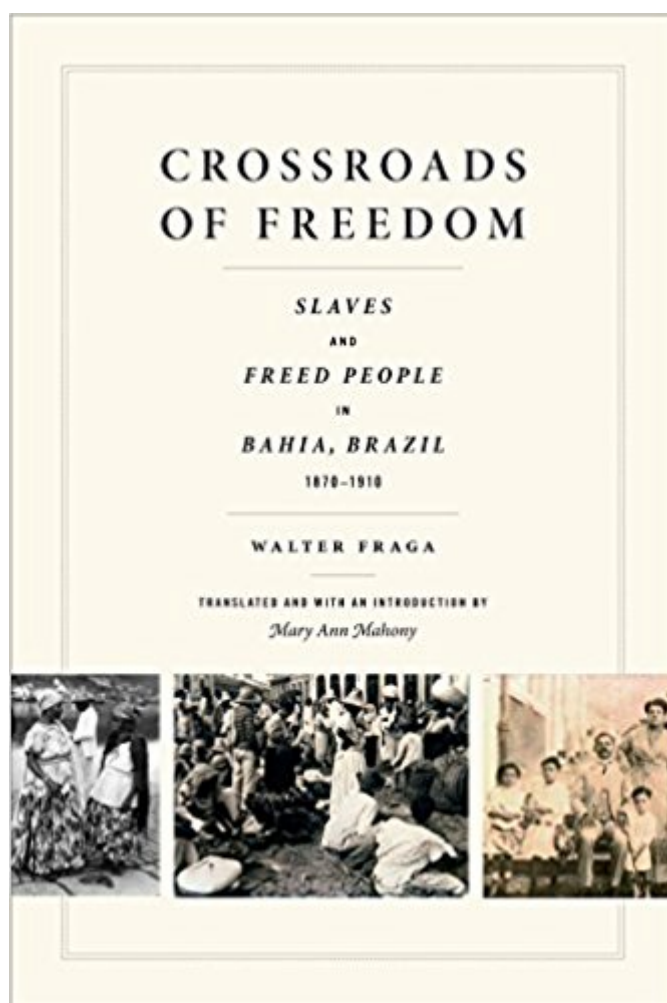


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Crossroads Of Freedom: Slaves And Freed People In Bahia, Brazil, 1870-1910



Synopsis

By 1870 the sugar plantations of the Recôncavo region in Bahia, Brazil, held at least seventy thousand slaves, making it one of the largest and most enduring slave societies in the Americas. In this new translation of *Crossroads of Freedom*—which won the 2011 Clarence H. Haring Prize for the Most Outstanding Book on Latin American History—Walter Fraga charts these slaves' daily lives and recounts their struggle to make a future for themselves following slavery's abolition in 1888. Through painstaking archival research, he illuminates the hopes, difficulties, opportunities, and setbacks of ex-slaves and plantation owners alike as they adjusted to their postabolition environment. Breaking new ground in Brazilian historiography, Fraga does not see an abrupt shift with slavery's abolition; rather, he describes a period of continuous change in which the strategies, customs, and identities that slaves built under slavery allowed them to navigate their newfound freedom. Fraga's analysis of how Recôncavo's residents came to define freedom and slavery more accurately describes this seminal period in Brazilian history, while clarifying how slavery and freedom are understood in the present. Â Â Â

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"Drawing on outstanding research into the notarial, parish, and judicial records from the heart of the old sugar plantation area of Bahia, Walter Fraga recaptures many of the individual stories that illuminate the process of slavery's end and the adjustments of masters and slaves to that process. Featuring fascinating stories with a strong human dimension, *Crossroads of Freedom*

makes a wonderful contribution to an already-rich historiography." (Stuart B. Schwartz, author of *Sea of Storms: A History of Hurricanes in the Greater Caribbean from Columbus to Katrina*) "Mary Ann Mahony has adeptly translated one of the best monographic histories of slaves for the vast sugar lands of Brazil. . . . This book extends Fraga's 2004 dissertation and is a must read for specialists of slavery, emancipation, or Brazil, and, if contextualized, should be compelling to undergraduates and general readers as well. Highly recommended." (I. W. Read Choice 2017-01-01)

Walter Fraga is Associate Professor in the Department of History of the Federal University of the Bahian Recôncavo in Cachoeira, Bahia, Brazil. Mary Ann Mahony is Professor of History at Central Connecticut State University.

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