



Slavery: real people and their stories of enslavement

Books Reviewed:

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Reviewer:

[Clive Barnes](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

BfK Rating:

5

This is the most thorough introduction to the history of black slavery, suitable for young people, that I have seen. As with most surveys of this subject, slavery in the USA receives the most attention, but there is also a lot more information than usual on slavery in South America, whose original African slave population was much greater than the USA, and on slavery in the Caribbean, which ought to be brought more to the attention of British children. Surely there must be enough historiography on slavery in the Caribbean and its aftermath for this to figure even more in such general histories. The book is in the familiar DK house style: double page spreads where the illustrations are the focus, with bite size paragraphs of text to accompany them. There is an impressive range of reproductions ? photographs, prints, paintings ? which appear mostly to be contemporary with their subjects. Reg Grant is an author with huge experience in writing history for young people and, as usual, he marshals a massive amount of material to provide a coherent, up-to-date, consistently interesting and knowledgeable account. The emphasis here is on the direct experience of the Peculiar Institution, as it was called in the United States. So there is testimony from slaves and slaveholders; and from those who justified slavery and those who opposed it. The book is punctuated by full double-page illustrations and keynote statements which highlight slave suffering and the longing for freedom. The book has the familiar DK strengths and shortcomings: brilliant design and presentation, wonderful (but unattributed) illustrations, an authoritative text, maps that are sometimes too small or complicated to make sense of, a perfunctory glossary, and no suggestions for further reading. But both author and publisher deserve congratulation for an attractive and fascinating book on this least attractive aspect of our history. Well worth its price.

Running Order:

77

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