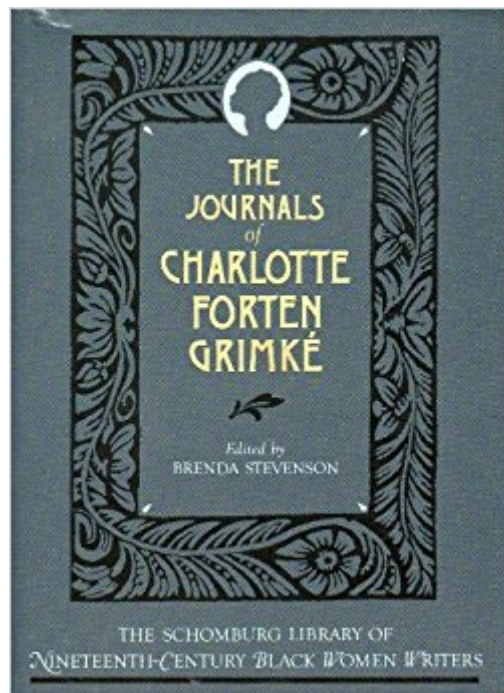


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The Journals Of Charlotte Forten Grimké (The Schomburg Library Of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers)



Synopsis

Born into an affluent and politically active black family, Charlotte Forten Grimké (1837-1914) was a scholar, reformer, teacher and writer. Her journals describe her privileged childhood, her sporadic teaching career, her involvement with the anti-slavery movement, her eighteen months teaching the contraband slaves of the South Carolina Sea Islands during the Civil War and her later work as poet and essayist. Thanks to her keen observation and meticulous accounts of the people and events that shaped her life, her journals provide a unique and personal view of the Civil War and Reconstruction eras.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké" are an extraordinary human document. Brenda Stevenson edited the journals for the Schomburg Library of Nineteenth Century Black Women Writers. The introduction gives the basic facts about the author. She was born in 1837 into a wealthy, free African-American family in Philadelphia. She had a distinguished career as a writer, teacher, and activist before she died in Washington, DC in 1914. The journals span the years 1854-92. Grimké's writings offer a fascinating window into the 19th century U.S. Her own life and interests are vividly portrayed. It is particularly interesting how great a role the anti-slavery movement played in her life; this cause strikes me as one of her truly great passions. She also discusses at length the authors who had an impact on her: Nathaniel Hawthorne ("The Scarlet

Letter" is praised as a "thrilling story"), Harriet Beecher Stowe, John Milton, John Greenleaf Whittier ("the 'Great Poet of Humanity'"), Charles Dickens, Homer (she prefers Cowper's translation of the "Iliad" to Pope's), and more. She even recalls seeing Ralph Waldo Emerson lecture in person. Later entries tell of her own work as a teacher. There are some interesting little episodes, such as an account of getting her daguerrotype taken. And she also writes frankly of her experience of racism. This volume includes a chronology of the author's life, a list of people who played a part in her life, and over 80 pages of endnotes. Charlotte's voice is wonderfully likeable: full of life and intelligence. In these journals she emerges as an inquisitive spirit with a hunger for knowledge and a passion for justice. I recommend this book to those interested in 19th century American history, women's studies, and/or African-American studies, or to those who simply love great books as much as Charlotte did.

The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké prove to be a work of exquisite quality. I learnt of Mrs. Grimké via her relationship with Colonel Robert Gould Shaw (54th Massachusetts Regiment) and eventually became besotted with her writings. Indeed, she is an inspiration and has brought about further interest in the abolitionist movement. I have never delighted in the writings of another but hers!

Superb!

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