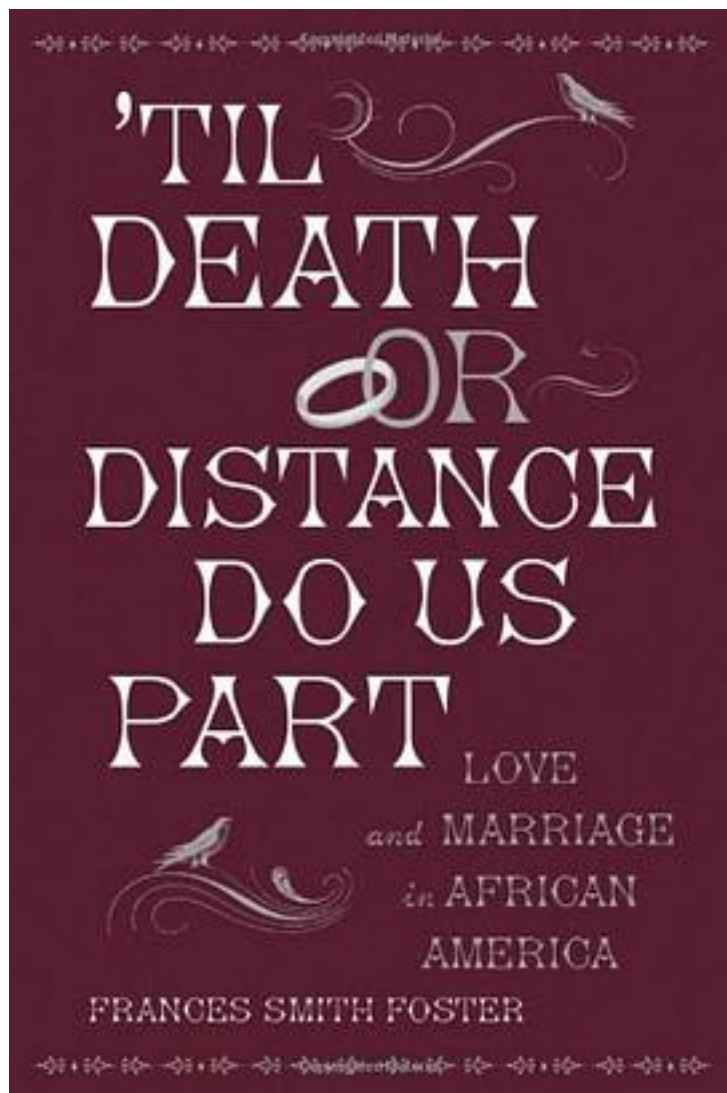


'Til Death or Distance Do Us Part



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出版者:

出版时间:2010-1

装帧:

isbn:9780195328523

Conventional wisdom says that marriage was rare or illegal for slaves and that if African Americans married at all, their vows were tenuous ones: "until death or distance do us part." It is believed that this history explains the dysfunction of the African American family to this day. In this groundbreaking book, Frances Smith Foster shows that this common wisdom is flawed as it is based upon partial evidence and it ignores the writings African Americans created for themselves. Rather than relying on documents produced for abolitionists, the state, or other biased parties, Foster draws upon a trove of little-examined alternative sources and in so doing offers a correction to this widely held but misinformed viewpoint. The works examined include family histories, folkloric stories, organizational records, personal memoirs, sermons and especially the fascinating and varied writings published in the Afro-Protestant Press of the times. She shows that "jumping the broom" was but one of many wedding rituals and that love, marriage and family were highly valued and central to early African American society. Her book offers a provocative new understanding of a powerful belief about African American history and sheds light on the roles of memory and myth, story and history in defining contemporary society and shaping the future.

作者介绍:

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