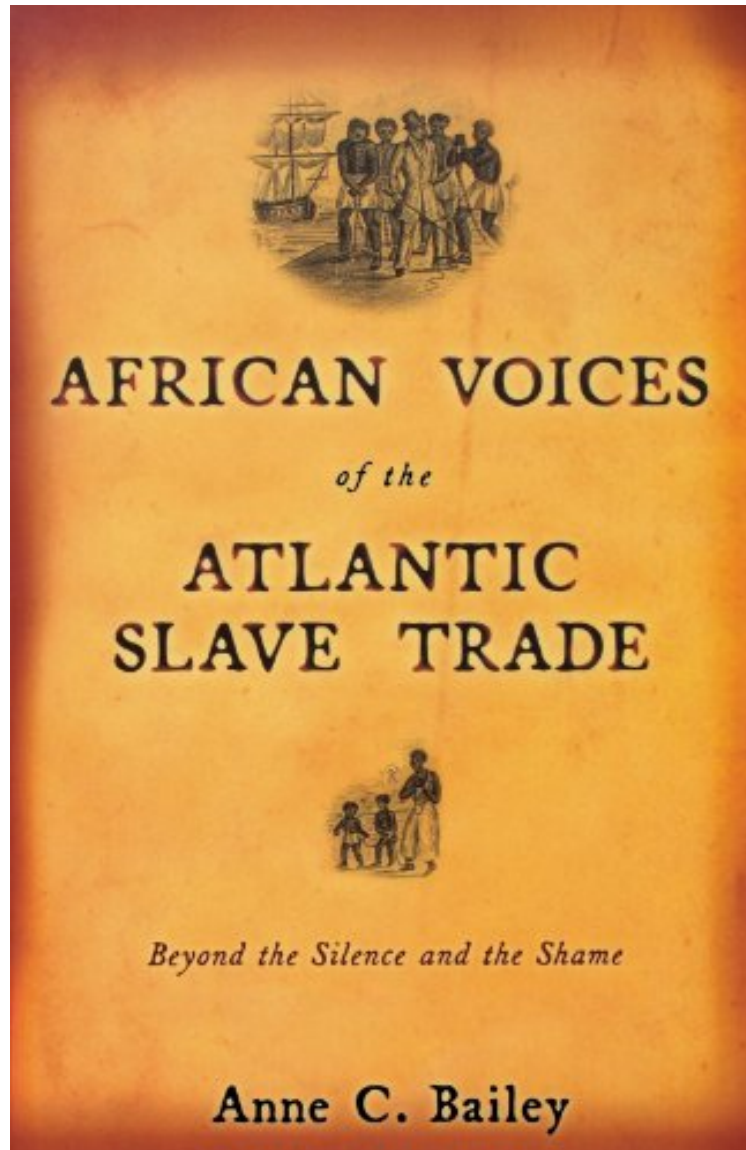


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African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame

Anne Bailey

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Anne Bailey : African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Magnificent and Extraordinarily Important Book!By SteveWhat

would our country be like today if there had been no slavery? Imagine the increase in our current population if some 600,000 whites and blacks hadn't lost their lives in the Civil War; imagine blacks being welcomed to our shores as first-class citizens and offered equal opportunities, most particularly educational opportunities; imagine a nation which considered skin color irrelevant; imagine; imagine, imagine. Instead, slavery to a great extent has brought us to where we are today, a nation still divided and haunted by anti-black racism more than 150 years after the very last slave was freed, A NATION WHERE, WHEN BLACKS FIRST ARRIVED IN AMERICA, THEY WERE CONSIDERED NO BETTER THAN FARM ANIMALS THUS SOWING THE VERY SEEDS OF HATRED AND PREJUDICE WE SO OFTEN HEAR ABOUT AND READ EVERY SINGLE DAY. How did this all come about? In her mesmerizing book *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame*, Professor Anne C. Bailey describes for us as best anyone can the origins of the Atlantic Slave Trade and what drove Europeans, Americans and even Africans to pursue this god-awful business. Making a number of trips to Africa, interviewing countless Africans and to some extent relying on the research of others, Dr. Bailey attempts to explain this dreadful phenomenon. However, for her the journey was far from easy. Why? Because the slave trade's history is unwritten; its history is oral, passed down from one generation to the next. Yet those Africans whose ancestors either engaged in the trade or were its victims are so ashamed of their past that, for the most part, they are unwilling (maybe even unable) to talk about it. Still, through persistence spanning many years Dr. Bailey did learn about the trade's origins and workings and shares all this with us in her magnificent book. Sadly, in our high school and college US history courses little mention is made of the Atlantic Slave Trade. And yet it is of such core importance to what we are today that it must be taught perhaps shouted out is a better term. And that is what Dr. Bailey accomplishes in *African Voices*, a book that should be required reading in every single high school and college throughout the country. Highly recommended! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. For the knowledge seekers By KaMau-Mau For those seeking an in depth look into our holocaust, this is an excellent book. In many books on the subject, they tend to separate different aspects until the reader gets the idea that Africans didn't resist and made it fairly easy for Europe to gain their economical power. By the time I finished, I had the same emotions and thoughts as I did when I watched movies like *Mississippi Burning*, *Rosewood* and *Roots*. If this book doesn't empower you, you probably need to visit Ghana's Elmina dungeon and see it for yourself. 10 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating material, but flawed writing style. By Anthony Sanchez This book is quite enlightening in the history of the African slave trade. Contrary to what one might expect from the title and reviews, the author does not solely rely on oral stories from African elders. The stories that the author quotes, though, are always interesting. Especially, the Africans' involvement with the slavery. Of course, a story is just that, a story. As with many long told stories, there will be many aspects of truth and nontruth. That is not to say that any of the legends told were lies. They will contain versions of events as told by people who were not witness to the event. It is like the child's party game of "telephone." You start with a story at one end of the line and watch how it changes by the time it reaches the last person. Changes are inevitable, although, the basic premise may be intact. Still, the author provides a useful addition to the literature. So often, the African slave trade discussion is limited to what occurred in America. This book provides stories and facts of the rudimentary aspects of the slave trade such as the problems with shippers obtaining insurance, and the changes in ships' designs. The book informed me on other aspects of the slave trade that I had not known. For example, the international outlawing of the slave transportation did not result in a lessening, but a sharp increase in Atlantic transportation of slaves. Also, the profits arising from slave trading after abolishing were far above what I would have expected. The author too was clearly stunned. That said, the major flaw in this book is that it is so dryly written. Her method of presenting the material is as if one were listening to a dictation. An odd presentation for such an emotional and significant topic.

