

Edited by Cassie Sade Turnipseed

# Field Hollers And Freedom Songs: The Anthology

*Featuring the collected works from the Sweat Equity Investment in the Cotton Kingdom Symposium*

SERIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY

## Summary

Taking place annually in “the most southern place on earth,” aka, the “Cotton Kingdom,” the Sweat Equity Investment in the Cotton Kingdom Symposium offers a platform to honor, celebrate, and recognize the legacy of the African Americans who labored in the cotton fields of the Mississippi Delta. The symposium intends to trigger discussions and provide a space where the histories and contributions of those Americans can be heard and learned from.

Born in the antebellum south, the “soul of America” came to be through the tearful occupation of planting, chopping, picking and ginning cotton, where it was then brined within a system of enslavement, sharecropping and international trade that in so many ways provided America its “greatness.” Carefully compiled from works presented at the symposia, this anthology looks to expose the tortured “cotton-pickin’ spirit” embedded in America’s soul. A spirit that is rendered in song, chants, spoken word and field hollers, and revealed in this volume through the selected articles, lyric poetry, proverbs, speeches, slave narratives and workshop proposals. The rich and varied content of this book reflects the uniqueness of not only the Mississippi Delta but also the histories of those who lived and worked there.

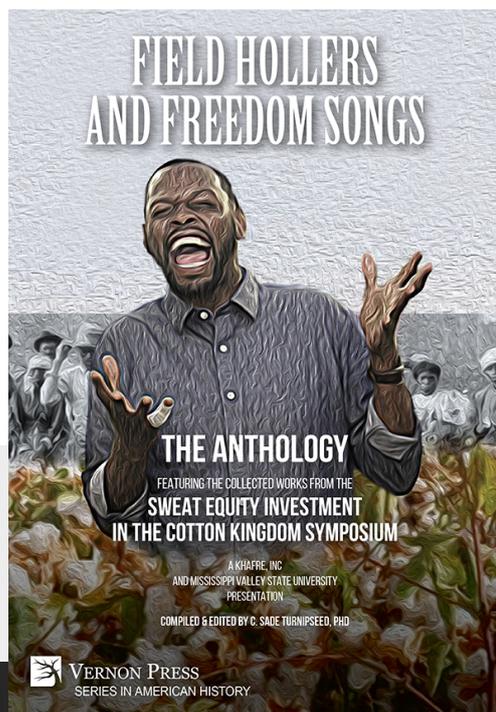
## About the editor

**Cassie Sade Turnipseed** is the Institute of Higher Learning’s (IHL) 2017 Mississippi Diversity Educator of the Year. A public historian, educator, and community outreach specialist Turnipseed is the founder of the Mississippi-Delta based not-for-profit Khafre, Inc., whose mandate is to honor the legacy and historic contributions of Cotton Pickers, particularly those enslaved in the American South. As executive director of Khafre, Inc. Turnipseed is the lead researcher in the development of the ‘Cotton Pickers of America Monument and Historic site’ in the Mississippi Delta AKA The Cotton Kingdom; and is partnering with BelArt Cotton, Africa, NANTAP, and several other African institutions to document the African origins of cotton, the seeds, the gin, textile manufacturing, and its medicinal uses.

Turnipseed is also the proud recipient of a 2018 summer research grant to formally study the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. This research shall formulate one of few textbooks on the subject along with an accompanying documentary entitled, ‘The Gullah Geechee: Making a Way Out of No Way.’ In addition, Turnipseed is collecting narratives about Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU), America’s newest Historically Black College/University (HBCU), to produce the updated edition of its founder Dr James Herbert White’s publication on the early stages of MVSU. The new edition shall be entitled, ‘Up from the Cotton Fields-Revisited’ and published by University Press of Mississippi (UPM).

Professor Turnipseed currently teaches history at Jackson State University (JSU) and serves as an adjunct professor at MVSU. Turnipseed is the inaugural director of education and outreach for the B.B. King Museum, in Indianola, MS; and presents lectures and workshops on the blues and the impact that sharecroppers’ cotton culture has had on global economies. Turnipseed is the long-time talk show host and producer of the Delta Renaissance television show, and currently produces the Juneteenth 101 Podcast and Lecture series weekly. Turnipseed received a U.S. Congressional Honor for her “commitment to preserving the rich history and cultural heritage of Mississippi,” and was selected to receive a Hutha Fellowship at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) in Murfreesboro, TN (2014-15). Turnipseed was also chosen by Governor Haley Barber to be recipient of the 2008 Delta Regional Authority’s Delta Leadership Institute Fellowship, among numerous other awards.

Turnipseed’s true passion is her work with students and young people. As demonstrated in every endeavor, Turnipseed makes it known that “if it does not involve the children, it does not involve me.” In 2003, Burkina Faso’s Minister of Culture appointed Turnipseed to a six-year tenure as the ‘official representative’ of the world-renowned Pan African Film Festival, Ouagadougou (FESPACO), and in 2022 re-negotiated terms to present the ‘Sankofa Challenge’—to present student-led film/tv scripts and other projects in collaboration with the Nigerian “Nollywood” film production industry. In essence, Turnipseed’s philosophical approach to life is one that emanates from an ancient African dictate ... ‘know thy self.’ She stated, “You cannot fully function in a global society, nor appreciate the significance of world history, if you have no knowledge of your own cultural affiliations and historical contributions.”



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