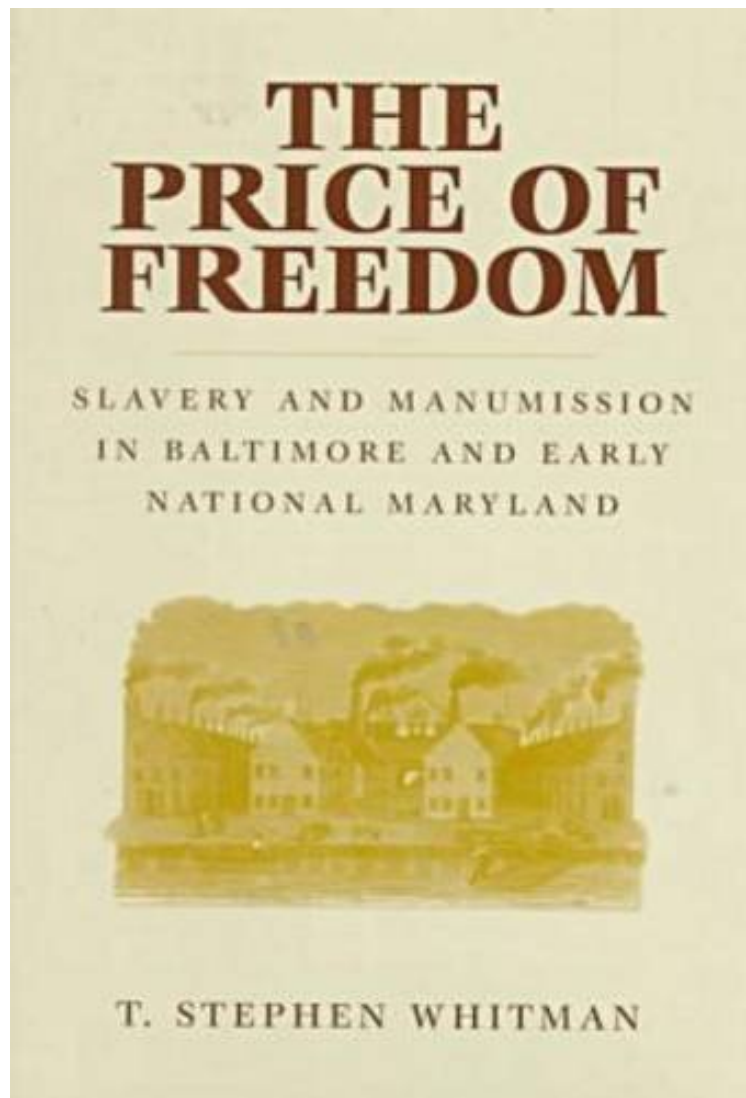


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The Price of Freedom: Slavery and Manumission in Baltimore and Early National Maryland

T. Stephen Whitman

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T. Stephen Whitman : The Price of Freedom: Slavery and Manumission in Baltimore and Early National Maryland before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Price of Freedom: Slavery and Manumission in Baltimore and Early National Maryland:

Paradoxically, in the decades following the Revolution, slavery in Baltimore gained strength even as slaves were being freed in record numbers. The vigorous growth of the city required the exploitation of rural slaves with craft skills. To prevent them from escaping and to spur higher production, owners entered into arrangements with their slaves, promising eventual freedom in return for many years of hard work. This was a practical, not a philanthropic arrangement; following the release of one group of slaves, owners would simply purchase additional ones. This practice of "term slavery" created a labor force affordable to small craftsmen and manufacturers and directly contributed to the urban development of the country's third largest city. Newly freed slaves, driven by debts contracted in purchasing freedom, remained dependent upon their former masters for employment. The freeing of blacks in rural Maryland and their migrations to Baltimore to work and save in order to aid still-enslaved kin supplied the city with even more free black workers.

From *Library Journal* Whitman (history, Mount St. Mary's Coll., Maryland) examines the complexities of slavery and master-slave relations in early Federal Baltimore. The ownership of slaves was a sizable investment, and Whitman illustrates that masters minimized the risk of their running away by gradual manumission, freeing the slave after a certain period of service. He also shows that slave flight was often a means of extracting from the master more favorable terms of service within the condition of slavery. Whitman thus reveals that slavery was a more intricate process than most readers assume, involving hired slaves, industrial slaves, gradual freedom, and the status and condition of the freed slave. A scholarly examination of the subject appropriate for students doing research who can handle the statistics and demographics. Robert A. Curtis, Taylor Memorial P.L., Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Nothing so reveals the nature of slave society than the slaves' access to freedom. No one has explored the character of manumission in Maryland with greater sensitivity and in greater depth than T. Stephen Whitman. In tracing slavery's transformation, *The Price of Freedom* stokes the debate over the viability of slavery in the Upper South and suggests how changes on the margins were defining the course of slavery to the South and freedom to the North. It is a work of signal importance." -- Ira Berlin, Professor of History, University of Maryland and author of *Many Thousands Gone* About the Author T. Stephen Whitman is assistant professor of history at Mount Saint Mary's College in Maryland.