

eric foner voices of freedom

eric foner voices of freedom is a widely acclaimed resource that has transformed the study of American history in classrooms across the nation. This article provides a comprehensive overview of Eric Foner's influential work, "Voices of Freedom," exploring its purpose, structure, and impact on historical scholarship. Readers will discover the book's origins, its role in fostering critical thinking, and how it enriches the understanding of pivotal moments in U.S. history. Key sections examine the diversity of primary sources featured, Foner's editorial approach, and practical ways educators utilize the collection. The article also delves into the themes and historical perspectives that make "Voices of Freedom" essential reading for students, teachers, and history enthusiasts alike. With keyword-rich, reader-friendly content, this guide will help you understand why "eric foner voices of freedom" stands out as a vital educational tool and an authoritative voice in the field of American history.

- Overview of Eric Foner and Voices of Freedom
- Origins and Purpose of Voices of Freedom
- Structure and Organization of the Collection
- Types of Primary Sources Included
- Editorial Approach and Historical Perspectives
- Key Themes Explored in Voices of Freedom
- Voices of Freedom in the Classroom
- Impact on Historical Scholarship
- Conclusion

Overview of Eric Foner and Voices of Freedom

Eric Foner is a renowned historian whose scholarship has significantly shaped the study of American history, particularly the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the concept of freedom in the United States. "Voices of Freedom" is one of his most celebrated works, serving as a companion reader to his other influential publications. This compilation gathers an impressive range of primary source documents, making it an essential tool for students and educators seeking to engage directly with the voices that have defined American history. The book's reputation for depth and authenticity ensures that "eric foner voices of freedom" remains a central resource for understanding the evolution of freedom and democracy in the U.S.

Origins and Purpose of Voices of Freedom

Development of the Collection

"Voices of Freedom" was developed to supplement Eric Foner's major textbook, "Give Me Liberty!", and to provide firsthand perspectives on critical events and debates throughout American history. Foner recognized the importance of allowing students to access original documents, speeches, letters, and essays from diverse historical figures. The purpose of this collection is to encourage analytical thinking and to deepen the reader's engagement with the complexities of freedom and its contested meanings over time.

Educational Goals

The primary educational goal of "Voices of Freedom" is to bridge the gap between textbook narratives and the lived experiences of individuals who shaped the nation's history. By presenting a wide spectrum of documents, Foner aims to foster a critical understanding of historical change, the dynamics of social movements, and the ongoing struggle for equality and justice. This approach empowers students to interpret and evaluate historical evidence directly.

Structure and Organization of the Collection

Chronological Arrangement

"Voices of Freedom" is organized chronologically, allowing readers to trace the progression of American history from the colonial era to the present. Each chapter corresponds with major periods and themes covered in Foner's main textbook, making it easy to integrate the documents into broader course materials. This structure helps readers see the evolution of ideas and conflicts over time.

Document Selection Criteria

Eric Foner selects documents based on their historical significance, diversity of perspectives, and relevance to major themes of freedom and democracy. The collection features both well-known texts and lesser-known voices, ensuring a balanced representation of viewpoints. This editorial strategy provides students with a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted nature of American history.

- Chronological chapters aligned with textbook material
- Documents include speeches, letters, essays, and official records

- Selection emphasizes diversity and historical relevance

Types of Primary Sources Included

Political and Legal Documents

The collection incorporates foundational political and legal documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and landmark Supreme Court decisions. These sources offer insight into the legal frameworks and ideological debates that have shaped American society.

Personal Narratives and Letters

Personal narratives, letters, and memoirs provide intimate glimpses into the experiences of individuals across different eras. These documents include accounts from enslaved people, immigrant stories, women's voices, and activists from various movements. Such sources humanize historical events and highlight the personal dimensions of freedom.

Speeches and Essays

Speeches and essays from influential figures—such as Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King Jr., and Elizabeth Cady Stanton—offer powerful expressions of resistance, advocacy, and hope. These texts showcase the rhetorical strategies and philosophical arguments that have advanced the cause of liberty and justice.

Editorial Approach and Historical Perspectives

Balancing Representation

Eric Foner's editorial approach emphasizes the inclusion of diverse voices, reflecting the complexity of U.S. history. By presenting perspectives from different racial, ethnic, and social groups, Foner ensures that readers encounter the full spectrum of historical experiences. This method challenges traditional narratives and promotes a more inclusive understanding of freedom.

Contextual Introductions and Annotations

Each document is accompanied by brief introductions and annotations that provide historical context and guidance for interpretation. Foner's commentary helps readers understand the significance of

each source within its specific time period and broader thematic framework. These notes are essential for making primary sources accessible and meaningful to students.

Key Themes Explored in Voices of Freedom

Evolution of Freedom

A central theme of "Voices of Freedom" is the evolving definition of freedom in the United States. The collection traces how ideas about liberty, citizenship, and rights have changed in response to social, political, and economic developments. Readers learn about the contested meanings of freedom and how different groups have struggled to expand its boundaries.

