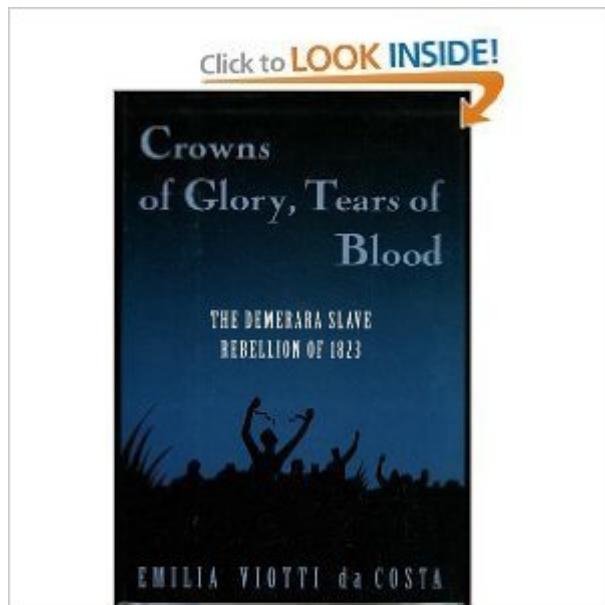


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Crowns Of Glory, Tears Of Blood: The Demerara Slave Rebellion Of 1823



Synopsis

On the night of August 17, 1823, the distinctly African sounds of blaring shell-horns and beating drums signalled the start of one of the most massive slave rebellions in the history of the Western Hemisphere, the uprising in the British colony of Demerara (now Guyana). That evening, nine to twelve thousand slaves surrounded the main houses of about sixty plantations, armed with cutlasses, knives fastened on poles, and guns. They broke down doors, smashed windows, commandeered arms and ammunition, and put their masters and overseers in the stocks. Intent on avoiding a blood bath (over three days of fighting, colonial forces took the lives of more than 255 slaves, while only two or three white men were killed), the rebels spoke of "rights," and planned to present their grievances to the governor. For a few days, the slaves succeeded in turning the world upside down, treating masters the way masters had always treated slaves. Retaliation from colonial officials would be swift, bloody, and brutal. In *Crowns of Glory*, Emilia Viotti da Costa tells the riveting story of a pivotal moment in the history of slavery. Studying the complaints brought by slaves to the office of the Protector of Slaves, she reconstructs the experience of slavery through the eyes of the Demerara slaves themselves. Da Costa also draws on eyewitness accounts, official records, and private journals (most notably the diary of John Smith, one of four ministers sent by the London Missionary Society to convert Demerara's "heathen"), to paint a vivid portrait of a society in transition, shaken to its foundations by the recent revolutions in America, France, and Haiti. Smith and his wife, Jane, the planters and colonial politicians, and the leaders of the rebellion emerge as flesh-and-blood individuals, players trapped in a complex political game none of them could fully understand. Unravelling the complex web of events leading up to the climactic rebellion, Da Costa explains how Smith, a dedicated but inexperienced minister who arrived at the Le Resouvenir plantation confident that all faithful missionaries would win "a crown of glory that fadeth not away," could seven years later find himself convicted by court martial of fostering rebellion amongst the slaves, and sentenced to be hanged by the neck until dead. She details the colonials' orgy of repression following the rebellion--scores of slaves were sentenced more or less at random to grisly public executions and ritualistic floggings, and Smith died in his cell before news arrived that the Crown had granted him mercy--and shows how it fueled the anti-slavery movement in Britain, leading to the abolition of slavery in the colonies ten years later. Casting new light on the nuances of racial relations in the colonies, the inevitable clash between the missionaries' message of Christian brotherhood and a social order based on masters and slaves, and the larger historical forces that were profoundly eroding the institution of slavery itself, *Crowns of Glory* is an original and unforgettable book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The writer has done a stellar job of demystifying the events surrounding this rebellion. She painted an elaborate picture of the social, economic, religious and political underpinnings which informed the thought processes of the planters, the bureaucracy (in Demerara and Europe) AND the slaves - that largely forgotten and /or ignored constituency. This is a must-read for anyone interested in understanding the effects of the slave trade on ALL of its participants. It gives voice to those unwilling participants who had hitherto been referenced only in passing - if at all. It imbues the slaves with a level of humanity that is often overlooked by other writers, and sees the event not merely from the traditional Euro-centric standpoint. Make no mistake about it, this book is a tough read, and tugs at some very visceral emotions. But it's also a bit of a page turner - you REALLY want to know what happens next.....

So far , the book gives a full and step by step view of the tribulations of the slaves. Highly recommended.

I'm still reading this book & there's a lot that I'm learning about Guyana. Well researched book.

perfect condition for a used book. seemed like it was never used and just sat on someone's bookshelf. love it

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