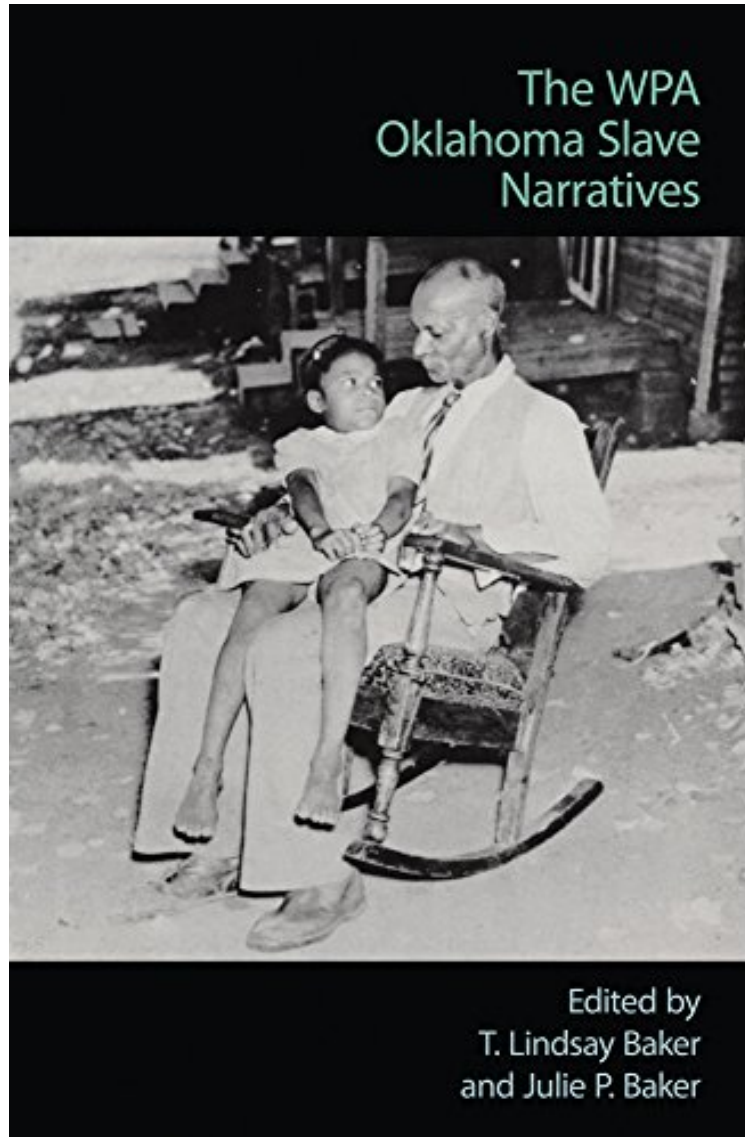


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The WPA Oklahoma Slave Narratives

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This is an important work. However so many of ...By Julia J.This is an important work. However so many of the naratives are so similar that I feel that the interviewees are not being completely candid but rather are telling stories that they feel white folk want to hear. Still I have learned much about black slave life and experiences of the reconstruction era.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five

StarsBy ryan ann harjoThis book has rare accounts of history in it!

These are fascinating stories of the memories of ex-slaves, fourteen of which have never been published before. Although many African Americans had relocated in Oklahoma after emancipation in 1865, some of the interviewees had been slaves of Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, or Creeks in the Indian territory.

From the Back Cover "I never talk to nobody 'bout this" was the response of one aged African American when asked by a Works Project Administration field worker to share memories of his life in slavery and after emancipation. He and other ex-slaves were uncomfortable with the memories of a time when black and white lives were interwoven through human bondage. Yet the WPA field workers overcame the old people's reticence, and American West scholars T. Lindsay Baker and Julie P. Baker have collected all the known WPA Oklahoma "slave narratives" in this volume for the first time - including fourteen never published before. Their careful editorial notes detail what is known about the interviewees and the process of preparing the narratives. The interviews were made in the late 1930s in Oklahoma. Although many African Americans had relocated there after emancipation in 1865, some interviewees had been slaves of Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, or Creeks in the Indian Territory. Their narratives constitute important primary sources on the foodways, agricultural practices, and home life of Oklahoma Indians. This definitive, indexed edition will be an important resource for Oklahoma and Southwest historians as well as those interested in the history of African Americans, slavery, and Oklahoma's Five Tribes. For those studying the generation of African American men and women who over a century ago initiated black life in Oklahoma, the slave narratives are a major source of "collective memory".

About the Author T. Lindsay Baker, who holds the W. K. Gordon Chair in Industrial History at Tarleton State University, Stephenville, Texas, is Director of the W. K. Gordon Center for Industrial History, Thurber, Texas, and editor of the *Windmillers' Gazette*. He is the author of *A Field Guide to American Windmills and North American Windmill Manufacturers' Trade Literature: A Descriptive Guide*.