



Tales from the Haunted South: Dark Tourism and Memories of Slavery from the Civil War Era (The Steven and Janice Brose Lectures in the Civil War Era)

Tiya Miles

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In this book Tiya Miles explores the popular yet troubling phenomenon of "ghost tours," frequently promoted and experienced at plantations, urban manor homes, and cemeteries throughout the South. As a staple of the tours, guides entertain paying customers by routinely relying on stories of enslaved black specters. But who are these ghosts? Examining popular sites and stories from these tours, Miles shows that haunted tales routinely appropriate and skew African American history to produce representations of slavery for commercial gain. "Dark tourism" often highlights the most sensationalist and macabre aspects of slavery, from salacious sexual ties between white masters and black women slaves to the physical abuse and torture of black bodies to the supposedly exotic nature of African spiritual practices. Because the realities of slavery are largely absent from these tours, Miles reveals how they continue to feed problematic "Old South" narratives and erase the hard truths of the Civil War era. In an incisive and engaging work, Miles uses these troubling cases to shine light on how we feel about the Civil War and race, and how the ghosts of the past are still with us.

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