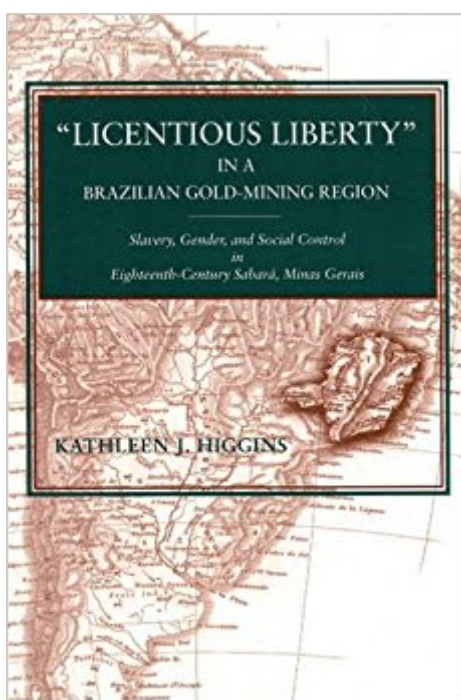


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# "Licentious Liberty" In A Brazilian Gold-Mining Region: Slavery, Gender, And Social Control In Eighteenth-Century Sabara, Minas Gerais



## Synopsis

To studies of Brazilian slavery this book adds a new dimension by showing how it developed in a region where mining was the chief commercial activity and how important a role gender played in this frontier setting in creating opportunities for slaves to achieve some measure of autonomy, compared with slaves who worked in sugar-cane and coffee-growing areas. The interactions among masters, slaves, and royal officials were profoundly shaped by the accessibility and widespread dispersal of gold deposits, the emergence of small urban centers in which commercial activities thrived, the sexual division of labor among slaves working in mining and commerce, and the changing sex ratio within the population of free white colonists settling in the region. Focusing attention on the changing status, autonomy, and influence of nonwhite women, the author argues, is one of the most effective ways of understanding the economic, demographic, and cultural evolution of the slave society as a whole.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

[A] must-read for all those interested in the African Diaspora and Brazilian slavery. --Mary Karasch, Oakland University  
The author examines diverse secular and ecclesiastical administrative sources ... to portray the social world of the slaves and slave owners of a typical 18th century mining town, with especial focus on religion, patterns of work, and relations between masters and slaves and men and women. Higgins is very attentive to the structural possibilities and limits on people's lives, emphasizing how these differed according to age, sex, race, ability and historical circumstances.

--Unknown, *British Bulletin of Publications On Latin America, Carribean, Portugal and Spain*This well-documented book will be widely read not only by historians and students of colonial Brazil but also by a wide range of scholars of New World slave systems and race relations. It will aptly be adopted as a textbook not only for graduate seminars on comparative slavery but also for many undergraduate courses in Brazilian and Latin America history and the African Diaspora studies, in which students will enjoy and learn from the book together with the illuminating Brazilian movie: *Xica da Silva*. *Licentious Liberty* indeed helps us understand in what circumstances this ambitious slave woman became a concubine for a Portuguese diamond from Lisbon in early eighteenth-century Minas Gerais.

--Mieko Nishida, *The Americas*The author examines diverse secular and ecclesiastical administrative sources ... to portray the social world of the slaves and slave owners of a typical 18th century mining town, with especial focus on religion, patterns of work, and relations between masters and slaves and men and women. Higgins is very attentive to the structural possibilities and limits on people s lives, emphasizing how these differed according to age, sex, race, ability and historical circumstances.

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--Mieko Nishida, *The Americas*

Kathleen J. Higgins is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Iowa.

"*Licentious Liberty' in a Brazilian Gold-Mining Region : Slavery, Gender, and Social Control in Eighteenth-Century Sabara, Minas Gerais*" is a wonderful examination of the interactions between masters and slaves in the gold-mining areas in eighteenth-century Brazil. This masterpiece shows how the gender relations between female slaves and their white masters have often subverted the values of a hypocritical and conservative society, allowing the changing of status of black women, among which the most famous one was certainly *Chica da Silva*, a former slave who began to live among the members of the limited gold-mining elite after becoming the concubine of a portuguese official. This book is speacially advisable for those interested in slavery and general sociology.

I needed this book for a class. It came really fast. Haven't read it yet, but am happy w/ the price.

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