Struggling with the History of Slavery at Your Institution? Learn more about *On These Grounds*, an LOD model to Describe Enslaved Lives

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This presentation will report on the progress of the Mellon Foundation-funded project, On These Grounds (OTG), which brings together a core team of experienced digital history experts, archivists, and historians of slavery from Michigan State University, the University of Virginia, and Georgetown University to create, evaluate, revise, and disseminate a linked open data (LOD) ontology focused on adequately describing the lived experiences of those enslaved individuals who labored in bondage at higher education institutions. OTG is reparative at its core, and seeks to surface enslaved voices within institutional records, whose dominant perspectives are white and privileged. Given the critical mass of institutions eager to scrutinize and share their archives as they confront these complicated histories, OTG brings together an interdisciplinary group to craft a sustainable, extensible, linked open data (LOD) model to organize, publish, and share this foundational yet often undiscovered information with interested scholars, students, alumni, descendants, and members of the public. Project team members will present the developing ontology, and summarize the essential work with the partner institutions who are testing the model and with the advisory board, whose feedback has been critical for the development. Finally, team members will invite archivists, historians, and their institutions to undertake this work with their collections.

About the authors:

Sharon Leon is Associate Professor of Digital History at Michigan State University and is the director of the Omeka family of web publishing platforms. As the PI at the lead institution, Dr. Leon is coordinating the drafting, development, testing, and revision of the data model, the resource templates, and the workflow documentation for OTG.

Brenda Gunn (she/her) is Associate University Librarian for Special Collections and Preservation and leads the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia Library. AUL Gunn directs the work of the UVA team which contributes to the development of the data model and the documentation of descriptive workflows.