



Speaking Lives, Authoring Texts: Three African American Women's Oral Slave Narratives

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Critical edition of three women's oral slave narratives.

Speaking Lives, Authoring Texts is a critical collection of three women's oral slave narratives, *Louisa Picquet, the Octoroon: A Tale of Southern Slave Life* (1861), *The Story of Mattie J. Jackson* (1866), and *Sylvia Dubois, A Biography of The Slave Who Whipped Her Mistress and Gained Her Freedom* (1883), that have received little scholarly attention owing both to the oral nature of the texts and the circumstances of their publication and republication. Taken together, these narratives display African American women's discursive practices that subvert oppression, assert agency, and create representations of the past that counter dominant narratives of both slavery and American culture. This volume ensures that twenty-first-century readers "hear" these voices to not only gain historical knowledge, but also to understand the dynamics of literacy and self-representation, and to locate oral narratives in the spectrum and tradition of African American literary production.

"These three oral life narratives of ex-slave women, originally spoken through a second-person interviewer, will interest all readers ... The book is a welcome addition for the fields of oral history, women's studies, African American studies, and US history and culture." — *CHOICE*

"This book provides an important chronology of nineteenth-century women's life. It organizes and summarizes a wealth of historical materials, offering scholars and other readers an unprecedented and rich resource." — Joycelyn Moody, author of *Sentimental Confessions: Spiritual Narratives of Nineteenth-Century African American Women*

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