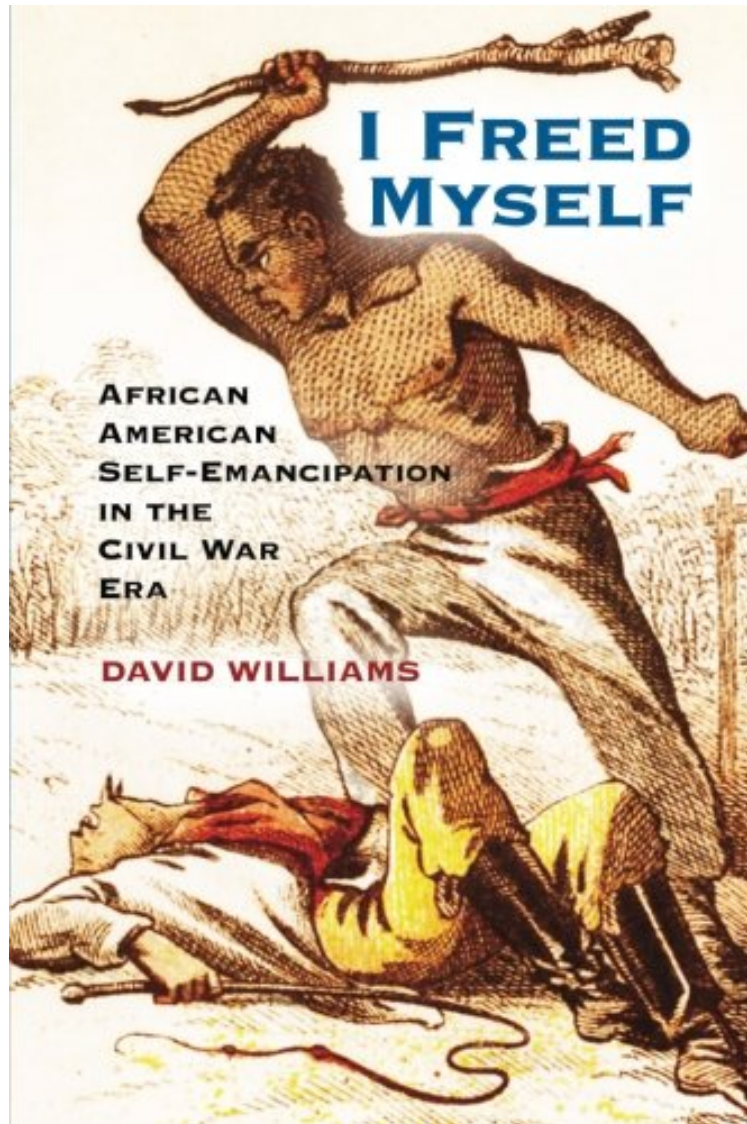


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I Freed Myself: African American Self-Emancipation in the Civil War Era

David Williams

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#1329582 in Books Williams David 2014-04-21 2014-04-21 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.98 x .59 x 5.98l, .85 #File Name: 1107602491275 pages I Freed Myself African American Self Emancipation in the Civil War Era | File size: 75.Mb

David Williams : I Freed Myself: African American Self-Emancipation in the Civil War Era before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised I Freed Myself: African American Self-Emancipation in the Civil War Era:

