

## Freedom's Captives

*Freedom's Captives* is a compelling exploration of the gradual abolition of slavery in the majority-black Pacific coast of Colombia, the largest area in the Americas inhabited primarily by people of African descent. From the autonomous rainforests and gold mines of the Colombian Black Pacific, Yesenia Barragan rethinks the nineteenth-century project of emancipation by arguing that the liberal freedom generated through gradual emancipation constituted a modern mode of racial governance that birthed new forms of social domination, while temporarily instituting de facto slavery. Although gradual emancipation was ostensibly designed to destroy slavery, she argues that slaveholders in Colombia came to have an even greater stake in it. Using narrative and storytelling to map the worlds of Free Womb children, enslaved women miners, free black boatmen, and white abolitionists in the Andean highlands, *Freedom's Captives* insightfully reveals how the Atlantic World processes of gradual emancipation and post-slavery rule unfolded in Colombia.

Yesenia Barragan is Assistant Professor of Latin American History at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. She is the author of *Selling Our Death Masks: Cash-for-Gold in the Age of Austerity* (2014) and principal investigator of the bilingual digital database “The Free Womb Project.”

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# Freedom's Captives

*Slavery and Gradual Emancipation on the  
Colombian Black Pacific*

YESENIA BARRAGAN

*Rutgers University*



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