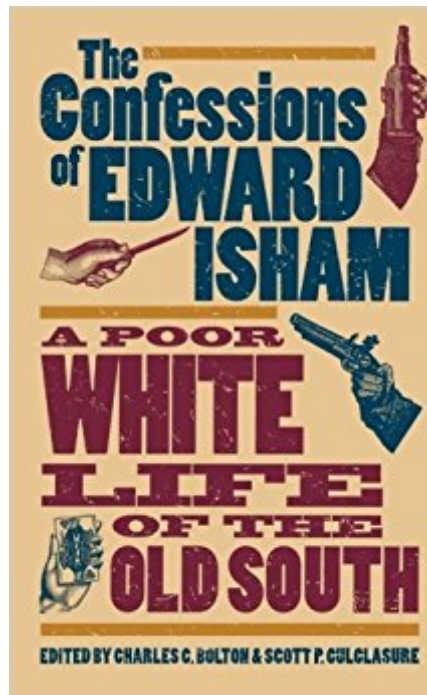




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The Confessions Of Edward Isham: A Poor White Life Of The Old South



Synopsis

This compelling collection of original documents and current scholarship sheds considerable light on the underside of the poor white experience in the antebellum South. In 1859, the Georgian Edward Isham, convicted in North Carolina of murdering a Piedmont farmer, dictated his life story to his court-appointed defense attorney. The autobiography left behind provides a rare look at the world of poor whites from the viewpoint of a member of this most elusive of the Old South's social groups. A selection of essays accompanying the autobiography examines the meaning of the document from a variety of perspectives: crime, frontier life, gender relations, labor, and the genre of nineteenth-century confessional literature.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Takes the remarkable autobiography of a confessed murderer and examines it from a variety of perspectives. Each of the essays that follow the Isham autobiography contributes to the mosaic of poor white life in the South. The violence that characterized Isham's life is astonishing. Many previous scholars have commented on the violence in the Old South, but rarely has one been able to see it through the lens of a single, brutish life. (Jeffrey J. Crow director of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History) The Confessions of Edward Isham, a cleverly conceived and adeptly executed essay collection, is a rich addition to our ever-growing understanding of that shadowy world of southern poor whites. The range of insights and meanings these scholars have teased out of the life of Edward Isham, known only through his brief biographical statement, makes

this book extraordinary. It is an example of how much skillful historians can make of single lives and even single incidents, particularly given the dramatic and even chilling story they focus upon here. (John C. Inscoe author of Mountain Masters: Slavery and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina)

Charles C. Bolton is professor and head of history at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Scott P. Culclasure is an international baccalaureate coordinator for the Guilford County, North Carolina schools.

Just a general excellent book. Very educational, and readable. Even the Notes, Index, and maps were highly informative. I'd recommend it to anyone interested in the Civil War antebellum South.

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