

HISTORY WORKSHOP

The Department of History

Tuesdays ~ 12:30-1:30 pm ~ ZOOM

Stolen: Five Free Boys Kidnapped into Slavery and their Astonishing Odyssey Home

Dr. Richard Bell

University of Maryland

September 22, 2020

12:30-1:30 pm

[Zoom ID: 946 2190 5729](#)

P/W: UDHistory



Join us for a talk with Dr. Richard Bell, the author of *Stolen*, a new book that tells the incredible story of five boys whose courage forever changed the fight against slavery in America.

Philadelphia, 1825: five young, free black boys fall into the clutches of the most fearsome gang of kidnappers and slavers in the United States. Lured onto a small ship with the promise of food and pay, they are instead met with blindfolds, ropes, and knives. Over four long months, their kidnappers drive them overland into the Cotton Kingdom to be sold as slaves. Determined to resist, the boys form a tight brotherhood as they struggle to free themselves and find their way home.

Their ordeal—an odyssey that takes them from the Philadelphia waterfront to the marshes of Mississippi and then onward still—shines a glaring spotlight on the Reverse Underground Railroad, a black market network of human traffickers and slave traders who stole away thousands of legally free African Americans from their families in order to fuel slavery's rapid expansion in the decades before the Civil War.

Dr. Richard Bell is Professor of History at the University of Maryland. He holds a PhD from Harvard University and is author of the new book *Stolen: Five Free Boys Kidnapped into Slavery and their Astonishing Odyssey Home* which is shortlisted for the George Washington Prize. He has won more than a dozen teaching awards, including the University System of Maryland Board of Regents Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching, the highest honor for teaching faculty in the Maryland state system. He has held major research fellowships at Yale, Cambridge, and the Library of Congress and is the recipient of the National Endowment of the Humanities Public Scholar award. He serves as a Trustee of the Maryland Historical Society, as an elected member of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, and as a fellow of the Royal Historical Society.