Conflict and Reform

The book examines the role of conflict and reform in shaping American society. Documents highlight pivotal moments such as the abolition of slavery, the fight for women's suffrage, labor movements, civil rights activism, and more. These sources illustrate the ongoing efforts to challenge injustice and promote progress.

Diversity and Inclusion

"Voices of Freedom" underscores the importance of diversity and inclusion in American history. By featuring marginalized voices and underrepresented perspectives, Foner demonstrates that the quest for freedom has been a collective endeavor shaped by many different actors. This focus encourages readers to appreciate the complexity and richness of the American experience.

1. Evolution of freedom across historical periods
2. Struggles for civil rights and social justice
3. Impact of reform movements on American society
4. Role of marginalized groups in shaping history

Voices of Freedom in the Classroom

Instructional Uses

Educators widely use "Voices of Freedom" to facilitate active learning and critical analysis of primary sources. The book serves as a springboard for classroom discussions, research projects, and essay assignments. Teachers utilize the documents to help students develop historical thinking skills, including contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration.

Facilitating Debate and Discussion

The diverse range of perspectives in the collection supports lively debates and discussions about historical controversies and ethical dilemmas. Students are encouraged to compare viewpoints, assess evidence, and articulate their own interpretations. This pedagogical approach enhances engagement and deepens understanding.

Assessment and Evaluation

"Voices of Freedom" provides rich material for formative and summative assessments. Instructors can design assignments that require close reading of primary sources, analysis of historical arguments, and synthesis of multiple perspectives. This fosters higher-order thinking and prepares students for advanced study in history and related fields.

Impact on Historical Scholarship

Influence on Research and Teaching

"Voices of Freedom" has had a significant impact on both research and teaching in American history. Scholars appreciate the accessibility and breadth of the sources, which enable new interpretations of key events and trends. The book's focus on primary documents encourages original research and supports the development of historiographical debates.

Contribution to Public Understanding

By making historical voices more accessible, Eric Foner's collection contributes to public understanding of the American past. "Voices of Freedom" informs discussions about contemporary issues by illuminating historical precedents and ongoing struggles for justice. The work's influence extends beyond academia, shaping how history is taught and understood nationwide.

Conclusion

Eric Foner's "Voices of Freedom" stands as a foundational resource for exploring the history of freedom in the United States. Through its diverse selection of primary sources, thoughtful editorial approach, and integration into educational settings, the collection offers a dynamic and nuanced portrait of the nation's past. Whether used by students, teachers, or scholars, "Voices of Freedom" continues to enrich the study of American history and inspire critical engagement with the meaning of freedom.

Q: What is the main purpose of Eric Foner's Voices of Freedom?

A: The main purpose of "Voices of Freedom" is to provide direct access to primary source documents that illuminate the struggles and debates over freedom throughout American history. It encourages critical thinking and helps readers engage with historical evidence firsthand.

Q: Who is Eric Foner and why is his work significant?

A: Eric Foner is an esteemed historian known for his scholarship on the Civil War, Reconstruction, and American freedom. His work is significant for its emphasis on inclusive history and its influence on both academic research and classroom teaching.

Q: What types of primary sources are included in Voices of Freedom?

A: The collection includes political and legal documents, personal narratives, letters, speeches, essays, and official records. These sources represent a wide range of perspectives and historical periods.

Q: How is Voices of Freedom structured?

A: "Voices of Freedom" is organized chronologically, with chapters corresponding to major periods and themes in American history. This arrangement helps readers follow the development of key ideas and events.

Q: How do educators use Voices of Freedom in the classroom?

A: Educators use the book to spark discussion, facilitate debates, create research assignments, and assess students' historical thinking skills. The documents support active learning and help students analyze multiple perspectives.

Q: What are some key themes explored in Voices of Freedom?

A: Key themes include the evolution of freedom, conflict and reform, diversity and inclusion, and the role of marginalized groups in shaping American society.

Q: Why is it important to study primary sources in history?

A: Studying primary sources allows students to engage directly with the voices and experiences of historical actors. This approach fosters critical analysis and a deeper understanding of historical events.

Q: How does Voices of Freedom contribute to historical scholarship?

A: The book enriches historical scholarship by making diverse primary sources accessible and promoting new interpretations of key events. It supports research and advances historiographical debates.

Q: Can Voices of Freedom be used for independent study?

A: Yes, "Voices of Freedom" is suitable for independent study, providing readers with a wealth of documents and contextual information to explore American history on their own.

Q: What makes Voices of Freedom different from other American history readers?

A: Its comprehensive selection of sources, careful editorial approach, and emphasis on diverse perspectives set "Voices of Freedom" apart as a leading resource for understanding the complexities of American freedom.

