



The Life of Olaudah Equiano (Dover Thrift Editions)

By Olaudah Equiano

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Slave narratives are powerful indictments of the horrors of slavery and oppression, invaluable not only for the stories they tell but also for the consistently high quality of their literary style. This book by Olaudah Equiano is one such story. A compelling account that has gripped and fascinated readers since its original London publication in 1789, the narrative describes Equiano's formidable journey from captivity to freedom and literacy.

Charting a passage that takes him from life as an Igbo prince in what is now eastern Nigeria to the New World, Equiano begins with a description of his native land that includes particulars of the dress, agriculture, industry, commerce, rituals, superstitions, and religious ceremonies of his country. In stark and poignant detail he gives a compelling account of his kidnapping and his ordeal aboard the slave ship, his service in the French and Indian wars, as well as many other of his vicissitudes and adventures until he finally settles in England, where he becomes a key figure in the British abolitionist movement.

Skillfully written with a wealth of grossing detail, this volume powerfully illustrates the nature of the black experience in slavery, making it essential reading for students of African-American history and anyone interested in the struggle for equal rights and human dignity.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Born in Nigeria in 1745, Olaudah Equiano was a well-known African abolitionist. Equiano was shipped to the West Indies as a child-slave, and then to England where he was purchased by Lieutenant Michael Pascal and trained as a seaman before serving in The Seven Years War. At the conclusion of hostilities, Pascal did not free Equiano as promised, but instead sold him to Captain James Doran who then sold Equiano to James King, a merchant from Philadelphia. In 1765, King let Equiano purchase his freedom for forty pounds, and helped him earn money in his stead as a merchant. Now a free man, Equiano returned to London where he made significant contributions to the abolitionist movement, and published his autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*, which influenced the Slave Trade Act of 1807. Equiano is believed to have died in 1797 at the age of 52.

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