

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910786004903321
Autore	Hager Christopher <1974->
Titolo	Word by word [[electronic resource]] : emancipation and the act of writing // Christopher Hager
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Cambridge, Mass., : Harvard University Press, 2013
ISBN	0-674-07082-8 0-674-06748-7
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (296 p.) : ill
Disciplina	810.9/896073075
Soggetti	American literature - African American authors - History and criticism Authors, American - 19th century - Political and social views American literature - 19th century - History and criticism African Americans - Intellectual life - 20th century African American authors - Political and social views African Americans - Social conditions - To 1964 Literature and society - United States African Americans - Civil rights African Americans in literature Enslaved persons - Emancipation - United States African
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Black Literacy in the White Mind -- The Private Life of the Literate Slave -- Writing a Life in Slavery and Freedom -- The Written We -- Petition and Protest in the Occupied South -- Black Ink, White Pages.
Sommario/riassunto	One of the cruelest abuses of slavery in America was that slaves were forbidden to read and write. Consigned to illiteracy, they left no records of their thoughts and feelings apart from the few exceptional narratives of Frederick Douglass and others who escaped to the North-or so we have long believed. But as Christopher Hager reveals, a few enslaved African Americans managed to become literate in spite of all prohibitions, and during the halting years of emancipation, thousands more seized the chance to learn. The letters and diaries of these novice

writers, unpolished and hesitant yet rich with voice, show ordinary black men and women across the South using pen and paper to make sense of their experiences. Through an unprecedented gathering of these forgotten writings—from letters by individuals sold away from their families, to petitions from freedmen in the army to their new leaders, to a New Orleans man's transcription of the Constitution—Word by Word rewrites the history of emancipation. The idiosyncrasies of these untutored authors, Hager argues, reveal the enormous difficulty of straddling the border between slave and free. These unusual texts, composed by people with a unique perspective on the written word, force us to rethink the relationship between literacy and freedom. For African Americans at the end of slavery, learning to write could be liberating and empowering, but putting their hard-won skill to use often proved arduous and daunting—a portent of the tenuousness of the freedom to come.
