

[PDF] Slaves In The Family

Edward Ball - pdf download free book



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Author: Edward Ball
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Description:

Writer Edward Ball opens *Slaves in the Family* with an anecdote: "My father had a little joke that made light of our legacy as a family that had once owned slaves. 'There are five things we don't talk about in the Ball family,' he would say. 'Religion, sex, death, money and the Negroes.'" Ball himself seemed happy enough to avoid these touchy issues until an invitation to a family reunion in South Carolina piqued his interest in his family's extensive plantation and slave-holding past. He realized that he had a very clear idea of who his white ancestors were--their names, who their children and children's children were, even portraits and photographs--but he had only a murky vision of the black people who supported their livelihood and were such an intimate part of their daily lives; he knew neither their names nor what happened to them and their descendants after they were freed

following the Civil War. So he embarked on a journey to uncover the history of the Balls and the black families with whom their lives were inextricably intertwined, as well as the less tangible resonance of slavery in both sets of families. From plantation records, interviews with descendants of both the Balls and their slaves, and travels to Africa and the American South, Ball has constructed a story of the riches and squalor, violence and insurrection--the pride and shame--that make up the history and legacy of slavery in America. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From School Library Journal YA-A compelling saga, Ball's biographical history of his family stands as a microcosm of the evolution of American racial relations. Meticulously researched, and aided by the fact that the South Carolina Ball families were compulsive record keepers, the story begins with the first Ball to arrive in Charleston in 1698. The family eventually owned more than 20 rice plantations along the Cooper River, businesses made profitable by the work of slaves. In the course of his research, the author learned that his ancestors were not only slave owners, but also that there was a highly successful slave trader company in his background. He was able to trace the offspring of slave women and Ball men (between 75,000 and 100,000 currently living) and locate a number of his own African-American distant cousins. Although records indicate that the author's forebearers were not by any means cruel or vicious owners, his remorse for these facets of his family history is clear. In the course of his research, he visited Bunce Island, off the coast of Sierra Leone, to see the fortress from which his ancestors loaded terrorized men, women, and children onto slave ships. Their story represents that of many African Americans. This book helps readers to visualize, if not understand, the slave legacy still enmeshed in this country today. Despite its length, this is an important, well-written slice of history that will be of interest to young adults.

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