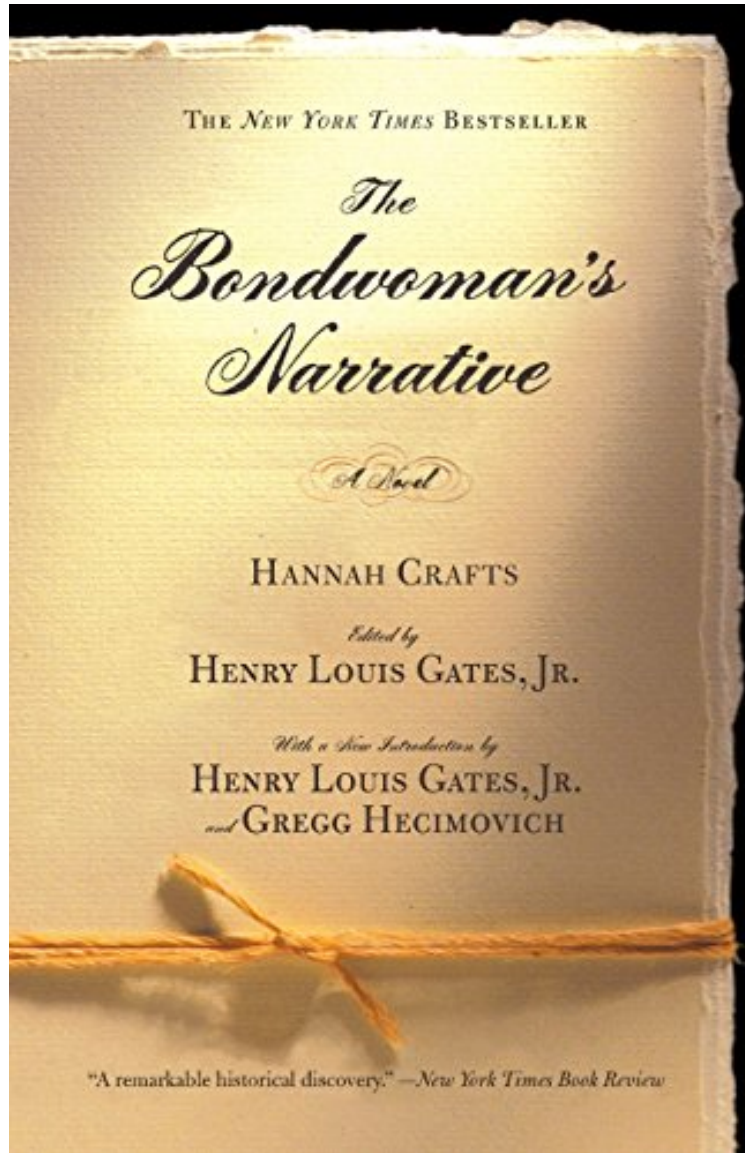


(Get free) The Bondwoman's Narrative

The Bondwoman's Narrative

Hannah Crafts

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#333312 in Books Hannah Crafts 2003-04-01Format: ColorOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.50 x 1.25 x 5.50l, .93 #File Name: 0446690295365 pagesThe Bondwoman s Narrative | File size: 49.Mb

Hannah Crafts : The Bondwoman's Narrative before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Bondwoman's Narrative:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. closest thing to being thereBy sushiI saw Professor Gates on Charlie Rose, and immediately ordered a copy of this book. The story challenges the stereotypes of slaves and masters during those terrible times--all slaves weren't "yes, massah" creatures and all masters/mistresses weren't whip-bearing monsters (although the image of the old nursemaid and her dog hanging in the linden tree is impossible to get out of

your head--truth or fiction). The overwhelming sensation of the inhumanity of slavery--no matter how kind the master--hangs over the story, and the yearning to be free is so great, you can't help but be relieved that the story has a happy ending. Seeing her careful self-editing and reading about her thimble-pressed correction papers and homemade bookbinding made reading this book very sweet--this lady deserves to be recognized and published! Thank you Professor Gates and all the other people who preserved this work. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. So moving! By R. Cunningham I am reading this just after seeing the movie "12 years a slave." The language is almost identical. It is moving and very interesting to read. I am equally impressed that even living through that most difficult period in history, Hannah Crafts' faith in God never wavered. The preface written by Henry Louis Gates was very long and thought out. I was curious to figure out why it was so extensive, but after reading through it, I realized how important it was for him to explain the whole authentication process. I can see how people would be inclined to challenge his findings, but after the thorough research he did, I have no questions about the validity of this wonderful book. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Unique a must read to truly understand slavery. By Katherine Rose written by a slave and a story written after she was freed. She also taught herself to read and write by going through the library of her master, who had no compassion for his workers. She took risks and tells the horrors created by the master against his servants. Little bit of a hard read because she describes many incidents of punishment that are gruesome, but well worth receiving the truth of the reality of slavery.

Tells the story of Hannah Crafts, a young slave working on a wealthy North Carolina plantation, who runs away in a bid for freedom up North.

