

Matthew Ballard, Director of Library Services, recently presented at the Researching New York Conference at the New York State Museum in Albany on November 23, 2019.

Ballard's paper, "The Business of Equality: Racial Liberalism and the Legacy of Rufus Brown Bullock," shed new light on the upbringing of Bullock. Spending the majority of his childhood in Albion, NY, historians have oversimplified the socio-political climate of antebellum Orleans County, labeling the region as staunchly abolitionist and failing to address the spectrum of political beliefs in the area. Upon his election as governor of Georgia in 1868, Bullock relied upon a system of convict leasing to support private infrastructure projects, among other actions, which adds to the complexity of his story.

The paper was presented as part of a panel entitled "Lives and Legends," which addressed the challenges associated with examining and revising mythical narratives of state and national figures.