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From Los Angeles and New York to Chicago and Miami, street gangs are regarded as one of the most intractable crime problems facing our cities, and a vast array of resources is being deployed to combat them. This book chronicles the astounding self-transformation of one of the most feared gangs in the United States into a social movement acting on behalf of the dispossessed, renouncing violence and the underground economy, and requiring school attendance for membership. What caused the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation of New York City to make this remarkable transformation? And why has it not happened to other gangs elsewhere? David C. Brotherton and Luis Barrios were given unprecedented access to new and never-before-published material by and about the Latin Kings and Queens, including the group's handbook, letters written by members, poems, rap songs, and prayers. In addition, they interviewed more than one hundred gang members, including such leaders as King Tone and King Hector. Featuring numerous photographs by award-winning photojournalist Steve Hart, the book explains the symbolic significance for the gang of hand gestures, attire, rituals, and rites of passage. Based on their inside information, the authors craft a unique portrait of the lives of the gang members and a ground-breaking study of their evolution.
