

FINAL REPORT

Professional Development Grant

Stanley M. Elkins' *Slavery*: History? Social Science? Chutzpah? Or What?

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This document is the final report of a research project funded by an ATU Professional Development Grant. The research took place in Fall 2013 and the project time-line was completed in December, 2013.

A. Title Page (attached at front)

B. Restatement of Project Researched

Stanley M. Elkins was a well-known and provocative historian best known for his work *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* published in 1959. He made two major arguments. The first was that American abolitionists' refusal to compromise their ideals made them less effective as advocates for emancipation than more pragmatic British abolitionists. The second was that slavery, like other totalitarian environments throughout history, made the subjected peoples fundamentally dependent on their masters and robbed them of initiative. Elkins' views were influential in the late 1960's and early 1970's on Daniel Patrick Moynihan, one of the founders of the neo-conservative movement. My purpose will be to revisit Elkins' work on slavery and its impact on modern political and academic thought.

C. Review of Research Procedure

The semester was spent reading and analyzing Elkins' work, related works, and the relevant historiographical literature examining his impact on academia and politics. The results are in the process of being organized for public presentation. I hope to present my findings at an academic conference such as the Arkansas Association of College History Teachers in October 2014 or a regional Phi Alpha Theta meeting. I also plan to use my findings extensively in my 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century European History classes and my World History classes.

D. Summary of Findings

The Professional Development Grant allowed Academic Affairs to pay for an adjunct instructor to take one of my courses. This course reduction freed up time for me to pursue my investigation. My study of Stanley Elkins' *Slavery* and works critical of it over the course of the semester Fall 2013 has increased my knowledge and understanding of many phenomena. Some are listed as follows:

1. Slavery in South America. (Elkins contrasts slavery there with slavery in North America).
2. Agricultural history of the American South until 1865.
3. Agricultural history of parts of South America until 1888.
4. European relations (cultural, economic, political) with slavery regions of North and South America.

5. Concentration camps (Elkins likened the psychological experience of U.S. slaves to that of concentration camp inmates).
6. Historiography on the topic of American slavery.

#### E. Conclusions

Knowledge of these topics and the material related to them should be of value to me in teaching the following courses:

1. World History II (HIST 1513)
2. European History courses from 1550-1887
3. Latin American History courses
4. American History courses
5. HIST 2513 Sources and Methods: Using the controversy surrounding Elkins' book as a concrete example of historiographical debate.

Finally, I continue to be interested in the impact of *Slavery* on current political and academic discourse. I look forward to presenting my findings in the near future.