[Eric Foner Voices Of Freedom](#)

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Eric Foner's Voices of Freedom: A Comprehensive

Guide

Are you captivated by American history, eager to understand its complexities and contradictions? Then Eric Foner's *Voices of Freedom* is a must-read. This isn't just a textbook; it's a journey through the American experience, told through the words and perspectives of those who lived it. This comprehensive guide will delve into what makes *Voices of Freedom* so impactful, exploring its key themes, pedagogical approach, and lasting influence on the way we understand American history. We'll examine why it remains a cornerstone text in college classrooms and a compelling read for anyone interested in a nuanced and engaging exploration of the nation's past.

H2: Understanding Eric Foner's Approach in *Voices of Freedom*

Eric Foner, a renowned historian, masterfully avoids a purely top-down narrative in *Voices of Freedom*. Instead, he employs a bottom-up approach, prioritizing the voices and experiences of ordinary Americans—women, men, enslaved people, Indigenous populations, immigrants, and marginalized groups. This approach challenges traditional, often Eurocentric, narratives that frequently overlook or minimize the contributions and struggles of these vital segments of the population. Foner's skillful weaving together of primary source documents—letters, speeches, diaries, legal documents, and songs—gives readers direct access to the past, allowing them to engage with history on a personal and emotional level.

H2: Key Themes Explored in *Voices of Freedom*

Voices of Freedom doesn't shy away from the uncomfortable truths of American history. Several key themes emerge throughout the text, forming a complex and multifaceted portrayal of the nation's development:

H3: Freedom's Evolving Definition:

The book meticulously traces how the very concept of "freedom" has been contested and redefined throughout American history. It showcases how different groups have understood and fought for freedom, revealing the inherent tensions between liberty and inequality. This is not a simplistic narrative of progress, but rather a nuanced examination of the ongoing struggle for a more inclusive and just society.

H3: The Struggle for Equality:

The fight for racial, gender, and economic equality forms a central thread throughout *Voices of Freedom*. Foner expertly demonstrates how these struggles have intertwined and shaped the

nation's trajectory. He highlights the persistent resistance to equality, showcasing both the triumphs and setbacks experienced by marginalized communities.

H3: The Interplay of Politics and Society:

The text examines the complex relationship between political structures and social movements. It shows how political events, legislative actions, and social activism have influenced each other, creating a dynamic and interconnected history. This approach emphasizes the agency of ordinary individuals in shaping the political landscape.

H3: The Impact of Ideologies:

Voices of Freedom explores the power of competing ideologies—from republicanism and liberalism to abolitionism and socialism—to shape American political and social life. It demonstrates how these belief systems have influenced both the progress and the setbacks in the pursuit of a more equitable society.

H2: Pedagogical Excellence and Accessibility

One of the reasons Voices of Freedom is so successful is its pedagogical approach. Foner's writing is clear, accessible, and engaging, making complex historical events understandable to a wide audience. The inclusion of diverse primary sources allows readers to connect with history on a deeply personal level, fostering critical thinking and encouraging further exploration. The book is structured in a way that facilitates discussion and debate, making it an ideal text for classroom settings.

H2: The Lasting Impact of Voices of Freedom

Voices of Freedom has significantly impacted the teaching and understanding of American history. Its emphasis on primary sources, its inclusion of diverse perspectives, and its nuanced approach have challenged traditional narratives and encouraged a more inclusive and accurate portrayal of the American past. The book has inspired countless students and scholars, prompting critical reflection on the nation's history and its ongoing quest for a more just and equitable future. Its influence extends beyond academia, shaping public discourse and inspiring activism.

Conclusion:

Eric Foner's *Voices of Freedom* is more than just a textbook; it's a crucial resource for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of American history. By prioritizing the voices of ordinary people and addressing the complexities of the nation's past, Foner offers a powerful and compelling narrative that encourages critical thinking and fosters a more informed citizenry. Its accessibility, combined with its scholarly rigor, ensures its continued relevance and impact for years to come.

FAQs:

1. Is *Voices of Freedom* suitable for non-academic readers? Absolutely! While it's used in academic settings, Foner's writing style is clear and engaging, making it accessible to anyone interested in American history.
2. What makes *Voices of Freedom* different from other American history textbooks? Its emphasis on primary sources and diverse perspectives, coupled with its nuanced approach to complex historical issues, sets it apart.
3. How does *Voices of Freedom* incorporate different perspectives? It includes narratives from various groups, including women, enslaved people, Native Americans, and immigrants, providing a more complete and inclusive picture of the past.
4. Is there a specific edition of *Voices of Freedom* that is considered the best? While there are several editions, the most recent edition often contains the most updated scholarship and potentially revised content. Checking the publication date is crucial.
5. Where can I find *Voices of Freedom*? It's widely available online from major book retailers, as well as in libraries and college bookstores.

eric foner voices of freedom: *Voices of Freedom* Eric Foner, 2005

eric foner voices of freedom: *Voices of Freedom* Eric Foner, 2005 Edited by Eric Foner and coordinated with each chapter of the text, this companion to *Give Me Liberty!* includes primary-source documents touching on the theme of American freedom. The freedom theme is explored in the words of well-known historical figures and ordinary Americans. Each document is accompanied by an introductory headnote and study questions.

