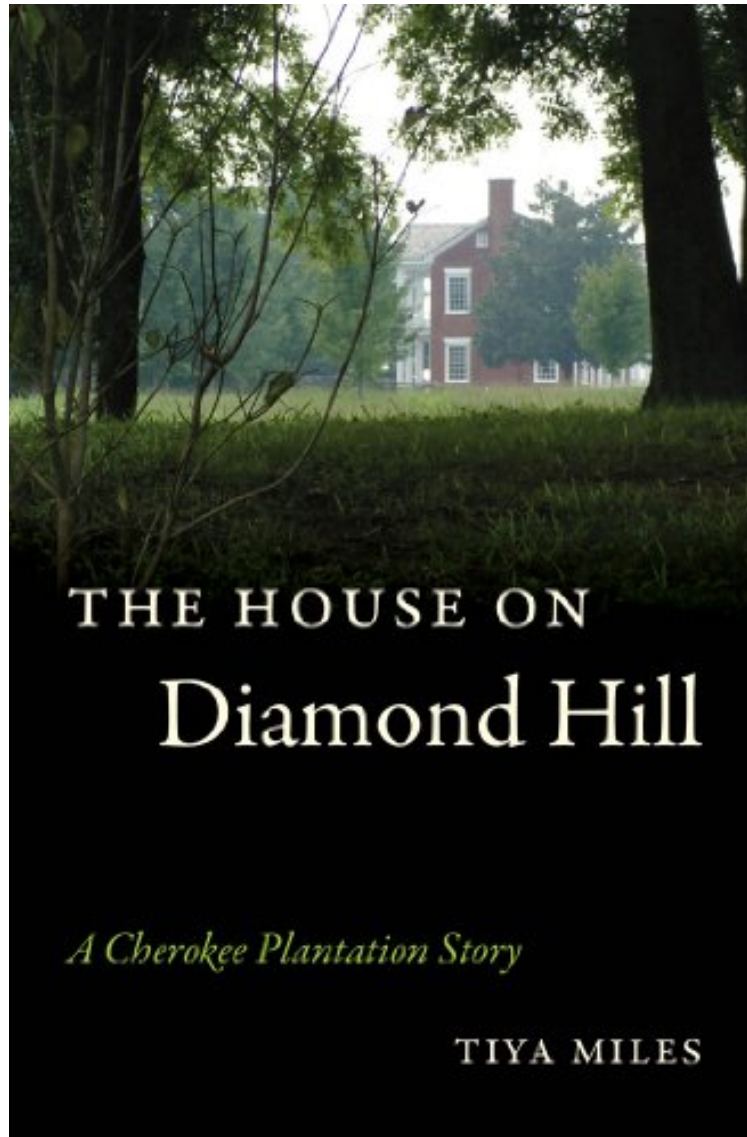


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The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story

Tiya Miles

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Tiya Miles : The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. What a story! By AKMTiya Miles explores a complicated and multilayered subject in her book, *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story*. It is a seemingly innocuous entity—a historic house in Georgia. However, the house is the Chief Vann House, a nineteenth-century mansion on traditional Cherokee land erected by a Cherokee family who owned more than one hundred slaves. When

writing an earlier book about African and Cherokee interrelated histories, Miles came across the house with its interwoven past of Cherokee, European-American, and African and African-American lives. In this book, she takes a material culture approach—examining an “artifact” (the house) and uncovering its cultural, historical, and social contexts. With her background in African-American studies, Miles brings in scholarship about the African diaspora, slavery, the antebellum South, and black consciousness. She discusses subjugation and its many layers in this story—Cherokee men over Cherokee women, Cherokee men/women over African slaves, the United States over Cherokees. Also, she defines the mechanisms of slavery and its key facet of “the dehumanization of another person that transfers a sense of perverse superiority onto the slave owner” (116). Instead of talking about slaves generally, she defines three different slave populations on the Vann estate—slaves from Africa, slaves of African descent born in Cherokee country who spoke Cherokee, and slaves of mixed African and Cherokee ancestries. Each has a different and interlocking story. Instead of enduring as faceless statistics, Miles retells the lives of certain slaves, male and female, to illuminate life as a slave on the Vann estate. Caty, Patience, Grace, Pleasant, Isaac, and Michael had their own ways and methods of dealing with life as an enslaved person. Miles shows how slaves were treated and how they reacted. They were sold, punished, brutally abused, and overworked. The slaves resisted through work slowdowns, destroying tools, running away, burning homes, and committing suicide. Violence figures heavily in this book. It is uncensored and unapologetic. At times, it became too much. However, the Vann estate was a place of tremendous abuse. Nevertheless, Miles tackles deeply contentious issues that many do not want to address—black chattel slavery, domestic violence, colonialism, Indian Removal, and Cherokee slave holders. She demonstrates that the sources are there. It is a commendable topic which hopefully produces more scholarship. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Historical research. By Schwetlona I read this book as an assignment for a college class. It was a good book. It just isn't one that I would have chosen for my self. It reads like a research paper and is very informative and I learned a lot. I was surprised that Native American's had slaves and plantations. If you like history, you will like this. ~Me0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Diamond Hill By Shirley Grammer I loved the book! Ms. Miles is a wonderful writer and shared more about the Vann Plantation than any other book I have read regarding James Vann, Joseph Vann, Wahli Vann and Peggy Scott Vann and the people who lived and worked at Diamond Hill.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, James Vann, a Cherokee chief and entrepreneur, established Diamond Hill in Georgia, the most famous plantation in the southeastern Cherokee Nation. In this first full-length study to reconstruct the history of the plantation, Tiya Miles tells the story of Diamond Hill's founding, its flourishing, its takeover by white land-lottery winners on the eve of the Cherokee Removal, its decay, and ultimately its renovation in the 1950s. This moving multiracial history sheds light on the various cultural communities that interacted within the plantation boundaries--from elite Cherokee slaveholders to Cherokee subsistence farmers, from black slaves of various ethnic backgrounds to free blacks from the North and South, from German-speaking Moravian missionaries to white southern skilled laborers. Moreover, the book includes rich portraits of the women of these various communities. Vividly written and extensively researched, this history illuminates gender, class, and cross-racial relationships on the southern frontier.

