



Slavery in Mississippi (Southern Classics)

Charles S. Sydnor

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Slavery in Mississippi, first published in 1933, is a deeply researched and tightly argued social and economic study of slave life in Mississippi by Charles S. Sydnor (1898-1954). Inspired by Ulrich B. Phillips's American Negro Slavery (1918) and Life and Labor in the Old South (1929), Sydnor strived to test Phillips's contention that slavery was simultaneously a benign institution for African American slaves and an unprofitable one for their masters.

Sydnor included path-breaking chapters on such broad scholarly topics as slave labor, slave trading, and the profitability of slavery, but he also examined in depth slave clothing, food, shelter, physical and social care, police control, slave fugitives, and punishments and rewards. More thorough than many previous historians, Sydnor examined how slavery "worked" as a social and economic system--how slaves actually lived, how planters bought, cared for, controlled, hired out, and sold their human property.

Historian John David Smith's new introduction to this Southern Classic edition frames the original text within the scholarship on slavery in the interwar years, presents its arguments, chronicles its reception by white and black critics, and highlights the ongoing debates about slavery, especially on the profitability of slavery and the conditions of slave life sparked by Sydnor's influential book.

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