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Book Review

African American Life in South Carolina's Upper Piedmont, 1780-1900

By W.J. Megginson

The University of South Carolina Press, 2006. 546 pages. \$59.95

Gone With the Wind, this is not! Readers from both ends of the spectrum will find W.J. Megginson's opus hard to accept, considering the stereotypes exhibited by Hollywood as well as scholarly and not-so scholarly books that focused on large plantation life. One is drawn immediately to the extensive research that was done to produce this work. What probably began as a small project burgeoned as more and more sources opened up during research. All primary sources appear to have been exhausted including reminiscences of remaining family members. Even as families were separated by death or inheritance from their masters, contact was maintained because so few ever saw their spouse and children moving beyond the county...they were often just down the road. Free blacks appear to be as common as elsewhere in the South, except as the Civil War approached more were blocked from this goal and in some places the process was illegal. Evidence is that even in this region, owners were nervous that their slaves might revolt, but instead these industrious people forged their place in history quietly through family, church, and social interactions. This book is highly recommended for academic and public libraries.

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