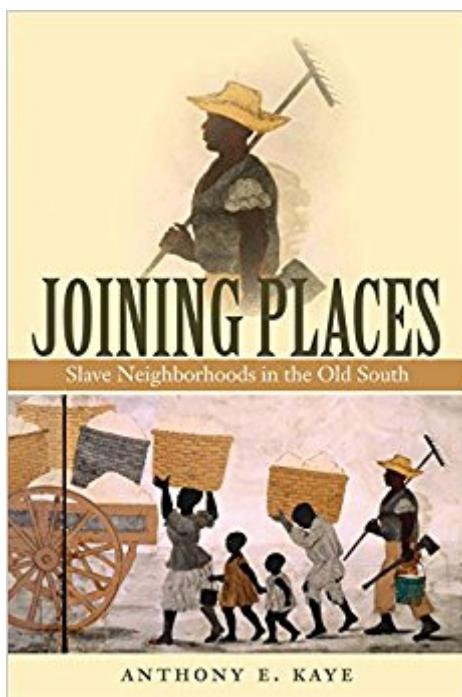


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# Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods In The Old South (The John Hope Franklin Series In African American History And Culture)



## Synopsis

In this new interpretation of antebellum slavery, Anthony Kaye offers a vivid portrait of slaves transforming adjoining plantations into slave neighborhoods. He describes men and women opening paths from their owners' plantations to adjacent farms to go courting and take spouses, to work, to run away, and to otherwise contend with owners and their agents. In the course of cultivating family ties, forging alliances, working, socializing, and storytelling, slaves fashioned their neighborhoods into the locus of slave society. *Joining Places* is the first book about slavery to use the pension files of former soldiers in the Union army, a vast source of rich testimony by ex-slaves. From these detailed accounts, Kaye tells the stories of men and women in love, "sweethearting," "taking up," "living together," and marrying across plantation lines; striving to get right with God; carving out neighborhoods as a terrain of struggle; and working to overthrow the slaveholders' regime. Kaye's depiction of slaves' sense of place in the Natchez District of Mississippi reveals a slave society that comprised not a single, monolithic community but an archipelago of many neighborhoods. Demonstrating that such neighborhoods prevailed across the South, he reformulates ideas about slave marriage, resistance, independent production, paternalism, autonomy, and the slave community that have defined decades of scholarship.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A detailed portrait of slave men and women venturing beyond the limits of their master's domain to adjoining plantations. . . . An important contribution to the scholarship on slavery. Given the merits

of Kaye's antebellum study, one hopes that historians of other periods will examine the importance of place to African Americans.--*Journal of Mississippi History*Kaye joins a growing body of work that explores the complicated, contested nature of community, power, and labor, leading the scholarship toward a denser awareness of life within slavery.--*Enterprise and Society*An original and persuasive interpretation of slavery and slave life. . . . Boldly conceived and fluently written. . . . An important book, one that will surely become a staple in graduate courses on southern and African American history. . . . Kaye has shifted the scholarly conversation.--*American Historical Review*Add[s] impressively to the list of scholars who have forced a rethinking about slavery in the Old South. . . . Kaye has resurrected a cache of primary documents that are crucial to any full understanding of how slaves persevered. For this, and for producing a first-rate study, Kaye is to be commended.--*The Historian*Make[s] an impressive addition to recent scholarship and should be essential reading for those interested in the history and historiography of the antebellum South.--*Georgia Historical Quarterly*A finely detailed and richly documented narrative. . . . This volume can be expected to have wide-ranging influence on the future study of the lives of the enslaved and the plantation economy that held them in bondage.--*Journal of the Early Republic*Based on path-breaking research that accomplishes something unthinkable at this late date: it excavates a too-rarely used, massive set of sources that reports new words from ex-slaves speaking about their experiences before emancipation. . . . A rewarding, even exciting contribution to the scholarship of slavery and African-American history. . . . A detailed, breathing portrait of slavery in the Natchez District, one that sometimes is shocking in its living tints. . . . All who study slavery in North America need to read this important new work.--*Journal of Interdisciplinary History*Joining Places offers a new approach to familiar questions about the character of slave society and community. . . . [It] demonstrates how 'neighborhood' shaped slaves' work and socialization, their creation of marriage and family ties, and the resistance they offered to slaveholders and the slave regime.--*Frederick Douglass Book Prize Committee*By reconceptualizing slaves as living within complex, shifting, historically and spatially specific 'neighborhoods,' Joining Places suggests a promising way out of the increasingly unproductive historiographical impasse between slaves' agency and masters' power. . . . Throughout, Kaye's painstaking examination of his subjects' language leads to new insights.--*Journal of American History*Recapture[s] both the fluidity and yearning for stability that marked the lives of the enslaved in this dynamic locale.--*The North Carolina Historical Review*Important. . . [a] new and significant interpretive framework for understanding antebellum southern slavery. . . . A welcome addition. . . . The best historical works invite questions, and Kaye's work is no exception.--*Civil War Book Review*One of the best books on

