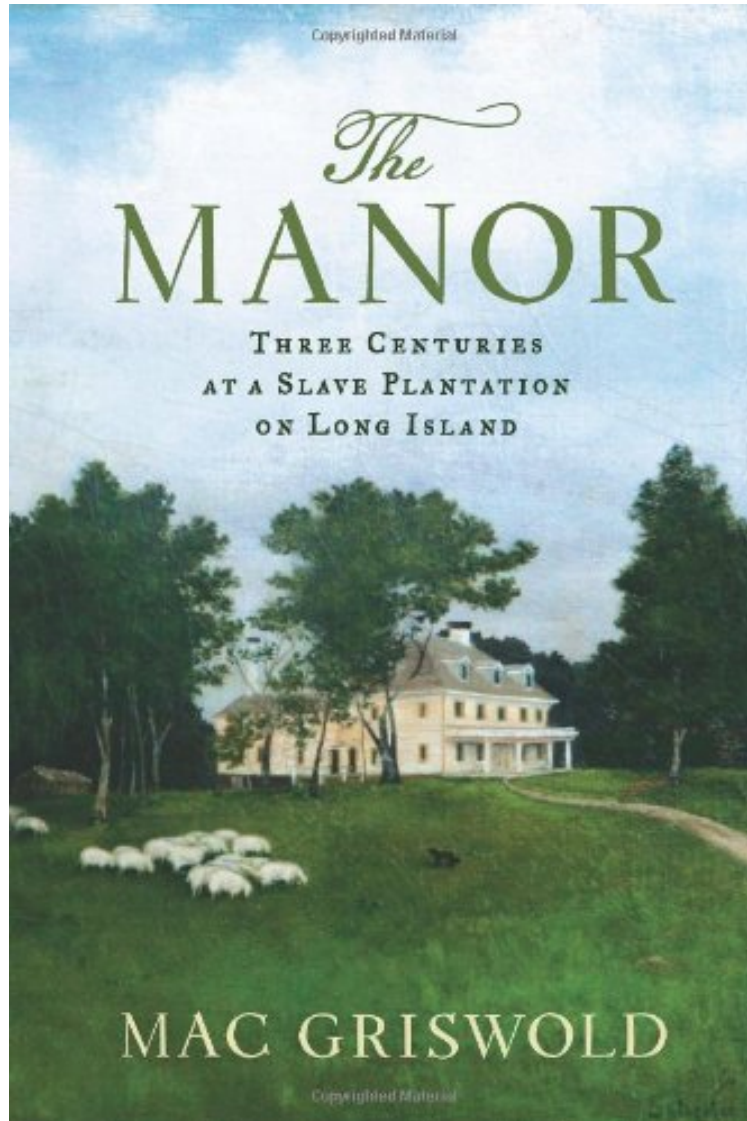


(Library ebook) The Manor: Three Centuries at a Slave Plantation on Long Island

The Manor: Three Centuries at a Slave Plantation on Long Island

Mac Griswold

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#293534 in Books Farrar, Straus and Giroux 2013-07-02 2013-07-02 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.41 x 1.61 x 6.331, 1.60 #File Name: 0374266298480 pages | File size: 20.Mb

Mac Griswold : The Manor: Three Centuries at a Slave Plantation on Long Island before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Manor: Three Centuries at a Slave Plantation on Long Island*:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Wonderful Book By Ms. Shy Funnybones Mac Griswold has written a fascinating book about Sylvester Manor, a slave plantation on Long Island's Shelter Island. The house was founded in the 17th century and inhabited until very recently by descendants of these founders, people that Griswold

presents as complicated, three-dimensional individuals whose lives are shadowed by the slavery that built and maintained their beautiful home. I especially like the way she takes the reader along as she explores the manor, its inhabitants, its gardens and its cemeteries, and as she travels to such places as Amsterdam and Africa to walk in the footsteps of those who came to the New World, some via the Middle Passage, a journey whose horror she describes so vividly. Allowing the reader to share her shock, discoveries and surprises as she makes them creates drama and excitement. Indeed, I couldn't put the book down. I also learned a lot. For example, I hadn't read about a provisioning plantation before, hadn't seen so clearly the ship-born connections that were part of the Atlantic World, hadn't known that seagoing ships did not sail directly from Amsterdam but made their preparations at Texel, a nearby island, and hadn't heard of the wind-driven saw mills which revolutionized ship building by producing planks much more quickly than previously possible. At the core of this story about early colonialism and its aftermath are the contradictions: Rhode Island representing soul liberty but having the biggest slave trade in North America, Quakers exhibiting the impulse to exploit even as they dream of leaving oppression behind and starting over in the New World. I always find such contrasts puzzling, never quite understandable, yet undeniable. It is tempting to fasten upon just one side of the equation rather than acknowledge the difficult whole, as Griswold is willing to do. Anyone interested in history would enjoy and be moved by this wonderful book. 11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Great history, wonderful reading!!!

