In this lecture, Gerard Aching examines, reflects on, and compares Cuba's Escalera Conspiracy of 1844, which violently quashed an emerging movement to reform slavery on the island, with the Compromise of 1850 in the United States, which gave rise to the Fugitive Slave Act of the same year. Both events overlap temporally and geographically within the long history of Plantation America. And even though “conspiracy” and “compromise” each represented divergent treatments of the facts of human bondage, they both constituted attempts at managing confrontations between anti-slavery activism and pro-slavery intransigence that brought both societies to the brink of self-destruction. The lecture will also consider how lines of inquiry in Latin American and African American studies can be brought to bear on examining the roots of slavery in the Americas in mutually productive ways.