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Bullwhip Days the Slaves Remember

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In the mid-thirties, the Federal Writer's Project, an adjunct of the W.P.A., dispatched interviewers to capture the personal memories of the last few thousand survivors of American slavery. In *Bullwhip Days*, they tell, in their own voices, of the harsh realities of human bondage. The vivid and powerful images are a vital part of America's history and offer sobering insight into the roots of racism in today's society.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

"Twenty-nine oral histories and additional excerpts, selected from 2000 interviews with former slaves conducted in the 1930s for a WPA Federal Writers Project, document the conditions of slavery that, Mellon maintains, lie at the root of today's racism," reported PW. Photos.

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From Library Journal

As part of the Federal Writers' Project in the 1920s and 1930s, a rich oral history of slavery was compiled from interviews with thousands of former slaves. Selections were first published in 1945 in B.A. Botkin's *Lay My Burden Down*, and later in collections by Norman Yetman and Lester Julius, now all out of print. The complete set is still available (George P. Rawick, ed. *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols, 1972; Suppl. Series 1, 12 vols., 1978; Suppl. Series 2, 10 vols., 1980, Greenwood Pr.). Although this sample of 29 full narratives and several excerpts is excellent, recalling such varied experiences as religion, sexuality, and escape attempts, editor Mellon provides no historical context or setting. As a result, the larger meaning of a people's resilience in adversity is lost. Currently, libraries in need of a one-volume sampling of this fascinating body of work will have to be content with this faint echo. Randall M. Miller, St. Joseph's Univ., Philadelphia

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Users Review

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