Tales From the Haunted South: Dark Tourism and Memories of Slavery From the Civil War Era

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Abstract

Haunted History and Public Memory

Paranormal investigation shows like Ghost Hunters are nearly a dime a dozen, and with the rise of these paranormal programs came a rise in interest in haunted history. Cities with antebellum pasts are now home to countless companies specializing in ....

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In this book Tiya Miles explores the popular yet troubling phenomenon of 'ghost tours,' frequently promoted and experienced at plantations, urban manor homes, and cemeteries throughout the South. As a staple of the tours, guides entertain paying customers by routinely relying on stories of enslaved black specters. But who are these ghosts? Examining popular sites and stories from these tours, Miles shows how haunted tales routinely appropriate and skew African American history to produce representations of slavery for commercial gain. Because the realities of slavery are largely absent from these tours, Miles reveals how they continue to feed problematic 'Old South' narratives and erase the hard truths of the Civil War era. In an incisive and engaging work, Miles uses these troubling cases to shine light on how we feel about the Civil War and race, and how the ghosts of the past are still with us.