

Executing Democracy: Volume Two: Capital Punishment and the Making of America, 1835-1843: 2 (Rhetoric & Public Affairs)

Stephen John Hartnett

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This eye-opening and well-researched companion to the first volume of Executing Democracy enters the death-penalty discussion during the debates of 1835 and 1843, when pro-death penalty Calvinist minister George Barrell Cheever faced off against abolitionist magazine editor John O'Sullivan. In contrast to the macro-historical overview presented in volume 1, volume 2 provides micro-historical case studies, using these debates as springboards into the discussion of the death penalty in America at large. Incorporating a wide range of sources, including political poems, newspaper editorials, and warring manifestos, this second volume highlights a variety of perspectives, thus demonstrating the centrality of public debates about crime, violence, and punishment to the history of American democracy. Hartnett's insightful assessment bears witness to a complex national discussion about the political, metaphysical, and cultural significance of the death penalty.



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