eric foner voices of freedom: *Voices of Freedom* Eric Foner, 2008 Edited by Eric Foner and coordinated with each chapter of the text, this companion to *Give Me Liberty!* includes 139 primary-source documents touching on the theme of American freedom.

eric foner voices of freedom: *Give Me Liberty! and Voices of Freedom* Eric Foner, 2013-11-12 It is the leading text in the field because it works in the classroom.

eric foner voices of freedom: *Voices of Freedom* Eric Foner, Kathleen DuVal, Lisa McGirr, 2022-12 See why this is the most popular reader for the U.S. history course.

eric foner voices of freedom: *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution* Eric Foner, 2019-09-17 "Gripping and essential."—Jesse Wegman, *New York Times* An authoritative history by the preeminent scholar of the Civil War era, *The Second Founding* traces the arc of the three foundational Reconstruction amendments from their origins in

antebellum activism and adoption amidst intense postwar politics to their virtual nullification by narrow Supreme Court decisions and Jim Crow state laws. Today these amendments remain strong tools for achieving the American ideal of equality, if only we will take them up.

eric foner voices of freedom: *Give Me Liberty! An American History* Eric Foner, 2016-09-15 *Give Me Liberty!* is the #1 book in the U.S. history survey course because it works in the classroom. A single-author text by a leader in the field, *Give Me Liberty!* delivers an authoritative, accessible, concise, and integrated American history. Updated with powerful new scholarship on borderlands and the West, the Fifth Edition brings new interactive History Skills Tutorials and Norton InQuizitive for History, the award-winning adaptive quizzing tool.

eric foner voices of freedom: Forever Free Eric Foner, 2013-06-26 From one of our most distinguished historians, a new examination of the vitally important years of Emancipation and Reconstruction during and immediately following the Civil War—a necessary reconsideration that emphasizes the era’s political and cultural meaning for today’s America. In *Forever Free*, Eric Foner overturns numerous assumptions growing out of the traditional understanding of the period, which is based almost exclusively on white sources and shaped by (often unconscious) racism. He presents the period as a time of determination, especially on the part of recently emancipated black Americans, to put into effect the principles of equal rights and citizenship for all. Drawing on a wide range of long-neglected documents, he places a new emphasis on the centrality of the black experience to an understanding of the era. We see African Americans as active agents in overthrowing slavery, in helping win the Civil War, and—even more actively—in shaping Reconstruction and creating a legacy long obscured and misunderstood. Foner makes clear how, by war’s end, freed slaves in the South built on networks of church and family in order to exercise their right of suffrage as well as gain access to education, land, and employment. He shows us that the birth of the Ku Klux Klan and renewed acts of racial violence were retaliation for the progress made by blacks soon after the war. He refutes lingering misconceptions about Reconstruction, including the attribution of its ills to corrupt African American politicians and “carpetbaggers,” and connects it to the movements for civil rights and racial justice. Joshua Brown’s illustrated commentary on the era’s graphic art and photographs complements the narrative. He offers a unique portrait of how Americans envisioned their world and time. *Forever Free* is an essential contribution to our understanding of the events that fundamentally reshaped American life after the Civil War—a persuasive reading of history that transforms our sense of the era from a time of failure and despair to a threshold of hope and achievement.

eric foner voices of freedom: *Give Me Liberty!, 6e Ap(r) with Media Access Registration Card + Voices of Freedom, 6e Volumes 1 and 2* Eric Foner, 2020-02-20 AP(R) is a trademark registered and/or owned by the College Board, which was not involved in the production of, and does not endorse, this product.

eric foner voices of freedom: *To ŌJoy My Freedom* Tera W. Hunter, 1998-09-15 As the Civil War drew to a close, newly emancipated black women workers made their way to Atlanta—the economic hub of the newly emerging urban and industrial south—in order to build an independent and free life on the rubble of their enslaved past. In an original and dramatic work of scholarship, Tera Hunter traces their lives in the postbellum era and reveals the centrality of their labors to the African-American struggle for freedom and justice. Household laborers and washerwomen were constrained by their employers' domestic worlds but constructed their own world of work, play, negotiation, resistance, and community organization. Hunter follows African-American working women from their newfound optimism and hope at the end of the Civil War to their struggles as free domestic laborers in the homes of their former masters. We witness their drive as they build neighborhoods and networks and their energy as they enjoy leisure hours in dance halls and clubs. We learn of their militance and the way they resisted efforts to keep them economically depressed and medically victimized. Finally, we understand the despair and defeat provoked by Jim Crow laws and segregation and how they spurred large numbers of black laboring women to migrate north. Hunter weaves a rich and diverse tapestry of the culture and experience of black women workers in

the post-Civil War south. Through anecdote and data, analysis and interpretation, she manages to penetrate African-American life and labor and to reveal the centrality of women at the inception--and at the heart--of the new south.

