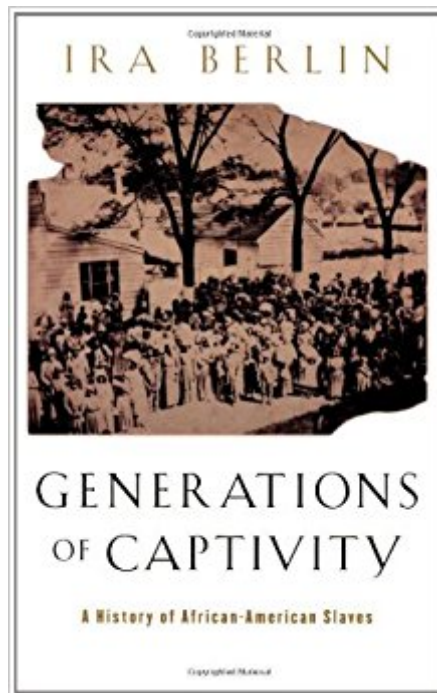


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Generations Of Captivity: A History Of African-American Slaves



Synopsis

Ira Berlin traces the history of African-American slavery in the United States from its beginnings in the seventeenth century to its fiery demise nearly three hundred years later. Most Americans, black and white, have a singular vision of slavery, one fixed in the mid-nineteenth century when most American slaves grew cotton, resided in the deep South, and subscribed to Christianity. Here, however, Berlin offers a dynamic vision, a major reinterpretation in which slaves and their owners continually renegotiated the terms of captivity. Slavery was thus made and remade by successive generations of Africans and African Americans who lived through settlement and adaptation, plantation life, economic transformations, revolution, forced migration, war, and ultimately, emancipation. Berlin's understanding of the processes that continually transformed the lives of slaves makes *Generations of Captivity* essential reading for anyone interested in the evolution of antebellum America. Connecting the "Charter Generation" to the development of Atlantic society in the seventeenth century, the "Plantation Generation" to the reconstruction of colonial society in the eighteenth century, the "Revolutionary Generation" to the Age of Revolutions, and the "Migration Generation" to American expansionism in the nineteenth century, Berlin integrates the history of slavery into the larger story of American life. He demonstrates how enslaved black people, by adapting to changing circumstances, prepared for the moment when they could seize liberty and declare themselves the "Freedom Generation." This epic story, told by a master historian, provides a rich understanding of the experience of African-American slaves, an experience that continues to mobilize American thought and passions today.

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Customer Reviews

Eminent historian Berlin revisits and extends by a century the territory of his honored and groundbreaking *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in America* (1998), incorporating the "vast outpouring of new research in this field" in the brief period since its publication and mirroring that book's structure. In 150 or so pages here, Berlin recapitulates the argument of his earlier, prize-winning work, delineating "the making and remaking of slavery" as a matter of "Generations": the "Charter Generations," who managed "to integrate themselves into mainline society during the first century of settlement, despite their status as slaves and the contempt of the colony's rulers"; the "Plantation Generations," living in a world where "blackness and whiteness took on new meaning," who managed "to forge new communities as 'Africans,' an identity no one had previously considered or even knew existed"; and the "Revolutionary Generations," beneficiaries, victims, and participants in both the "revolutionary ideology [and] evangelical upsurge" of the period. Berlin, president of the Organization of American Historians and an editor of the Remembering Slavery project, is attentive to place as well as time, and focuses first on New Netherland, the Chesapeake, and the North, followed by variants in Florida, the Lower Mississippi Valley and Low Country South Carolina. New to this book are "the Migration Generations," who suffered a Second Middle Passage with the accelerated transcontinental "transfer" of slaves between 1810 and 1861. An epilogue introduces the "Freedom Generations," reaching into the 1860s. While preserving the terrible complexity and diversity of North American slavery, Berlin offers a compact scholarly account of the transformation of a society with slaves into a slave society. He reveals without condescension or simplification the inspiring social structures that arose from a horrific history. While it may not get the attention of *Many Thousands*, this book follows up with grace and determination. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Although American slavery is generally thought of as dominating and being dominated by the culture, politics, and economics of the South, Berlin charts the dynamic quality of American slavery by placing it into the changing context of American history and various generations overall. The experience of the original settlement population adapting to their new environment produced what Berlin calls the chartered generation. Most often associated with slavery is plantation life and the plantation generation, which reflected the western and southern expansion of the nation as cotton

became king of the economy. Following the plantation generation was the revolutionary generation, when worldwide views on slavery and freedom influenced domestic politics and culture. Berlin reflects on the contrasts between the southern experience of slavery and the north's experience and challenges with its freedmen. The Chesapeake, or upper south, was for a period the region that dominated the internal slave trade and facilitated further regional redistribution of slaves. Finally, Berlin examines the migration generation, the substantial shift in the black population to the north and west. Vernon Ford Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Berlin's generational and geographical study is well thought out, researched, and written and would make a good starting point and a great primer for anyone interested in the study of slavery. The book is very general and broad in scope, not focusing on one part of the country or one aspect of slavery for too long. If you want to get a good overall picture of slavery over time this book would be a good place to start.

I got this book for a class but it is rather interesting. History tends to focus on the antebellum south when discussing slavery but this book gives you a good look at how slavery was different throughout parts of the US. If you are really interested in the history of slavery, it's definitely worth a look.

Well written and comprehensive, but still able to capture the nuances of the many experiences of African American history. Ira Berlin blesses us with his years of experience writing about slavery.

Great read. Recommend it for any one interested in the subject of slavery before the Civil War.

Excellent history of slavery practices in this country.

Interesting and informative.

This book is a just barely adequate introduction to the subject. One will look in vain for evidence, quotes, examples, etc., to back up or illustrate most assertions. It is also surprisingly repetitive in places. The reader is told several times why planters insisted on stamping out African names. The Kindle footnotes in this book don't work at all for me either on my Touch or iPad, and I am very

unhappy about that. Perhaps the rating would be higher if the footnotes were functional. His other books are said to be better.

One of the best books on the American Slave Trade...but It gets very slow. Dr. Berlin knows everything there is to know about it, but I did not want to read this entire book.

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