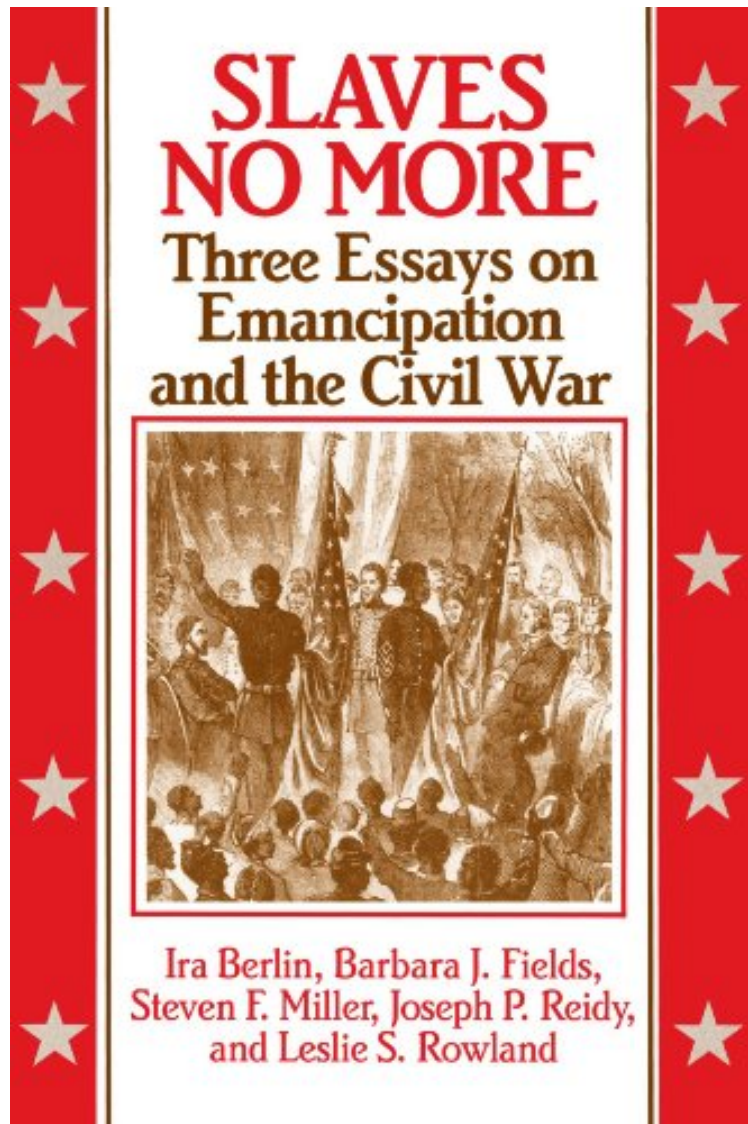


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Slaves No More: Three Essays on Emancipation and the Civil War

Ira Berlin, Barbara J. Fields, Steven F. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, Leslie S. Rowland
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Ira Berlin, Barbara J. Fields, Steven F. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, Leslie S. Rowland : Slaves No More: Three Essays on Emancipation and the Civil War before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Slaves No More: Three Essays on Emancipation and the Civil War:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. To The PointBy Barry SharpeI became a fan of Barbara J. Fields during a recent re-watching of Ken Burns' Civil War film he did for PBS. She is a terrific writer and stays on point. All essays are good but I had no issues or complaints with any of the inclusions. Consider, if you will, the overwhelming changes that took place following Juneteenth. If an African-American left his/her master, they were faced with having

