



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Conditional freedom : free soil and fugitive slaves from the US South to Mexico's Northeast, 1803-1861

Mareite, T.J.F.

Citation

Mareite, T. J. F. (2020, February 13). *Conditional freedom : free soil and fugitive slaves from the US South to Mexico's Northeast, 1803-1861*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/85166>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/85166>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/85166> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Mareite T.J.F.

Title: Conditional freedom : free soil and fugitive slaves from the US South to Mexico's Northeast, 1803-1861

Issue Date: 2020-02-13

Propositions – Stellingen

1. In the Age of Revolution, while the emergence of a modern free-soil policy in Mexico clashed with the expansion of the Second Slavery in the US South, self-emancipated enslaved people in the US South increasingly sought to achieve both formal and informal freedom in late colonial and early independent Mexico.
2. Freedom in Mexico was *conditional* in two ways. (a) Before and during escape attempts, enslaved people's ability to attain freedom in Mexico was deeply conditioned upon a series of demographic, socioeconomic, environmental and political structures. (b) Across the Mexican border, the capacity to craft and conserve freedom was made conditional upon violent incursions by slaveholders and mercenaries into Mexican territory as well as the inconsistencies of Mexico's free-soil policy.
3. The emergence of Mexico as a free-soil territory during the nineteenth century was not a process as linear and unproblematic as scholars have commonly assumed, but rather was fraught with debates involving both Mexican and US officials and citizens.
4. The Mexican contrast between the rise of unconditional or formal freedom *on paper* and the persistence of conditional freedom *in practice* sheds light on the range of intermediary experiences for self-emancipated slaves between informal and formal freedom. It further refines our understanding of free-soil and spaces of freedom in the age of the Second Slavery.
5. The notion of Mexico as a land of freedom for African Americans has long been underrepresented in both popular memory and the historiography.
6. Although global history is a fruitful approach when used for suitable questions and objects, its ever-increasing importance in the globalized academia casts an uninvited shadow on the intrinsic value of area studies for the discipline of history.
7. Scholars should not regard the neoliberal turn of academia (which includes, among other symptoms, the growing casualization of academic labor and commodification of academic knowledge as well as an increased pressure to publish and compete) as an irreversible process.
8. The growth of capitalism and slavery's entrenchment are two extremely compatible processes, both throughout history and in contemporary times.
9. Calls to erect walls (symbolic and material ones) between the US and Mexico are as ancient as they have proved delusive and fallacious throughout history.

In the early 1830s, Kentucky-born traveller James O. Pattie argued that unless a "Chinese wall rise between the two states", Mexico would continue to be "the refuge of negro-stealers and the Elysium of rogues". James O. Pattie, *The Personal Narrative of James O. Pattie of Kentucky* (Cincinnati: John H. Wood, 1831), 289.

10. Completing a PhD is a constant and difficult exercise in self-discipline, perseverance, mutual support and care.