

DONE WITH SLAVERY

THE BLACK FACT IN MONTREAL

FRANK MACKEY

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Did slavery exist in Montreal, and if so what did it look like? Frank Mackey grapples with this question in *Done with Slavery*, a study of black Montrealers in the eighty years between the British Conquest and the union of Lower and Upper Canada.

Through close examination of archival and contemporary sources, Mackey uncovers largely unknown aspects of the black transition from slavery to freedom. While he considers the changing legal status of slavery, much of the book provides a detailed and nuanced reconstruction of the circumstances of black Montrealers and their lived experience. The resulting picture is remarkably complex, showing the variety of occupations held by blacks, the relationships they had with those they served, their encounters with the judicial and political systems, and the racial mingling that came with intermarriage and apprenticeships. *Done with Slavery* casts the categories of blackness and slavery in a new light, showing that broad histories of the phenomenon must begin to take into account the specifics of the lives of "marginal" black populations.

Done with Slavery is an invitation to look at a colonial society through the prism of documented black experience, revealing that the roots of the present are neither as wholesome as some would hope nor as bitter as others might suppose.

"This is an extremely important book. Mackey is a skilled writer and his subject is topical and significant, both in terms of international and Canadian scholarship. His main purpose is to recount the stories of black people in Quebec so that they are no longer forgotten and in that he is very successful." PAUL E. LOVEJOY, Harriet Tubman Institute, York University

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