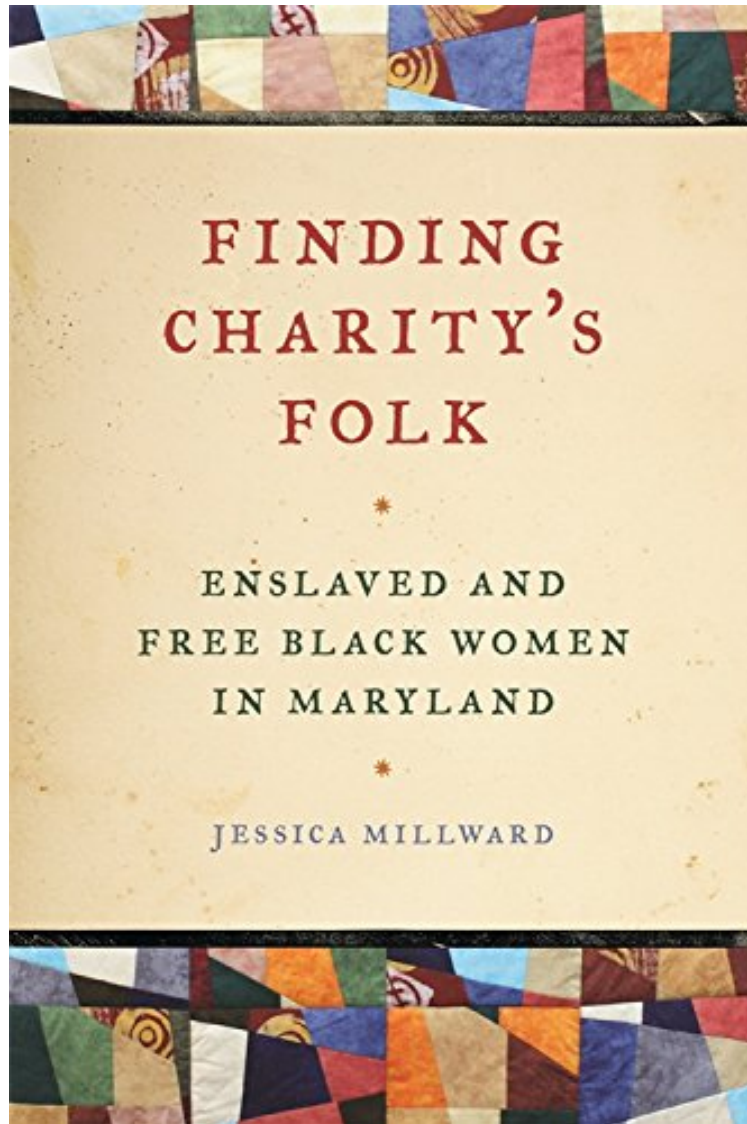


[Download] Finding Charity's Folk: Enslaved and Free Black Women in Maryland (Race in the Atlantic World, 17001900 Ser.)

## **Finding Charity's Folk: Enslaved and Free Black Women in Maryland (Race in the Atlantic World, 17001900 Ser.)**

*Jessica Millward*

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**Jessica Millward : Finding Charity's Folk: Enslaved and Free Black Women in Maryland (Race in the Atlantic World, 17001900 Ser.)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Finding Charity's Folk: Enslaved and Free Black Women in Maryland (Race in the Atlantic World, 17001900 Ser.):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Despite all, we are still here. By Rachel This was an amazing book. It sheds light on the quite and often forgotten ways in which enslaved women fought for their freedom. This book unequivocally shows that Black women were active agents in their pursuit of freedom. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent perspective on the African American Women's influence on American ... By minerv As a Native Annapolitan, I found this book to be very informative. Excellent perspective on the African American Women's influence on American History as a whole.

*Finding Charity's Folk* highlights the experiences of enslaved Maryland women who negotiated for their own freedom, many of whom have been largely lost to historical records. Based on more than fifteen hundred manumission records and numerous manuscript documents from a diversity of archives, Jessica Millward skillfully brings together African American social and gender history to provide a new means of using biography as a historical genre. Millward opens with a striking discussion about how researching the life of a single enslaved woman, Charity Folks, transforms our understanding of slavery and freedom in Revolutionary America. For African American women such as Folks, freedom, like enslavement, was tied to a bondswoman's reproductive capacities. Their offspring were used to perpetuate the slave economy. Finding loopholes in the law meant that enslaved women could give birth to and raise free children. For Millward, Folks demonstrates the fluidity of the boundaries between slavery and freedom, which was due largely to the gendered space occupied by enslaved women. The gendering of freedom influenced notions of liberty, equality, and race in what became the new nation and had profound implications for African American women's future interactions with the state.

Digging deeply into the county court records of Maryland, the author presents a remarkable picture of how some enslaved women, including Charity Folks, acquired their freedom. In doing so, she broadens our perspective on female slaves, African American family relationships, and free blacks. Thoroughly versed in a broad literature, she authoritatively discusses a wide range of related topics, including interracial sex, violence, rape, and the relationship between enslaved women's bodies, freedom suits, and manumission laws. (Loren Schweningen, Elizabeth Rosenthal Professor Emeritus of History, University of North Carolina, Greensboro) *Finding Charity's Folk* is bold and daring in both chronology and content. With incredible new sources, Jessica Millward recovers the lives of African American women in rural Maryland, courageously tackling the complexities of emancipation in early America. *Finding Charity's Folk* makes an essential contribution to African American women's history and to the narrative of American freedom. (Erica Armstrong Dunbar, University of Delaware) *Finding Charity's Folk* chronicles the remarkable journeys and accomplishments of 'a ghost of slavery' and the painstaking researcher who invoked and 'remembered' Charity Folks, an enslaved Annapolis, Maryland, mulatto, into the present. . . . Yet Millward also warns that our fixation on the much-debated female-headed household 'obscures the role of black men' who supported their children and cared for elderly kin. Thus, Millward weaves the experiences of Folks and her extended family into the literature while encouraging us to rethink how we do history. (Cynthia M. Kennedy *Journal of American History*) *Finding Charity's Folk* is a slim four-chapter volume of less than seventy-five pages of text. . . . Rather than a biography, it is a social history resulting from more than a decade of research involving the examination of over one thousand manuscripts archived in the United States, England, and Africa. . . . Using Saidiya Hartman's concept of 'afterlife of slavery,' Millward attempts to answer questions about the lives of freed women who remained surrounded and sometimes haunted by slavery. . . . Unlike other studies of slavery and freedom in North America, *Finding Charity's Folk* links the foremother to her descendants in contemporary America through extensive genealogical research in combination with US census returns, interviews, and memory. (Wilma King *Early American Literature*) The sense of place is strongly conveyed in *Finding Charity's Folk*. . . . There is a strong emphasis on the gendered reality of slavery and freedom throughout the book. . . . These connections impart an intimacy between the past and present that is often lacking in historical monographs. . . . Millward argues that freedom, rather than being exclusively an individual act, was communal. (Nicole Ribianszky *Journal of Southern History*) About the Author JESSICA MILLWARD is an associate professor of history at the University of California, Irvine.