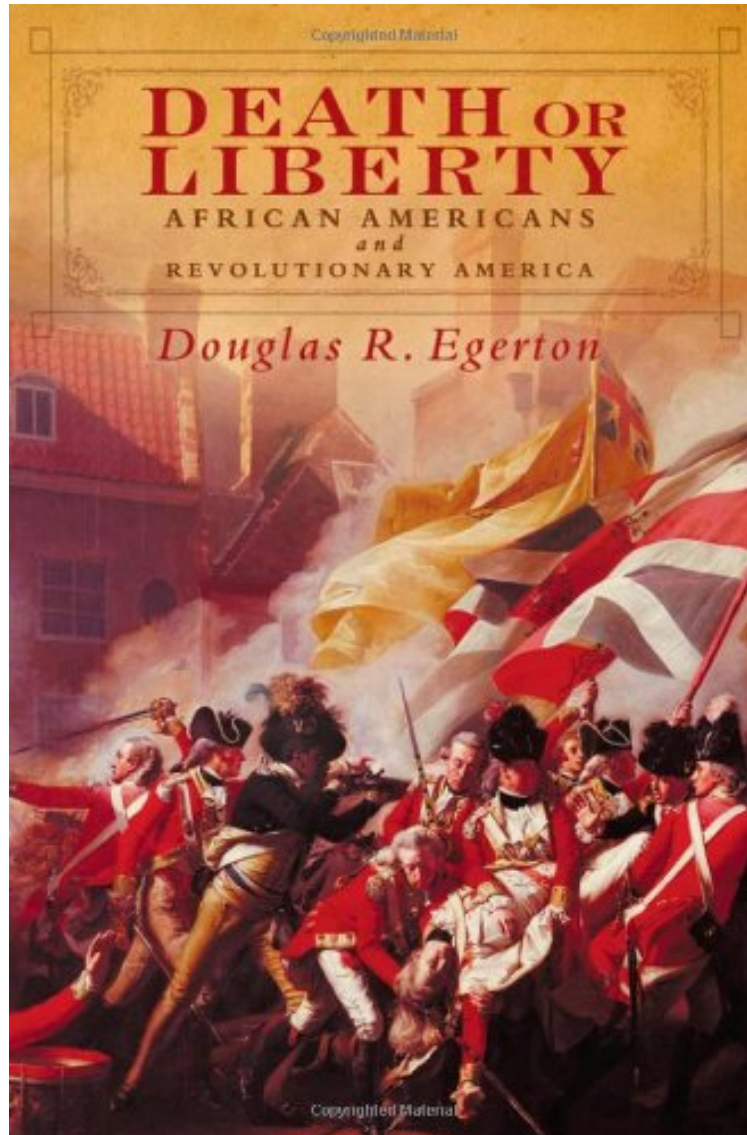


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Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America

Douglas R. Egerton

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Douglas R. Egerton : Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America:

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Douglas Egerton's delicate treatment of the sad and painful stories opens the door to a dark past and helps the modern reader realize, if not internalize, just how delicate and vulnerable is a Liberty that was never really believed in. This book will lift you, however, with the understanding of just how much liberty was believed in by African Americans, enough to risk everything to achieve, even if only for a while. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. a thrilling narrative
By CustomerI absolutely loved this book. Had to read it straight through. So much history that was new to me and so very interesting and well written. An outstanding book, plan to use it in a 4th of July display as another facet of the Revolutionary War
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By KaseyThis book was recommended by my professor to finish my paper and it worked very nicely. Hoping for a good grade in African American History!!

In *Death or Liberty*, Douglas R. Egerton offers a sweeping chronicle of African American history stretching from Britain's 1763 victory in the Seven Years' War to the election of slaveholder Thomas Jefferson as president in 1800. While American slavery is usually identified with antebellum cotton plantations, Egerton shows that on the eve of the Revolution it encompassed everything from wading in the South Carolina rice fields to carting goods around Manhattan to serving the households of Boston's elite. More important, he recaptures the drama of slaves, freed blacks, and white reformers fighting to make the young nation fulfill its republican slogans. Although this struggle often unfolded in the corridors of power, Egerton pays special attention to what black Americans did for themselves in these decades, and his narrative brims with compelling portraits of forgotten African American activists and rebels, who battled huge odds and succeeded in finding liberty--if never equality--only in northern states. Egerton concludes that despite the real possibility of peaceful, if gradual, emancipation, the Founders ultimately lacked the courage to end slavery.

