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Pioneers of the Black Atlantic

By Henry Louis Gates, William L. Andrews

Paperback. Book Condition: New. Not Signed; In the eighteenth century, a small group of black men met the challenge of the Enlightenment by mastering the arts and sciences and writing themselves into history. The battle lines were clear--literacy stood as the ultimate measure of humanity to the white arbiters of Western culture. If blacks could succeed in this sphere, they would prove that African and European humanity were inseparable. Without a literary record, blacks seemed predestined for slavery. The small but dedicated group--now known as the Black Atlantic writers--who stepped forward to meet this challenge published their autobiographies in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They not only defied the popular opinion of the time that blacks were unfit for letters, but inaugurated the Black American and Black British literary traditions. While slave narratives are often excerpted and anthologized, they are rarely collected in their entirety. Pioneers of the Black Atlantic is the first anthology to include the complete texts of the five most important and influential narratives of the eighteenth century. Included here are the writings of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, John Marrant, Ottobah Cugoano, Olaudah Equiano, and John Jea. Their stories, resonant still in our racially divided world, are landmarks...



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