



## Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South (Gender and American Culture)

By Stephanie M. H. Camp

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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.

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**Editorial Review**

Review

"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..."

1 "American Historical Review"

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"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..."

1 "American Historical Review"

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 Quarterly*

An appealing and creative approach to understanding everyday slave resistance.--*Southern Historian*

The 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 Chicago

Stephanie 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 Review*

Deepens our understanding of resistance as both an individual and collective endeavor. [Camp] argues forcefully. . . . Intriguing and interesting.--*The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*

Camp's creative and elegant work reinforces the interconnectedness of North and South, slave and free, in the lives of enslaved people.--*Signs*

Camp 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*

From the Inside Flap

Focusing on female slaves' everyday forms of resistance--such as truancy, theft, and illegal parties--Camp argues that the Civil War years saw revolutionary change that had been in the making for decades, as slaves broke rules, spoke their minds, and ran away.

## **Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**Linda Porter:**

In this 21st millennium, people become competitive in each and every way. By being competitive currently, people have to do something to make these individuals survive, being in the middle of typically the crowded place and notice by simply surrounding. One thing that oftentimes many people have underestimated that for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a e-book your ability to survive increase then having chance to stay than other is high. For yourself who want to start reading some sort of book, we give you this particular *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South (Gender and American Culture)* book as nice and daily reading book. Why, because this book is greater than just a book.

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