

# The History and Legacy of the Reconstruction Amendments

## CALL FOR PAPERS



1 Extract from "The Fifteenth Amendment", an 1870 print celebrating the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in February 1870

Paper proposals are invited for a conference exploring the drafting and legacy of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, to be held at the Rothermere American Institute at Oxford University on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

The conference is being organized by the Quill Project at Pembroke College Oxford to celebrate the publication of a major digital collection exploring the drafting of these amendments and related legislation, details of which are below.

It is hoped that the mix of papers at the conference will explore both the 'Second Founding' itself and the effects of these Amendments on subsequent legal, political, and social developments in the United States. We actively encourage proposals from junior scholars and members of groups that have been underrepresented in the academy.

### Paper Submissions

Proposals are invited for 30-minute papers highlighting recent or in-progress research in any of the following areas, broadly interpreted:

- The drafting of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, or Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution of the United States, or the ratification of those amendments in the states, and competing understandings of the rights that the constitutional text should protect.
- Related state and federal legislation that attempted to protect or resist the protection of civil rights in response.
- The fate of unsuccessful proposals for federal constitutional reform or legislation relating to slavery and civil rights in the period 1850 to 1875.
- The subsequent jurisprudence that has shaped understandings of the Fourteenth Amendment. Papers exploring the history of the changing understanding of the phrase 'due process' are especially encouraged.

- State constitutional reform that was a response to the Civil War or to the amendment of the Constitution.
- The memory of this period of constitutional change and its interpretation by subsequent generations.
- The extent to which constitutional reform has, or has not, effected social and political change in the United States.

To propose a paper please send a summary of up to 300 words outlining the proposed paper, together with a 2-page curriculum vitae, to: [quill@pmb.ox.ac.uk](mailto:quill@pmb.ox.ac.uk). Please send proposals for papers by Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

### **Format of the conference**

Our current hope is to hold an in-person conference, though we are sensitive to the ever-evolving ways in which the Covid-19 pandemic will affect travel plans or recommendations relating to in-person events. The Rothermere American Institute is equipped to support a mixed-format in-person and online event if that becomes necessary.

### **About the Quill Project**

The Quill Project is a centre based at Pembroke College Oxford that explores the negotiation of legal texts, most especially the various constitutional conventions that have shaped American state and federal constitutional law. The project publishes interactive digital editions that help us understand how large groups of people have collectively drafted legal texts. The research centre emphasizes multi-disciplinary approaches, the development of digital approaches that enhance our understanding of legislative history, and collaborative methods of working that include partnerships with other institutions and the involvement of undergraduate and graduate students in its research projects. More details about the Quill Project can be found at [www.quill.pmb.ox.ac.uk](http://www.quill.pmb.ox.ac.uk). You can explore the research platform developed by the centre at [www.quillproject.net](http://www.quillproject.net).

In the summer of 2022 the project will publish a major new collection that explores the congressional history of proposals constitutional reform and related legislation in the period 1860-1875, from the Corwin Amendment to the 1875 Civil Rights Act. This project is being completed in conjunction with the Center for Constitutional Studies at Utah Valley University. A pre-release preview of the collection is available [https://www.quillproject.net/library\\_collection/3](https://www.quillproject.net/library_collection/3).

### **About the Rothermere American Institute**

The Rothermere American Institute is the University of Oxford's centre for the study of the United States and its place in the world, supporting world-leading scholarship from a range of disciplines and communicating that scholarship to a wider public. More details about the Rothermere American Institute can be found at <https://www.raiox.ac.uk>.

