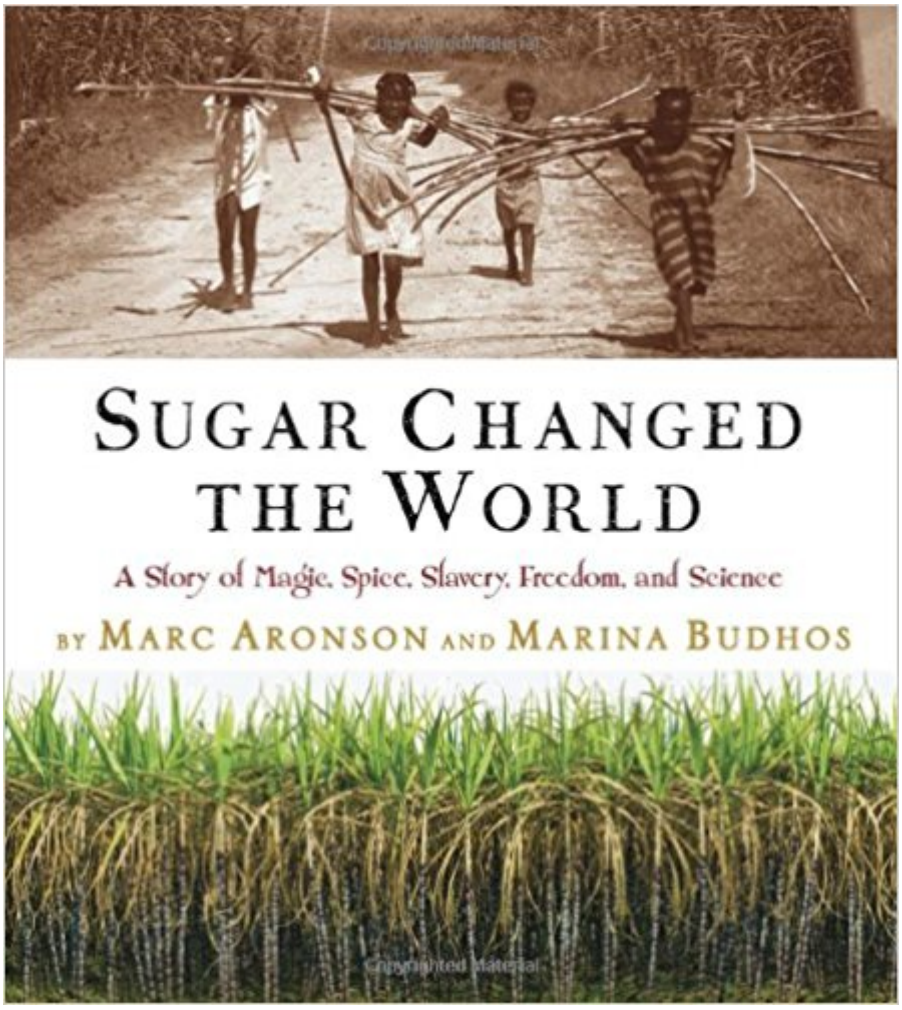
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Sugar Changed The World: A Story Of Magic, Spice, Slavery, Freedom, And Science



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Synopsis

When this award-winning husband-and-wife team discovered that they each had sugar in their family history, they were inspired to trace the globe-spanning story of the sweet substance and to seek out the voices of those who led bitter sugar lives. The trail ran like a bright band from religious ceremonies in India to EuropeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Middle Ages, then on to Columbus, who brought the first cane cuttings to the Americas. Sugar was the substance that drove the bloody slave trade and caused the loss of countless lives but it also planted the seeds of revolution that led to freedom in the American colonies, Haiti, and France. With songs, oral histories, maps, and over 80 archival illustrations, here is the story of how one product allows us to see the grand currents of world history in new ways. Time line, source notes, bibliography, index.

