



'Til Death Or Distance Do Us Part: Love and Marriage in African America

Frances Smith Foster

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Conventional wisdom tells us that marriage was illegal for African Americans during the antebellum era, and that if people married at all, their vows were tenuous ones: "until death or distance do us part." It is an impression that imbues beliefs about black families to this day. But it's a perception primarily based on documents produced by abolitionists, the state, or other partisans. It doesn't tell the whole story.

Drawing on a trove of less well-known sources including family histories, folk stories, memoirs, sermons, and especially the fascinating writings from the Afro-Protestant Press, *'Til Death or Distance Do Us Part* offers a radically different perspective on antebellum love and family life.

Frances Smith Foster applies the knowledge she's developed over a lifetime of reading and thinking. Advocating both the potency of skepticism and the importance of story-telling, her book shows the way toward a more genuine, more affirmative understanding of African American romance, both then and now.

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