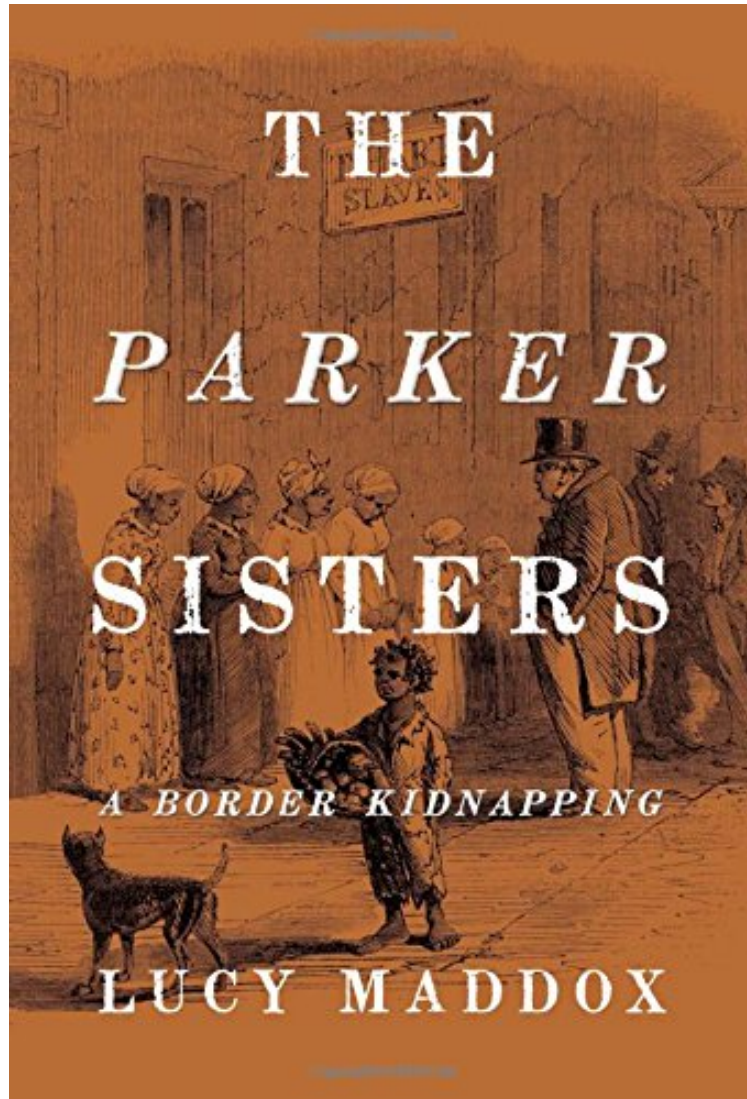


(Mobile book) The Parker Sisters: A Border Kidnapping

The Parker Sisters: A Border Kidnapping

Lucy Maddox

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Lucy Maddox : The Parker Sisters: A Border Kidnapping before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Parker Sisters: A Border Kidnapping:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This is history, up close and personal. It ...By Christina This is history, up close and personal. It demonstrates the kindness and morality of the neighborhood, regardless of color or social status, vs the callous indifference of outsiders using greed as their only compass. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Dennis Todd Terrific story beautifully told 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Revealing and Informative Narrative By Nancy A. The Parker Sisters: A Border Kidnapping by Lucy

Maddox is a nonfiction exploration of the 1851 kidnapping of two free black sisters from Chester County, PA, which is just above the Pennsylvania-Maryland line. Quakers had settled the area before William Penn. Quakers as a group were not active abolitionists, and those who were had to work under cover. Slavery was illegal in Pennsylvania but residents obeyed the law concerning the Fugitive Slave Act which made it mandatory to return escaped 'property' to their Southern owners. Abolitionists were detested as lawbreakers. Pennsylvanians also were incensed by the kidnapping of freemen to be sold as slaves in the South, another breaking of the law. The life of a free person of color in rural Pennsylvania was one of isolation, working for European descent farmers for little pay. Elizabeth Parker was kidnapped and sold to a New Orleans woman. She was sent on the streets to sell flowers and candy, slept on a feather bed, and was surrounded by others of her color. She was not unhappy in spite of her loss of freedom. When she was arrested for breaking the 8 pm curfew she played her trump card and confessed she was a free woman kidnapped into slavery. Her sister Rachel Parker was also kidnapped and her employer and other Chester County farmers followed to bring her back; the farmer she worked for was later found dead. After several exhumations it was determined that he was murdered. Their kidnapper claimed they were the Crocus sisters who had escaped from their owners. The girls remained in prison for a year awaiting the trials that would settle their identity.. African Americans were legally bared from testifying in court for others of their color. Their identity had to be established by members of their home community, against the word of those who benefited from her sale. Maddox uses trial records and primary sources to reconstruct the kidnapping of the Parker sisters. Their story brings to life the legal, political, and personal ramifications of the Fugitive Slave Act. I received a free ARC from the publishers through NetGalley in exchange for a fair and unbiased review.

In 1851, Elizabeth Parker, a free black child in Chester County, Pennsylvania, was bound and gagged, snatched from a local farm, and hurried off to a Baltimore slave pen. Two weeks later, her teenage sister, Rachel, was abducted from another Chester County farm. Because slave catchers could take fugitive slaves and free blacks across state lines to be sold, the border country of Pennsylvania/Maryland had become a dangerous place for most black people. In *The Parker Sisters*, Lucy Maddox gives an eloquent, urgent account of the tragic kidnapping of these young women. Using archival news and courtroom reports, Maddox tells the larger story of the disastrous effect of the Fugitive Slave Act on the small farming communities of Chester County and the significant, widening consequences for the state and the nation. *The Parker Sisters* is also a story about families whose lives and fates were deeply embedded in both the daily rounds of their community and the madness and violence consuming all of antebellum America. Maddox's account of this horrific and startling crime reveals the strength and vulnerability of the Parker sisters and the African American population.

"In this compact and engrossing story, Maddox uses the 1851 kidnappings of Elizabeth and Rachel Parker in Pennsylvania to demonstrate how antebellum slavery transcended state boundaries.... Maddox expertly contextualizes the Parker kidnappings, keeping her eye on the larger legal and political issues.... [She] dramatically renders the subsequent legal trials in thrilling detail, yet never loses sight of the kidnappings' historical importance in the deep divisions among Americans regarding slavery and abolition."—Publishers Weekly