



THE PUTNAM VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PO BOX 297 ♦ 301 PEEKSKILL HOLLOW RD.

PUTNAM VALLEY, NY 10579

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OUR AMERICAN HISTORY

A FREE PROGRAM SERIES - OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Hanging Captain Gordon

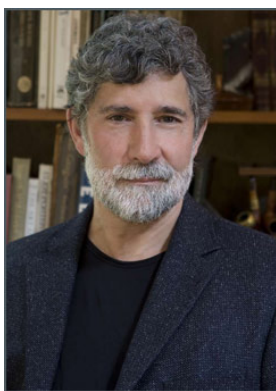
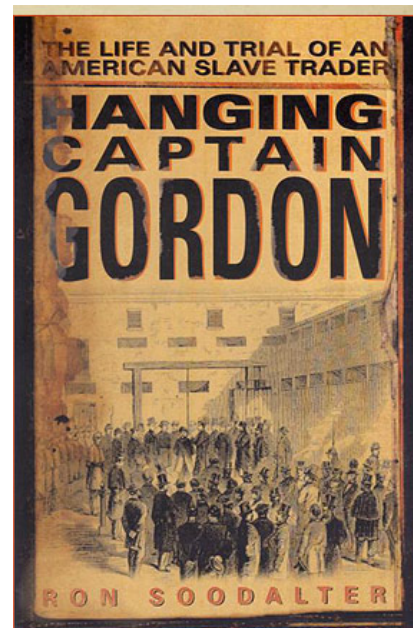
With Educator, Historian and Author

Ron Soodalter

Saturday May 14, 2016 at 10:00 am

On a frosty day in late February 1862, hundreds gathered in New York City's "Tombs" prison to watch the execution of Nathaniel Gordon. A sea captain from an old and respected Portland, Maine family, Gordon was about to become the only man in the history of the United States to be hanged for slave trading. What events led up to this pivotal moment? In *Hanging Captain Gordon*, Ron Soodalter explores the many compelling issues that came together to seal one man's fate.

When Gordon had sailed two years before to bring Africans back in chains from the Congo River, he had no reason to fear a hanging. Although this horrible crime had been a capital offense for over 40 years, the government – through corruption and disinterest – never bothered to enforce it. President Buchanan himself had stated publically that he would never hang a slaver! But Gordon didn't realize that a major change was coming. With the nation embroiled in a civil war, and a new president at the helm, social reform was the order of the day. Captain Gordon got caught up in the most vital turning point in American history.



Ron Soodalter

Ron Soodalter has pursued a variety of diverse careers. With a B.A. in American History and masters degrees in Education and American Folk Culture, he has taught in various schools throughout New York State, and in New York's Riker's Island Prison. He then worked as curator of a Colorado history museum, where he served on the Board of Directors of the 10-state Mountain-Plains Museums Conference.

In addition to his two current books – *Hanging Captain Gordon* and *The Slave Next Door*, Soodalter has had more than 250 articles published in periodicals including the New York Times, Smithsonian, Civil War Times, Military History, New York Archives, True West, and America's Civil War.

Ron also travels extensively, lecturing on both American History and the modern-day slave trade. Soodalter serves on the Board of Directors of the Abraham Lincoln Institute and the Advisory Board of the S.S. Columbia project. Ron lives, with his wife Jane, in Cold Spring, NY.

**This FREE program will be held at the Putnam Valley Grange Hall
128 Mill Street ♦ Putnam Valley, NY 10579 at 10:00 am**