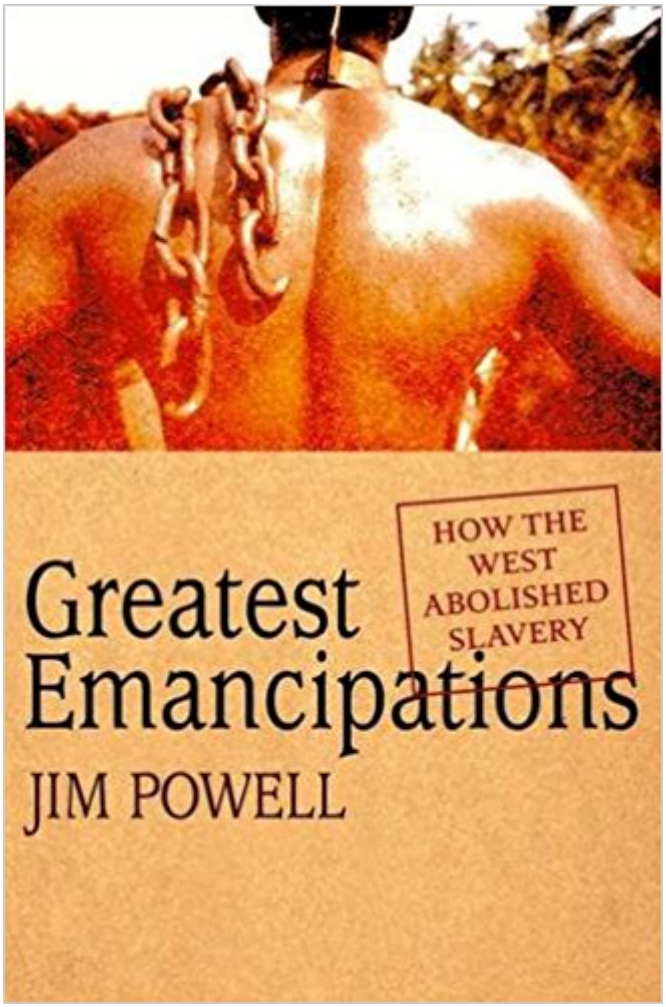
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Greatest Emancipations: How The West Abolished Slavery



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Synopsis

For thousands of years, slavery went unchallenged in principle. Then in a single century, slavery was abolished and more than seven million slaves were freed. Greatest Emancipation tells this amazing story, focusing on Haiti, the British Caribbean, the United States, Cuba and Brazil, which accounted for the vast majority of slaves in the west. Jim Powell offers some surprising insights and shows that while the abolition of slavery was essential to any free society, it wasn't the sole determing factor, since some societies that abolished slavery later embraced dictatorships. Jim Powell reveals the process and tremendous influence that slavery's eradication had on individual societies in the west.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“Powell...has written a sweeping study of emancipation in the Atlantic world, detailing abolitionist movements and the end of slavery in Haiti, the British Caribbean, Cuba, Brazil, and the US. His argument is provocative...Powell's contribution to the debate is an important voice.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢CHOICEÃ¢â ¬Å“Jim Powell's Greatest Emancipations is a thoughtful, well-written book with a provocative and challenging thesis. This book chronicles the people and their strategies that emancipated slaves in the Western Hemisphere. Powell develops a case that that the more violence was involved in an emancipation, the worse the outcomes tended to be. Among other things, the destruction and killing of war led to a backlash that nobody could control, a backlash that subverted civil rights for decades. Readers will be interested to see Powell's reasons for believing that equal rights probably would have been achieved decades sooner if war Ã¢â ¬â œ including the

U.S. Civil War Ã¢â ¬â œ had been avoided. He offers a refreshing abolitionist, antiwar case that hasn't been heard in a long time.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢David Beito, author of Taxpayers in Revolt and Black Maverick: T.R.M. Howard's Fight for Civil Rights and Economic PowerÃ¢â ¬Å“I very much enjoyed reading Greatest Emancipations. I thought it did an excellent job presenting the material and showing how some key issues were settled. Readers should learn a great deal that they had not previously known, and they should begin to see things in a different light.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Stanley Engerman, Bancroft Prize winning co-author of Time on the Cross, the Economics of American Negro Slavery, co-editor of The Historical Guide to World Slavery and other booksÃ¢â ¬Å“Powell's analysis is thoroughly documented, relying on an impressive variety of popular and academic literature both contemporary and historical.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Milton Friedman, Nobel LaureateÃ¢â ¬Å“Jim Powell is one tough-minded historian, willing to let the chips fall where they may.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢David Landes, Harvard University and author of The Wealth and Poverty of NationsÃ¢â ¬Å“Powell's analysis is thoroughly documented, relying on an impressive variety of popular and academic literature both contemporary and historical.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Milton Friedman, Nobel Laureate

Jim Powell, a Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute, is the author The Triumph of Liberty, FDR's Folly, Wilson's War and Bully Boy. His articles have appeared in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Chicago Tribune, Town & Country, Esquire and Americana, among other publications. He has lectured in Argentina, Brazil, Great Britain, Germany and Japan. He lives in Westport, Connecticut.