eric foner voices of freedom: *Give Me Liberty!*, 6th Edition (Volume 2) Eric Foner, 2019-10
The leading U.S. history textbook, with a new focus on Who is an American?

eric foner voices of freedom: *Story of American Freedom* Eric Foner, 1999-09-07 Freedom is the cornerstone of his sweeping narrative that focuses not only congressional debates and political treatises since the Revolution but how the fight for freedom took place on plantation and picket lines and in parlors and bedrooms.

eric foner voices of freedom: *America: A Narrative History* Shi, David E., 2019-07-01 America is the leading narrative history because students love to read it. Additional coverage of immigration enhances the timeliness of the narrative. New Chapter Opener videos, History Skills Tutorials, and Norton's adaptive learning tool, InQuizitive, help students develop history skills, engage with the reading, and come to class prepared. What hasn't changed? Our unmatched affordability. Choose from Full, Brief (15% shorter), or The Essential Learning Edition--featuring fewer chapters and additional pedagogy.

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eric foner voices of freedom: *Reconstruction* Eric Foner, 2011-12-13 From the preeminent historian of Reconstruction (New York Times Book Review), a newly updated edition of the prize-winning classic work on the post-Civil War period which shaped modern America, with a new introduction from the author. Eric Foner's masterful treatment of one of the most complex periods of American history (New Republic) redefined how the post-Civil War period was viewed. Reconstruction chronicles the way in which Americans—black and white—responded to the unprecedented changes unleashed by the war and the end of slavery. It addresses the ways in which the emancipated slaves' quest for economic autonomy and equal citizenship shaped the political agenda of Reconstruction; the remodeling of Southern society and the place of planters, merchants, and small farmers within it; the evolution of racial attitudes and patterns of race relations; and the emergence of a national state possessing vastly expanded authority and committed, for a time, to the principle of equal rights for all Americans. This smart book of enormous strengths (Boston Globe) remains the standard work on the wrenching post-Civil War period—an era whose legacy still reverberates in the United States today.

eric foner voices of freedom: *Give Me Liberty!: An American History* Seagull 6E Combined Vol Foner, Eric, 2019-12-01 A powerful text by an acclaimed historian, *Give Me Liberty!* delivers an authoritative, concise, and integrated American history. In the Sixth Edition, Eric Foner addresses a question that has motivated, divided, and stirred passionate debates: "Who is an American?" With new coverage of issues of inclusion and exclusion reinforced by new primary source features in the text and a new secondary source tutorial online *Give Me Liberty!* strengthens

students' most important historical thinking skills. The Seagull Edition offers the complete text of the Full Edition in full color and a portable trim size with fewer illustrations and maps and an exceptionally low price.

eric foner voices of freedom: *Give Me Liberty!*, 6e Seagull Volume 1 with Media Access Registration Card + *Voices of Freedom*, 6e Volume 1 Eric Foner, 2019-12-05

eric foner voices of freedom: *Nothing But Freedom* Eric Foner, 2007-09 *Nothing But Freedom* examines the aftermath of emancipation in the South and the restructuring of society by which the former slaves gained, beyond their freedom, a new relation to the land they worked on, to the men they worked for, and to the government they lived under. Taking a comparative approach, Foner examines Reconstruction in the Southern states against the experience of Haiti, the British Caribbean, and early twentieth-century southern and eastern Africa. He reveals Reconstruction to have been, despite its failings, a unique and dramatic experiment in interracial democracy in the aftermath of slavery. Steven Hahn's timely new foreword places Foner's analysis in the context of recent scholarship and assesses its enduring impact in the twenty-first century.

eric foner voices of freedom: Founding Brothers Joseph J. Ellis, 2002-02-05 PULITZER PRIZE WINNER • NATIONAL BESTSELLER • A landmark work of history explores how a group of greatly gifted but deeply flawed individuals—Hamilton, Burr, Jefferson, Franklin, Washington, Adams, and Madison—confronted the overwhelming challenges before them to set the course for our nation. “A splendid book—humane, learned, written with flair and radiant with a calm intelligence and wit.” —The New York Times Book Review The United States was more a fragile hope than a reality in 1790. During the decade that followed, the Founding Fathers—re-examined here as Founding Brothers—combined the ideals of the Declaration of Independence with the content of the Constitution to create the practical workings of our government. Through an analysis of six fascinating episodes—Hamilton and Burr’s deadly duel, Washington’s precedent-setting Farewell Address, Adams’ administration and political partnership with his wife, the debate about where to place the capital, Franklin’s attempt to force Congress to confront the issue of slavery and Madison’s attempts to block him, and Jefferson and Adams’ famous correspondence—Founding Brothers brings to life the vital issues and personalities from the most important decade in our nation’s history.

