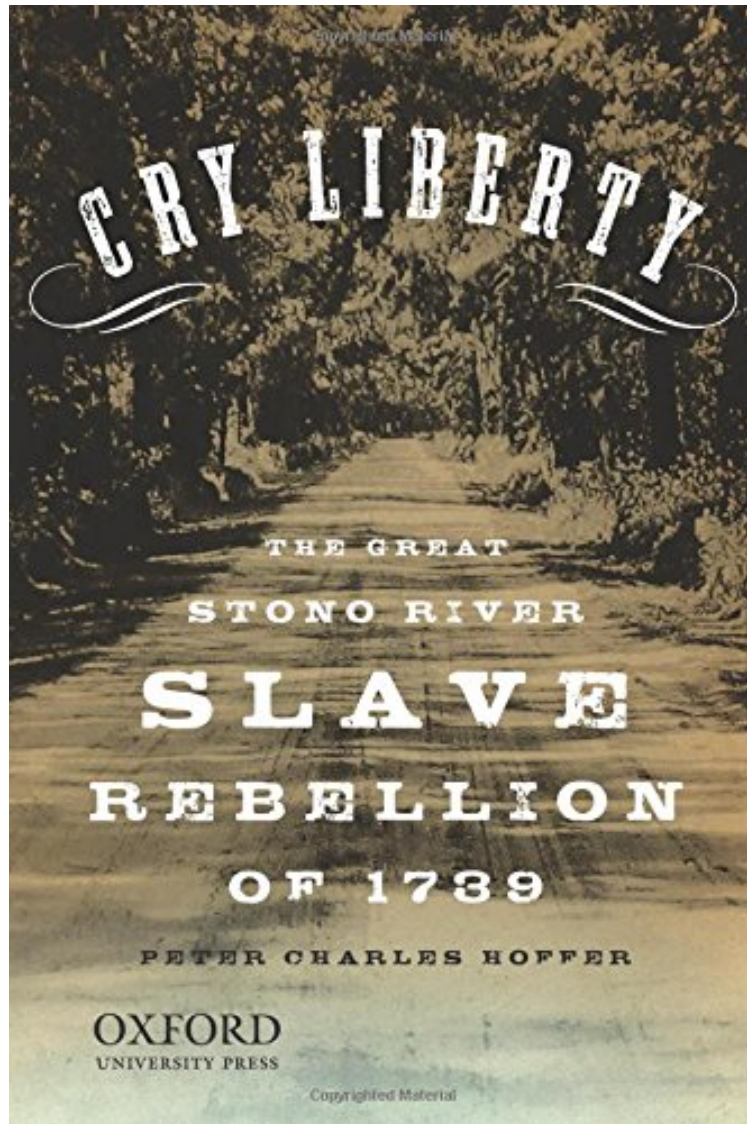


Cry Liberty: The Great Stono River Slave Rebellion of 1739 (New Narratives in American History)

Peter Charles Hoffer

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Peter Charles Hoffer : Cry Liberty: The Great Stono River Slave Rebellion of 1739 (New Narratives in American History) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cry Liberty: The Great Stono River Slave Rebellion of 1739 (New Narratives in American History):

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Well Documented bit of History on the Low CountryBy D_shrinkLet me say I was attracted to this book for two reasons; I am an amateur history buff and I happen to live

