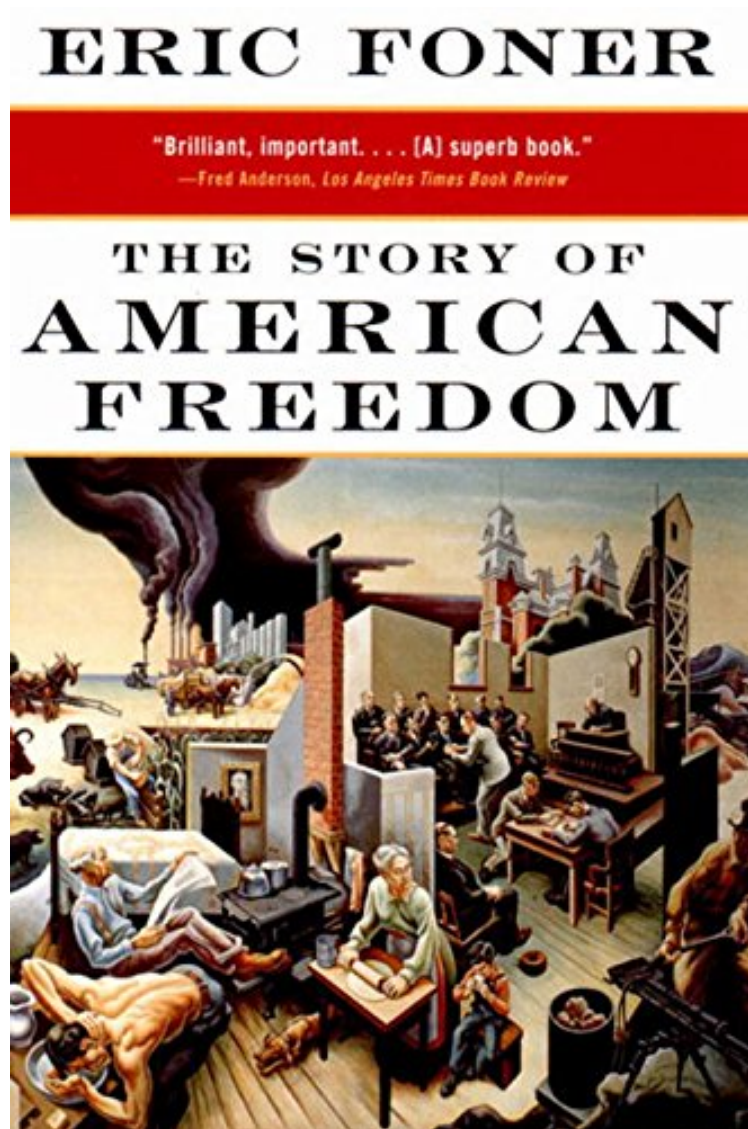


[Library ebook] The Story of American Freedom (Norton Paperback)

The Story of American Freedom (Norton Paperback)

Eric Foner

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Eric Foner : The Story of American Freedom (Norton Paperback) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Story of American Freedom (Norton Paperback):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommend for any American!By DLove this book!3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Freedom In AmericaBy John F. GilliganThis 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, Supreme 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 whether 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 wants to understand the fundamental character of our nation and the core of the American Identity. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Richard C Woolson Outstanding analysis

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.

Freedom, Eric Foner writes, is "the oldest of clichés 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 From Library Journal

Distinguished Columbia historian Foner frames American history as a continuing fight for freedom. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist The concept of "freedom" as a driving force in American history is often dismissed by Marxists, neo-Beardians, and revisionists as a smoke screen to cover the clash of competing economic interests. Foner, professor of history at Columbia University, acknowledges that different groups put different slants on the meaning of freedom. He also deals effectively with the exclusion of various groups from the benefits of freedom. Nevertheless, Foner sees America's commitment to freedom as a genuine, living ideal, which has inspired its citizens and driven them to heights of achievement and sacrifice. In a panorama of the struggle for freedom, Foner provides interesting insights into the labor movement, feminism, and the struggle for civil rights. This work will be a worthy addition to a public library's American history collection. Jay Freeman