

Chica da Silva: A Brazilian Slave of the Eighteenth Century (New Approaches to the Americas)

Júnia Ferreira Furtado

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Júnia Ferreira Furtado offers a fascinating study of the world of a freed woman of color in a small Brazilian town where itinerant merchants, former slaves, Portuguese administrators and concubines interact across social and cultural lines. The child of an African slave and a Brazilian military nobleman of Portuguese descent, Chica da Silva won her freedom using social and matrimonial strategies. But her story is not merely the personal history of a woman, or the social history of a colonial Brazilian town. Rather, it provides a historical perspective on the cultural universe she inhabited, and the myths that were created around her in subsequent centuries, as Chica de Silva came to symbolize both an example of racial democracy and the stereotype of licentiousness and sensuality always attributed to the black or mulatta female in the Brazilian popular imagination.



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