



# **A Hard Fight for We: Women's Transition from Slavery to Freedom in South Carolina (Women in American History)**

*Leslie A. Schwalm*

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This title is winner of the Willie Lee Rose Publication Prize, the Southern Association of Women Historians, 1998. The courage and vigor with which African-American women fought for their freedom during and after the Civil War are firmly at the center of this groundbreaking study. Focusing on slave women on the rice plantations of lowcountry South Carolina, Leslie Schwalm offers a thoroughly researched account of their vital roles in antebellum plantation life and in the wartime collapse of slavery, and their efforts as freedwomen to recover from the impact of war while redefining life and labor in the postbellum period. Freedwomen fiercely asserted their own ideas of what freedom meant and insisted on important changes in the work they performed for white employers and in their own homes. They rejected the most unpleasant or demeaning tasks, guarded prerogatives gained under a slave economy, and defended their vision of freedom against unwanted intervention by Northern whites and the efforts of former owners to restore slavery's social and economic relations during Reconstruction.



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