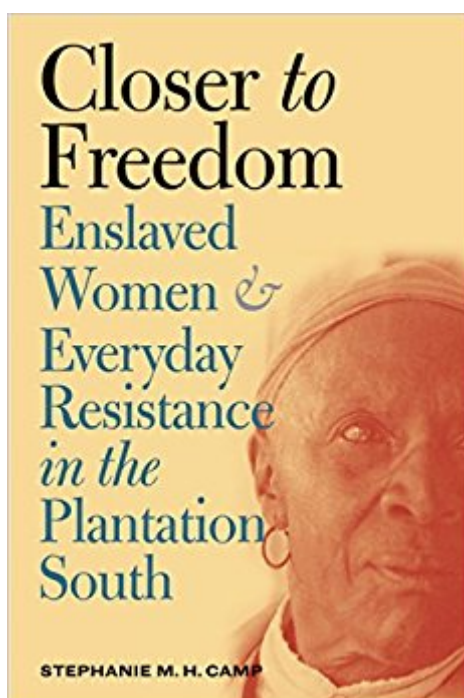


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Closer To Freedom: Enslaved Women And Everyday Resistance In The Plantation South (Gender And American Culture)



Synopsis

Recent scholarship on slavery has explored the lives of enslaved people beyond the watchful eye of their masters. Building on this work and the study of space, social relations, gender, and power in the Old South, Stephanie Camp examines the everyday containment and movement of enslaved men and, especially, enslaved women. In her investigation of the movement of bodies, objects, and information, Camp extends our recognition of slave resistance into new arenas and reveals an important and hidden culture of opposition. Camp discusses the multiple dimensions to acts of resistance that might otherwise appear to be little more than fits of temper. She brings new depth to our understanding of the lives of enslaved women, whose bodies and homes were inevitably political arenas. Through Camp's insight, truancy becomes an act of pursuing personal privacy. Illegal parties ("frolics") become an expression of bodily freedom. And bondwomen who acquired printed abolitionist materials and posted them on the walls of their slave cabins (even if they could not read them) become the subtle agitators who inspire more overt acts. The culture of opposition created by enslaved women's acts of everyday resistance helped foment and sustain the more visible resistance of men in their individual acts of running away and in the collective action of slave revolts. Ultimately, Camp argues, the Civil War years saw revolutionary change that had been in the making for decades.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Sensitive, bold, and imaginative, the first book to place black women at the center of everyday resistance to bondage. (Douglas R. Egerton, Le Moyne College, author of "Gabriel's Rebellion: The Virginia Slave Conspiracies of 1800 and 1802") "This slim volume makes a substantial and often ingenious contribution to slavery studies and to women's and southern history..." | "American Historical Review" "This slim volume makes a substantial and often ingenious contribution to slavery studies and to women's and southern history..." | "American Historical Review" "Wonderfully evocative. . . . A provocative book full of astonishing, sometimes unforgettable moments." -- "Virginia Magazine" "Camp's creative and elegant work reinforces the interconnectedness of North and South, slave and free, in the lives of enslaved people." -- "Signs" "Very readable yet analytically sophisticated. . . . Camp seamlessly integrates a wide array of sources . . . into an engaging book that does more than recount women's experiences as slaves in the plantation South. . . . An excellent study of bondwomen and a penetrating look at the rival geographies created by enslaved people." -- "Journal of Southern History" "Deepens our understanding of resistance as both an individual and collective endeavor. [Camp] argues forcefully. . . . Intriguing and interesting." -- "The Journal of Interdisciplinary History" "This slim volume makes a substantial and often ingenious contribution to slavery studies and to women's and southern history..." | "American Historical Review"

This slim volume makes a substantial and often ingenious contribution to slavery studies and to women's and southern history. Taking pleasure seriously, studying space without getting trapped in the 'public versus private' debate, finding new information in much-mined sources, and complicating our knowledge of enslaved women's resistance are valuable in themselves. They are also potent hints at what Camp and those who follow her lead will accomplish in the coming years.--American Historical Review Very readable yet analytically sophisticated. . . . Camp seamlessly integrates a wide array of sources . . . into an engaging book that does more than recount women's experiences as slaves in the plantation South. . . . An excellent study of bondwomen and a penetrating look at the rival geographies created by enslaved people."--Journal of Southern History Through the lens of geography, Camp successfully introduces a new language to describe and interpret everyday resistance among enslaved women and men. Scholars interested in a different approach to this important topic will find *Closer to Freedom* refreshing.--Civil War History Wonderfully evocative. . . . A provocative book full of astonishing, sometimes unforgettable moments.--Virginia Magazine The book is well written throughout, and Camp really does seem to get inside the minds of enslaved women. . . . This is a promising first book and an interesting and innovative addition to the

