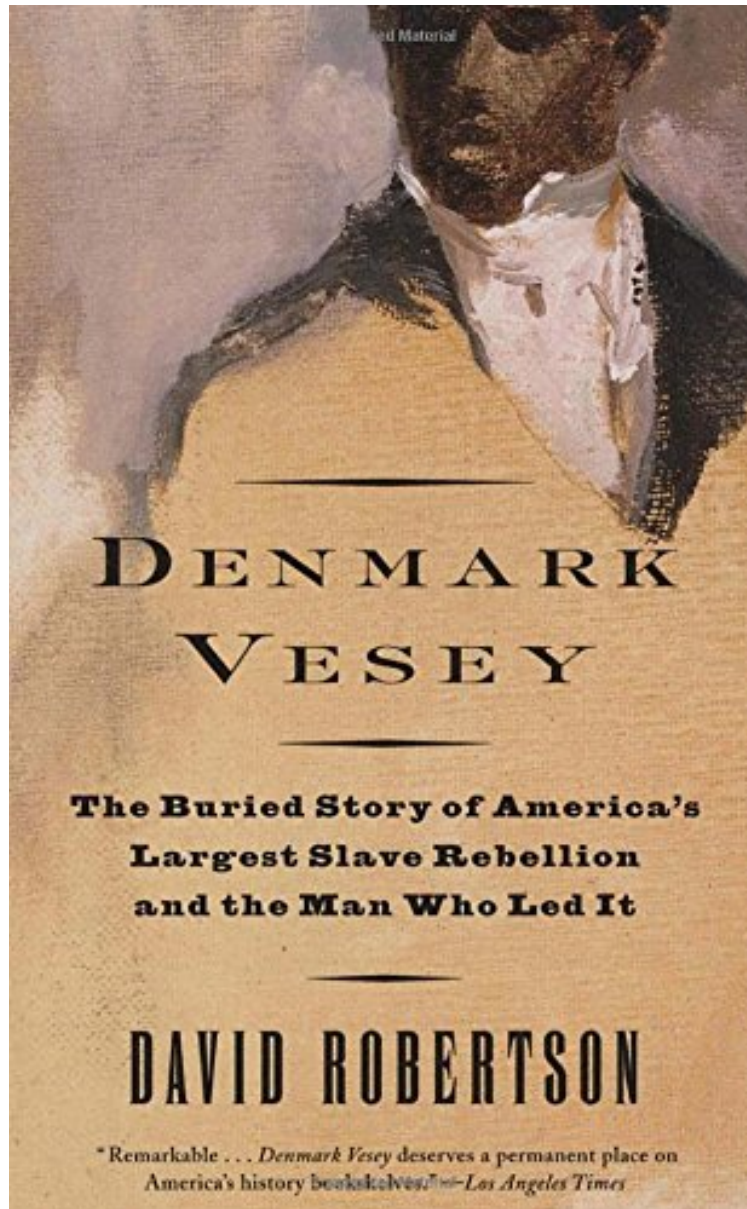


[Free and download] Denmark Vesey: The Buried Story of America's Largest Slave Rebellion and the Man Who Led It

Denmark Vesey: The Buried Story of America's Largest Slave Rebellion and the Man Who Led It

David Robertson

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In a remarkable feat of historical detective work, David Robertson illuminates the shadowy figure who planned a slave rebellion so daring that, if successful, it might have changed the face of the antebellum South. This is the story of a man who, like Nat Turner, Marcus Garvey, and Malcolm X, is a complex yet seminal hero in the history of African American emancipation. Denmark Vesey was a charismatic ex-slave--literate, professional, and relatively well-off--who had purchased his own freedom with the winnings from a lottery. Inspired by the success of the revolutionary black republic in Haiti, he persuaded some nine thousand slaves to join him in a revolt. On a June evening in 1822, having gathered guns, and daggers, they were to converge on Charleston, South Carolina, take the city's arsenal, murder the populace, burn the city, and escape by ship to Haiti or Africa. When the uprising was betrayed, Vesey and seventy-seven of his followers were executed, the matter hushed by Charleston's elite for fear of further rebellion. Compelling, informative, and often disturbing, this book is essential to a fuller understanding of the struggle against slavery.

.com In 1822, Denmark Vesey, a Caribbean-born free Negro from Charleston, South Carolina, led the largest attempted slave revolt in U.S. history with over 9,000 blacks. Although it failed--thanks to the confessions of a house slave to his master--and Vesey was executed, his heroic attempt continues to be a source of pride for African Americans. David Robertson's well-researched book chronicles Vesey's life as a slave in Haiti, his move to Charleston, his fluency in English, Creole, and French, and his skillful use of Christian teachings (and possibly Islamic ones, as well) to inspire the slaves to rebel. "He was a black man of great physical presence, strength, and intellect," Robertson writes, "linguistically fluent and politically facile enough to mold various African ethnic and religious groups into one unified force." Using court testimony from Vesey's trial and historical archives, Robertson unveils the stark and violent climate of antebellum life in 18th-century America, bringing to life a hero who fought for the same principles upon which the democratic nation in which he was made a slave was founded. --Eugene Holley Jr.From Publishers WeeklyMuch is already known about Denmark Vesey, who purchased his freedom from slavery in 1800 with money he won in a lottery. Yet his apparently sudden transformation from successful free black carpenter and property owner to the organizer of "the most elaborate and well-planned slave insurrection in U.S. history," in 1822, still fuels lingering curiosity. Evoking the atmosphere of material wealth enjoyed by antebellum South Carolina whites, Robertson reveals their fear at being surrounded by a black slave population whose labor made their comfort possible but who outnumbered them four to one. Drawing on the correspondence and memoirs of whites and their descendantsAbout not of blacksARobertson addresses his central question: "Why were individual freedom and prosperity not enough for Denmark Vesey?" The author's answer, which links Vesey's dissatisfaction (and that of the thousands of slaves who were reputedly ready to join him in arms) to the spiritual autonomy he achieved through the African Methodist Episcopal Church, is persuasive. Furthermore, Robertson identifies Vesey as a spiritual and political leader whose views were a precursor to modern Black Theology. Based on the word of a slave informant, Vesey and more than 20 slaves were hanged as insurrectionists in the summer of 1822, despite little physical evidence. Robertson's well-researched narrative and smooth style make this an intelligent analysis of, as well as a worthy tribute to, his subject. Photos not seen by PW. (Aug.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalRobertson's carefully considered revisionist work tells the story of Denmark Vesey, a slave who purchased his own freedom and after 22 years organized what would have been (had he not been betrayed by informers) the most elaborate and well-planned slave rebellion in United States history. Through his appeal to negritude and religion, with himself as the black Messiah, VeseyAby then almost 60 years oldArecruited about 9000 slaves and black freedmen in a failed attempt to seize the arsenal and ships at Charleston harbor, burn the city, and murder the entire white population. Robertson (Booth: A Novel) discusses the aftermath of the attempted slave revolt and analyzes its national, social, and political consequences. Charleston eventually became the most fortified city in the nation. This well-written and meticulously researched biography sheds new light on various aspects of Vesey's attempted revolt,

providing excellent notes for each chapter, a brief biography of each of those executed with Vesey in 1822, but unfortunately no bibliography. Nevertheless, the author has succeeded in putting together a very interesting and useful biography, the first in decades.-AEdward G. McCormack, Univ. of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Lib., Long Beach
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