.com Few events are more thrilling than the discovery of a buried treasure. Some years ago, when scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr. was leafing through an auction catalog, he noticed a listing for an unpublished, clothbound manuscript thought to date from the 1850s: "The Bondwoman's Narrative, by Hannah Crafts, a Fugitive Slave, Recently Escaped from North Carolina." Gates realized that, if genuine, this would be the first novel known to have been written by a black woman in America, as well as the only one by a fugitive slave. He bought the manuscript (there was no competing bid) and began the exhilarating task of confirming the racial identity of the author and the approximate date of composition (circa 1855-59). Gates's excited descriptions of his detective work in the introduction to *The Bondwoman's Narrative* will make you want to find promising old manuscripts of your own. He also proposes a couple candidates for authorship, assuming that Hannah Crafts was the real or assumed name of the author, and not solely a pen name. If Gates is right (his introduction and appendix should convince just about everyone), *The Bondwoman's Narrative* is a tremendous discovery. But is it a lost masterpiece? No. The novel draws so heavily on the conventions of mid-19th-century fiction--by turns religious, gothic, and sentimental--that it does not have much flavor of its own. The beginning of chapter 13 is a close paraphrase (virtually a cribbing) of the opening of Dickens's *Bleak House*. This borrowing seems to have escaped Gates, although he does quote the assessment of one scholar, the librarian Dorothy Porter Wesley, who had owned the manuscript before he acquired it, that "the best of the writer's mind was religious and emotional and in her handling of plot the long arm of coincidence is nowhere spared." Although not a striking literary contribution, *The Bondwoman's Narrative* is well worth reading on historical grounds, especially since it was never published. As Gates argues, these pages provide our first "unedited, unaffected, un glossed, unaided" glimpse into the mind of a fugitive slave. --Regina Marler From Publishers Weekly

Nothing intrigues quite the way an old manuscript does: there's the story told in its pages, but there's also the story of the pages. In this volume's lively, provocative introduction, Gates, Harvard chair of African-American studies, describes his discovery of a handwritten manuscript from the collection of Dorothy Porter Wesley, the famous Howard University librarian, in an auction. Identified in the auction catalogue as a "fictionalized biography... of the early life and escape of one Hannah Crafts," the manuscript, Gates thought, might be the "first novel written by a woman who had been a slave." After purchasing it, he undertook the painstaking work of authenticating it and determining its author. Though Dr. Joe Nickell (the sleuth who proved the Jack the Ripper diaries fraudulent) firmly limits the manuscript's composition to 1853 to 1861 and Gates locates a few candidates for authorship, the historical Hannah Crafts remains elusive. Whoever Hannah Crafts was--and about that there is sure to be some discussion--she was a talented storyteller. Though Crafts appears self-taught and borrows from many sources--influences include other slave narratives, 19th-century sentimental and gothic novels and, as Gates noted in a letter to the *New Yorker*, Charles Dickens--she propels her story along, vividly describing the heroes and villains she entangles in her multiple plots. A mulatto, Hannah grows up a house slave in Virginia, learning to read in secret. When her master at last marries, Hannah becomes a maid to the new mistress, a woman who seems haunted. In fact, she is hunted: someone who holds proof that her mother is a slave is blackmailing her. Knowing her mistress will be sold if exposed, Hannah encourages her to flee, and flees with her. Thus begins Hannah's journey, as she passes through the hands of prison guard, slave trader, benevolent caretaker, mean and petty masters and finally to freedom. The style is sentimental and effusive, but it is also winning. Crafts's portrayal of the Wheelers--a small-minded but ambitious couple who prefer to "live at the public expense"--is incisive and utterly familiar. Though Gates chose to touch up Crafts's punctuation, he left her

spelling as is and included her revisions, which were remarkably few. Crafts clearly understood the needs of her narrative and the conventions of the 19th-century novel in a way that many first novelists (of any century) don't. While scholars will have to decide whether this is "the unadulterated `voice' of the fugitive slave herself," lay readers can simply enjoy Crafts's remarkable story and Gates's own story of discovering her. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Well-known scholar and writer Gates, who just joined the faculty at Harvard, purchased this holograph a handwritten, seminovelized, extremely melodramatic account of a "mixed-race" woman's trials as a slave, as well as her commentaries on and escape from slavery from the estate of Howard University historian and librarian Dorothy Wesley Porter. Based on external and internal evidence, Porter and now Gates believe that the manuscript was written by an escaped slave just before the Civil War which, as Gates contends in his lengthy introduction, would make this the first novel by an African American woman. As such, it would offer unique access to a text untainted by seemingly helpful white abolitionist editors, advisers, and amanuenses who generally made extensive changes in the stories written by fugitive slaves. The external evidence of ink, paper, and handwriting does seem to suggest that this manuscript was written before the Civil War, although the internal evidence the author's unusual practice of race neutrality when introducing characters, as well as specific references to historical figures is less convincing. And the influence of other writers and genres (particularly, as it turns out, Charles Dickens and the 19th-century sentimental novel) still manifests itself throughout the text. In addition, there is the worrisome sense that this project may be more about Gates (his name is larger than Crafts's on the cover) or perhaps even about our own need to locate seemingly untainted texts than about the author herself. Still, Gates is to be commended for making this holograph public in the interest of scholarship. Possibly, as he hopes, this effort will cause more definitive authenticating material to be found. Recommended for academic libraries, public libraries where interest is warranted, and libraries with large African American collections. Roger A. Berger, Everett Community Coll., WA Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.