American slavery to appear in recent years. . . . Scholars have written about these themes for years, but never with Kaye's mixture of empirical depth, stylistic grace, and theoretical sophistication.--Civil War History[Kaye] consults a heretofore-neglected source of testimony from the newly freed slaves: the US Pensions Bureau files of African American soldiers who served in the Union Army during the Civil War. . . . Recommended.--ChoiceA deep and nuanced portrait of slavery in the Deep South during a critical period in its making and unmaking. . . . An important contribution to the scholarship of slavery and resistance, and should also be of interest to scholars interested in the production of space.--Canadian Journal of HistoryVirtually an anatomy of the roots of neighborhood in southern communities in the U.S. South. . . . Suitable and highly recommended.--Multicultural ReviewEloquently shows the significance of neighborhoods in the ante-bellum South.--Journal of Southern HistoryA significant addition to the historiography of the Old South.--Arkansas Historical Quarterly

Kaye's book is destined to become a classic. It will take its place among the best books about American slavery to appear in the last three decades. More than a study of ideology, the book is a plain-spoken and shrewd analysis of the day-to-day experiences of slaves in the Natchez District. Kaye's handling of evidence and interpretation is truly exemplary. This is a sterling book written with an admirable touch.--Michael P. Johnson, Johns Hopkins University, author of *Abraham Lincoln, Slavery, and the Civil War*This is a boldly conceptual and deeply empirical book that refigures and advances some of the most important historiographical debates of the past thirty years in scholarship on slavery in the United States. It is ambitious, smart, and compelling.--Walter Johnson, Harvard University, author of *Soul by Soul: Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*

I can only assume the negative review accompanying mine is due to the mild redundancy that one faces with most historical narratives. One has to accept, when picking up a book like this one, that in order to represent a historical argument it is the responsibility of the author to give multiple examples on each point, otherwise it would be like a scientist only testing a hypothesis once or twice. When reading a book like this one, reading his major points and then skimming the examples he gives will give you more benefit than trying to read it cover to cover, word for word. Later, if you need to cite the examples he uses in your own studies, Kaye has provided ample material.Ultimately this is a good book, especially for cultural geography of the American South in terms of understanding that slave-planter relations were not as cut and dry as popular media would have one believe. Also, many of the social practices put into play in Louisiana and Mississippi

during the antebellum period were still alive in primarily black neighborhoods as late as the civil rights era and a few can be found going strong today. That is a significant point. Does this author reinforce one or two valid points a little too exhaustively? Possibly, but overall I found this book to be a good read (As long as you're not expecting a page turner!)

ok

The author delved deeply into relevant historical records concerning enslaved people and found something new that should be common sense: instead of a community of people bounded by the shared condition of being enslaved, black Mississippians in slavery formed neighborhoods. They did all those things that make us human, like courting, worshiping, visiting, and trying to cut as good a deal with those in charge as they could. They treated strangers like strangers and protected their own. Of course, there was a thick overlay of violence and exploitation, but Kaye structures the book on the intentions and actions of African-descended people as people rather than as slaves. This is an academic book with a fresh approach to the subject that humanizes them.

There are no other reviews of this book because nobody has ever finished it. It is nothing but one long run on cliche'. Are my twenty words up yet? It is that awful.

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