



# Slavery in Philadelphia: A History of Resistance, Denial and Wealth

*Phillip Seitz*

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The City of Brotherly Love drank deeply from the well of misery for more than three centuries. Personal resistance and plantation revolution in the city and surrounding counties was more common than previously understood, and **Slavery in Philadelphia** features a series of rich, intimate, and amazingly detailed accounts of previously unknown slave rebellions, as well as struggles to reunite families, nineteenth century legal battles, and individual agency in the face terrible opposition.

**Slavery in Philadelphia** tells the story of the prominent families who purchased Africans to do their bidding, but the city's relationship with enslavement went far beyond this. In the late eighteenth century Philly was the center of the mid-Atlantic grain trade, processing thousands of tons of slave-produced grain into flour from plantations in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware for shipment overseas. By the 1850s the city was a major textile center, driving the expansion of southern enslavement through its thirst for cotton. The story continues to the present day through the management of wealth generated over a century of slave-supported industry.

This book follows the history of the Chew family, Pennsylvania's leading slaveholders, from their arrival in Jamestown to their residence on Philadelphia's social register today, including their desperate efforts to erase and purify their past of the stain of slave ownership. Based on newly discovered records preserved for centuries by the family itself, **Slavery in Philadelphia** shows the full breadth of slavery in the mid-Atlantic region, and encompasses memoir, African American history, industrial records, elite ancestry, and a fascinating money trail.

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