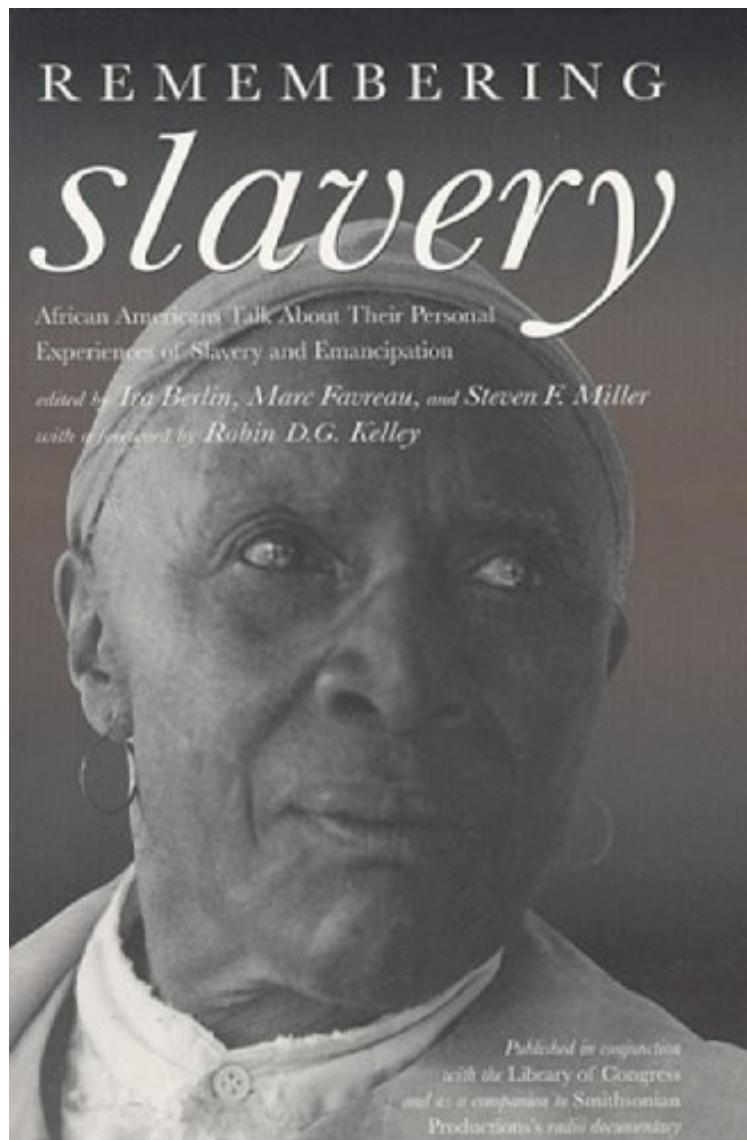


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Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk About Their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Freedom

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3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Pagination could use improvement. By Reginald Coleman The content was rich and well thought out, but the sections containing the actual dialogue with the interviewers did not paginate correctly. There were whole sections of dialogue that was simply not there. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. College level book By Marc's 2 cents Book arrived in perfect condition. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. GREAT BOOK By Mrs. B. This is a must read for anyone who has any questions about what it must have felt like to be a slave. I learned a lot and highly recommend the book. It's written EXACTLY as the interviewee speaks it so it's slow southern reading. Sometimes I'd have to read the sentence twice to understand what they were getting at, but it's a true representation of what was said so no complaints here. I really enjoyed the interviews and the pictures.

Early in the 1930s interviewers from the Federal Writers' Project combed the American South in search of former slaves. The interviewers spoke with hundreds of elderly people about their experiences in slavery, and preserved the voices of some of them on primitive recording devices. The nearly-inaudible recordings were placed in the Library of Congress, unheard by the general public, but now, remastered with the aid of modern technology, they offer the only known opportunity to hear the voices of former slaves.

From Publishers Weekly Two projects begun independently and presented together here provide chilling witness to slavery's persistent legacies. Transcripts of 124 former slaves interviewed in the 1920s and 1930s are accompanied by recently restored recorded interviews that have languished in the Library of Congress since 1941. Historian Berlin, founding director of the Freedmen and Southern Society Project at the University of Maryland, is a master of allowing the natural drama of history to unfold. The tapes particularly are riveting—perhaps especially for those seeking their roots in Southern slavery. Until the modern civil rights movement, Berlin notes, historians' "struggle over slavery" was considered "too important to be left to the [blacks] who experienced it," but their experience has increasingly been coming to light as more archival material is unearthed and made available. Still, some seams are apparent. The original transcribers of the print interviews (nine appear both in print and on cassette) made numerous and idiosyncratic editorial interventions that at times can read, as Berlin notes, like "minstrel-speak." Actor James Earl Jones and dancer Debbie Allen reading selections from the interviews on portions of the tape are not nearly as credible or moving as the voices of former slaves. Those wonderfully present voices describe family life, work ethic and recreational patterns, religious ethos and resistance in answer to questions posed in often unmistakably condescending terms by white interviewers. This project will enrich every American home and classroom. 40 bw photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal Grade 7 Up? These original recordings were made by interviewers from the Federal Writers' Project in the early 1930s. They have been remastered using state-of-the-art equipment and sound remarkably clear. Published in conjunction with the book of the same title, they represent the only known original recordings of former slaves. Their anecdotes are supplemented by dramatic readings by Debbie Allen, James Earl Jones, and Louis Gossett, Jr. among others. As good as the actors are, the tapes really come alive when the former slaves are speaking. Their dignity and authenticity are most impressive as they describe family life, daily routine, and work expectations. Despite their rigors and tragedies, the dozen men and women on the selections are not bitter but instead are optimistic, open-minded, and well-adjusted. These are excellent primary historical audio sources that students and teachers will find invaluable. Rob Tench, Newport News Public Library, VA Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal This is not the first publication of selections from the Library of Congress's interviews with former slaves, collected in the 1930s under the auspices of the Works Project Administration. But it is the most effective and enduring presentation of these invaluable living records we are likely to see, in no small part thanks to the accompanying audiotapes, which present actual interviews for the very first time. Quite literally, history comes alive in this unparalleled work. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.