



# **The Land Shall Be Deluged in Blood: A New History of the Nat Turner Revolt**

*Patrick H. Breen*

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On the evening of August 21, 1831, Nat Turner and six men launched their infamous rebellion against slaveholders. The rebels swept through Southampton County, Virginia, recruiting slaves to their ranks and killing nearly five dozen whites—more than had ever been killed in any slave revolt in American history. Although a hastily assembled group of whites soon suppressed the violence, its repercussions had far-reaching consequences.

In *The Land Shall Be Deluged in Blood*, Patrick H. Breen uses the dramatic events in Southampton to explore the terrible choices faced by members of the local black community as they considered joining the rebels, a choice that would likely cost them their lives, supporting their masters, or somehow avoiding taking sides. Combining fast-paced narrative with rigorous analysis, Breen shows how, as whites regained control, slaveholders created an account of the revolt that saved their slaves from white retribution, the most dangerous threat facing the slaveholders' human property. By probing the stories slaveholders told that allowed them to get non-slaveholders to protect slave property, *The Land Shall Be Deluged in Blood* reveals something surprising about both the fragility and power of slavery.

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