very close to where the events in the story occurred. The author made a very enjoyably read story unfold without stating in the typical dogmatic fashion of many educators that he/she has some new clues without substantiating or documenting the reason for their position. The author is a professor at the University of Georgia and has written several other books and many articles on the similar time frame in US history. The author also avoided the one thing in the book he notes many others do, which record a particular fact and then work backward to try to come out with a definite scenario to explain the incident. The author gives several reasons for how things may actually have occurred without being dogmatic about his conclusions. The book was extensively documented throughout with notes and references at the bottom of each page to which they referred. Let me say this is a rather small book in both physical dimensions and also length [173pp] and were it a work of fiction, I would certainly rank it a novella rather than a novel. The upside of that is that it can be easily read in one long or two short readings. The author sets the tone for his work in the opening paragraph: "The only large scale rebellion in British North America occurred on a single day, from very early Sunday morning to late afternoon, on September 9, 1739. The setting was similarly limited - a store, a bridge, nearby plantations, and a road along the North Branch of the Stono River known as Pon Pon at the time but [now known as US-17 or alternatively Savannah Hwy when heading south from Charleston and conversely called Charleston Hwy when heading north from Savannah]. The author included some obvious facts known to any amateur history buffs as "Without slaves, Carolina would never have been profitable enough to merit colonization." Yet he also explained many interesting observations as "To show deference to whites, ...slave speech was often slowed or mumbled, or spoken with a glance to the side or down. This was a defense mechanism the enslaved learned in Africa, where it was a sign of respect for young people to avoid meeting the gaze of their elders." He also noted that the sex ratio in the late 1730's of slaves was 1.7 males for each female, which made females far more valuable to male slaves but not necessarily to slave owners who felt they couldn't produce as much heavy work as males. This along with a myriad of other minor facts is what made the book interesting and hard to put down. I heartily recommend this book.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Small but O.K. By John D. Patterson I bought Hoffer's earlier work, "The Great New York Conspiracy of 1741" a few years back. Cry Liberty was all right but not as in depth as his earlier work. Probably because not as much information was available on the subject for research. His conclusions are probably on the mark. A good but not great book.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Interesting By Westley This was a very interesting read for a history student as it really does try to create a narrative on an event we know little about. It is a defining work whose insights are worth the read but its particular type of historical narrative is worthy of note and study in itself. The book arrived in good condition and on time.

The story of slavery in the colonial New World is, in part, one of rebellion. In Jamaica, Hispaniola, Dutch Surinam and elsewhere, massive uprisings threatened European rule. But not in British North America. Between the founding of Jamestown in 1607 and the start of the American Revolution in 1775, the colonies experienced only one notable revolt, on South Carolina's Stono River in 1739, and it lasted a single day. Yet, writes Peter Charles Hoffer, as brief as this event was, historians have misunderstood it--and have thus overlooked its deeper significance. In *Cry Liberty*, Hoffer provides a deeply researched and finely nuanced narrative of the Stono River conflict, offering uncomfortable insights into American slavery. In particular, he draws on new sources to reexamine this one dramatic day. According to conventional wisdom, recently imported African slaves--warriors in spirit and training--learned of an impending war between England and Spain. Seeking freedom from Spanish authorities, the argument runs, they launched a well-planned uprising in order to escape to Florida. But Hoffer has mined legislative and legal records, land surveys, and first-hand accounts to identify precisely where the fighting began, trace the paths taken by rebels and militia, and offer a new explanation of its causes. Far from a noble, well-crafted revolt, he reveals, the slaves were simply breaking into a store to take what they thought was their due, and chance events put them on a path no participant had originally intended. The truth is a far less heroic, but far more of a human tragedy. Richly researched, crisply told, and unflinchingly honest, this book uncovers the grim truth about the violent wages of slavery and sheds light on why North America had so few slave rebellions.

"This is a smart book--smart because it forces readers to think anew about a topic that is well known to scholars of colonial slavery, the Stono slave rebellion of 1739...Readers will come away with lots to contemplate about the nature of slave resistance in colonial America and about the reading of fragmentary and tantalizing evidence. It is the sort of smart book that students will love." --*The Journal of Southern History*

About the Author Peter Charles Hoffer is Distinguished Research Professor at the University of Georgia. He specializes in early U.S. history and legal history. He is the author of numerous books, including *Past Imperfect*; *Seven Fires: The Urban Infernos that Reshaped American History*; *The Brave New World: A History of Early America*; and *The Supreme Court: An Essential History*.