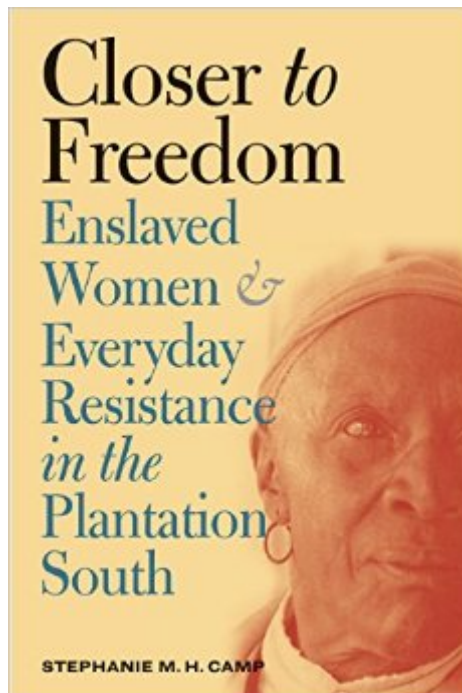


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# Closer To Freedom: Enslaved Women And Everyday Resistance In The Plantation South (Gender And American Culture)



## 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

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 it is 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.

This tome pulls back the curtain on a part of US history that has not been revealed. Stephanie spent lots of time combing archives to compile this volume. She has peeled back the cover on unexplored stories about slavery from the women's point of view. As she continues to explore this area of history, she is contributing to our knowledge of US history during slavery as well as providing a place for the voices of our female ancestors. Thanks for this work, Stephanie! Keep them coming!!

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.

Absolutely wonderful book with extensive research and beautifully written. Camp is a treasure to the field of American Slavery History.

This is an excellent read about an important topic to often ignored in our nation. its content is made even more important now, when the history of the nation is being corrupted by fantasy and not facts. The author is a talented storyteller who brings a poignant message rfrom which we can all learn to be more aware and engaged in standing tall.

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

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