By FredBrem The Manor is a powerful, evocative, poetic and beautifully crafted book. The contradictions and "subsurface" tragedy in the history of this northern island slave plantation go so deep -- and the human efforts (from today's vantage point) are so intentional, blind and immense -- that it's necessary to read The Manor slowly, valuing Griswold's impeccable work and doing one's best to absorb all the years and levels. Griswold's own experiences while writing The Manor unfold throughout the book, augmenting the primary narrative and at times providing a temporary (welcome) haven for the reader. The beauty of this historic landscape itself, through the years and seasons, also offers solace. Beyond the narrative itself, Griswold has captured the larger dichotomies brilliantly. So much of what is so seriously flawed in today's economic, political, and ecological human systems -- as well as the seeds of so much that is beautiful and good in American culture -- grew out of Early Modern European capitalism and the (Dutch) triangular trade. It's that portion of The Manor's legacy that all of us have inherited. I'm sharing this book with friends (and maybe a friend's book group?) as essential reading. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Bit scattered

By Blue Sky Maybe trying to weave landscape history, historical documentation, oral history/fiction and myth together with archaeological data was a bit too much to tackle in one sitting. Or perhaps a more considered editorial direction would have made this a less scenic and better academic rendering. I did not like the writing style. However, many of the quotes included in the text were current scholarship and on target.

Mac Griswold's *The Manor* is the biography of a uniquely American place that has endured through wars great and small, through fortunes won and lost, through histories bright and sinister and of the family that has lived there since its founding as a Colonial New England slave plantation three and a half centuries ago. In 1984, the landscape historian Mac Griswold was rowing along a Long Island creek when she came upon a stately yellow house and a garden guarded by looming boxwoods. She instantly knew that boxwoods that large twelve feet tall, fifteen feet wide had to be hundreds of years old. So, as it happened, was the house: Sylvester Manor had been held in the same family for eleven generations. Formerly encompassing all of Shelter Island, New York, a pearl of 8,000 acres caught between the North and South Forks of Long Island, the manor had dwindled to 243 acres. Still, its hidden vault proved to be full of revelations and treasures, including the 1666 charter for the land, and correspondence from Thomas Jefferson. Most notable was the short and steep flight of steps the family had called the "slave staircase," which would provide clues to the extensive but little-known story of Northern slavery. Alongside a team of archaeologists, Griswold began a dig that would uncover a landscape bursting with stories. Based on years of archival and field research, as well as voyages to Africa, the West Indies, and Europe, *The Manor* is at once an investigation into forgotten lives and a sweeping drama that captures our history in all its richness and suffering. It is a monumental achievement.

Griswold's deft unpacking of the Sylvester Manor mystery reveals the uncomfortable, complicated history they left behind.... [A] precise, beautiful book... Haunting. The Boston Globe Extraordinary... This is an important book, for it is not just about a house. It is about the world and the destruction we have caused in it, all for the sake of making that place called home. Jamaica Kincaid History buffs will love *The Manor*, and it tells a story that needs to be told.... [The house is] a remarkable relic of American history. The Washington Post Griswold skillfully weaves a historical tapestry of considerable complexity. Women's Wear Daily A lively history of early American settlement... Like that Pulitzer Prize-winning work [*The Hemingses of Monticello*], *The Manor* is American history tightly compressed. The Atlantic Wire About the Author Mac Griswold is a cultural landscape historian and the author of *Washington's Gardens at Mount Vernon* and *The Golden Age of American Gardens*. She has won a Guggenheim Fellowship and has written for *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Travel + Leisure*. She lives in Sag Harbor, New York.