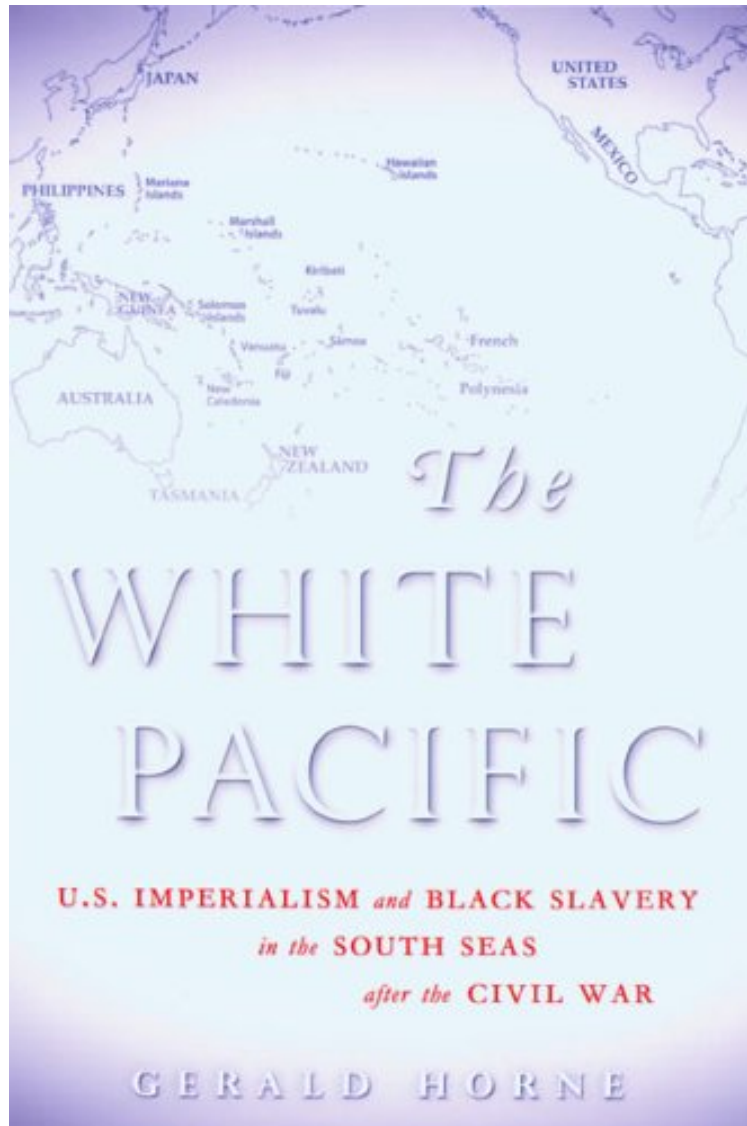


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# The White Pacific: U.S. Imperialism and Black Slavery in the South Seas after the Civil War

Gerald Horne

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**Gerald Horne : The White Pacific: U.S. Imperialism and Black Slavery in the South Seas after the Civil War** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The White Pacific: U.S. Imperialism and Black Slavery in the South Seas after the Civil War:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Compelling ArgumentsBy Robert H. CommandUniversity of

Houston professor Gerald Horne sets forth an intriguing study into the slave trade in the Pacific during the second half of the 19th Century. While setting down a well-documented history of Pacific "blackbirding," a euphemism for slave trading, Horne also develops an argument that the shortage of cotton and sugar created by the Civil War set into motion a series of events that gives rise to U.S. Imperialism, which eventually extinguishes Hawaii's sovereignty, fosters the White Australia policy and gives rise to Imperial Japan and ultimately, World War II in the Pacific. Almost as intriguing is Hawaii's role in the White Pacific. Horne develops the early ambitions of Kamehameha the Great to become the Napoleon of the Pacific, using the fleet assembled for an assault on Kauai to subjugate Tahiti. These ambitions live all the way through Kalakaua, who successfully argued before the legislature for \$30,000 to form a Polynesian confederation. The King sent representatives to Samoa, where the Malietoa, or alii nui, agreed to a confederation between the two kingdoms. However, the arrangement was short-lived as Kalakaua was stripped of his power the following year when he signed the Bayonet Constitution, and a reform party ended the alliance. Hawaii's distaste for slavery was written into the Constitution of 1852, partially on the advice of Alexander Liholiho, nephew of Kamehameha III. During a visit to the United States in 1849, Alexander Liholiho experienced slavery and racism first hand and vowed that it would never take place in the Hawaiian Kingdom.

Worldwide supplies of sugar and cotton were impacted dramatically as the U.S. Civil War dragged on. New areas of production entered these lucrative markets, particularly in the South Pacific, and plantation agriculture grew substantially in disparate areas such as Australia, Fiji, and Hawaii. The increase in production required an increase in labor; in the rush to fill the vacuum, freebooters and other unsavory characters began a slave trade in Melanesians and Polynesians that continued into the twentieth century. The White Pacific ranges over the broad expanse of Oceania to reconstruct the history of "blackbirding" (slave trading) in the region. It examines the role of U.S. citizens (many of them ex-slaveholders and ex-confederates) in the trade and its roots in Civil War dislocations. What unfolds is a dramatic tale of unfree labor, conflicts between formal and informal empire, white supremacy, threats to sovereignty in Hawaii, the origins of a White Australian policy, and the rise of Japan as a Pacific power and putative protector. It also pieces together a wonderfully suggestive history of the African American presence in the Pacific. Based on deft archival research in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Hawaii, the United States, and Great Britain, The White Pacific uncovers a heretofore hidden story of race, labor, war, and intrigue that contributes significantly to the emerging intersectional histories of race and ethnicity.

About the Author Gerald Horne is Moores Professor of History and African-American Studies at the University of Houston.