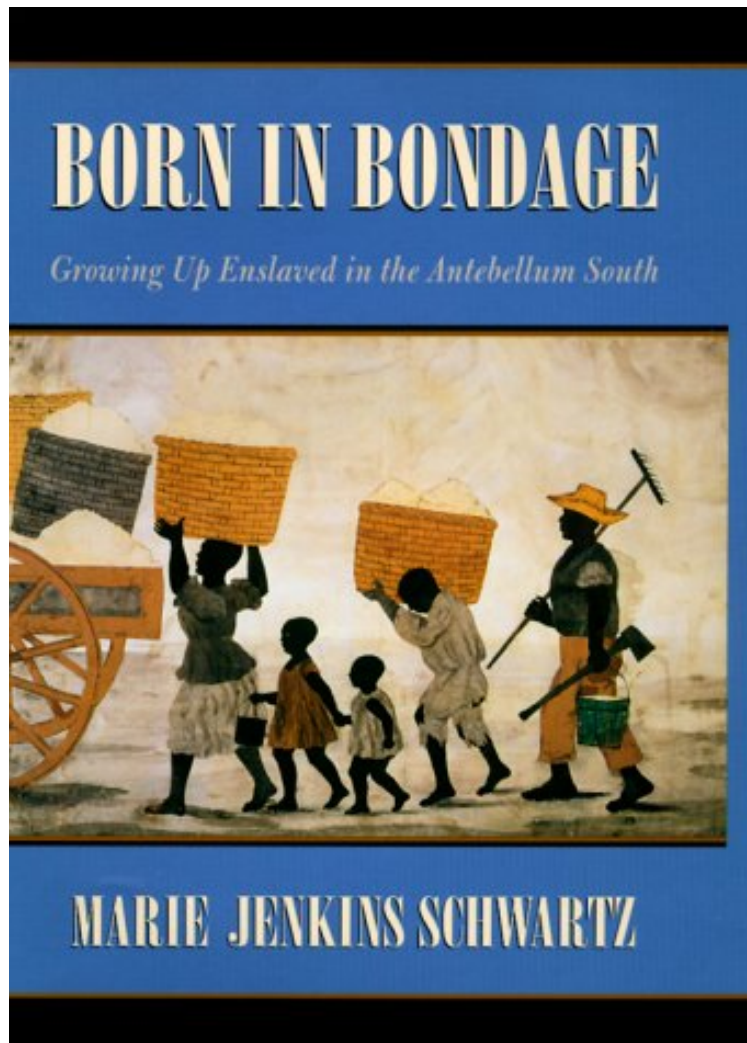


[Mobile ebook] Born in Bondage: Growing Up Enslaved in the Antebellum South

Born in Bondage: Growing Up Enslaved in the Antebellum South

Marie Jenkins Schwartz

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Marie Jenkins Schwartz : Born in Bondage: Growing Up Enslaved in the Antebellum South before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Born in Bondage: Growing Up Enslaved in the Antebellum South:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Economics drove slavery - including family life By Eric Hobart In this intriguing study, Marie Jenkins Schwartz has given us a better understanding of how the economics of slavery drove family life in the Antebellum South. It comes as no surprise that economics was the key factor in the perpetuation of slavery prior to the American Civil War, but this study gives the reader a new appreciation for how slaveholders viewed slaves, including children, as nothing more than property. Schwartz delves into many facets of slave family life, including pregnancy, birth of a child, education of the child, the horror of sale and separation from

family members, and love and marriage in the slave community. Her work is well documented and is a fascinating look at this topic. She explains how the slaveholders attempted to exert paternalistic control over the families for personal economic gain. For example, in the section on love and marriage, the author explains in great detail how slaveholders often made a mockery of the ceremony by forcing the omission of the standard "till death do us part" or "what God hath brought together let no man put asunder". She explains that these concepts were left out by the slaveholders to ensure no feelings of guilt or remorse when the newly married couple was broken apart by sale of one partner or the other. Her study seems to be largely focused on using the documents from the slave narratives collected during the Great Depression during the WPA, but well supplemented with contemporary accounts, including journals, diaries, and plantation records. When combined with quality secondary sources, the author has painted a nice portrait of slave family life. The area of slave family life is one that has been largely ignored by scholars in the past, and this book is a valuable contribution to the existing scholarly literature on the topic. I would highly recommend anyone interested in family dynamics and relationships between slaveholder and slaves in the Antebellum South read this book.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. a thought-provoking study of childhood under slavery
By A Customer
This absorbing book both confirms established information (e.g., the prevalence of children among domestic workers) and challenges popular assumptions about slaves' lives (Schwartz suggests that antebellum planter families frequently ignored injunctions against teaching slaves to read and that many, perhaps most, slave children learned the alphabet and basic reading skills, even if few became competent readers). Schwartz draws on WPA narratives of former slaves, as well as the memoirs of former slaves and slaveowners, to construct a surprising vivid picture of young children's lives under slavery. Her writing is smooth and clear, though occasionally repetitive.