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incoming freshmen in my general education history courses label Lincoln as the great emancipator. In 2010, Eric Foner demonstrated that Abraham Lincoln was far from consistent in his attitude towards slavery and slaves. Here, in *I Freed Myself*, historian David Williams tells the story from the slaves' perspective, and how they took freedom for themselves. In the first four chapters, Williams offers different manners in which slaves resisted the practice of slavery, from running away, challenging acts of punishments, serving as spies, and as soldiers. This expertly researched, and superbly written, account offers differing ways that slaves opposed the institution that kept them in bondage during the war years, with many accounts naming numerous blacks and their heroic and dangerous efforts. This work ends with the war and how whites banded together to counter all of the black's newly acquired rights, the freedmen, and freedwomen, however, continued to challenge the oppressive nature of the post-war South. As a PhD candidate, this book fits into many different must read lists: Civil War history, African American, Southern history, and to a lesser extent, military history. Readers will learn a great deal, but Williams's excellent prose make a difficult subject into an overwhelmingly easy read for scholars, historians, graduate students, and casual enthusiasts of any of the aforementioned fields of studies. In addition, its succinct nature, counting five chapters in 243 pages (with footnotes, which is sadly dying out) makes this book easily adoptable in any and all classes on race during the nineteenth century. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An Excellent Read By Sadie Robinson Good book for anyone to add to their collection about the Antebellum South, African Americans or slavery. Many seem to think that black people were docile during the Civil War and simply waited for the Yankees to free them. The truth is slaves shaped their own future and this book discusses the reasons they did and the methods. 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. This book will give you a new perspective on who deserves credit for emancipation By Trey Shipp The role of slaves in their own emancipation isn't part of the standard American story. It should be. This interesting book recounts heroic acts of slave escapes, revolts and military service. And as slaves grabbed freedom, Williams shows how they pushed a reluctant Lincoln and nation into ending slavery. At the beginning of the Civil War, outside a small group of abolitionists, virtually no whites were ready to end slavery. Even Lincoln had been willing to pass a constitutional amendment guaranteeing slavery forever to avoid conflict. But ultimately over 200,000 freedmen and former slaves would fight in the Union Army. And as the nation saw them fighting and dying alongside their white sons, husbands and fathers, the North embraced the rightness of freedom. This book will give you a new perspective on who deserves credit for emancipation.

For a century and a half, Abraham Lincoln's signing of the Emancipation Proclamation has been the dominant narrative of African American freedom in the Civil War era. However, David Williams suggests that this portrayal marginalizes the role that African American slaves played in freeing themselves. At the Civil War's outset, Lincoln made clear his intent was to save the Union rather than free slaves - despite his personal distaste for slavery, he claimed no authority to interfere with the institution. By the second year of the war, though, when the Union army was in desperate need of black support, former slaves who escaped to Union lines struck a bargain: they would fight for the Union if it committed itself to freedom. Williams importantly demonstrates that freedom was not simply the absence of slavery but rather a dynamic process enacted by self-emancipated African American refugees, which compelled Lincoln to modify his war aims and place black freedom at the center of his wartime policies.

"If asked 'who freed the slaves?' most Americans would probably still answer Abraham Lincoln. But that answer does not do justice to the far more complicated process by which freedom was achieved or give credit to the primary movers behind it. This book reclaims the term 'self-emancipation', which only fell out of favor after the Civil War, to show how slaves were central to initiating and sustaining their own freedom. It is an eminently readable and engaging testament of stories that emanate from below, which provide a fuller picture of how the nation survived one of its most searing crises." Tera Hunter, Princeton University "I Freed Myself challenges more than a century of accepted scholarship that has situated Lincoln at the center of the emancipation story. By making black voices loud and clear, David Williams tells a story that historians will no longer be able to dismiss: how African Americans, the most powerless people in American history, collectively forced emancipation to be the fulcrum of the American Civil War and won their own freedom." Scott Hancock, Gettysburg College "Mastering primary sources and a vast secondary literature, and writing with verve and clarity, David Williams has made an important, lasting contribution to studies of the Civil War era. His book proves beyond doubt that the actions of America's slaves repeatedly, and in many different ways, pushed emancipation onto the nation's agenda." Paul Escott, Wake Forest University "Timely and engaging, I Freed Myself offers a bold and unapologetic challenge to the conventional narrative of one of the most significant events in American history. Demonstrating that black freedom wasn't bequeathed in an eloquent proclamation or bestowed as an inadvertent by-product of the Civil War, Williams draws on recent scholarship and his own meticulous research to place African Americans at the center of a negotiated process through which they leveraged their freedom. This is a passionately argued, gracefully written, and genuinely provocative book, one that deserves a wide readership and a place in undergraduate classrooms." Mark Hersey, Mississippi State University About the Author David Williams is Professor of History at Valdosta State University in Georgia, where he specializes in the Civil War era and the

antebellum South. He is the author of ten books, including *Bitterly Divided: The South's Inner Civil War* and *A People's History of the Civil War*.