



Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South (Justice, Power, and Politics)

Talitha L. LeFlouria

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In 1868, the state of Georgia began to make its rapidly growing population of prisoners available for hire. The resulting convict leasing system ensnared not only men but also African American women, who were forced to labor in camps and factories to make profits for private investors. In this vivid work of history, Talitha L. LeFlouria draws from a rich array of primary sources to piece together the stories of these women, recounting what they endured in Georgia's prison system and what their labor accomplished. LeFlouria argues that African American women's presence within the convict lease and chain-gang systems of Georgia helped to modernize the South by creating a new and dynamic set of skills for black women. At the same time, female inmates struggled to resist physical and sexual exploitation and to preserve their human dignity within a hostile climate of terror. This revealing history redefines the social context of black women's lives and labor in the New South and allows their stories to be told for the first time.

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