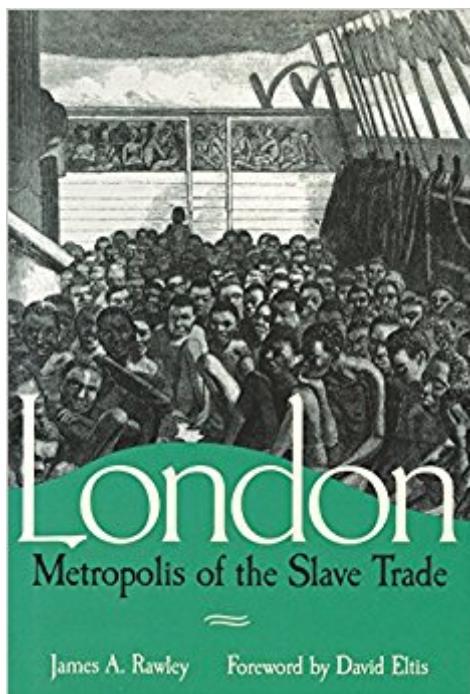


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London, Metropolis Of The Slave Trade



Synopsis

"The recognition that ordinary people could and did trade in slaves, as well as the fact that ordinary people became slaves, is, indeed, the beginning of comprehending the enormity of the forced migration of eleven million people and the attendant deaths of many more." In *London, Metropolis of the Slave Trade*, James A. Rawley collects some of his best works from the past three decades. Also included in this volume are three new pieces: an essay on a South Carolina slave trader, Henry Laurens; an analysis of the slave trade at the beginning of the eighteenth century; and a portrait of John Newton, a slave trader who became a priest in the Church of England and composer of the hymn "Amazing Grace" as well as an outspoken opponent of the trade. In these essays Rawley brings together new information on individuals involved in and opposed to the slave trade and shows how scholars have long underestimated the extent of London's participation in the trade. Rawley draws on material from the year 1700 to the American Civil War as he explores the role of London in the trade. He covers its activity as a port of departure for ships bound for Africa; its continuing large volume after the trade extended to Bristol and Liverpool; and the controversy between London's parliamentary representatives, who defended the trade, and the abolitionist movement that was quartered there. Sweeping in scope and thorough in its analysis, this collection of essays from a seasoned scholar will be welcomed by historians concerned with slavery and the slave trade, as well as by students just beginning their exploration of this subject.

Book Information

Series: Shades of Blue and Gray (Book 1)

Hardcover: 216 pages

Publisher: University of Missouri; First edition (October 2, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0826214835

ISBN-13: 978-0826214836

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.9 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #766,752 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #341 in Books > History > Historical Study & Educational Resources > Essays #418 in Books > History > World > Slavery & Emancipation #561 in Books > History > Americas > United States > Civil War > Abolition

Customer Reviews

"An important contribution to our understanding of the Atlantic slave trade and succeeds in establishing London and its merchant community as central to it." •South Carolina Historical Magazine "This most useful collection helps to confirm Rawley's standing in the field." •Journal of Modern History "While London's role as a center of abolitionism is well known, the fact that it was perhaps even more important than Liverpool as a center of the defense of the slave trade has remained largely hidden. As with all of the best historical writing, James Rawley's essays show that the reality of eras other than our own is much more complicated and interesting than most of the better-known conceptions of that reality, and more important, that there are no easy interpretations possible once one moves beyond recognition of the moral enormity of Europeans carrying so many unwilling Africans to the Americas." •David Eltis

Foreword by David Eltis

Very well written book reminiscent of ordinary people doing horrible things during Nazi Germany.

London was the major port involved in the early development of the English Transatlantic slave trade, but it is often discounted in favor of Bristol and Liverpool, which overshadowed London in terms of participation as the 18th century wore on. As Rawley points out, the London trade did not actually end in the 1720s, as many have suggested, but persisted until the British abolished their participation in the trade in 1807. What makes this book important to those who want to know more about how the trade got started and accepted is that it is in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, that you can see the entrepreneurial and ethical development of the trade most clearly. At this point the trade was not the well-oiled machine that it later became and people were able to make choices. Those who chose to participate set the tone and developed the methodology of what was to come. This excellent book traces the lives of some of London's foremost traders of the period, putting a human face on people we now find hard to understand. It is an extraordinary effort of research that is surprisingly readable, considering the wealth of information and the nature of the subject. James Rawley has spent a life time specializing in this area, and this is an important collection of recent essays.

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