

ABSTRACT

NARRATIVES OF ENSLAVED PEOPLE: LIFTING THE VEIL, RESISTING THE PECULIAR INSTITUTION

During the Peculiar Institution, slave codes that maintained the system were established and enforced in America. The African family was manipulated, debilitated and nearly destroyed. Escaped fugitives wrote narratives about their captivity for the Abolition movement to effect the demise of the demon slavery and its attendant atrocities. Women's narratives reported horrors and burdens beyond what men experienced and observed: the mental and emotional shame and heartache; the pain women suffered, including ever-present worries of child bearing, rearing, and protecting; of attempting to hold to the values and wisps of memory from their Motherland; of methods they used to resist the abuses against their minds, bodies, and families. After the Civil War, narratives purposed to rebuild the family, to infuse confidence, and to facilitate achievement of the American Dream for former slaves and their descendants. The narratives worked to uplift the people out of invisibility.

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