“The Flight of Mary Ann Paine: Slavery, Gender, and Black-Indigenous Identity in the Post-Removal South.”

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Abstract:

For context, the book manuscript explores how African, European, and Indigenous peoples understood, adapted, and adopted racial and religious ideas in the context of Indian Removal and slavery’s expansion in the United States. Using literary sources, ethnographic accounts, genealogical materials, government documents, personal papers, slave narratives, newspapers, and church records, the project focuses on Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee between 1810 and 1902. I examine how each group maneuvered the complexity of a new settler society in a “Southern confluence,” a term that I coined to describe a geographic space for social and cultural exchange and the multi-layered, intersecting power dynamics associated with racial slavery and westward expansion. By exposing the personal relationships that facilitated chattel slavery’s growth and Indigenous dispossession and the individuals who challenged these transformations, my work fuses interdisciplinary scholarship on African Americans, ethnohistory, settler colonialism, gender, religion, and historical memory. Exploring the region as a Southern confluence allows us to see Black, Indigenous, and white Southerners relationally and bridges three subfields (Native American History, African American History, Southern History) that had once been (and are still often) siloed in U.S. History.