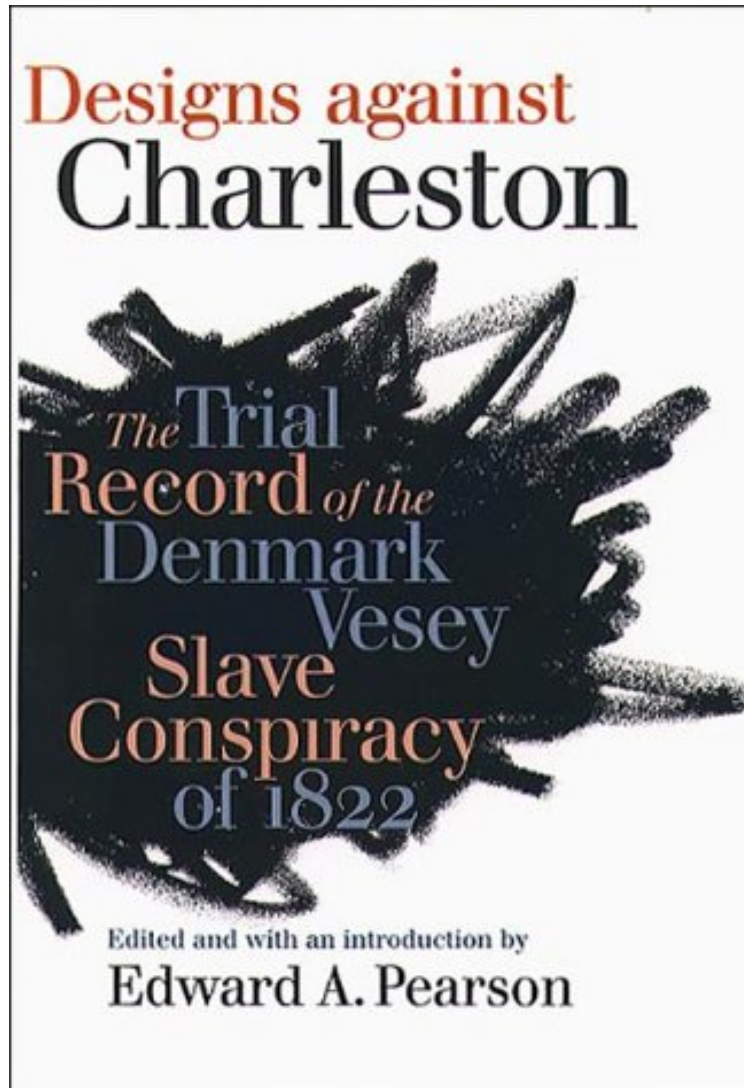


Designs against Charleston : The Trial Record of the Denmark Slave Conspiracy of 1822

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in "William and Mary Quarterly" Oct '01 completely shredded the book and stated that the actual record indicated exactly the reverse of Pearson's conclusion. The Johnson review earned the prize from the Organization of American Historians for the best journal article of that year in all of American History, in spite of the fact that the President of that organization had written a blurb for the back cover praising the book. The Pearson could not even get it right in the book title--there was no trial. The current price for this book is so high because the publisher withdrew the book and tried to recover all copies. 3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Poor research, inadequate scholarship
By Bothell Reader
Like the previous reviewer stated, this book was thoroughly discredited by Michael P. Johnson. How Pearson could keep his job or his pride after writing this travesty of a book boggles the imagination. I wonder how he would have graded himself, if he were his own student? The real tragedy here is that he takes a pivotal historical event in the history of slavery in the US and completely misrepresents it. Bad scholarship doesn't even begin to cover it. 5 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Good scholarship, poor book production
By A Customer
Minor distractions from the otherwise impressive scholarship in this book are the woefully inaccurate maps accompanying the text. In one wildly wrong map, the port city of Charleston is located not on the Atlantic but thirty or more miles inland on a river's bank. I realize such errors should not be chalked up against the author, but for such an expensively-priced volume, a reader should also receive accurate illustrations. A university press should have taken greater care in the production of this otherwise excellent book.

On July 2, 1822, officials in Charleston, South Carolina, executed a free black carpenter named Denmark Vesey for planning what would have been the most extensive slave revolt in U.S. history. Only days before the rebellion was scheduled to begin, authorities learned of the plot and arrested and imprisoned those involved. That summer, more than a hundred black Charlestonians were put on trial for their part in the conspiracy. Thirty-five were eventually sent to the gallows. Designs against Charleston is a fascinating and comprehensive account of the Vesey conspiracy that uses both primary and secondary sources. Until now, readers interested in the trials have had to rely primarily on a heavily censored account published in 1822 by the men who tried the conspirators. This book contains the complete, verbatim transcript of the trials. Here, published for the first time, are the words of the accused as they were originally recorded in the courtroom. Pearson also discusses the social and cultural life of Charleston in the early nineteenth century, the political and religious ideas that inspired Vesey and his followers to plan the city's destruction, and, finally, the impact that the conspiracy and its aftermath had on the lives of South Carolinians, both black and white.