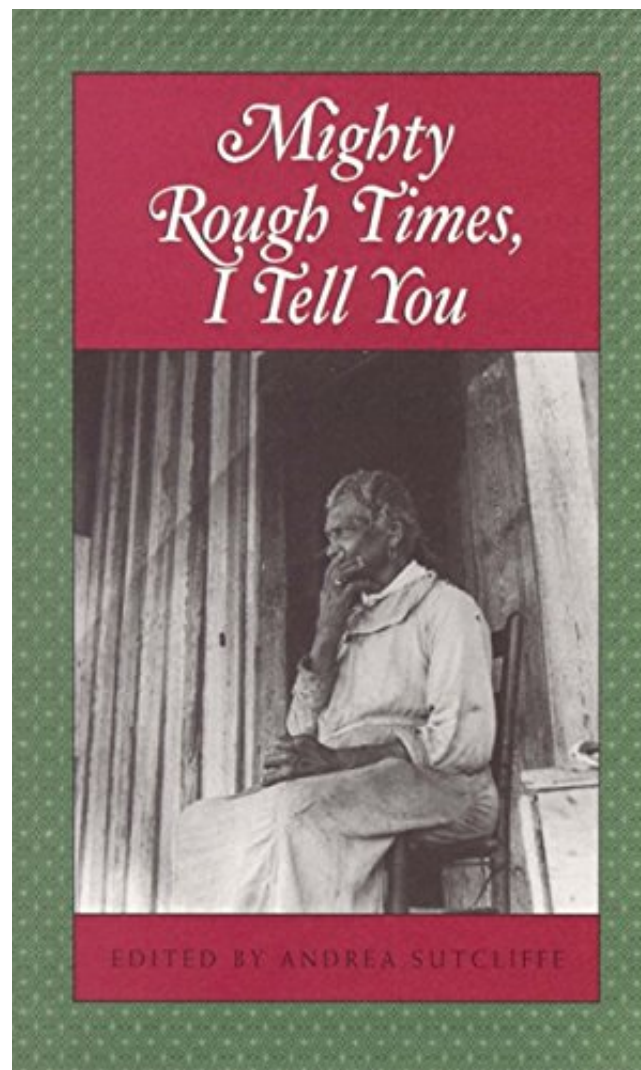


Mighty Rough Times, I Tell You: Personal Accounts of Slavery in Tennessee

by

Charlotte Collins



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Synopsis

In 1929, the Social Sciences Department at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, began recording the oral histories of former slaves. During the mid-1930s, the Federal Writers' Project undertook a similar effort, ultimately compiling more than two thousand interviews and ten thousand pages of material in seventeen states. In this volume, thirty-six former slaves living in Tennessee recount what it was like to live under the yoke. Tennessee was not a large slaveholding state compared with others in the South. On the other hand, it was a leader in the abolition movement prior to 1830 and a powder keg of mixed Union and Confederate sympathies at the time of the Civil War. The voices in this volume thus recall the extreme conditions of slavery in the border country. Originally from San Antonio, Andrea Sutcliffe has a journalism degree from the University of Texas at Austin. She was a writer, editor, and publications manager in the Washington, DC, area for twenty years. Her writing and editing career began in 1990 as director of the EEI Press in Alexandria, Virginia. In 1996, Andrea Sutcliffe moved to Virginia's Shenandoah Valley to devote herself full-time to writing. Andrea's love of her new home in the mountains of western Virginia, and a desire to learn more about the region's fascinating history, led to her book, *Touring the Shenandoah Valley Backroads*.

Sort review

About the Author Originally from San Antonio, Andrea Sutcliffe has a journalism degree from the University of Texas at Austin. She was a writer, editor, and publications manager in the Washington, DC, area for twenty years. Her writing and editing career began in 1990 as director of the EEI Press in Alexandria, Virginia. In 1996, Andrea Sutcliffe moved to Virginia's Shenandoah Valley to devote herself full-time to writing. Andrea's love of her new home in the mountains of western Virginia, and a desire to learn more about the region's fascinating history, led to her book, *Touring the Shenandoah Valley Backroads*. --This text refers to an alternate kindle_edition edition.

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What people say about this book

Classynoni, "Really insightful !. I loved the collection of the first hand experience from these peoples lives and the idea of them being asked to tell how they truly felt about their situation. The way they spoke was so true to life it was like being there. However, it still disturbed me to know that one human being could be so cruel to another human being and call themselves Christian's! Even animals today are treated better than slaves were back then..... heartbreaking!"

S. Kelley Chambers, "Excellent.. Very good read. Excellent excerpts. Well written and put together."

Ebook Tops Reader, "Five Stars. good"

Colinda, "Slave narratives without too much dialect. The book is easier to read than some slave narratives because excessive dialect has been changed to plain English. Just enough remains to provide a little flavor - the word marster is often used for master, for instance. Each chapter is a first-person account by a former slave telling of life during slavery and after freedom. Based on interviews done in Tennessee, the stories are simply told and have the ring of truth. They are quite varied. Some of the people were mistreated as slaves, while a few had kind masters and enough to eat. The best-treated was probably Lucy, who says "It was a long time before I knew I was a slave." She was "a kinda maid and companion" to a young woman who married a U.S. Army Officer, and they traveled a lot. Other stories are full of sadness and of course, some tell of neglect or cruelty. More of the interviewees witnessed extreme cruelty than actually experienced it. After all, these were people who survived into old age. Not being allowed to learn to read was a recurring complaint. The forced separation of families is a repeated source of anguish, although I was surprised at how many eventually found other family members after freedom came. Another theme is joining the Yankees during the Civil War, although accounts of actual battles are sparse. Apparently the interviewees were more interested in the slave experience and how the people coped after they were freed. A number of the elderly persons who were interviewed were disapproving of the young people at that time, who did not have the manners that were insisted upon during slavery and who did not appreciate the great privilege of being free citizens. I found this book very interesting. The presentation is elegantly simple with a clear typeface and adequate white space. The only illustration is on the cover."

Andre M., "Probably the best of the Series. This is probably the best in the series of the interviews with former slaves done in the 1930s-in this case Tennessee. Here we get info on a long-forgotten lynching that took place in Nashville in 1892 and an early look at life at Fisk University. What makes these stand apart from the others is the fact that since Black Students from Fisk University interviewed these ex-slaves in 1929-30 (not to be confused with the later

WPA Slave narratives), they felt freer to express themselves than they would have with White interviewers at the time. We get an eye-opening read as a result and a virtually untarnished view. However, many of these are anonymous since some of the ex-slaves feared retribution for their remarks. All in all, an excellent read and a treasure chest for historians. There was another book that was written in 1968 from the Fisk University Slave narratives called "Unwritten History of Slavery" that contains some of the same material. Interesting to compare the two."

G. JoAnne Wheeler, "So very interesting. Was on vacation in Nashville, TN and saw this book in a shop. Got home and ordered it and it is such a compelling book, so interesting and it was shipped so quickly. Very pleased with this company!!!!"

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