eric foner voices of freedom: *Many Thousands Gone* Ira Berlin, 2009-07-01 Today most Americans, black and white, identify slavery with cotton, the deep South, and the African-American church. But at the beginning of the nineteenth century, after almost two hundred years of African-American life in mainland North America, few slaves grew cotton, lived in the deep South, or embraced Christianity. *Many Thousands Gone* traces the evolution of black society from the first arrivals in the early seventeenth century through the Revolution. In telling their story, Ira Berlin, a leading historian of southern and African-American life, reintegrates slaves into the history of the American working class and into the tapestry of our nation. Laboring as field hands on tobacco and rice plantations, as skilled artisans in port cities, or soldiers along the frontier, generation after generation of African Americans struggled to create a world of their own in circumstances not of their own making. In a panoramic view that stretches from the North to the Chesapeake Bay and Carolina lowcountry to the Mississippi Valley, *Many Thousands Gone* reveals the diverse forms that slavery and freedom assumed before cotton was king. We witness the transformation that occurred as the first generations of creole slaves—who worked alongside their owners, free blacks, and indentured whites—gave way to the plantation generations, whose back-breaking labor was the sole engine of their society and whose physical and linguistic isolation sustained African traditions on American soil. As the nature of the slaves' labor changed with place and time, so did the relationship between slave and master, and between slave and society. In this fresh and vivid interpretation, Berlin demonstrates that the meaning of slavery and of race itself was continually renegotiated and redefined, as the nation lurched toward political and economic independence and grappled with the Enlightenment ideals that had inspired its birth.

eric foner voices of freedom: *A Struggle for Power* Theodore Draper, 2011-05-04 From one of the great political journalists of our time comes a boldly argued reinterpretation of the central event

in our collective past—a book that portrays the American Revolution not as a clash of ideologies but as a Machiavellian struggle for power.

eric foner voices of freedom: The Half Has Never Been Told Edward E Baptist, 2016-10-25 A groundbreaking history demonstrating that America's economic supremacy was built on the backs of enslaved people Winner of the 2015 Avery O. Craven Prize from the Organization of American Historians Winner of the 2015 Sidney Hillman Prize Americans tend to cast slavery as a pre-modern institution -- the nation's original sin, perhaps, but isolated in time and divorced from America's later success. But to do so robs the millions who suffered in bondage of their full legacy. As historian Edward E. Baptist reveals in *The Half Has Never Been Told*, the expansion of slavery in the first eight decades after American independence drove the evolution and modernization of the United States. In the span of a single lifetime, the South grew from a narrow coastal strip of worn-out tobacco plantations to a continental cotton empire, and the United States grew into a modern, industrial, and capitalist economy. Told through the intimate testimonies of survivors of slavery, plantation records, newspapers, as well as the words of politicians and entrepreneurs, *The Half Has Never Been Told* offers a radical new interpretation of American history.

eric foner voices of freedom: Reconstruction Updated Edition Eric Foner, 2014-12-02 From the preeminent historian of Reconstruction (New York Times Book Review), the prize-winning classic work on the post-Civil War period that shaped modern America. Eric Foner's masterful treatment of one of the most complex periods of American history (New Republic) redefined how the post-Civil War period was viewed. Reconstruction chronicles the way in which Americans—black and white—responded to the unprecedented changes unleashed by the war and the end of slavery. It addresses the ways in which the emancipated slaves' quest for economic autonomy and equal citizenship shaped the political agenda of Reconstruction; the remodeling of Southern society and the place of planters, merchants, and small farmers within it; the evolution of racial attitudes and patterns of race relations; and the emergence of a national state possessing vastly expanded authority and committed, for a time, to the principle of equal rights for all Americans. This smart book of enormous strengths (Boston Globe) remains the standard work on the wrenching post-Civil War period—an era whose legacy still reverberates in the United States today.

eric foner voices of freedom: They Left Great Marks on Me Kidada E. Williams, 2012-03-12 Well after slavery was abolished, its legacy of violence left deep wounds on African Americans' bodies, minds, and lives. For many victims and witnesses of the assaults, rapes, murders, nightrides, lynchings, and other bloody acts that followed, the suffering this violence engendered was at once too painful to put into words yet too horrible to suppress. Despite the trauma it could incur, many African Americans opted to publicize their experiences by testifying about the violence they endured and witnessed. In this evocative and deeply moving history, Kidada Williams examines African Americans' testimonies about racial violence. By using both oral and print culture to testify about violence, victims and witnesses hoped they would be able to graphically disseminate enough knowledge about its occurrence that federal officials and the American people would be inspired bear witness to their suffering and support their demands for justice. In the process of testifying, these people created a vernacular history of the violence they endured and witnessed, as well as the identities that grew from the experience of violence. This history fostered an oppositional consciousness to racial violence that inspired African Americans to form and support campaigns to end violence. The resulting crusades against racial violence became one of the political training grounds for the civil rights movement. -- Book Cover.

