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Title

Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8bm3t8br>

Journal

Journal of American History, 96(1)

ISSN

0021-8723

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Publication Date

2009-06-01

DOI

10.2307/27694804

Peer reviewed

charges, such as Louis Weichmann and Richard Mitchell Smoot, while condemning Surratt. Archival materials are rarely cited in the notes, and there is no mention of what Leonard describes as “a very substantial piece” of the assassination puzzle, a large collection of trial records collected in National Archives Record Group M-599 (Leonard, *Lincoln’s Avengers*, p. xvi). *Assassin’s Accomplice* is a quick, entertaining read, but Surratt still awaits more rigorous analysis.

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Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household. By Thavolia Glymph. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. xiv, 279 pp. Cloth, \$70.00, ISBN 978-0-521-87901-9. Paper, \$24.99, ISBN 978-0-521-70398-7.)

Out of the House of Bondage by Thavolia Glymph focuses on the principal site of southern social and familial organization: the household. As such, this study contributes abundantly to the literature on women’s history and emancipation. Glymph is concerned not only with understanding how a society responds to an emancipated population but also with exploring the limits of freedom and how gender might dictate the course of, and responses to, such freedom.

The author’s primary argument is that during the nineteenth century, the definition of what constituted a plantation “household” changed. By investigating the relationships of power between southern white and black women from the Civil War into emancipation, Glymph argues that the static terms “public” and “private” are not accurate descriptors for southern gendered ideology. Rather, the management of labor (be it enslaved or free) emerged as the driving discourse in households. Glymph contends that the imagined “cult of domesticity” produced violent interactions between mistresses and enslaved women. The first two chapters in particular suggest that violence inscribed life in the household and beyond its walls. As evenhanded as Glymph is in her treatment of violence experienced by

enslaved women and the roles of subordination assumed by white plantation women in relation to patriarchal male figures, mistresses were, nonetheless, the “female face” of the slave owners’ often-violent power (p. 4). Emerging from that line of inquiry is Glymph’s suggestion to reexamine the politics of domination as well as previously held convictions about the nature of slave resistance (p. 67).

Glymph’s central argument about labor management in domestic spaces builds on the work of scholars of the southern household such as Peter Bardaglio, Catherine Clinton, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, and Anne Firor Scott; that of women and emancipation such as Laura Edwards, Leslie Schwalm, and Marli Weiner; and that of the history of gender and race such as Nancy Bercau, Noralee Frankel, and Jacqueline Jones. The author’s conclusions are based on such sources as Works Progress Administration interviews of ex-slaves, diaries of plantation mistresses, county court records, personal family papers, and organizational records of mutual aid societies from nine southern archives.

There are very few criticisms to offer on this work. Chapter 1 provides a detailed overview of gendered violence and engages a broad range of scholarly literatures. Chapters 6 and 7 shift focus from southern women to a discussion of the white and black population in the South. That transition supports the author’s argument for change within the context of liberation movements. This shift is effortless, detracting not at all from the tightly woven narrative of the first five chapters.

Glymph suggests that *Out of the House of Bondage* is part of a larger research trajectory on class and regional variations during the era of emancipation. Whether this book is the first of an ongoing study or the author’s definitive word on the topic, Glymph has provided a new canvas for classic questions of enslavement, emancipation, and domestic spaces.

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West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War. By Heather Cox Richardson. (New Haven: Yale University