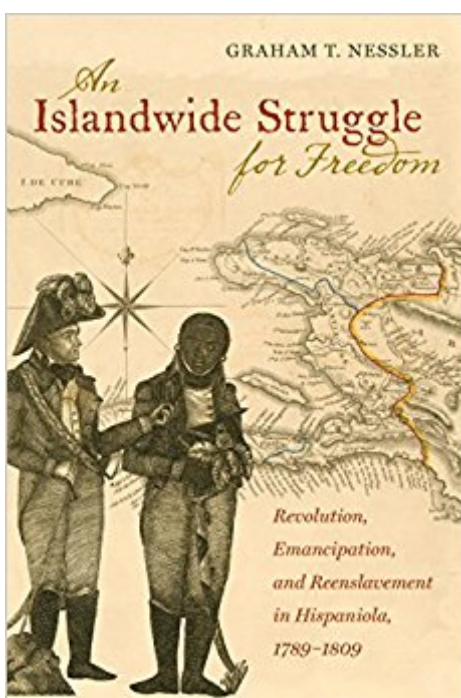


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An Islandwide Struggle For Freedom: Revolution, Emancipation, And Reenslavement In Hispaniola, 1789-1809



Synopsis

Reinterpreting the Haitian Revolution as both an islandwide and a circum-Caribbean phenomenon, Graham Nessler examines the intertwined histories of Saint-Domingue, the French colony that became Haiti, and Santo Domingo, the Spanish colony that became the Dominican Republic. Tracing conflicts over the terms and boundaries of territory, liberty, and citizenship that transpired in the two colonies that shared one island, Nessler argues that the territories' borders and governance were often unclear and mutually influential during a tumultuous period that witnessed emancipation in Saint-Domingue and reenslavement in Santo Domingo. Nessler aligns the better-known history of the French side with a full investigation and interpretation of events on the Spanish side, articulating the importance of Santo Domingo in the conflicts that reshaped the political terrain of the Atlantic world. Nessler also analyzes the strategies employed by those claimed as slaves in both colonies to gain liberty and equal citizenship. In doing so, he reveals what was at stake for slaves and free nonwhites in their uses of colonial legal systems and how their understanding of legal matters affected the colonies' relationships with each other and with the French and Spanish metropolises.

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Customer Reviews

An important, highly original account of the impact of revolutionary activity on two distinct late-18th-century slave societies that shared the same island: the French colony of Saint-Domingue (renamed Haiti in 1804) in western Hispaniola and the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo in eastern Hispaniola. Highly recommended.--CHOICE

An Islandwide Struggle for Freedom demonstrates a truly original point: that events in Saint-Domingue/Haiti during the revolutionary era were influenced at every turn by events in the other half of the island of Hispaniola, the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo--and vice versa. This is a major contribution to the scholarship on the Haitian Revolution and to the larger story of the struggle over slavery in the American world.--Jeremy Popkin, University of Kentucky
This first full-scale account of revolutionary Hispaniola casts a brilliant new light on the complex politics of the Haitian Revolution, which Nessler persuasively reinterprets as an insular, as well as circum-Caribbean, phenomenon. An engaging, lucid, and artfully written work of historical scholarship.--Malick Ghachem, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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