eric foner voices of freedom: Troubling Freedom Natasha Lightfoot, 2015-11-19 In 1834 Antigua became the only British colony in the Caribbean to move directly from slavery to full emancipation. Immediate freedom, however, did not live up to its promise, as it did not guarantee any level of stability or autonomy, and the implementation of new forms of coercion and control made it, in many ways, indistinguishable from slavery. In *Troubling Freedom* Natasha Lightfoot tells the story of how Antigua's newly freed black working people struggled to realize freedom in their everyday lives, prior to and in the decades following emancipation. She presents freedpeople's

efforts to form an efficient workforce, acquire property, secure housing, worship, and build independent communities in response to elite prescriptions for acceptable behavior and oppression. Despite its continued efforts, Antigua's black population failed to convince whites that its members were worthy of full economic and political inclusion. By highlighting the diverse ways freedpeople defined and created freedom through quotidian acts of survival and occasional uprisings, Lightfoot complicates conceptions of freedom and the general narrative that landlessness was the primary constraint for newly emancipated slaves in the Caribbean.

eric foner voices of freedom: Give Me Liberty!, 6e Brief Combined Volume with Media Access Registration Card + Voices of Freedom, 6e Volumes 1 And 2 Eric Foner, This is a preassembled package of Give Me Liberty!: An American History, volume 1 (978-0-393-41816-3) and Voices of Freedom: A Documentary History, volumes 1 and 2 (978-0-393-69691-2 and 978-0-393-69692-9). Affordable at an exceptional value, this leading text in the U.S. survey course and its best-selling companion reader have both been updated for the Sixth Edition.

eric foner voices of freedom: A People's History of the United States Howard Zinn, 2003-02-04 Since its original landmark publication in 1980, A People's History of the United States has been chronicling American history from the bottom up, throwing out the official version of history taught in schools -- with its emphasis on great men in high places -- to focus on the street, the home, and the workplace. Known for its lively, clear prose as well as its scholarly research, A People's History is the only volume to tell America's story from the point of view of -- and in the words of -- America's women, factory workers, African-Americans, Native Americans, the working poor, and immigrant laborers. As historian Howard Zinn shows, many of our country's greatest battles -- the fights for a fair wage, an eight-hour workday, child-labor laws, health and safety standards, universal suffrage, women's rights, racial equality -- were carried out at the grassroots level, against bloody resistance. Covering Christopher Columbus's arrival through President Clinton's first term, A People's History of the United States, which was nominated for the American Book Award in 1981, features insightful analysis of the most important events in our history. Revised, updated, and featuring a new afterword by the author, this special twentieth anniversary edition continues Zinn's important contribution to a complete and balanced understanding of American history.

eric foner voices of freedom: Frederick Douglass David W. Blight, 2020-01-07 * Selected as One of the Best Books of the 21st Century by The New York Times * Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in History * "Extraordinary...a great American biography" (The New Yorker) of the most important African American of the 19th century: Frederick Douglass, the escaped slave who became the greatest orator of his day and one of the leading abolitionists and writers of the era. As a young man Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) escaped from slavery in Baltimore, Maryland. He was fortunate to have been taught to read by his slave owner mistress, and he would go on to become one of the major literary figures of his time. His very existence gave the lie to slave owners: with dignity and great intelligence he bore witness to the brutality of slavery. Initially mentored by William Lloyd Garrison, Douglass spoke widely, using his own story to condemn slavery. By the Civil War, Douglass had become the most famed and widely travelled orator in the nation. In his unique and eloquent voice, written and spoken, Douglass was a fierce critic of the United States as well as a radical patriot. After the war he sometimes argued politically with younger African Americans, but he never forsook either the Republican party or the cause of black civil and political rights. In this "cinematic and deeply engaging" (The New York Times Book Review) biography, David Blight has drawn on new information held in a private collection that few other historians have consulted, as well as recently discovered issues of Douglass's newspapers. "Absorbing and even moving...a brilliant book that speaks to our own time as well as Douglass's" (The Wall Street Journal), Blight's biography tells the fascinating story of Douglass's two marriages and his complex extended family. "David Blight has written the definitive biography of Frederick Douglass...a powerful portrait of one of the most important American voices of the nineteenth century" (The Boston Globe). In addition to the Pulitzer Prize, Frederick Douglass won the Bancroft, Parkman, Los Angeles Times (biography), Lincoln,

Plutarch, and Christopher awards and was named one of the Best Books of 2018 by The New York Times Book Review, The Wall Street Journal, The Boston Globe, The Chicago Tribune, The San Francisco Chronicle, and Time.

