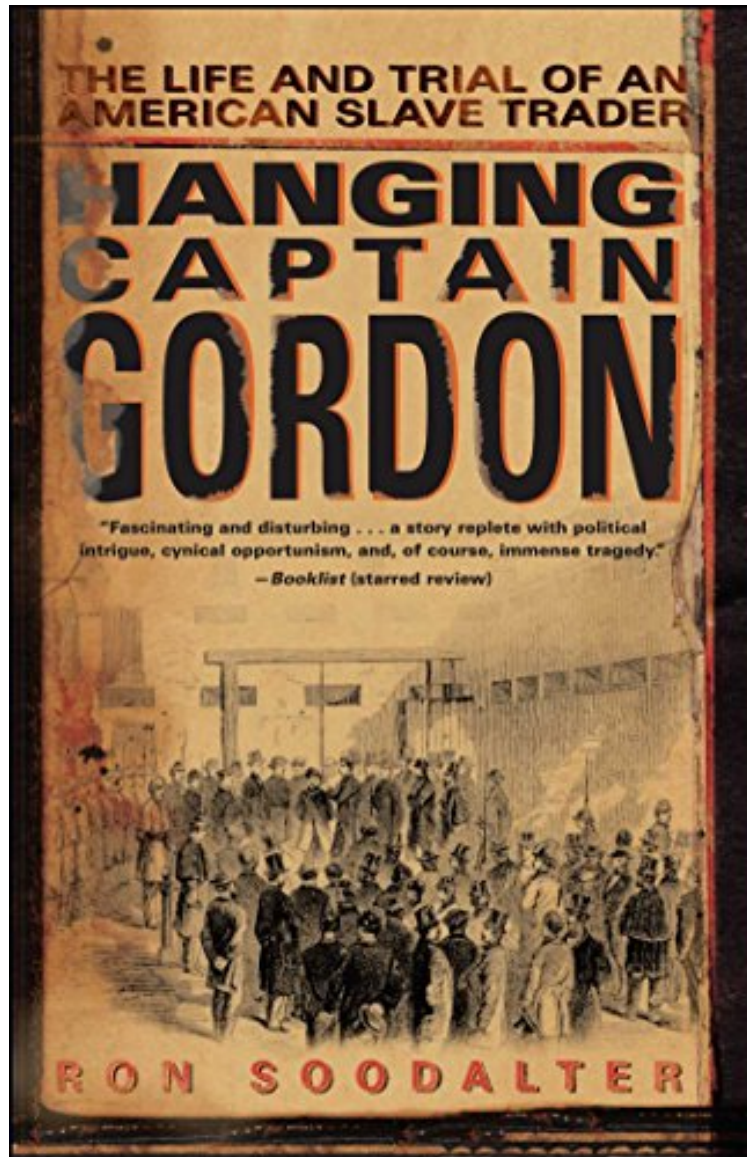


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Hanging Captain Gordon: The Life and Trial of an American Slave Trader

Ron Soodalter

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Ron Soodalter : Hanging Captain Gordon: The Life and Trial of an American Slave Trader before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hanging Captain Gordon: The Life and Trial of an American Slave Trader:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Ron Soodalter out did himself By O. Kwame Gyamfi The author, Ron

Soodalter, sets the stage to an extraordinary event in the history of the US. I was going through some old Harpers Ferry cartoons regarding reconstruction and came across the story of Captain Gordon. I did a google/ search and found this great piece of literature. Simply Amazing. What I like most about Soodalter's style of writing, is that I find myself looking up at the ceiling in deep thought, because his writing paint pictures of the time frame. This book can easily be made into a Motion Picture just based on the Novel because of his style of writing. Lastly, I never knew that the Transatlantic Slave trade was still flourishing up until the U.S. Civil War. I was content with the 1808 Act that abolished the trade set by the U.S. Congress. Bravo, this book shows how important it is to do your own research and think for yourself. Highly recommended reading..!!!!1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Completely enjoyable historyBy LukeReads with the ease of a novel, but with the credibility of the author's amazing research. Provides a historical context I've never read elsewhere and will give you an amazing insight to that era - and it's ramifications on today's society.Kept my interest from cover to cover - it's great edutainment.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Little known American historyBy AsnBorrowed this from the public library some years ago and always wanted my own copy so I could follow up on some of the officials and persons named on the book. Very interesting account of a little known event in American history and a new perspective of President Lincoln.

