 Field Activity Report*.

### ***Press/Media:***

During our Mozambican sessions, SWP also provided access and supported the work of two major media outlets (The Guardian, The New Yorker) from which we expect major stories in FY2025. For more details, please see the annexed *SWP Mozambique 2024 Field Activity Report*.

### ***Institutionalization and Partnership Development:***

Discussions aimed at advancing formal agreements focused on research collaboration on the L'Aurore site and on artefact loans were advanced with the respective university and government officials in Maputo, and a code of conduct focusing on research process and data was implemented. For more details, please see the annexed *SWP Mozambique 2024 Field Activity Report*.

## **V. Portugal**

Main Partners: National Museum of Natural History and Science of the University of Lisbon, City Museum of Lisbon, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, IADE.



- **Teacher Training in Difficult History Initiative (2 sessions: July 1-5, 2024 and July 8-12, 2024)**

In June/July 2024, SWP in collaboration with the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (a co-supporter along with the US Embassy) launched an innovative initiative designed to support educators in Portugal to critically incorporate the history of the slave trade and address Portugal's involvement and its impacts – past and present in Portuguese society and globally. Held at the Gulbenkian in Lisbon, and titled “*Difficult Histories, Difficult Legacies*,” this training included secondary school teachers, museum staff, and other educational professionals focusing on pedagogical approaches to difficult stories, with a central focus on the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Developed and led by SWP postdoctoral Fellow Dr. Raquel Machaqueiro, the training included workshops by technical coordinators, including Rachel Machaqueiro (SWP), and invited academics and museum professionals from Portugal as well as from the US (including from the Smithsonian). The success of this initiative was signaled by the Gulbenkian's interest in co-sponsoring and hosting a continuation next year, as well as by media interest, including an interview of Machaqueiro on the primary national television broadcaster (RTP). A more detailed report on this initiative is provided in the attachment.

- **Museum of Lisbon Exhibition**

In the wake of Secretary Bunch’s 2023 visit to Lisbon, one of the co-organizing institutions for those events, the City Museum of Lisbon, has continued to work with members of the SWP Coordinating Office to develop a plan for the first major exhibit to address the slave trade at a major cultural institution in Portugal. SI-NMAAHC and GW hosted a visiting museum delegation to the SI exhibits and held discussions about moving forward in DC and in Lisbon. This has given rise to an internal authorization request to EGEAC in Lisbon (required of all public institutions) which has been provisionally approved, an ongoing consultation process that has resulted in the selection of SWP-recommended curators, facilitation of discussions for purposes of obtaining loan objects (including from the Sao Jose site at IZIKO), and collaboration in development – most notably including close collaboration in the development and submission of a grant to the Terra Foundation for American Art. Albeit not successful, that grant development process has advanced planning for the exhibit, now likely to be target dates for late 2027 and continued discussions and strategizing about funding. Of note: Secretary Bunch had committed to writing letters of support for these efforts as needed in this next FY.

***Partnership Development & Other:***

In the wake of the early 2023 events, SWP has continued discussions about how to electively and strategically advance partnering with Portuguese institutions in ways that advance SWP’s core mission, with respect to research, capacity-building, critical public education and engagement, and that can provide access to complementary forms of support available in and to European-based partners. In addition to the aforementioned Teacher Training and collaboration in the effort to implement the Museum of Lisbon exhibition, the SWP CO led by SWP Co-director Stephen Lubkemann and postdoctoral fellow Raquel Machaqueiro have continued to pursue collaborative archival research with CHAPAS exploring the connections between slave traders and the founding of maritime insurance and have submitted a formal request for open access to the private files of the largest insurer in Portugal. They have also continued discussions with the Director and staff of the Museum of Natural History of the University of Lisbon on the “Casa da Africa” initiative – that is exploring the possibility of securing the site once owned by the owner of the slave ship São José for future use as a site of memory by a coalition of Portuguese institutions. Productive discussions about support for all of these initiatives, and potentially for SWP work in other Lusophone spaces, have been held with the President of the Gulbenkian Foundation, the leadership of the Luso-American Foundation, the head of Lisbon’s urban infrastructure in the Mayor’s office and University of Lisbon and Museum leadership, inclusive of the possibility of jointly developing ERC and/or EU Horizons funding proposals. A specific small grant that would provide half of the support for Machaqueiro has already been solicited by FLAD and is currently under development to be submitted in Trimester one of FY2025. Further exploration of these advancement opportunities from European sources will continue in 2025 and 2026 developed and pursued in collaboration with the strategic advancement plan that has been solicited by the Secretary from the SWP Co-Directors and which is already in the process of being developed (see below).

## **VI. Senegal**

Main Partners: WARC, URICA, Marc-André Bernier, Madicke Gueye, ACHA, AfrOrigens, Gilson Rambelli, Andre Bergeron

- **SWP-A Senegal:**

In June 2024, SWP began its second round of training in Senegal for our second SWP-Academy cohort (overall, albeit our first in Francophone Africa). This session brought back students from the 2022 cohort, all from Francophone countries, including students from Haiti, Senegal, Benin, and Côte d'Ivoire; co-led by Marc-André Bernier and Gabrielle Miller (NMAAHC), and assisted by Madicke Gueye (URICA), Andre Bergeron, Gilson Rambelli (AfrOrigens), and Kelsey Rooney.

