



The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South

Catherine Clinton

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This pioneering study of the much-mythologized Southern belle offers the first serious look at the lives of white women and their harsh and restricted place in the slave society before the Civil War. Drawing on the diaries, letters, and memoirs of hundreds of planter wives and daughters, Clinton sets before us in vivid detail the daily life of the plantation mistress and her ambiguous intermediary position in the hierarchy between slave and master.

"The Plantation Mistress challenges and reinterprets a host of issues related to the Old South. The result is a book that forces us to rethink some of our basic assumptions about two peculiar institutions -- the slave plantation and the nineteenth-century family. It approaches a familiar subject from a new angle, and as a result, permanently alters our understanding of the Old South and women's place in it.

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