A meticulously researched and elegantly written book that is accessible to nonacademic readers as well as scholars and researchers of Native American and African American history.--Public Historian Illustrates that Cherokee slavery differed significantly from that practiced by white Americans. . . . Slavery helped prove to the United States government that they [Cherokees] had acculturated and thus had become 'civilized.' Recommended.--Library Journal A nuanced picture of Cherokee responses to U.S. colonialism in the early history with this microhistory of Diamond Hill. . . . Miles has produced an excellent book that enriches the historical picture of slavery in Indian nations.--H-Am Indian [Miles'] ventures into new realms of research and analysis will be greatly appreciated by scholars examining the transformation of the Native South into the Old South.--Georgia Historical Quarterly Both interesting to professionals and accessible for laypersons. . . . This book could easily become standard reading in public history courses while still retaining its allure for fireside readers.--Southern Historian The fullest published portrait yet of slaves to the Cherokee.--The Defenders Online Miles paints the most detailed picture yet published of the lives of the black slaves to the Cherokee.--Bay State Banner A compelling narrative that speaks to the core issues of identity in the American South.--North Carolina Historical Tiya Miles's new book, *The House on Diamond Hill*, delves into the Chief Vann House's formative years, bringing to life the complex world of a multiracial and multicultural frontier South. . . . Deserves a prominent place on the bookshelves of anyone interested in Native Americans, slavery, plantation labor, or the antebellum South, as well as anyone who appreciates a beautiful, poignant read.--Southern Cultures [Provides] rich detail from the newly translated diaries and letters of German missionaries.--Diverse Education An interesting book that makes a significant contribution to the study of the period.--The Journal of the North Carolina Association of Historians Through splendid characterizations and well documented anecdotes, the reader is given a glimpse into many events of Cherokee history, but with the author's expertly crafted writing and through the personalized telling, the history, which can often be dry in other formats, comes to life vividly.--Cherokee

One Feather A well-written, thoroughly researched work, worthy of praise for its challenges to scholars of American Indian and Cherokee history and African American studies, its use of microhistory as a way to reveal lives seemingly lost in historical records, and its rich insights into the damage wrought on so many lives as a result of the violence of colonialism.--Chronicles of Oklahoma [Miles'] book is accessible and well written, its story important. Highly recommended.--Choice Miles's research is solid; her writing is clear; and the story she tells is both important and compelling. The House on Diamond Hill is an exemplary book.--Journal of Southern History A welcome addition to the histories of Native America, slavery, African America, gender, the early republic, and, perhaps most significantly, public history.--The American Historical The only comprehensive book about life on the Vann Plantation from the perspective of examining not only Cherokee history . . . but also black history, the roles of Moravian missionaries and white history.--The Daily Citizen, Dalton, GA Challenges us to look past the plantation's exquisite grounds and fully examine the worlds of the people who once lived and labored there. It is a must read for anyone interested in the histories of slavery, gender, Native America, and colonialism.--West Virginia History Displaying pitch-perfect sensibility that weaves profound human empathy with piercing scholarly critique, Tiya Miles lays open the suffering of all those who found themselves enmeshed in the world of Diamond Hill. At once monument and memorial, the Vann House is Cherokee, African, and American slavery writ large.--James F. Brooks, author of Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands This is one of the most thoughtful, beautifully written works of history on any topic that I have read in a long while. Miles has taken a complex set of issues that have been long obscured by a desire for a romantic and guilt-free past, and with grace and sensitivity, has completely rewritten history.--Leslie M. Harris, Emory University From the Inside Flap At the turn of the nineteenth century, James Vann, a Cherokee chief and entrepreneur, established Diamond Hill, the most famous plantation in the southeastern Cherokee Nation. In this first full-length study to reconstruct the history of the plantation, Tiya Miles tells the story of Diamond Hill's founding, its flourishing, its takeover by white land-lottery winners on the eve of the Cherokee Removal, its decay, and its renovation in the 1950s. Vividly written and extensively researched, this history illuminates gender, class, and cross-racial relationships on the southern frontier.