It's an awful story. It's an awful story. Why do you want to bring this up now? --Chief Awusa of Atorkor For centuries, the story of the Atlantic slave trade has been filtered through the eyes and records of white Europeans. In this watershed book, historian Anne C. Bailey focuses on memories of the trade from the African perspective. African chiefs and other elders in an area of southeastern Ghana—once famously called "the Old Slave Coast"—share stories that reveal that Africans were traders as well as victims of the trade. Bailey argues that, like victims of trauma, many African societies now experience a fragmented view of their past that partially explains the blanket of silence and shame around the slave trade. Capturing scores of oral histories that were handed down through generations, Bailey finds that, although Africans were not equal partners with Europeans, even their partial involvement in the slave trade had devastating consequences on their history and identity. In this unprecedented and revelatory book, Bailey explores the delicate and fragmented nature of historical memory.

From Publishers Weekly Focusing on the stories passed down from generation to generation among the Anlo Ewe community in southern Ghana, an area once known as the Slave Coast, Spelman College historian Bailey offers a noteworthy, carefully researched contribution to the study of the African slave trade. Few accounts in the copious literature have adequately addressed the African viewpoint, says Bailey, and the oral histories she offers are designed to correct that silence. Examples include "the incident at Atorkor": sometime in the 1850s, a breakdown in the working

(though unequal) relationship between white slave traders and a coastal African chief the chief's kin were taken along with inland, "approved" captives heralded a new phase in the slave trade, one in which African slave traders became nearly as vulnerable as their African captives. In compact chapters, Bailey considers the political and economic impact of the slave trade on the West African region; West and Central Africa's class-based practices of domestic slavery; and the issue of European, American and African agency in the slave trade. Though dense prose makes this a better choice for the scholar than the lay reader, Bailey brings unheard historical voices to the fore. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Historian Bailey focuses on the slave trade from the African perspective. As there are few written African records, in contrast to those found in Europe and the Americas, on this topic, she centers her study on the oral tradition, what she refers to as "African human libraries." She primarily focuses on a region in Ghana around one particular oral remembrance told from various perspectives. At the center of this story was an instance when the dominant clan, who had participated in the slave trade by capturing people from the interior for sale, had some of their own members tricked onto a slave ship never to return. One version records the chief as a victim; others record him as a collaborator. In both versions, this story reflected a turning point in this society, where all become vulnerable to the slave trade. Bailey explores the silence surrounding the slave trade and practices including domestic slavery, a legacy that continues today even where these slaves have been married into their masters' families. A fascinating perspective on slavery from the African continent. Vernon Ford Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved A remarkable effort to present the slave trade from a perspective very different from what we are used to . . . People like Anne Bailey make us uncomfortable, which is all to the good.-- Daniel Lazare, *The Nation* "Bailey is not afraid to ask difficult questions . . . [She] expands and troubles our understanding of the African diaspora. In this fine and accessible study of the slave trade, Bailey places African voices of this era at the center of the writing of history."--Robert P. Byrd, *Atlanta Journal Constitution* "[Bailey's] research is important, her questions provocative, and her arguments sensible."--Kirkus s "Bailey offers a noteworthy, carefully researched contribution to the study of the African slave trade . . . [and] brings unheard historical voices to the fore."-- Publishers Weekly "Anne Bailey's judicious, beautifully written account of this extended, appalling human experience is enormously enhanced by her great original contribution-the frequently moving and always thought-provoking memories and understandings of that tragedy amongst the descendants of those who participated as victims and perpetrators in West Africa itself."--Richard Rathbone, professor emeritus, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London