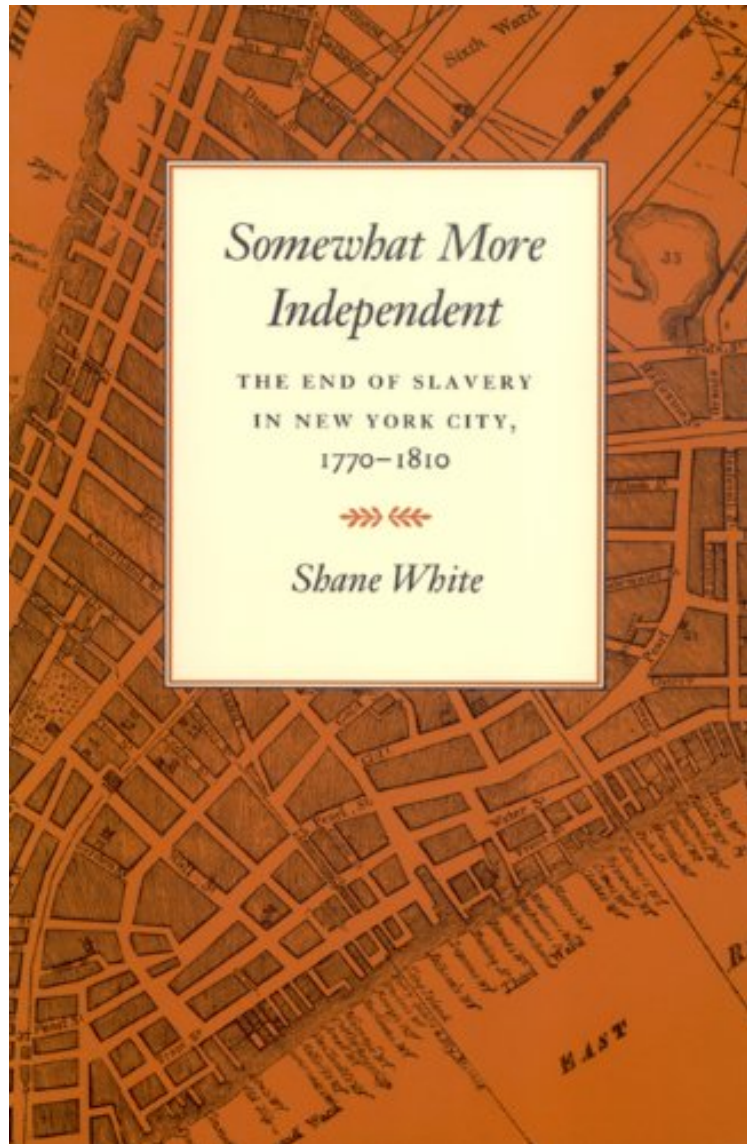


(Free) Somewhat More Independent: The End of Slavery in New York City, 1770-1810

Somewhat More Independent: The End of Slavery in New York City, 1770-1810

Shane White

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embarrassing that we Yanks need an Australian to write our history for us, but Shane White does it with humor, insight, and thoroughness. This is unquestionably the best book I have read on the subject of slavery in New York, and I've read all the books there are on the subject. (There aren't many.) White uses primary sources and original research, supplying data which our own historians have not bothered to ferret out. He gives an excellent description of the peculiar nature of the peculiar institution in New York, the different slave culture and different relationships between slaves and owners which in no way resembled that of the South. Most recent books that deal with the subject of slavery in New York quote this book extensively; you might as well read it for yourself.

Shane White creatively uses a remarkable array of primary sources—census data, tax lists, city directories, diaries, newspapers and magazines, and courtroom testimony—to reconstruct the content and context of the slave's world in New York and its environs during the revolutionary and early republic periods. White explores, among many things, the demography of slavery, the decline of the institution during and after the Revolution, racial attitudes, acculturation, and free blacks' "creative adaptation to an often hostile world."

White has written the most comprehensive account now available of the abolition of slavery in New York City. His most striking findings, however, concern not the process of emancipation but the extent of New York's involvement with slavery in the colonial and revolutionary periods. (The Nation) Provocative and well-argued, it challenges us to rethink the whole nature of northern slavery and the emancipation process. (American Historical) This gracefully written work is a significant contribution to social history, New York City history, and most of all, African-American history. (Journal of Social History) Shane White begins his book by asking what it meant to be black and living in the New York area as slavery ended, but by the time he finishes, we have learned more about the demise of bondage in an economically changing city than about being African American . . . Overall, this is a fine first book, suggestive, strong on demographic detail, and imaginative in reconstructing black life from fragments of evidence; its underlying vision of individual struggle may also indicate the shifting political ground of our own times as well. (Journal of American History) White's exact, well-written, and modulated monograph is the finest study to date of an important subject. . . . His book is an eloquent, unromantic account of the creativity and stamina of thousands of American slaves and ex-slaves whom historians have ignored for far too long. (Journal of Interdisciplinary History) The most exhaustive and illuminating local study of slavery and black culture in the North to appear in recent years. . . . This is an important work that maps new contours of the African American experience. (Choice) An excellent addition to the extraordinarily rich literature about American slavery and emancipation. . . . A work of excellence and enduring scholarly value (Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography) About the Author Shane White is a senior lecturer in history at the University of Sydney, Australia.