The training in this phase included a continuation of non-destructive underwater archaeological documentation techniques on the two shipwrecks students started to document during phase one (in 2022), an introduction to critical approaches to the history and legacy of the transatlantic slave trade, and introductory conservation. All continuing students in this cohort also received additional dive training that brought them up to the level of advanced open water (the new cohort members were brought up to Open Water 1).

*NOTE: This activity coordinated by SI-NMAAHC CSGS Staff is reported on separately by CSGS since it does not fall under this contract. Further information is also included on the Annex – reporting memo Gabrielle Miller.*

## **VII. South Africa**

Main Partners: IZIKO Museums of South Africa, ACHA

IZIKO provided essential support to the Mozambican field research through a conservation assessment (see Mozambique section above). IZIKO and ACHA are also supporting collaboration in Portugal with the Museum of Lisbon's effort to develop a major exhibition on the slave trade in which the story of the Sao Jose will feature centrally, and in investigating the ties of the Sao Jose's owner to the maritime insurance industry (see Portugal section above).

IZIKO and ACHA are also working with SWP-CO to develop two proposals for A) potential contributions to SWP-Academy training, and B) a new initiative that will focus on the history of the slave ship Meermin and the enslaved who revolted onboard and were later imprisoned on Robben Island. ACHA continues to play a significant role in the coordination of SWP-Academy instruction, logistics, and curriculum development, as well as in supporting the community monitor program's development and implementation.

## **VIII. St. Croix**

Main Partners: TimeLooper

The St. Croix online exhibition has continued to move forward, and it's reaching its final stage, with plans for the exhibition to be available on the SWP website.

*NOTE: Further information on progress and ETA for completion is available from the primary coordinators of this initiative at NMAAHC (Gabrielle Miller and Jenney Fazande).*

# COORDINATING OFFICE ACTIVITIES

## • CO Meetings

Weekly CO Meetings: The coordinating office held around 51 meetings over the course of FY24. These weekly meetings provide the vital forum in which the management of SWP is implemented tactically and in which overall strategy is adjusted.

## • Development

*Grant Applications*-SWP applied to and/or assisted in the application of the following external funding opportunities:

- I. Andrew Mellon Foundation (submitted via GWU): Usable Pasts: Mobilizing Slave Wrecks Project's New Generation of Global Research and Community Leaders to Address Present Social Injustice through Recovery of Suppressed/Neglected History. Outcome: Not Awarded
- II. TED Audacious Project (submitted via NMAAHC). Outcome: Not Awarded.
- III. Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation-Brazil (submitted via AfrOrigins with SWP CO support and collaboration in development). Outcome: **AWARDED**
- IV. Terra Foundation for American Art (submitted via Museum of Lisbon with SWP CO support and collaboration in development): Exhibition Proposal- More than Merchants/ Not Mere Merchandise: Enslavers and Enslaved in Lisbon's Global Entanglements w/The Slave Trade Outcome: Not Awarded

*GWU Development Office Meetings* – SWP held 3 meetings throughout the year with the office of Development and Alumni Relations at GW to discuss ways to make use of available resources, reach private donors, and diversify the overall stream of funding for the project. These meetings will continue to be ongoing in FY2025 and will also involve coordination with NMAAHC.

## • Communications/Media/Website

1. Website Development: SWP completed the primary work on--and did a soft launch of the website, available under: <https://slavewreckproject.org/> with plans for a formal launch in early 2025.
2. SWP Video Project: SWP began work on the production of a short video that will showcase the project writ large but focus on student opportunities and highlight GW's involvement in the project. This video will involve the participation of SWP CO members, partners, as well as former students, and will be fully produced and expensed by GW.
3. Social Media: SWP's Instagram account reached over 7K followers this year, and a Facebook account was created to share fieldwork updates with a larger audience.
4. Newsletter: SWP sent out 4 newsletters during the fiscal year (December 2023, March 2024, June 2024, and September 2024) – In Attachment
5. Media:

Around 25 news articles, announcements, or relevant interviews were produced related to SWP and/or its partners during FY24. Particularly notable media coverage this year included articles

by the Washington Post, VEJA and TV Globo (in Brazil), ATMOS Earth News, and by The Guardian (in Annex).

- Administrative Updates:

SWP worked with the following interns during the fiscal year.

Based at GW:

- *Annie McDonnell (SWP-CO) – September 2022 – (currently employed)* Annie McDonnell served as SWP's student research assistant. She is a sophomore at GW studying sociology with minors in gender studies and public policy. She brings previous experience working with international nonprofits and former research in intimate partner violence. She's excited to assist with SWP's development efforts and work with new communities.
- *Brenda Reiter (SWP-CO) – (September 2023-December 2023)* Brenda Reiter served as SWP's student admin assistant. She is a Political Science student at GW.

Based at NMAAHC:

- *Grace Wagnon (NMAAHC Fall Internship) – (August 2023 – December 2023)* Grace Wagnon worked primarily on assisting SWP in the development of the new website. She graduated from The George Washington University in May 2023 with a double major in History and International Affairs.

*\*Office Move-* the SWP Coordinating office was moved to 2110 G. St. NW #201-A, Washington, DC 20052.