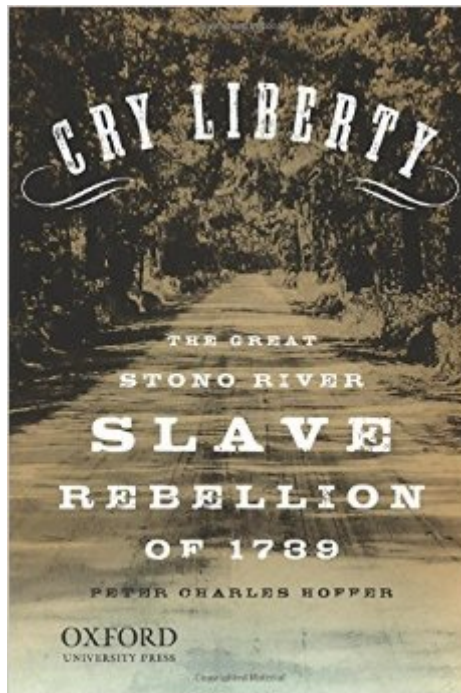


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Cry Liberty: The Great Stono River Slave Rebellion Of 1739 (New Narratives In American History)



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A research (inquest) into the probable events of slave activity which carried onward till the Civil War. The 150th anniversary of that war is a great time to look at this slave conflict. "Cry Liberty" covers much slave activity in early 18th century near Charles Town (Charleston), SC. The author has done an intellectual work in gathering research and visiting (photos in book) the area to attempt to make a determination if the Stono River slave rebellion was planned or an chance accident. As an unbiased writer, he looks between the previously written lines, the culture, Colonial needs, status of people, misinformation, economics of the area, fear, religion, politics, and even land surveys. So well researched and footnoted that reading more on this "rebellion" seems needless. It's not a textbook, but it is solid nonfiction, worthy of an educated look. The uprising of 1739 was almost silenced for 2 3/4 centuries. It is a story worth reading. Slave activity was little different then than in 1861 when, let's face it, slavery divided America, north to south. Was Stono really a prequel to that slavery rebellion? Or was it simply a case of "chattel stampede?"

PROLOGUE: Maps and a look at the Shono/Charles Town area.

Chapters:

- 1 AT HUTCHENSON'S STORE- The revolt's beginning place and its likely composition.
- 2 INHUMAN BONDAGE- Slaves by law, creation, color, economic need as rice field labor. Slaves were mobile.
- 3 TERROR IN THE NIGHT- Ditch digging slaves kill whites (23 total in the end) but began in a search for food and drink. Death & mayhem, even slave against slave. Like white vs white in Civil War.
- 4 ON PON PON ROAD- The road was slave constructed in 1739. Weary slaves marched, Florida freedom bound, rested, the beginning to their end.

Let 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].

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