



Doctoring Freedom: The Politics of African American Medical Care in Slavery and Emancipation (The John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture)

Gretchen Long

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For enslaved and newly freed African Americans, attaining freedom and citizenship without health for themselves and their families would have been an empty victory. Even before emancipation, African Americans recognized that control of their bodies was a critical battleground in their struggle for autonomy, and they devised strategies to retain at least some of that control. In *Doctoring Freedom*, Gretchen Long tells the stories of African Americans who fought for access to both medical care and medical education, showing the important relationship between medical practice and political identity.

Working closely with antebellum medical journals, planters' diaries, agricultural publications, letters from wounded African American soldiers, WPA narratives, and military and Freedmen's Bureau reports, Long traces African Americans' political acts to secure medical care: their organizing mutual-aid societies, their petitions to the federal government, and, as a last resort, their founding of their own medical schools, hospitals, and professional organizations. She also illuminates work of the earliest generation of black physicians, whose adult lives spanned both slavery and freedom. For African Americans, Long argues, claiming rights as both patients and practitioners was a political and highly charged act in both slavery and emancipation.

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