On a frosty day in February 1862, hundreds gathered to watch the execution of Nathaniel Gordon. Two years earlier, Gordon had taken Africans in chains from the Congo -- a hanging offense for more than forty years that no one had ever enforced. But with the country embroiled in a civil war and Abraham Lincoln at the helm, a sea change was taking place. Gordon, in the wrong place at the wrong time, got caught up in the wave. For the first time, *Hanging Captain Gordon* chronicles the trial and execution of the only man in history to face conviction for slave trading -- exploring the many compelling issues and circumstances that led to one man paying the price for a crime committed by many. Filled with sharply drawn characters, Soodalter's vivid account sheds light on one of the more shameful aspects of our history and provides a link to similar crimes against humanity still practiced today.

From Publishers WeeklyEntering the dense fray of Civil War-themed books is this fast-paced story of the 1862 hanging of Nathaniel Gordon, one of many ship captains charged with breaking an 1820 law banning slave-trading, but the only one to ever be executed. Soodalter, a former museum curator and history teacher, uses this singular event as a prism to provide an overview of Civil War-era politics, Lincoln's presidency and the maritime economy of slavery. Informative, but never dull or pedantic, this book hums along quickly, glossing over well-documented areas and concentrating instead on Gordon, the son of a sea merchant, who was arrested at the helm of a ship containing 897 slaves near the mouth of the Congo River. Deported to New York to stand trial, Gordon found himself at the center of a sensationalist frenzy, caught between the gears of a nation in flux. Soodalter's vivid depictions of slaving voyages present the squalid conditions aboard slaving ships and New York City's infamous "Tombs" prison where Gordon awaited his execution and the attitude among slavers and politicians that anti-slavery legislation was largely a paper tiger. Soodalter's take on slave-trading and its ancillary politics is accessible, and though he retreads some heavily covered material, his survey of slaving vis--vis the Gordon case will appeal to casual and serious readers of history.Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.From Booklist*Starred * Beginning in 1794, Congress passed a series of increasingly restrictive laws to limit and eventually abolish maritime-based slave trading; by 1820 it had become a capital offense. But, as Soodalter illustrates, the laws were a joke. The U.S. refused to cooperate with Britain in patrolling the African coast. Indifferent or corrupt American officials, both in the U.S. And in foreign ports, repeatedly looked the other way as slavers outfitted ships, sailed to Africa, and returned with their holds stuffed with their cargoes of hapless, suffering humans. Those few officials who took seriously their legal obligations were frustrated by bureaucratic inertia or the outright hostility of pro-slavery figures. However, with the onset of the Civil War, the political atmosphere and the degree of tolerance for slave trading had changed in the Union. When Nathaniel Gordon, then a 34-year-old "family man" from Portland, Maine, was seized with a slave-loaded ship on his return from the Congo, it began a complicated, prolonged legal and political struggle that ended with Gordon's execution in 1862. Soodalter's fascinating and disturbing account of this obscure episode in our history is a story replete with political intrigue, cynical opportunism, and, of course, immense tragedy, revealing just how thoroughly the curse of the "peculiar institution" of chattel slavery had infiltrated every aspect of American life. This outstanding work will interest both specialists and general readers. Jay FreemanCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Fascinating and disturbing...a story replete with political intrigue, cynical opportunism, and, of course, immense tragedy." -- Booklist (starred review)"A remarkable story." -- The Atlanta Journal-Constitution"Hanging Captain Gordon tells with satisfying thoroughness, clarity, and drama the half-forgotten story of the only slave trader executed under American law.... A solid achievement." -- William Lee Miller, author of *Lincoln's Virtues and Arguing About Slavery*"An engaging book about a forgotten incident in American history." -- The Washington Times