From Publishers Weekly
Egerton (*Gabriel's Rebellion*) traverses the rise and the debatable inevitability of slavery in the United States between the end of the Seven Years' War (1763) and Jefferson's election (1800), arguing that the division of the Republic into free wage labor sections and proslavery regions did not have to happen that way. But it did; in spite of the uprisings by Denmark Vesey and Gabriel echoing slogans from the fight for independence, the American Revolution failed to fulfill its promise of freedom. If the territory seems familiar, the author approaches it on a road less traveled, surveying what the revolution meant to black contemporaries: Jefferson's servant Richard responds to the ideological arguments concerning slavery; Quok Walker's successful lawsuit merges with an account of emancipation in the states north of Delaware; Titus, who fought with the Loyalists, leads to the examination of the role of black combatants. Egerton has crammed a great deal of political, legal and social history into this dense but accessible book. He has achieved an extraordinary synthesis, while maintaining a careful attentiveness to regional, even state, differences during this period when the United States was aborning and things might have happened differently. (Jan.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "This rich volume focuses on the 'Age of Revolution' through the experiences of enslaved and free Africans and African Americans in North America...*Death or Liberty* by Douglas Egerton provides an overview of the much-neglected topic of the black experience in early America."--*Journal of African American History*"Reflecting broad research and reading, these musings from a mature historian of early America advance fresh perspectives that both clarify and complicate our understanding of the distinct radical dynamics and values at the nation's start."--Thomas J. Davis, *Publishers Weekly*"The monumental accomplishments of Founding Fathers like Thomas Jefferson and George Washington seem trivial in comparison to what many of their African American contemporaries achieved. Seizing the unprecedented opportunities presented by the Revolutionary War, thousands of enslaved Americans--including slaves owned by Jefferson and Washington--made their own declarations of independence and undertook the arduous and perilous journey from slave to freedom. Now, for the first time, the scores of recent investigations of black participation in the American Revolution have been synthesized into an elegant and seamless narrative. In *Death or Liberty*--a title taken not from Patrick Henry but from a participant in Gabriel's Rebellion in 1800--Douglas Egerton shows that African Americans not only extracted the most liberty from the Revolutionary experience but also paid the highest price for it."--Woody Holton, University of Richmond"Slowly, American understanding of the vital Revolutionary era is becoming more open, subtle, and realistic. Douglas Egerton's suggestive book uses real lives to weave surprising new threads into this familiar old flag."--Peter H. Wood, author of *Strange New Land: Africans in Colonial America*"In this highly readable account Douglas Egerton weaves together the stories of black and white men and women in a seamless and deeply human telling of the American Revolutionary war. Even scholars familiar with the subject matter will find fresh and original insights on virtually every aspect of American Revolutionary history."--Sylvia R. Frey, author of *Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age*"Egerton...has combined his own research with a wealth of scholarship to create a learned and persuasive synthesis."--*New England Quarterly*"A brilliant synthesis of African American struggles for freedom between 1763 and 1800...Sparkles with insight."-- s in *American History*"This book offers an engaging and persuasive view that, on balance, the American Revolution was a disillusioning failure for the Africans and African Americans who struggled to make it meaningful for themselves."--

American Historical "[A]n important work...[I]t draws together the vast body of literature on this subject and provides a coherent narrative that scholars of the revolutionary era cannot afford to ignore."--Journal of American History"Offers new revelations to readers familiar with the field, even as it provides a lucid and informative introduction to those not deeply immersed in it...Learned, textured, and sobering."--Common-place About the AuthorDouglas R. Egerton is Joseph C. Georg Professor of History at Le Moyne College. His books include Year of Meteors: Stephen Douglas, Abraham Lincoln, and the Election that Brought on the Civil War.