



The New York Conspiracy Trials of 1741: Daniel Horsmanden's Journal of the Proceedings, with Related Documents (Bedford Series in History & Culture)

Serena R. Zabin

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When in 1741 a rash of fires followed a theft in pre-revolutionary New York City, British colonial authorities came to suspect an elaborate conspiracy led by slaves and poor whites who intended to burn the city and hand it over to Britain's Catholic foes. Within seven months, roughly 200 people were arrested, 17 were hanged, and 70 others were expelled from New York. This book abridges the transcript Justice Daniel Horsmanden kept of the trials. His record of the testimony of slaves and working-class whites provides extraordinary clues to the nature of race, class, and gender relationships in colonial New York City and raises questions about the nature and extent of the alleged conspiracy. Serena Zabin's introduction provides context by describing slavery, tavern culture, and the legal system as well as explaining British tensions with France and Spain. Additional documents include newspaper accounts of the Antigua and Stono Rebellions and letters concerning the 1741 trials to help students make connections among these uprisings and the atmosphere of fear and suspicion they created. Document headnotes and glosses, lists of trial participants, a chronology of events, questions for consideration, a selected bibliography, and an index provide strong pedagogical support.

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