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The Slave Drivers: Black Agricultural Labor Supervisors in the Antebellum South (Contributions in Afro-American and African Studies)

William L. Van Deburg

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Despite increased interest in the lives of American slaves, the slave elite has been accorded only shallow study by historians, leaving the topic to unfavorable stereotypes, legend, and undocumented assertions. In this revelatory work William Van Deburg takes up the case of the black slave driver, examining the conflicting depictions given in histories, accounts of white southerners and antebellum travelers, and narratives of fugitive slaves and exbondsmen. He describes the daily lives and duties of black drivers, and refuting the stereotype of cruel collaborator, shows that their role neither psychologically destroyed slave drivers nor turned them into sadistic oppressors. Socially and emotionally tied to their fellow slaves, the bondsmen identified with their interests more much closely than with those

of the owner. Van Deburg concludes this valuable revisionist work with a useful essay on his primary sources.

"Van Deburg has done historians of slavery (American and comparative) a great favor. His little book synthesizes a great deal of material."-Choice?Van Deburg has done historians of slavery (American and comparative) a great favor. His little book synthesizes a great deal of material.?-ChoiceAbout the Authorn Deburg /f William /i L.