Stephanie M. H. Camp

Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South


Stephanie M. H. Camp's Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South (2004) offers a nuanced and compelling analysis of the daily lives and struggles of enslaved women in the antebellum South. Camp's work challenges traditional narratives of slavery by highlighting the complex and varied experiences of enslaved women, whose resistance was often overlooked or dismissed.

Camp argues that enslaved women were actively engaged in resistance, using everyday practices and materials to advance liberation ideology in the South. She demonstrates how women used their cabins to hide and distribute materials and how they passed on their resistance through oral tradition.

Closer to Freedom proceeds from the conviction that dichotomies such as slave/master and free/slave did not sufficiently capture the realities of life for enslaved women. Camp shows that enslaved women resisted in multiple ways, from passive disobedience to outright violence.

Camp's research draws on a wide range of sources, including slave narratives, letters, and periodicals, to paint a vivid picture of enslaved women's lives. She identifies a variety of strategies used by women to counter the oppression and control exerted by their masters.

Closer to Freedom is an important contribution to the field of African American history and is a valuable resource for understanding the everyday resistance of enslaved women. It provides a fresh perspective on the history of slavery and encourages further research into the lives of enslaved women.

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