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Gr 8 UpÃ¢â ¬â œThis meticulously researched, brutally honest, compelling book offers readers a different way to look at many events over the past 200 years or so. The title says it all. From the slave trade through abolition; from revolutions (American, French, and Haitian) to the Louisiana Purchase; from the decline of honey to the rise of saccharine, these events and many more are directly traced to the cultivation and production of sugar cane around the world. With a focus on slavery, Aronson and Budhos demonstrate how this one crop, with its unique harvesting

needs, helped to bring about a particularly brutal incarnation of slavery. What makes this such a captivating read is that the book has a jigsaw-puzzle feel as the authors connect seemingly disparate threads and bring readers to the larger picture by highlighting the smaller details hidden within. Primary-source materials such as photographs, interview excerpts, and maps are included throughout, making this an indispensable part of any history collection. The chapter entitled Ã¢â ¬Å“How We Researched and Wrote This BookÃ¢â ¬Â• will be of particular interest to teachers and librarians.Jody Kopple, Shady Hill School, Cambridge, MAÃ Â© Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

As the title suggests, this stirring, highly detailed history of the sugar trade reaches across time and around the globe. Framed by the authorsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ family connections to the subject, the chapters move from New Guinea, where humans are believed to have first cultivated sugar cane 10,000 years ago, to its spread across the ancient world. With a chapter titled Ã¢â ¬Å“Hell,Ã¢â ¬Â• the authors delve into brutal accounts of the rise of sugar plantations in the Caribbean and Hawaii. In the U.S., where the sugar story centered on Louisiana, even supposedly free states, such as New York, made fortunes in transporting and selling sugar grown by slaves. The bookÃ¢â ¬â„¢s scope is ambitious, but the clear, informal prose, along with maps and archival illustrations, makes the horrific connections with dramatic immediacy. A closing chapter about how GandhiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s struggle for human rights affected the sugar trade brings in more of the authorsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ stories. A teacherÃ¢â ¬â„¢s guide is available, and classroom discussion is sure to spark intense interest and further research, starting with the fully documented sources at the back. Grades 8-12. --Hazel Rochman

I enjoyed "How Sugar Changed the World....." enough to cause me to use part of my vacation to go on a tour of a sugar plantation on Maui and the adjacent Sugar Museum to learn more about the business in the Hawaiian Islands. We read this book as our book club selection. I remember the jingle, "pure cane sugar, from Hawaii" on the C& H advertisements. Little did I know that the adds were placed to cause consumers to believe that cane sugar was superior to sugar beet sugar. We all enjoyed the book but felt it glossed over some facts and was a little thin in places. We wanted to read more. For instance, I had no idea of Gandi’s role in the movement to stop the kidnapping and illegal trade of Indians to work the cane fields. I didn’t know about the danger of the work especially when harvest came. There was only 24-48 hours to get the cane from field to boiling pots. Everyone worked including kids. Parts of the book are hard to read because of the field workers deplorable

living conditions, the brutality and inhumane practices that are described. Sugar did change the world, one of the unintended consequences was ushering in the industrial revolution. BTW, the art work in the book is great. Enjoy!

This is a wonderful book, if you want to learn more about the history and importance of sugar during The Age of Sugar. I recommend it.Sugar production was the direct cause of slavery. And "Sugar plantations stand between the old agricultural world of the feudal period and the wage and factory labor of the industrial age," per the book. Sugar set the world of the 18th century in motion, as, almost like a modern-day addictive drug, sugar was an instant hit with whoever tasted it. As humans, from the moment we are born, we crave sweetness.The drive to produce more and more of the stuff gave men and companies the excuse to treat other men and women like animals, even to the point of working them to death in the process. Such is the story told by this book, with a smooth, honest approach, full of details and insight.Cane sugar can be traced back to the present country of New Guinea. From there, it was spread by seamen to other parts of the world. By the 1300s, Europeans emerged from the Dark Ages and began to add more flavor to their food. Italian merchants brought sugar to Italian markets. Other Europeans discovered sugar via The Crusades.The sugar plantation was the invention of the Muslins. The Spanish and Portuguese captured the Canary Islands and The Azores. There, they set up Muslim-style plantations, using African slaves as labor. These plantations had a single purpose: to grow, harvest, then process sugar to be exported and sold elsewhere.Christopher Columbus took sugar cane from these islands to what are now the modern states of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Soon, sugar plantations boomed there and in Brazil, which became the largest of all producers. Between 1500 and the mid-1800s, more than three million Africans were shipped to Brazil to work the sugar plantations. Large numbers of African slaves were also shipped to the island nations of Barbados, Jamaica and others. By the mid-1700s, so much sugar was being produced, even common people in the New World and Europe could afford it. Tea was being imported to drink for pleasure and energy, but it was the addition of sugar that made it a huge hit.The Age of Sugar was in full-swing. Per the book, "Between the 1600s and the 1800s, sugar drove the entire economy linking Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas.On the plantations, once land was cleared, the production of sugar followed a continual pattern. The "seeders" planted cane cuttings and covered them with soil. The "weeders" cleared the fields of weeds and tried to control the rats. The "cutters" worked endless hours harvesting the crop, expected to cut and bind more than 4,000 stalks per day. The stalks were sent to the grinding mills, where syrup was extracted, then boiled and strained, leaving the sugar

