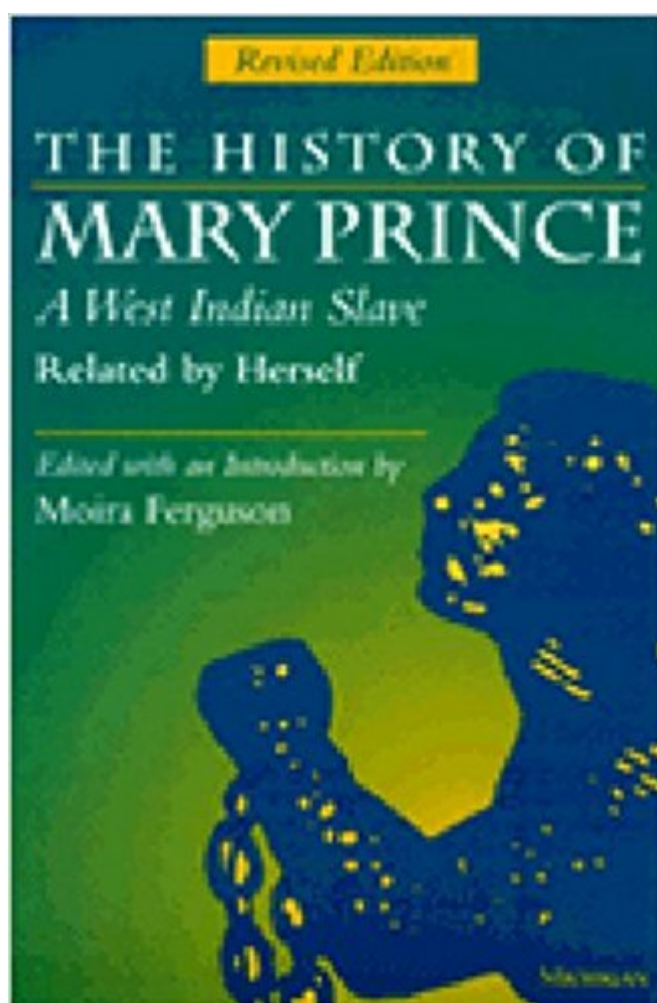


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# The History Of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave, Related By Herself: Revised Edition



## Synopsis

Mary Prince was the first black British woman to escape from slavery and publish a record of her experiences. In this unique document, Mary Prince vividly recalls her life as a slave in Bermuda, Turks Island, and Antigua, her rebellion against physical and psychological degradation, and her eventual escape to London in 1828. First published in London and Edinburgh in 1831, and well into its third edition that year, *The History of Mary Prince* inflamed public opinion and created political havoc. Never before had the sufferings and indignities of enslavement been seen through the eyes of a woman--a woman struggling for freedom in the face of great odds. Moira Ferguson's edition of the book added an introduction, annotations, and appendices. The book has found popularity both in the classroom and with the general public. Recently, an adaptation of the memoirs of Mary Prince appeared as one segment of "A Skirt Through History," a six-part feature film series produced by the BBC. Mary Prince's story has also been the centerpiece of BBC radio broadcasts. In this revised and expanded edition of *The History of Mary Prince*, Ferguson has added new material, based on her extensive research in Bermuda and London. The book includes new details of Mary Prince's experiences as a freewoman in England, the transcripts of several libel cases brought against her, and the reactions of British society, as seen in prominent periodicals of the day, against the original publication of *The History of Mary Prince*. This new material brings greater depth and detail and serves to more fully illustrate and contextualize the life of this remarkable woman. Moira Ferguson is James E. Ryan Professor of English and Women's Literature, University of Nebraska.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I was born in Brackish-Pond, in Bermuda, on a farm belonging to Mr. Charles Myners. My mother was a household slave; and my father, whose name was Prince, was a sawyer belonging to Mr. Trimmingham, a ship-builder at Crow-Lane." In this brief straight-forward, and often poetic narrative, Mary Prince describes her life of labor as a household and field slave was made heavier by illness and pain brought on the abject cruelty of her "masters." The text of this autobiography, the first by a female slave to be published, is prefaced and followed by letters written by British people attesting to the honor of her character and the truth of her testimony. Mary's heartfelt and unselfpitying life story, often so wrenching she cannot bring herself to remember or describe the details, contrasts sharply with the polite words of her white protectors' proclamations about the truth of her words. Moira Ferguson's excellent introduction and a critical afterword by Ziggi Alexander give a historical perspective to this lucid and powerful life-story. -- For great reviews of books for girls, check out [Let's Hear It for the Girls: 375 Great Books for Readers 2-14](#). -- From [500 Great Books by Women](#); review by Jesse Larsen

Sara Salih is assistant professor of English at the University of Toronto and editor of *The History of Mary Prince* for Penguin Classics.

this is a good read but one must keep in mind the agenda of anti-slavery zealots.the new intro is informative and even admits the main problem with mary prince's narrative.namely, that her account may have been embellished by anti-slavery society activists in england.this is another narrative, like the early narrative of venture smith that was "related by" the enslaved person.those types of narratives are always suspect of having been embellished. even so, it is an importantpart of the historical record - especially regarding enslaved women in british held islands in the caribbean.i will use in university level african diaspora history courses that i teach. i am interested in how studentswould compare prince's narrative with linda brent's (harriet jacobs) "incidents in the life of a slave girl".

Interesting cultural history but not much happens, and not written as well as some other personal histories of slavery. Still, worth reading to expand your understanding of how terrible the institution of slavery really was, and yet how people on both sides rose above it.

This is an excellent memoir, albeit painful to read in certain parts. This is a must-read for history buffs--particularly those interested in the Caribbean and the system of slavery in the British colonies.

Mary Prince dictated her history to a white woman in England, where she finally claimed her freedom after a life of horrendous abuse under several masters. Her narration is part of an anti-slavery pamphlet that contains other fascinating documents as well: a letter from her last master viciously defaming her character and a presentation of evidence to refute this calumny by Thomas Pringle, Secretary of Britain's Anti-Slavery Society. Among other events, Mary's history includes daily beatings by sadistic masters who, while entrusting her with considerable responsibility, punished the tiniest fault with insane cruelty. It describes her ten-year stint working long hours in the salt ponds of Turk's Island, labor that broke her health. It shows her growing attraction to religion and her attempts to receive spiritual instruction. I found this book compelling on two levels: as a detailed personal account of the appalling oppression of black slaves in the West Indies - and as a look at the compassionate work of anti-slavery activists. Those who opposed slavery had to have their wits about them, for the slave owners were greatly debased by their unholy power over other humans and would stoop to any chicanery to defend their position. Mary Prince's history triggered a lawsuit and countersuit when it was published in 1831. It was instantly in great demand by the public and was of great value to the Anti-Slavery Society in their campaign against the slave trade. I recommend this book both as a classic of Black history and an unforgettable story.

This story should be mandatory for high school students (or even Jr High). First person true story of a slave.

An amazing read.

This book is a great primary source read that gives an in-depth image of the life of Mary Prince. From the transporting between colonies and England, to the violence endured, and being passed from family to family - Mary Prince remains hopeful of her situation and also for her future as a wife. The book directly engages the reader and provides not only information about the life of a Black female slave, but also humanizes Mary as a woman rather than just a slave as many accounts and even history tends to classify them as.

Lets say the story of Mary Prince reflects the woman's personality perfectly. I like the book.

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