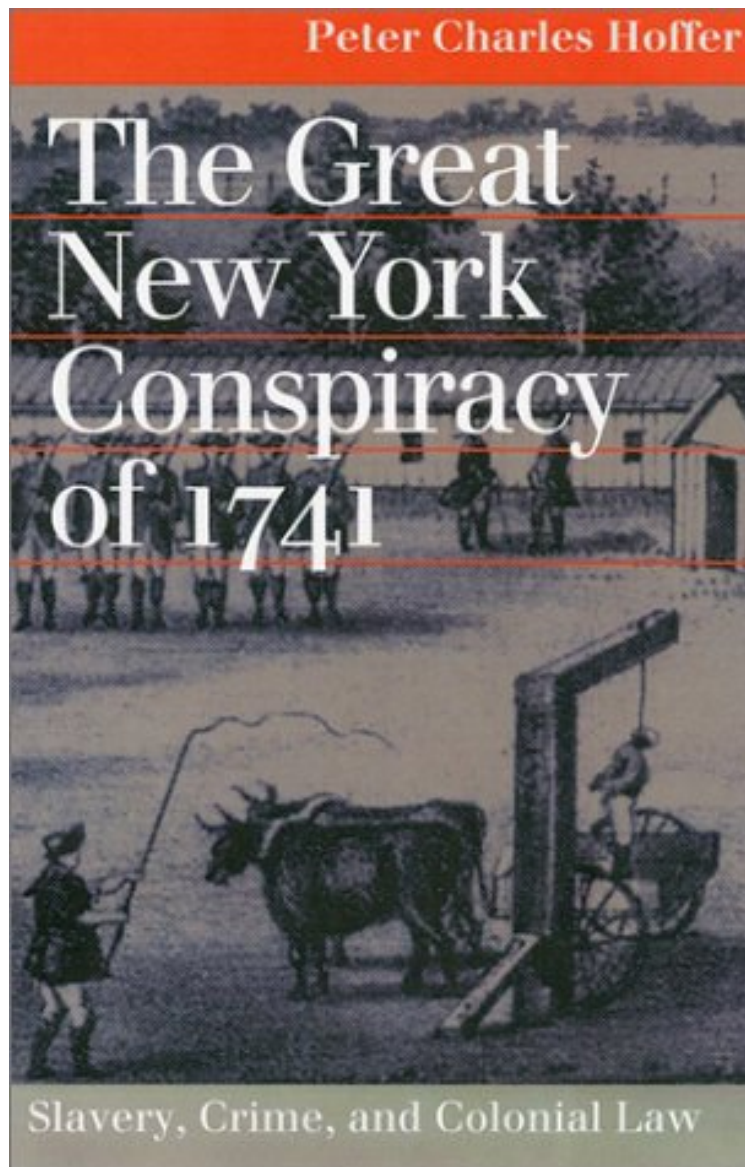


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The Great New York Conspiracy of 1741: Slavery, Crime, and Colonial Law (Landmark Law Cases American Society)

Peter Charles Hoffer

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#1239845 in Books University Press of Kansas 2003-06-12 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.32 x .56 x 7.121, .61 #File Name: 0700612467204 pages | File size: 33.Mb

Peter Charles Hoffer : The Great New York Conspiracy of 1741: Slavery, Crime, and Colonial Law (Landmark Law Cases American Society) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Great New York Conspiracy of 1741: Slavery, Crime, and Colonial Law (Landmark Law Cases American Society):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy T.A.S.Excellent resource.3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. The Great New York ConspiracyBy Gail Stuart RoweAs usual, Peter Hoffer provides his readers with a gracefully written look at a intriguing but little known moment in our nation's past. And, as is true of his other studies, his work on the NY Conspiracy is thought-provoking and placed intelligently in context so that both the small picture and the large picture can be appreciated. Though intended for professional historians and graduate students, lay readers and undergraduates can enjoy--and profit--from this work.9 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Read it anywayBy EricIn the relative absence of recent works on the subject, this is a welcomed addition and worth reading. However, it is poorly written and will certainly be surpassed by future efforts. The historical narrative is disjointed and uneven, marked far too often by a sneering tone rather than an attempt to comprehend the people and times of which the author writes. Where he does make an attempt to explore their thought-processes and assumptions, one is very often left wondering what caused him to come to his conclusions, which are presented as if written in stone. One never escapes an awareness that the author is very much a child of a particular culture and era, one never is drawn by the book into the culture and era being portrayed. Further, his actual objective seems less to reveal the events and the era mentioned in the title than to score polemical points in our modern era by tenuously and absurdly linking responses to modern terrorism to the slave trials. The book begins and ends with this. With the wealth of information available on these events, one can only hope that a more unbiased and perceptive historian one whose objective is historical rather than polemical, will take up the challenge of writing a definitive narrative in the near future.

Three and a half decades before the city of New York witnessed the first great battle waged by the new United States of America for its independence, rumors of a massive conspiracy among the city's slaves spread panic throughout the colony. On the testimony of frightened bondsmen and a handful of whites, over seventy slaves were convicted and a third of these were executed.The suspected conspiracy in New York prompted one of the most extensive slave trials in colonial history and some of the most grisly punishments ever meted out to individuals. Peter Hoffer now retells the dramatic story of those landmark trials, setting the events in their legal and historical contexts and offering a revealing glimpse of slavery in colonial cities and of the way that the law defined and policed the institution.Among other things, Hoffer reveals how conspiracy became a central feature of the law of slavery at the same time as it reflected the white belief that slaves were always conspiring against their masters. He draws on uniquely revealing firsthand accounts of the trials to both retell a gripping story and open a window on colonial American justice. He leads readers through a chain of events involving robbery and arson that culminated in the trials of a group of white men suspected of inciting the slaves to revolt. The episode, so vital to our understanding of a time when slavery was an entrenched institution and the law made even the angry muttering of slaves into a criminal act, has much to tell us about current affairs as well. African slaves in colonial times were viewed by authorities and citizens much as some foreigners are today: inherently dangerous, easily identifiable, and constantly conspiring.