crystals.The plantations were run like factories. The work was back-breaking and relentless. And, the book makes the point, "the Africans who labored in the sugar fields....were meant to work and die." The plantation owner was a kind of king or god, ruling over his empire of sugar. He had absolute power over the slaves, male and female. Slaves had no rights. Owners preferred to kill their slaves, rather than fear them. As a result, per the book, "on the sugar islands, while more than two million people were brought over from Africa, there were only 670,000 at (the time of) emancipation (1865)."In contrast, African slaves were the basis of wealth, not only production, for owners in the United States. More than 500,000 are estimated to have been brought in, but over the years the population of slaves grew impressively, so that by 1865 there was an eight-fold increase in their numbers, to more than 4 million African Americans.Back to Europe, per the book, sugar supplied the energy required by English workers in the mines and the factories during the industrial revolution. But sugar was also the source of the wealth to build and initially operate the factories. Per the authors, "English factories, you might say, were built, run and paid for by sugar." By 1900, sugar was used for jams, cookies, cakes, syrups, candies, tea and more. But it was the labor of the African slaves that had made this all possible. "Their labor made the Age of Sugar - the Industrial Age - possible."But the Age of Sugar would come to an end. In 1801, Black slaves in Haiti first gained their freedom via an armed revolt, and throughout Europe and America the ideas of liberty and freedom were on the rise. In 1807, England banned involvement in the slave trade, and the United States banned further importation of slaves. Sugar production continued in the United States, especially in the state of Mississippi. But by the 1890s, there was an overabundance of sugar production in the world, and the price of sugar began to collapse. Europe had perfected the cultivation of the sugar beet, which lacked the need of slave labor. There was less and less need for the cultivation of sugar cane.The book also includes sections on the development of sugar plantations in Hawaii and on the importation of sugar workers from India to the Caribbean plantations. And it ends with a Timeline of significant dates and events related to the story of sugar.

This was an interesting book that goes through the history of sugar and the impact it has had on the world. I found it engaging and I liked the fact that many old photos and pictures of paintings and sketches were included. They really helped get a sense for the various periods of time represented/detailed in this book. Obviously, sugar has been the source of a lot of violence in the world and the authors dont...ummm....sugar coat....this fact. They try to be honest and fair in their approach to this title. While I thought it wasnt perfect as a historical or contextual work, it was still very good and I enjoyed reading it quite a bit.

An excellent history that ties together the history of sweetness in numerous countries, cultures, and motivations of the worldwide expansion and development of the sugar industry. As a reader who has lived at times surrounded by sugar cane fields in the Caribbean and South America it was very interesting to read how the authors "connected the dots" of the many centuries of colonization, slavery, and economic dominance of this one product..

I bought this book for my granddaughter/son, but read it before handing it off. I've read other, more intense stories about the sugar trade, but I found this to be at a level for younger teens. While doing a good job of detailing the bittersweet of how this crop destroyed lives while enriching others, it did it in a very readable and understandable manor.

Chosen by my 12 year old for summer reading for school. Read in 2 days, couldn't put it down.

I learned of this wonderful book in late February'11, towards the end of "Black History Month", watching C-SPAN "Book TV". The married authors' presentation before young(4th to ?)grade New York City school children was fascinating and informative to both the school kids and me!! I felt compelled to acquire and read this book.Learning the historical background of this ubiquitous sweet commodity, as well as its influence on people and past world affairs (i.e. "globalization"), is easily accomplished by reading this one text. It's easy reading for young students, their parents and teachers without, surprisingly, over-emphasis of the racial/ethnic divide(s) which still haunt many of us today! This book is not about "guilt trips".I would recommend this book to any and all who are uninformed, curious or diabetic, and who would like to more about how we got here today "sweet tooth" and all.

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