to put bread on the table. It wasn't all pretty. Very few slaves were trained for much beyond routine agricultural tasks. If ol' massa was broke, these ex-slaves had a ton of worry heaped upon them. So although freedom was sweet, along with it came new worries one really ought to consider from their perspective. This book takes a step toward that goal. Read this book. You will have a different perspective whether you are black or white. I recommend it to everyone.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By MLJ
Dynamic essays on the Emancipation.
0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. " Perhaps a better exploration of the longer volume would involve more strength ...
By Tyler R
Slaves No More was a culmination of writers including Ira Berlin, Barbara J. Fields and others as an attempt to convey the challenges, gains, and losses of emancipation during and after the Civil War. What promises to be an extensive search into these concepts leaves much to be desired. The book lacked focus leaning on several different theses, none of which were promised in the introduction. That which was promised is under represented and the book was far too redundant. Some forgiveness can be allotted given that this is a summarization of the much larger work by several authors, "Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867." Perhaps a better exploration of the longer volume would involve more strength and success. To begin, the Introduction promises extensive examples of black voices and accounts during and after Emancipation efforts. The authors intrigue the reader with promises such as "Not only did extraordinary numbers of former slaves, many of them newly literate, put pen to paper in the early years of freedom, but hundreds of others, entirely illiterate, gave depositions to government officials..." (xii). The representation of these fantastic accounts is meager at best and only remotely present in the second essay. An example is the authors' teasing comments such as "Southern slaves had their own conceptions of freedom, derived from their experience as slaves within the American republic." (86). Such a promise that was delivered only with the authors' suggestion of what they felt, instead of as promised in the introduction, relevant witness examples. Additionally, the premise of the book, "essays on Emancipation," was strongly delivered and yet a firm thesis was difficult to distinguish. Within the book, many arguments seem to be made in spite of or often in attempted congruity with other arguments. Collectively, there seemed to be four primary theses. The first, suggested the path that slaves made to align themselves with Union soldiers, the problems they faced and the existence of racism even within the Union. The second premise discussed the complexities surrounding enlisting black soldiers for both the Confederacy and the Union. The third suggested that the will and aim of the Union soldiers changed after the Emancipation Proclamation. Finally, the transition from slave to free was not a quick or immediate change and even in Southern states who had not been impacted directly by Union forces, slaves began being able to barter with their masters for their continued services. All of these are very well promoted so much so as to be repetitive. Each essay addressed these concepts but truly offered nothing new to the argument at the end of the book than had been offered at the beginning. This was a great disappointment considering other works by Berlin have been phenomenal. I do not recommend this as much more than a quick reference.

The three essays in this volume present an introduction to history of the emancipation of the slaves during the Civil War. The first essay traces the destruction of slavery by discussing the shift from a war for the Union to a war against slavery. The slaves are shown to have shaped the destiny of the nation through their determination to place their liberty on the wartime agenda. The second essay examines the evolution of freedom in occupied areas of the lower and upper South. The struggle of those freed to obtain economic independence in difficult wartime circumstances indicates conflicting conceptions of freedom among former slaves and slaveholders, Northern soldiers and civilians. The third essay demonstrates how the enlistment and military service of nearly 200,000 slaves hastened the transformation of the war into a struggle for universal liberty, and how this experience shaped the lives of former slaves long after the war had ended.

"Scholars familiar with the studies being produced by Berlin et al., Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867 will welcome this compact volume as a succinct statement of the emancipation process emerging from the authors' larger edited works....Slaves No More provides a path to the cutting edge of scholarship in this field. Now, students need not rehash the old issues, but they can begin their studies with newly framed questions poignantly outlined by these skilled authors." The Journal of Southern History
"Slaves No More expands the best of previous scholarship by bringing into the power equation a segment of people, whose role had been previously downplayed or ignored, by emphasizing the active part played by this politically powerless group." History: of New Books
"In preparing this volume the five authors...redesigned their original introductory essays to include extensive footnote references to both the documents on which the essays are based and to recent scholarship on the Civil War and emancipation. That feature increases the value and enlarges the contribution of this volume, which provides a self-contained analysis of how men and women struggled to enlarge their freedom and secure their independence." Mary Jo Bratton, North Carolina Historical
"It is one of the greatest strengths of Slaves No More that black Southerners emerge both as hapless victims and as independent agents in the military and ideological contest that was the Civil War....Slaves No More remains a significant and most welcome contribution to the field. The scholar, the student and the general reader will all find in Slave No More a coherent, insightful, provocative, and, above all, a highly readable

account of the experiences of the four million men, women and children whose future was determined on the battlefield, in the White House, in the halls of Congress, and in their everyday interactions with their fellow Americans." Julie Winch, *Labor History*"As an examination of the process of emancipation, *Slaves No More* is both valuable and stimulating in its own right." S.-M. Grant, *Journal of American Studies*From the Back CoverDrawn from the documentary history of emancipation that has been described as 'this generation's most significant encounter with the American past' (The New York Times), *Slaves No More* brings together three essays on the destruction of slavery and the redefinition of freedom in the midst of the nation's bloodiest conflict.

About the Author
Ira Berlin is Distinguished University Professor at the University of Maryland, College Park.
Barbara J. Fields is Professor of History at Columbia University. Her books include the prize-winning *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland During the Nineteenth Century* and (coauthored with the Freedmen and Southern Society Project) *The Destruction of Slavery and Free at Last: A Documentary History of Slavery, Freedom, and the Civil War*.
Joseph P. Reidy is professor of history at Howard University. He is coeditor of four volumes in the multivolume project, "*Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867*".
Rowland teaches history at the University of Maryland. He is the director of the Freedman and Southern Society Project, which is compiling a multivolume documentary history of the transition from slavery to freedom.