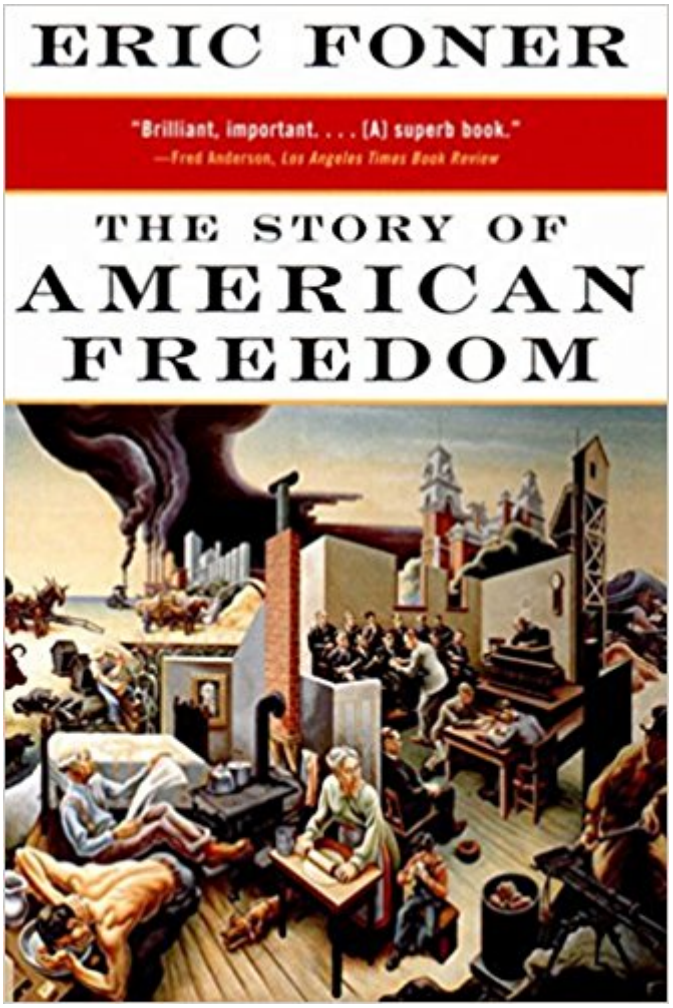
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The Story Of American Freedom (Norton Paperback)



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Synopsis

A stirring history of America focused on its animating impulse: freedom. From the Revolution to our own time, freedom has been America’s strongest cultural bond and its most perilous fault line, a birthright for some Americans and a cruel mockery for others. Eric Foner takes freedom not as a timeless truth but as a value whose meaning and scope have been contested throughout American history. His sweeping narrative shows freedom to have been shaped not only in congressional debates and political treatises but also on plantations and picket lines, in parlors and bedrooms, by our acknowledged leaders and by former slaves, union organizers, freedom riders, and women’s rights activists.

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Customer Reviews

Freedom, Eric Foner writes, is "the oldest of clichÃƒÂ©s and the most modern of aspirations." But what does it mean to be free? For the people of the United States, the concept of "freedom"--and its counterpart, "liberty"--have had widely differing meanings over the centuries. The Story of American Freedom, therefore, "is not a mythic saga with a predetermined beginning and conclusion, but an open-ended history of accomplishment and failure, a record of a people forever contending about the crucial ideas of their political culture." Foner begins with the colonial era, when the Puritans believed that liberty was rooted in voluntary submission to God and civil authorities, and consisted only in the right to do good. John Locke, too, would argue that liberty did not consist of the lack of

restraint, but of "a standing rule to live by, common to every one of that society, and made by the legislative power." Foner reveals the ideological conflicts that lay at the heart of the American Revolution and the Civil War, the shifts in thought about what freedom is and to whom it should apply. Adeptly charting the major trends of 20th-century American politics--including the invocation of freedom as a call to arms in both world wars--Foner concludes by contrasting the two prevalent movements of the 1990s: the liberal articulation of freedom, grounded in Johnson's Great Society and the rhetoric of the New Left, as the provision of civil rights and economic opportunity for all citizens, and the conservative vision, perhaps most fully realized during the presidency of Ronald Reagan, of a free-market economy and decentralized political power. The Story of American Freedom is a sweeping synthesis, delivered in clearheaded language that makes the ongoing nature of the American dream accessible to all readers. --Ron Hogan --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Distinguished Columbia historian Foner frames American history as a continuing fight for freedom.Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is an extraordinary book. Eric Foner traces the evolution of our understandings and meanings of freedom from America's foundation to the present. The concept of freedom is fundamentally cultural. That is, it embodies the habits of the heart, mind, and action of the American people: what we believe, how we feel, and how we act out our beliefs regarding freedom. Foner illustrates how our understandings of freedom have expanded, deepened and become more inclusive over the decades as a function of events, struggles, debates, Surpreme Court decisions, and outright violence, e.g. Civil War.You might say, our understandings of freedom are continually being forged in real life conflicts over its meanings wheather it was slavery, segregation, women's right to vote, unions, and the current freedom issues of gay marriage etc. In the end, Foner's book provides the reader with a deep understanding of how our notions of freedom have and continues to evolve. Foner educates us about American history and what it means to be an American. A great and optimistic book and a must read for anyone who want's to understand the fundamental character of our nation amd the core of the American Identity.

Outstanding analysis

I purchased this book for my son. I believed he enjoyed the book.

This book is quite interesting and brings history alive. The author’s language does take some time to get accustomed to, as he tends to be quite wordy. Overall, it illustrates how the meaning of freedom changes over time very effectively.

Great book for school!!!

The author has chosen a topic - "freedom" - that has been prominent in discourse both public (political) and private (personal lives). In short, the topic - however variously defined, in specific historical contexts - is vital to our public and private lives. He deals with the material beautifully; I cannot say enough in his favor. The material is especially timely as we are being deluged (once again) with politically motivated, manipulative uses of "freedom" and "liberty". Read the book. I read a library copy,then bought three copies - one to keep, others for family members. One final note, a teaser: he makes a good case that our U.S. culture has elevated MATERIAL CONSUMPTION way up, perhaps to the very top of what is now seen as American "freedom." And this has not necessarily been voluntary; rather, many of what we might think of as more traditional and meaningful freedoms are no longer available, at least to folks lacking the $$$$ to buy consideration by political/corporate leaders. The best that many people can hope for is the attention of a salesperson in a store.

I got it for a class and it is good definitely a good book if you are interested in american history even a little bit.

Had to read it for class, it was interesting at some points but drug along at others.

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