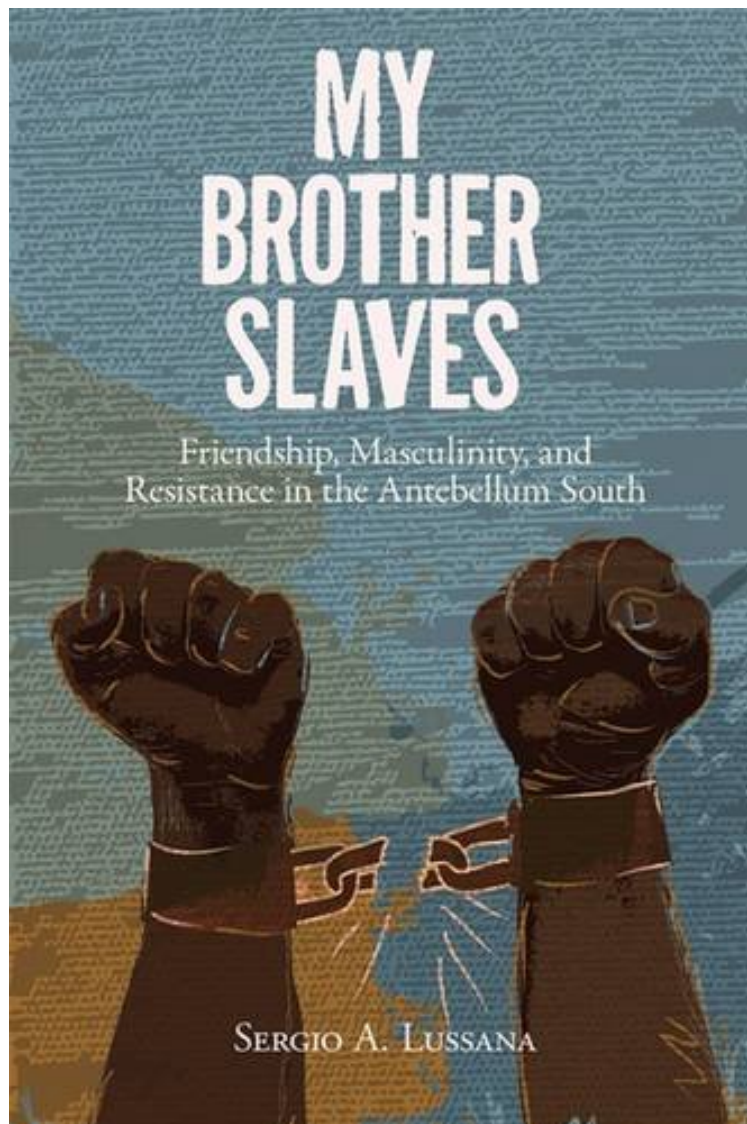


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## My Brother Slaves: Friendship, Masculinity, and Resistance in the Antebellum South (New Directions In Southern History)

*Sergio A. Lussana*

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**Sergio A. Lussana : My Brother Slaves: Friendship, Masculinity, and Resistance in the Antebellum South (New Directions In Southern History)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised My Brother Slaves: Friendship, Masculinity, and Resistance in the Antebellum South (New Directions In

Southern History):

Trapped in a world of brutal physical punishment and unremitting, back-breaking labor, Frederick Douglass mused that it was the friendships he shared with other enslaved men that carried him through his darkest days. In this pioneering study, Sergio A. Lussana offers the first in-depth investigation of the social dynamics between enslaved men and examines how individuals living under the conditions of bondage negotiated masculine identities. He demonstrates that African American men worked to create their own culture through a range of recreational pursuits similar to those enjoyed by their white counterparts, such as drinking, gambling, fighting, and hunting. Underscoring the enslaved men's relationships, however, were the sex-segregated work gangs on the plantations, which further reinforced their social bonds. Lussana also addresses male resistance to slavery by shifting attention from the visible, organized world of slave rebellion to the private realms of enslaved men's lives. He reveals how these men developed an oppositional community in defiance of the regulations of the slaveholder and shows that their efforts were intrinsically linked to forms of resistance on a larger scale. The trust inherent in these private relationships was essential in driving conversations about revolution. *My Brother Slaves* fills a vital gap in our contemporary understanding of southern history and of the effects that the South's peculiar institution had on social structures and gender expression. Employing detailed research that draws on autobiographies of and interviews with former slaves, Lussana's work artfully testifies to the importance of social relationships between enslaved men and the degree to which these fraternal bonds encouraged them to resist.

"Innovative and exciting, *My Brother Slaves* makes a valuable contribution to the fields of gender and slavery and new studies of 'masculinity' and its meanings in the antebellum South."?Emily West, author of *Family or Freedom: People of Color in the Antebellum South*"This is an engaging and insightful addition to the growing literature on enslaved masculinity. Lussana shows that gender was just as important for enslaved men as for enslaved women and this deeply-researched book will become required reading for anyone interested in slavery in the South."?Timothy Lockley, author of *Lines in the Sand: Race and Class in Lowcountry Georgia, 1750-1860*"Sergio Lussana's thoughtful book explores the inner world of enslaved men. It considers how African American bondsmen fashioned their own uniquely masculine social spaces, how they negotiated their masculine identities, and the extent to which enslaved peoples utilized friendship to affirm their humanity and exercise agency. Based on exhaustive research of the 1930s WPA interviews, *My Brother Slaves* sheds much needed light on gender and the slave community."?Richard Follett, University of Sussex"Through the skillful use of slave narratives, autobiographies, and folklore, Lussana uncovers the previously obscure homosocial world of enslaved men. Peering through a gendered lens, he examines masculine work, leisure pursuits, friendships, and exploits off the home plantation to supply a useful counterpoint to the much larger body of scholarship devoted to enslaved female experiences."?Jeff Forret, author of *Slave against Slave: Plantation Violence in the Old South*"[Lussana] has created a vivid depiction of the world in which male slaves worked, lived and tried to overcome.[ . . .] While there is much to read in the growing historiography of slave studies, Lussana's is among the first to exclusively study male slaves. Beyond his originality, Lussana is a gifted writer. The author's beautifully crafted narrative flows like water through the study's five chapters. For anyone desiring a more profound understanding of how male slaves lived, functioned, coped with chattel slavery, and resisted that abominable institution, Lussana's engaging, powerful and provocative study is essential reading."?Civil War News"Well-written, clear, and concise, *My Brother Slaves* is a useful primer on the development of enslaved manhood and homosocial relationships [ . . .]"? s in History" *My Brother Slaves* fills a long-standing void in the history of slavery. Lussana utilizes his wide range of sources in effective ways to reveal a world of, largely, solidarity and resistance among enslaved males in the antebellum South."?Journal of Social History"[The book] is a valuable chronicle of the everyday experiences that shaped enslaved lives, and Lussana offers useful ideas about assessing enslaved men's masculinity."? s in HistoryAbout the AuthorSergio A. Lussana is senior lecturer of history at Nottingham Trent University and is coeditor of *Black and White Masculinity in the American South, 1800–2000*.