6th Annual Stephanie Camp Memorial Lecture given by Professor Sharla Fett

Submitted by Alexandra Colley Dusablon on June 2, 2020 - 4:28pm

This year's Stephanie M.H. Camp Memorial Lecture was delivered by Professor Sharla M. Fett on Wednesday, May 27th on Zoom. Her talk was titled, "Recaptive African Women and the Body Politics of Survival in the Era of the 'Last Slave Ships.'"

In the final decade of the transatlantic slave trade, recaptive Africans seized by U.S. patrols from illegal slave ships found themselves embarked on new and deadly journeys of forced migration to Liberia. To survive the catastrophe of their displacement, recaptive women asserted communal life in the midst of anonymous death through rival use of ship's spaces and reclamation of their social bodies. This lecture merged the history of the body, to which Stephanie Camp contributed so crucially, with more recent work on black intellectual history in the Atlantic World.

Sharla M. Fett is a Professor of History at Occidental College in Los Angeles, working in the fields of Atlantic World slavery and abolition, the antebellum U.S. South, and race, gender & health. She is the author of Working Cures: Healing, Health and Power on Southern Slave Plantations (2002) and Recaptured Africans: Surviving Slave Ships, Detention, and Dislocation in the Final Years of the Slave Trade (2017), both with University of North Carolina Press. She served as major contributing author to the 5th edition of Ellen DuBois and Lynn Dumenil's Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents (2019) and has been a teaching partner of the Colored Conventions Project, a collaborative digital research site on 19th-century Black organizing.

The annual Camp memorial lecture series was established to honor the memory of our beloved colleague, Stephanie M.H. Camp, who was the Donald W. Logan Family Endowed Chair in American History at the University of Washington, and the author of the award-winning book Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South (2004). Before her untimely death in 2014, Professor Camp was writing a book about race and beauty. Her work remains a powerful influence on the fields of race, gender, and slavery in and beyond American history. This event was made possible by generous donations to the Stephanie M.H. Camp.