

# Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom

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This beautifully written book tells the haunting saga of a quintessentially American family. It is the story of Shoe Boots, a famed Cherokee warrior and successful farmer, and Doll, an African slave he acquired in the late 1790s. Over the next thirty years, Shoe Boots and Doll lived together as master and slave and also as lifelong partners who, with their children and grandchildren, experienced key events in American history—including slavery, the Creek War, the founding of the Cherokee Nation and subsequent removal of Native Americans along the Trail of Tears, and the Civil War. This is the gripping story of their lives, in slavery and in freedom.

Meticulously crafted from historical and literary sources, *Ties That Bind* vividly portrays the members of the Shoebottoms family. Doll emerges as an especially poignant character, whose life is mostly known through the records of things done to her—her purchase, her marriage, the loss of her children—but also through her moving petition to the federal government for the pension owed to her as Shoe Boots's widow. A sensitive rendition of the hard realities of black slavery within Native American nations, the book provides the fullest picture we have of the myriad complexities, ironies, and tensions among African Americans, Native Americans, and whites in the first half of the nineteenth century. In this lyrical narrative about Shoebottoms, Doll, and their descendants, Tiya Miles explores the constant push and tug between family connections and racial divides. Building on meticulous and inspired historical detective work, Miles shows what it might have felt like to be a slave and reassesses the convoluted ideas about race that slavery generated and left as a legacy." Nancy Shoemaker, author of *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth-Century North America*

*Ties That Bind* is a haunting and innovative book. Tiya Miles refuses to avoid or cover over the most painful aspects of the shared stories of Indians and African Americans. Instead, Miles passionately defends the need to explore history, even when the facts provided by history are not those that contemporary people want to hear." Peggy Pascoe, author of *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* Tiya Miles is Assistant Professor in the Program in American Culture, Center for Afroamerican and African Studies, and Native American Studies Program at the University of Michigan.

#### Other Books

*Happy Dreams of Liberty*, A poignant, multi-generational saga of a mixed-race family in the US West and South from the antebellum period through the rise of Jim Crow. When Samuel Townsend died at his home in Madison County, Alabama, in November 1856, the fifty-two-year-old white planter left behind hundreds of slaves, thousands of acres of rich cotton land, and a net worth of approximately \$200,000. In life, Samuel had done little to distinguish himself from other members of the South's elite slaveholding class. But he made a name for himself in death by leaving almost the entirety of his fortune to his five sons, four daughters, and two nieces: all of them his slaves. In this deeply researched, movingly narrated portrait of the extended Townsend family, R. Isabela Morales reconstructs the migration of this mixed-race family across the American West and South over the second half of the nineteenth century. Searching for communities where they could exercise their newfound freedom and wealth to the fullest, members of the family homesteaded and attended college in Ohio and Kansas; fought for the Union Army in

Mississippi; mined for silver in the Colorado Rockies; and, in the case of one son, returned to Alabama to purchase part of the old plantation where he had once been held as a slave. In Morales's telling, the Townsends' story maps a new landscape of opportunity and oppression, where the meanings of race and freedom--as well as opportunities for social and economic mobility--were dictated by highly local circumstances. During the turbulent period between the Civil War and the rise of Jim Crow at the turn of the twentieth century, the Townsends carved out spaces where they were able to benefit from their money and mixed-race ancestry, pass down generational wealth, and realize some of their happy dreams of liberty.

❏ ❏ ❏ ❏ ❏ . The Long, Bitter Trail : Andrew Jackson and the Indians ( New York : Hill and Wang , 1993 ) ; West . The Contested Plains : Indians , Goldseekers , and the Rush to Colorado ( Lawrence : University Press of Kansas , 1998 ) . 6."