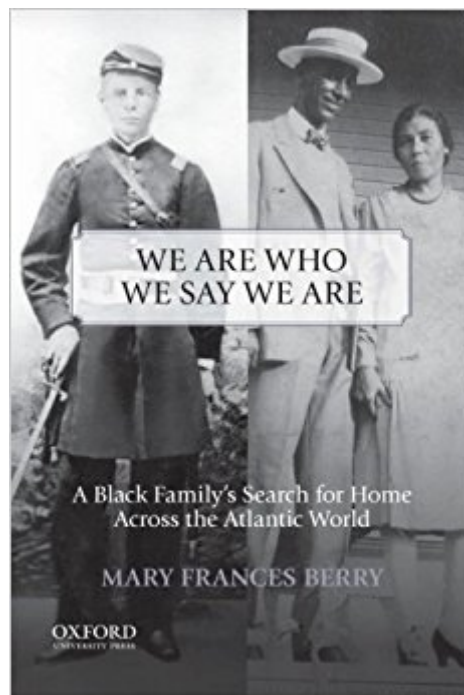




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# We Are Who We Say We Are: A Black Family's Search For Home Across The Atlantic World



## Synopsis

This colored Creole story offers a unique historical lens through which to understand the issues of migration, immigration, passing, identity, and color-forces that still shape American society today. *We Are Who We Say We Are* provides a detailed, nuanced account of shifting forms of racial identification within an extended familial network and constrained by law and social reality. Author Mary Frances Berry, a well-known expert in the field, focuses on the complexity and malleability of racial meanings within the US over generations. Colored Creoles, similar to other immigrants and refugees, passed back and forth in the Atlantic world. Color was the cause and consequence for migration and identity, splitting the community between dark and light. Color could also split families. Louis Antoine Snaer, a free man of color and an officer in the Union Army who passed back and forth across the color line, had several brothers and sisters. Some chose to "pass" and some decided to remain "colored," even though they too, could have passed. This rich global history, beginning in Europe--with episodes in Haiti, Cuba, Louisiana, and California--emphasizes the diversity of the Atlantic World experience.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

*We Are Who We Say We Are* is a captivating examination of race, class, and identity spanning several centuries and geographic borders...[E]xhaustively researched..."--Michael Dickinson, *The Journal of African American History*"*We Are Who We Say We Are* is a beautifully written historical narrative of an American family. Provocative and compelling, this book brims with insight while

powerfully reflecting the universally human truths of everyday life."--Elijah Anderson, Yale University

"A deeply-researched, subtle, and eye-opening analysis of the 'in-between' social status of people who look white, but whose reputed African descent marked them for discrimination. This marvelous book shows us how, within the same colored Creole family, unyielding racial and economic barriers led some to leave New Orleans and pass for white, while others--bound by family, community, and cultural ties--chose to become 'black' and forge civil rights alliances with African Americans."--Kevin Gaines, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

"Mary Frances Berry's gift as a writer is her ability to follow an individual family--here the Snaer family--and show us America anew. Berry impressively details how the social construction of race was lived in America--the ways in which people were placed and shaped, how they were seen, and how they altered their identity in a racially stratified United States."--Jeanne Theoharis, Brooklyn College of CUNY and author of the award-winning *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks*

Mary Frances Berry is Geraldine R. Segal Professor of American Social Thought and Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania. She is the author of several books, including *And Justice For All: The United States Commission On Civil Rights and the Struggle For Freedom in America* (2009) and *My Face Is Black Is True: Callie House and the Struggle for Ex-Slave Reparations* (2005).

Very interesting period of history is presented in this story. The author follows the history of one family and their struggles before, during and after the Civil War. This true story traces the history of our country and some of the horrors of slavery and Jim Crow laws. The research is detailed and allows the author to provide a detailed story of a family's experience with the many limitations placed on African Americans and those of mixed race. This book provides extensive history of the effects of slavery and the reasons for the widespread repression of people of color. I recommend this book to all college students and young adults .

Historically this book is interesting, but I was disappointed to see several inaccuracies in our family information, as well as a lack of current generation Snaers on the family tree, such as myself or even my parents. Otherwise, I found it fascinating and learned quite a lot.

I found this book to be a very interesting insight into my own personal family history. It details the struggles and journey that my family went through getting to where we are now. It details the grey

areas that existed for people that were colored but not slaves and how they fit into society. Like others have said, I wish the family tree would have been more complete.

Fascinating book. What an interesting story written in an informative but entertaining narrative. Worth reading.

Love it - it give us more family history.

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