historiography of the lives of the enslaved.--Georgia Historical QuarterlyAn appealing and creative approach to understanding everyday slave resistance.--Southern HistorianThe author's attention to a 'spatial history of American slavery' reveals contests over physical space as a hitherto unappreciated dimension of the everyday politics of plantation life. This book skillfully brings into view clandestine pockets--ephemeral but resilient--in which slave women, in particular, struggled to sustain a 'rival geography' in which powers of mastery could be held at bay.--Julie Saville, University of ChicagoStephanie Camp's brilliant study draws upon numerous fields of scholarship--feminist theory, anthropology, sociology--to produce an innovative reinterpretation of enslaved women in the plantation South. Sensitive, bold, and imaginative, *Closer to Freedom* is the first book to place black women at the center of everyday resistance to bondage.--Douglas R. Egerton, Le Moyne College This elegant and often profound monograph casts a fresh eye on the daily acts of self-preservation and disguised defiance that historians of slavery have called 'everyday resistance.' . . . Illuminating both the texture of enslaved women's lives and the concept of everyday resistance, *Closer to Freedom* is both a welcome teaching text and an accessible study for general readers.--North Carolina Historical ReviewDeepens our understanding of resistance as both an individual and collective endeavor. [Camp] argues forcefully. . . . Intriguing and interesting.--The Journal of Interdisciplinary HistoryCamp's creative and elegant work reinforces the interconnectedness of North and South, slave and free, in the lives of enslaved people.--SignsCamp has written a provocative book full of astonishing, sometimes unforgettable moments. Moreover, she has raised important questions about the way slave women resisted their owners. Ultimately no one will be able to answer the questions that Camp asks without coming to grips with the world she describes.--Virginia Magazine of History and Biography

An excellent work that gives substance and depth to the experience of slavery from the perspective, especially, of enslaved African women. Professor Camp's work discloses features of slavery and southern society that normally are not made explicit - humanising the enslaved in the process and connecting their efforts to the dramatic events following the Civil War.

Can be repetitive in some sections. Overall, generally a good book. Would recommend buying the paperback because the kindle version doesn't have page numbers.

This book breaks down alot. Although you get the it wasn't always that bad perception. To me in the beginning of the book the author tried to make it seem like it was a feminist book. But it wasn't it

must be understood it was an institution a system created by europeans to establish a system of white supremacy and maintain it and sustain it for the benefit of them and there descendants. The book is very informal and speaks to the trials faced by The Mothers of Creation under this Global System of Racism/White Supremacy. A good read

Was very enlightening. The key to what is in the book is in the title. Everyday. I Was amazed to find the slave girls liked to "dress up" and go hide in the swamps and go to a dance.

Very informative, provides meaningful perspective.

Great Condition

Stephanie Camp recasts the history of antebellum slavery by paying close attention to the ways in which gender shaped ideas of resistance and defiance among enslaved women of the Old South. Paying particular attention to the daily lives of enslaved women, Camp unearths fascinating evidence about the ways in which bondwomen defied slavery by the way they dressed, organized their living spaces, and, in some cases, fled from chattel slavery. While historians, over the past few decades, have written about resistance among enslaved people, Camp smartly intervenes in this debate by investigating the ways in which geography and place shaped the possibilities available to enslaved women to resist the commodification of their bodies. And while this historiographical move positions Camp's study as a transformative study on the scholarly subject of resistance, her attention to detail, to place, and to the everyday experiences of enslaved people makes her book one of the most valuable narratives to engage the human and lived experience of enslavement; and its for this reason that I continue to assign *Closer to Freedom* to my undergraduates--who continually walk away from a discussion of the book, knowing more about slavery and thinking more intelligently about the meaning of resistance.

Closer to Freedom is a breakthrough work that changed the way historians of slavery think about gender, resistance, space, and bodies. Camp sketches out the way that women responded to and at times resisted the demands of slavery, breaking from the image of the runaway man and the left-behind woman. In well-drawn sections on women who go truant or absent themselves from the plantation to hide in swamps and forests for a time, Camp explores the way enslaved women tried to create space for themselves. A book that builds upon and extends the pathbreaking *Ar'n't I A*

Woman, Too? by Deborah Gray White, and one of the key works that changed the discussions of gender and slavery.

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