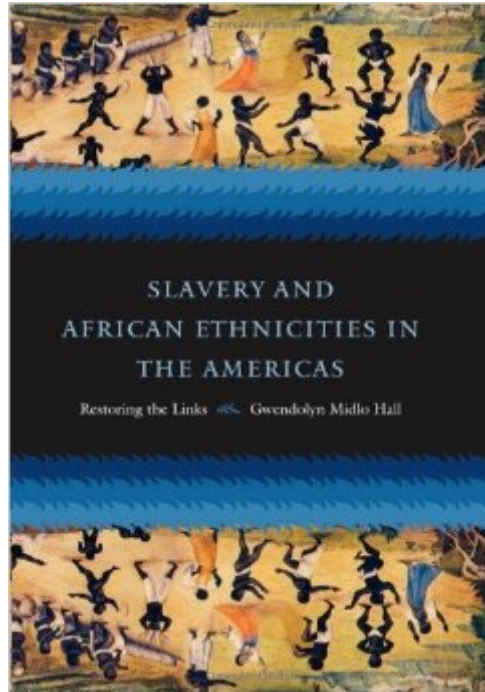


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Slavery And African Ethnicities In The Americas: Restoring The Links



Synopsis

Enslaved peoples were brought to the Americas from many places in Africa, but a large majority came from relatively few ethnic groups. Drawing on a wide range of materials in four languages as well as on her lifetime study of slave groups in the New World, Gwendolyn Midlo Hall explores the persistence of African ethnic identities among the enslaved over four hundred years of the Atlantic slave trade. Hall traces the linguistic, economic, and cultural ties shared by large numbers of enslaved Africans, showing that despite the fragmentation of the diaspora many ethnic groups retained enough cohesion to communicate and to transmit elements of their shared culture. Hall concludes that recognition of the survival and persistence of African ethnic identities can fundamentally reshape how people think about the emergence of identities among enslaved Africans and their descendants in the Americas, about the ways shared identity gave rise to resistance movements, and about the elements of common African ethnic traditions that influenced regional creole cultures throughout the Americas.

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Customer Reviews

This book is an introduction to the expanding analysis of slave trade, slavery, and other records that

give us a concrete look at what parts of Africa and which societies and cultures, the millions of slaves who were brought to the New World came from and where they went. Contrary to the earlier model that slaves were a culturally atomised group, the research by Hall and other contemporary scholars has disclosed that slaves from particular areas in Africa often went to particular places in the Americas. This was a product of trading routes, geography, political divisions, and slave marketers views that Africans from particular areas had particular skills or behavior patterns that made them attractive to particular purchasers. Rather than an atomization of different African cultures, the Americas were populated by accumulations of Africans from particular regions who continued and adapted the culture they possessed in Africa and created new African American cultures. Hall's book is decisive for anyone involved in the serious study of slavery either in the Americas and Africa, not only due to her content, but due to the way that she outlines the source material of records of the different slaving countries as well as the new databases of slavery records being developed on an international level. Her book attempts to show the broad outlines and covers all of Africa and all of the Americas. As such she cannot go into a richer detail. Her work on Louisiana does this. For a more detailed look at these questions as they pertain to Africans in the current United States, Michael Gomez's *Exchanging our Country Marks* is a necessary companion to this book. Both titles are required reading for anyone who wants to really know about African American history and identity, as well as the impact of slavery on Africa.

The book is largely statistical, and, for someone seeking the cultural anthropology behind the African slave trade, not very enlightening. Still, there is a lot of good material here in an area about which little has been written.

Likely to become a classic in the field; details the painstaking research of an American researcher using extensive records in Louisiana. The work debunks many of the myths of the U.S slave trade and also challenges aspects of existing research such as the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade Database. Hall writes with extreme scientific vigor yet still presents the information in a way that is fiercely passionate and obviously completely against the inherent mercantile philosophy of the Atlantic slave commerce. The book is deep in information, tables, and pictures yet has only 225 pages in the paperback version. Just wonderful. Do yourself a favour.

This was a Great read! The truth is out there. One must seek it. "Black" isn't an ethnicity. Educate yourself!

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