

He Shall Go Out Free: The Lives of Denmark Vesey (American Profiles)

Douglas R. Egerton

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He Shall Go Out Free: The Lives of Denmark Vesey (American Profiles) Douglas R. Egerton On July 2, 1822, Denmark Vesey was hanged in Charleston, S.C., for his role in planning one of the largest slave uprisings in the United States. During his long, extraordinary life Vesey played many roles—Caribbean field hand, cabin boy, chandler's man, house servant, proud freeman, carpenter, husband, father, church leader, abolitionist, revolutionary. Yet until his execution transformed him into a symbol of liberty, Vesey made it his life's work to avoid the attention of white authorities. Because he preferred to dwell in the hidden alleys of Charleston's slave community, Vesey remains as elusive as he is today celebrated, and his legend is often mistaken for fact.

In this biography of the great rebel leader, Douglas R. Egerton employs a variety of historical sources—church records, court documents, travel accounts, and newspapers from America and Saint Domingue—to recreate the lost world of the mysterious Vesey. The revised and updated edition reflects the most recent scholarship on Vesey, and a new afterword by the author explores the current debate about the existence of the 1822 conspiracy. If Vesey's plot was unique in the annals of slave rebellions in North America, it was because he was unique; his goals, as well as the methods he chose to achieve them, were the product of a hard life's experience.

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