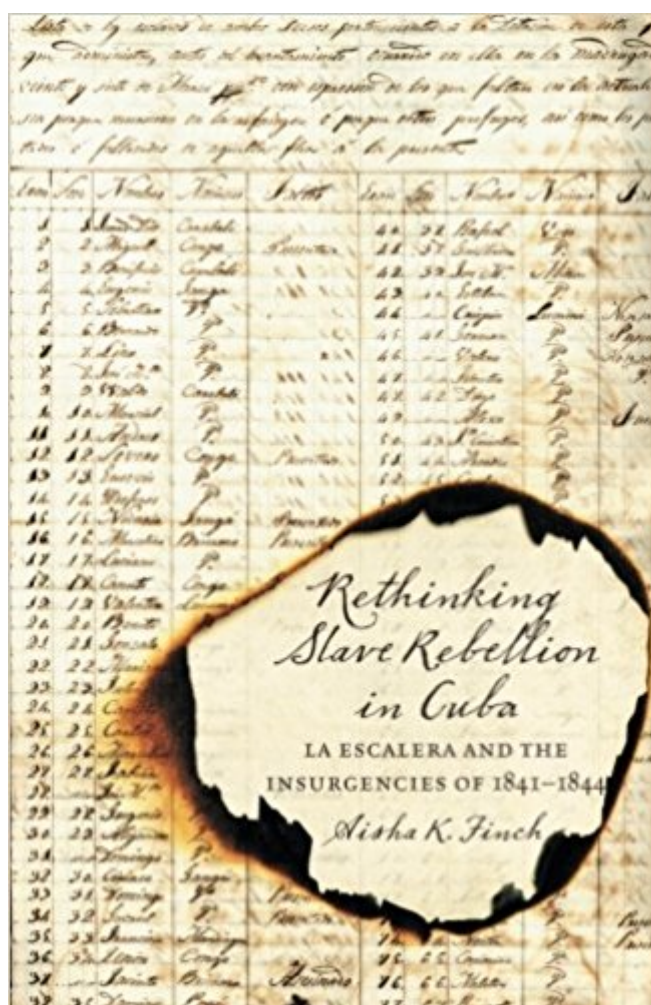


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Rethinking Slave Rebellion In Cuba: La Escalera And The Insurgencies Of 1841-1844 (Envisioning Cuba)



Synopsis

Envisioning La Escalera--an underground rebel movement largely composed of Africans living on farms and plantations in rural western Cuba--in the larger context of the long emancipation struggle in Cuba, Aisha Finch demonstrates how organized slave resistance became critical to the unraveling not only of slavery but also of colonial systems of power during the nineteenth century. While the discovery of La Escalera unleashed a reign of terror by the Spanish colonial powers in which hundreds of enslaved people were tortured, tried, and executed, Finch revises historiographical conceptions of the movement as a fiction conveniently invented by the Spanish government in order to target anticolonial activities. Connecting the political agitation stirred up by free people of color in the urban centers to the slave rebellions that rocked the countryside, Finch shows how the rural plantation was connected to a much larger conspiratorial world outside the agrarian sector. While acknowledging the role of foreign abolitionists and white creoles in the broader history of emancipation, Finch teases apart the organization, leadership, and effectiveness of the black insurgents in midcentury dissident mobilizations that emerged across western Cuba, presenting compelling evidence that black women played a particularly critical role.

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A detailed and revealing study of rural western Cuba's social and political landscapes. . . . An important study for scholars and students interested in gaining fresh insights into the making of slave insurgency in Cuba, the Caribbean, and the Americas.--American Historical Review Innovative

in its discussion of historiography and rebel representation, and in its disclosure of the roles of women and of the rural-urban networks coordinating with the insurgency.--Choice

An innovative and pioneering study of Cuban slave rebellions in the 1840s written with passion and insight. Aisha Finch makes important contributions to nineteenth-century Cuban historiography yet at the same time allows the historical actors themselves to take center stage and tell their story in a dramatic fashion. Finch's "groundbreaking analysis of" the neglected and crucial role of women in the rebellion has "wide-reaching" implications for reframing the study of slave revolts throughout the Atlantic World.--Matt D. Childs, University of South CarolinaIntellectually ambitious and impressively executed, this study offers compelling reading that simultaneously navigates the complex terrain of historiography and historical reconceptualization. By gendering slavery, Finch offers a major corrective to our understanding of insurgencies: scholars of La Escalera can never again imagine nor narrate that story without acknowledging the role of women and centrality of gender.--Herman Bennett, The Graduate Center, CUNY

The book is thoughtful and well researched.

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