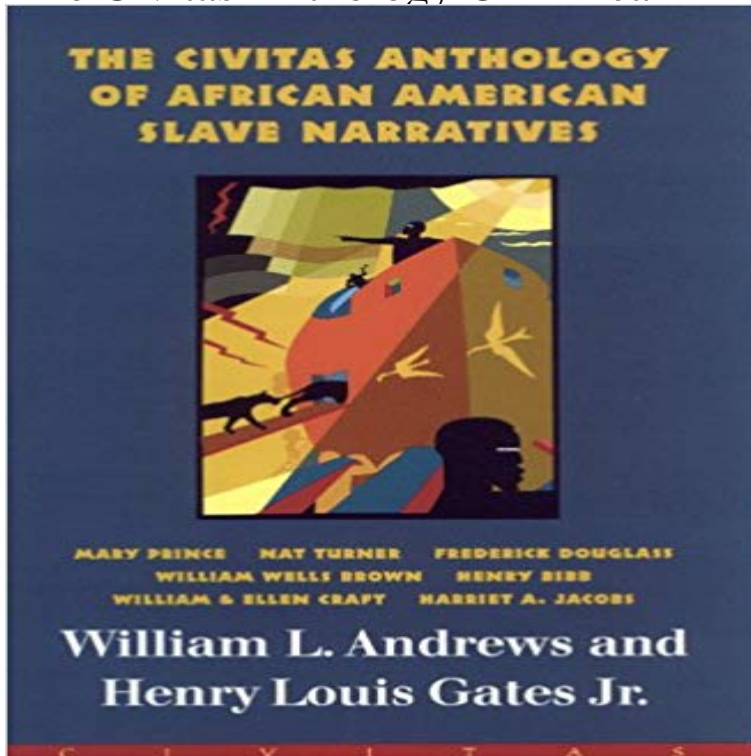


The Civitas Anthology Of African American Slave Narratives



Hailed in 1849 as a new department in the literature of civilization, the slave narrative forms the foundation of the African American literary tradition. From the late-eighteenth-century narratives by Africans who endured the harrowing Middle Passage, through the classic American fugitive slave narratives of the mid-nineteenth century, slave narratives have provided some of the most graphic and damning documentary evidence of the horrors of slavery. Riveting, passionate, and politically charged, the slave narrative blends personal memory and rhetorical attacks on slavery to create powerful literature and propaganda. The Civitas Anthology presents the seven classic antislavery narratives of the antebellum period in their entirety: *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave*, the first slave narrative published by a woman in the Americas; *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, written when Turner was asked to record his motivation for leading the bloodiest slave revolt in U.S. history; *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, an international bestseller and the first narrative to fashion the male fugitive slave into an African American cultural hero; *The Narrative of William W. Brown*, an account that explored with unprecedented realism the slaves survival ethic and the art of the slave trickster; *The Narrative of the Life of Henry Bibb*, the story of the struggles of the most memorable family man among the classic slave narrators; *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*, a gripping chronicle of one of the most daring and celebrated slave escapes ever recorded; and *Incidents in the Life of Slave Girl*, a dramatic text that exposed the sexual abuse of female slaves and pioneered the image of the fugitive slave woman as an articulate resister and survivor. Born out of lives of unparalleled suffering, the slave narrative captures all the bravery, drama, and hope that

characterized the African American struggle against slavery. From these beginnings came some of the most influential novels in American literature, for the works of writers such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mark Twain, and Toni Morrison owe much of their power and social resonance to the slave narrative tradition. The Civitas Anthology gathers the most important narratives in this tradition into one volume for the first time, an indispensable resource for scholars, students, and general readers.

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