3 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Slavery was an horrid event...
By A Customer
Here's a book that grants the reader a degree of freedom to question where a number of the quotes came from. The voices of the children are still missing. For thirty-five dollars it lacks merit. But for someone with little understanding of slavery its an interesting library read.

Each time a child was born in bondage, the system of slavery began anew. Although raised by their parents or by surrogates in the slave community, children were ultimately subject to the rule of their owners. Following the life cycle of a child from birth through youth to young adulthood, Marie Jenkins Schwartz explores the daunting world of slave children, a world governed by the dual authority of parent and owner, each with conflicting agendas. Despite the constant threats of separation and the necessity of submission to the slaveowner, slave families managed to pass on essential lessons about enduring bondage with human dignity. Schwartz counters the commonly held vision of the paternalistic slaveholder who determines the life and welfare of his passive chattel, showing instead how slaves struggled to give their children a sense of self and belonging that denied the owner complete control. *Born in Bondage* gives us an unsurpassed look at what it meant to grow up as a slave in the antebellum South. Schwartz recreates the experiences of these bound but resilient young people as they learned to negotiate between acts of submission and selfhood, between the worlds of commodity and community.

From Library Journal
In her first book, Schwartz looks deeply into the everyday ways masters and slave parents negotiated for "control" over slave children, a subject only recently plumbed in Thomas Webber's *Deep Like the Rivers* and Wilma King's *Stolen Childhood*. With a sophisticated reading of the WPA slave narratives, she reconstructs the experiences of slaves in Virginia, South Carolina, and Alabama, from birth, becoming "educated" to the world around them, reaching sexual maturity, and learning to work. Masters had ultimate power, in law and practice, and threatened slave families with disruption and sale, but they also sought to win over slave children with affection and favors. Slave parents simultaneously sought to protect their children by teaching them how to "put on ole massa" and to look to the slave community for identity and support. In her very readable book, Schwartz finds the masters' paternalism less generous than slaveholders boasted and more complicated than historians surmise today. An important addition to scholarship for all college libraries.

-Randall M. Miller, Saint Joseph's Univ., Philadelphia
Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. Schwartz makes the original and useful point that there was an inherent conflict between paternalism...and the efforts of slaves to maintain a family life of their own. To the degree that masters took direct responsibility for slave children they undermined the authority of the parents and the unity of the slave family. (George M. Fredrickson New York of Books)
Historian Schwartz focuses on the parent-child bond in this nuanced study of the pressures that slavery placed on the families and how parents and children responded. (Mary Carroll Booklist)
In *Born in Bondage*, Marie Jenkins Schwartz uses WPA slave narratives as well as diaries, letters, and account books left by slave holders to compare and contrast parents' and slaveowners' expectations, hopes, and meanings attached to a child born in slavery. Masters and parents both hoped to impart to the children their own beliefs about slavery, self-esteem, and the southern social system. Tracing the stages of a slave child's life from conception and birth to courtship and marriage, this book details the way that decisions were made about raising enslaved children and the way slave children learned to perceive their own lives. (Angela Boswell H-Net s)
Marie Jenkins Schwartz provides a masterful analysis...as she traces slaves' experiences from infancy and childhood through adolescence and into parenthood. In doing so, she adds to our understanding of the subtle power plays involved in

plantation life and the extent to which children often become pawns in ongoing struggles over authority and identity...Schwartz's most original contribution lies in framing her findings in the arch of life stages from birth to adulthood. (John C. Inscoe *Journal of the Early Republic*) Relying primarily on the narratives with former slaves conducted under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration, Schwartz focuses her attention on slaves in Virginia, along the rice coast of South Carolina and Georgia, and in Alabama. The result is a carefully constructed monograph that manages to offer new insights about familiar subjects...Her attention to the life cycle of slave children and families offers a fresh take on these familiar arguments, helping to strengthen them and to reaffirm the impressive accomplishment of slaves' survival. (Marli F. Weiner *Georgia Historical Quarterly*) She is particularly insightful at describing 19th-century African American child-rearing practices and the relationships between slave children and their parents...Schwartz makes several major contributions to scholarly understanding of the history of antebellum slavery, the slave family, and childhood. (E. W. Carp *Choice*) From the Inside Flap EACH TIME a child was born in bondage, the system of slavery began anew. Although raised by their parents or by surrogates in the slave community, children were ultimately subject to the rule of their owners. Following the life cycle of a child from birth through youth to young adulthood, Marie Jenkins Schwartz explores the daunting world of slave children, a world governed by the dual authority of parent and owner, each with conflicting agendas. Despite the constant threat of separation and the necessity of submission to the slaveowner, slave families managed to pass on essential lessons about enduring bondage with dignity. Schwartz counters the commonly held vision of the paternalistic slaveholder who determines the life and welfare of his passive chattel, showing instead how slaves struggled to give their children a sense of self and belonging that denied the owner complete control. *Born in Bondage* provides an unsurpassed look at what it meant to grow up as a slave in the antebellum South. Schwartz recreates the experiences of these bound but resilient young people as they learned to negotiate between acts of submission and selfhood, between the worlds of commodity and community.