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Baton Rouge, LA 70808-4684
(225) 578-6666
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BOOK NEWS

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Contact: Erin Rolfs

erolfs@lsu.edu/225.578.8282

The Maid Narratives: Black Domestic Workers and White Families in the Jim Crow South

Firsthand Accounts Uncover Intimate and Troubled Relationships Between Maid and Mistress

Baton Rouge, LA—Based on interviews with over fifty people—both black domestic workers and the white families they worked for—the stories in *The Maid Narratives* deliver a personal message about resilience and resistance in the face of oppression in the Jim Crow South.

The housekeepers, caretakers, sharecroppers, and cooks who share their memories in *The Maid Narratives* ultimately moved away during the Great Migration. Their perspectives as servants who left the South for better opportunities offer an original telling of physical and psychological survival in a racially oppressive caste system: Vinella Byrd, for instance, from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, recalls how a farmer she worked for would not allow her to clean her hands in the family's wash pan. These narratives are complemented by the voices of white women, such as Flora Templeton Stuart, from New Orleans, who remembers her maid fondly but realizes that she knew little about her life. Like Stuart, many of the white narrators remain troubled by the racial norms of the time. Viewed as a whole, the book presents varied, rich, and detailed stories, often tragic, and sometimes humorous. *The Maid Narratives* reveals, across racial lines, shared hardships, strong emotional ties, and inspiring strength.

Katherine van Wormer, who grew up in New Orleans, is a sociologist and professor of social work at the University of Northern Iowa. She is the author or coauthor of sixteen books, including *Death by Domestic Violence* and *Confronting Oppression, Restoring Justice*.

David Walter Jackson III is assistant professor in the department of African and African-American Studies at Metropolitan State College of Denver. He is co-producer of the oral video history project *African-American Voices of the Cedar Valley*. In 2006, he received the Trio Achiever of the Year award for the State of Iowa.

Charletta Sudduth is Title I early childhood consultant for the Waterloo Community School District. She earned a master's in social work and a doctorate in education, curriculum, and instruction, from the University of Northern Iowa.

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