GREATEST EMANCIPATIONS: HOW THE WEST ABOLISHED SLAVERY by Jim Powell is not the title I assumed. It was a surprise to read a well written history of the economic consequences of slavery and the gradual development of the capitalist emancipation of human beings from servitude.The second meticiulously researched chapter from originial sources is one of the best histories of the development of the ideas that seeped into western culture on the rights of man. These ideas came from neither the law or religions, both of which support slavery as a human condition. Ideas that first entered the annals of history during the English Civil War came from a group called Levellers. Powell traces this beginning of thought through John Locke, Frances Hutcheson, Adam Smith to the Declaration of Independence. This chapter alone is worth the price of the title. My copy is flagged, margined noted, and underlined; many of the authors he cites stand on the my personal shelves.The writing style is excellent with some blow-by-blow sections a bit long, but on the whole it is highly readable without being preachy.Nash Black, author of

SANDPRINTS OF DEATH

The book was in perfect condition thanks!listed just as described!even though we did not contact each other it was exactly what i wanted and needed

In the introduction to his book Greatest Emancipations, Jim Powell first covers a general historical look at civilizations and worldwide slavery and slave trades. He asserts that it seems as though every civilization had slavery, including ancient Africa, Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, India, the Americas, the Jews, and the Greek and Roman empires.Powell opens his book by posing the question "Could Slavery Be Abolished?" Using this point of view, he focuses on slavery in the Western world and how an abolition movement began, and eventually swelled to larger and more potent national antislavery movements. Powell uses a biographical style, moving from country to country, introducing key individuals in each movement, their personal biographies, organizations, successes and failures in the movement toward abolition of slavery.Powell's book is very detailed and his end notes and bibliography are outstanding. He also included an impressive time line of the antislavery movement in the Western World. However, I did find at times he prolonged the blow-by-blow action well beyond what was necessary to make his point. Though he seemed to record all of the participants in the slave trade, he only brushed by the participation of black African's in their brutal capture, imprisonment, torture, and sale of their own countrymen. Powell seems to shy away from the fact that there is more than enough guilt to go around here.Powell is an impressive historian and an excellent writer. Though this book is very detailed, it is likewise very readable. I am convinced every reader will learn a number of facts they knew nothing about by reading Greatest Emancipations. However, I did find a weak point in Powell's presentation. As he moved from section to section, and chapter to chapter, he would often jump backward or forward in time to cover abolitionist's activities in another part of a country, or while moving to a different country altogether. I usually had to stop and go back to a previous section or chapter to get my historical bearings again before proceeding on in the new chapter. Though this proved annoying, it may have been the only way Powell could have effectively cover the material.Powell ends the book by primarily covering the aftermath of the U.S. Civil War, post-war reconstruction of the South (or the lack of reconstruction efforts by President Andrew Johnson) and the final abolition of slavery in the United States. He goes to the extreme to characterize President Lincoln's decision to chose a military solution to prevent the South's secession from the Union, and end slavery at the same time, as a terribly flawed decision. Once I reached the final section of the book, Powell's conclusion, I

realized why.In his conclusion, Powell thinks the nation would have been better served if Lincoln had chosen to forgo a civil war and chose instead to just let the South "peacefully" secede from the Union. He feels that by doing so, and applying pressure through a 5-point national strategy listed in his conclusion, the South would have "eventually" voluntarily given up slavery on their own.Though I understand why Powell thinks a pacifist plan may have "eventually" brought slavery to an end, I also think he is really underestimating the long-standing pre-war cultural and political bitterness between the North and South. Lincoln was no warmonger and I'm sure he too would have preferred a less violent solution. No one wanted a civil war. No one wanted the horrific Hiroshima-Nagasaki at the end of WWII either. Although each decision ended the conflict, neither one, in my opinion, was actually a solution.It is impossible to know whether Powell's plan would have been effective or not. Remember how large a portion of the United States the pro-slave states comprised (11 Confederate states, plus substantial territories West and North of these states). The United States may not have been able to endure that kind a breakup of the Union. It was likely too that Texas would have successfully seceded from both the Union and Confederacy to become its own county. Unlike Powell, I simply don't see that there was a clear and satisfying solution facing Lincoln.A Side Note: I found it interesting that in the opening of Powell's book he is mildly critical of the Bible for not taking a more anti-slavery tone. Actually, both the OT and NT have more than a few words to say about how masters and slaves are required to treat each other. In fact, there is a small letter in the NT entirely dedicated to this subject from a slave's viewpoint. What Powell likely finds unacceptable is the Bible's failure to address the externals of slavery. Instead, the Bible focuses on correcting slavery from the inside rather than an overt denunciation of it. Jesus dealt with slavery on an individual basis, from the inside, a change of heart attitude, person by person. And he certainly was a positive and the quintessential role model. This may explain the absence of a strong anti-slavery message in scripture. Tragically however, slave owners, especially in our southern states, turned a blind eye and a deaf ear to the clear admonitions and examples in the Bible about slavery, choosing instead their own personal profit over humane civility.Just like the issue of slavery, this book and its author's recommendations and solutions will be discussed, debated, lauded, criticized, and maligned for years to come. And, unfortunately, our historical hindsight on matters like this haven't always been 20-20 either, especially in our PC-driven 21st Century.

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