

CLEMENTS CENTER FOR
SOUTHWEST STUDIES
SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

You are invited to the Brown Bag Lecture Series

October 26, 2011

12 noon to 1 p.m.

Texana Room, DeGolyer Library
6404 Hyer (formerly Hilltop) Lane & McFarlin Blvd.

*"What Can Digital Tools Tell Us about
Slavery in the Texas Borderlands?"*

Andrew Torget

David J. Weber Research Fellow for the Study of Southwestern America 2011-2012



During the twenty-five years that preceded the Mexican-American War, tens of thousands of Americans abandoned the United States to build new lives in the uncertain Texas borderlands. Drawn primarily from slave states of the southern United States, these settlers sought cheap land (first under Mexico and later the Republic of Texas) in order to build cotton farms in the region. This massive migration, in turn, fundamentally reshaped the territory between the United States and Mexico, eventually pulling these two nations into a war that would come to redefine power on the North American continent.

Torget will discuss how digital tools can provide historians with new windows into these transformations. Focusing on GIS mapping, geo-visualization, and text-mining techniques, Andrew will discuss how the movement of slaves and slaveholders into Texas during the 1830s and 1840s sheds new light on the evolution of the region during the years leading to the Mexican-American War.

Torget is an assistant professor of history at the University of North Texas in Denton. He received his PhD in history from the University of Virginia and is spending the academic year at SMU as a Clements Center Fellow completing his manuscript, "Cotton

Empire: Slavery, the Texas Borderlands and the Origins of the Mexican-American War," for publication.

Image: *Young Texas in Repose*, New York, New York E. Jones ca. 1845. Courtesy of the Beinecke Library Online Digital Images Collection.

For more information or if you need special accommodations, contact swcenter@smu.edu or 214-768-3684.



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