eric foner voices of freedom: Blood on the River Marjoleine Kars, 2020-08-11 Winner of the Cundill History Prize Winner of the Frederick Douglass Book Prize Named One of the Best Books of the Year by NPR A breathtakingly original work of history that uncovers a massive enslaved persons' revolt that almost changed the face of the Americas Named one of the best books of the year by NPR, Blood on the River also won two of the highest honors for works of history, capturing both the Frederick Douglass Prize and the Cundill History Prize in 2021. A book with profound relevance for our own time, Blood on the River "fundamentally alters what we know about revolutionary change" according to Cundill Prize juror and NYU history professor Jennifer Morgan. Nearly two hundred sixty years ago, on Sunday, February 27, 1763, thousands of slaves in the Dutch colony of Berbice—in present-day Guyana—launched a rebellion that came amazingly close to succeeding. Blood on the River is the explosive story of this little-known revolution, one that almost changed the face of the Americas. Michael Ignatieff, chair of the Cundill Prize jury, declared that Blood on the River "tells a story so dramatic, so compelling that no reader will be able to put the book down." Drawing on nine hundred interrogation transcripts collected by the Dutch when the rebellion collapsed, and which were subsequently buried in Dutch archives, historian Marjoleine Kars has constructed what Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Eric Foner calls "a gripping narrative that brings to life a forgotten world."

eric foner voices of freedom: Make Good the Promises Kinshasha Holman Conwill, Paul Gardullo, 2021-09-14 The companion volume to the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture exhibit, opening in September 2021 With a Foreword by Pulitzer Prize-winning author and historian Eric Foner and a preface by veteran museum director and historian Spencer Crew An incisive and illuminating analysis of the enduring legacy of the post-Civil War period known as Reconstruction—a comprehensive story of Black Americans' struggle for human rights and dignity and the failure of the nation to fulfill its promises of freedom, citizenship, and justice. In the aftermath of the Civil War, millions of free and newly freed African Americans were determined to define themselves as equal citizens in a country without slavery—to own land, build secure families, and educate themselves and their children. Seeking to secure safety and justice, they successfully campaigned for civil and political rights, including the right to vote. Across an expanding America, Black politicians were elected to all levels of government, from city halls to state capitals to Washington, DC. But those gains were short-lived. By the mid-1870s, the federal government stopped enforcing civil rights laws, allowing white supremacists to use suppression and violence to regain power in the Southern states. Black men, women, and children suffered racial terror, segregation, and discrimination that confined them to second-class citizenship, a system known as Jim Crow that endured for decades. More than a century has passed since the revolutionary political, social, and economic movement known as Reconstruction, yet its profound consequences reverberate in our lives today. Make Good the Promises explores five distinct yet intertwined legacies of Reconstruction—Liberation, Violence, Repair, Place, and Belief—to reveal their lasting impact on modern society. It is the story of Frederick Douglass, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Hiram Revels, Ida B. Wells, and scores of other Black men and women who reshaped a nation—and of the persistence of white supremacy and the perpetuation of the injustices of slavery continued by other means and codified in state and federal laws. With contributions by leading scholars, and illustrated with 80 images from the exhibition, Make Good the Promises shows how Black Lives Matter, #SayHerName, antiracism, and other current movements for repair find inspiration from the lessons of Reconstruction. It touches on questions critical then and now: What is the meaning of freedom and equality? What does it mean to be an American? Powerful and eye-opening, it is a reminder that history is far from past; it lives within each of us and shapes our world and who we are.

eric foner voices of freedom: For the Record: From first contact through Reconstruction

David E. Shi, Holly Ann Mayer, 1999-01-01

eric foner voices of freedom: *Voices from the Gathering Storm* Glenn M. Linden, 2001 *Voices from the Gathering Storm* explains the dramatic change in thinking about the nature and value of the American Union from 1846 to 1861 which impelled citizens from 11 southern states to declare independence and the remaining 22 states to fight the bloodiest war in the nation's history. This reader tells the story of seventeen Northerners and Southerners who lived through the critical fifteen years prior to the Civil War. In their letters and diaries, they describe in their own words what it was like to live during the sectional crisis and the coming of the war. Men like Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis thought deeply about issues of patriotism and states' rights, issues which remain of great importance today. Women and black Americans were also passionate in their beliefs. Harriet Beecher Stowe felt so strongly about slavery that she wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Frederick Douglass and Charlotte Forten Grimké wrote of their abhorrence of slavery and the need to end that 'evil institution.' The lives of Southern women were also affected as they were forced to confront the issue of slavery and the Northern effort to end it. The voices of these men and women are heard in this new volume. At this time the North and South made decisions that resulted in two very different civilizations—the South embraced slavery and states' rights, while the North rejected the expansion of slavery and accepted the idea of an indivisible Union. These pre-Civil War years contain the key to understanding how the war came to be and also enable students to comprehend the modern North and South. *Voices from the Gathering Storm* is the only text that uses primary sources to illustrate the conflicts that divided the nation before the war. This use of primary sources allows students to enter more deeply into the lives of Northerners and Southerners and to understand and appreciate the way in which they responded to this tense period in American history. The author provides chapter introductions that connect the d

eric foner voices of freedom: *A Short History of Reconstruction [Updated Edition]* Eric Foner, 2015-01-06 From the “preeminent historian of Reconstruction” (New York Times Book Review), an updated abridged edition of *Reconstruction*, the prize-winning classic work on the post-Civil War period which shaped modern America. *Reconstruction* chronicles the way in which Americans—black and white—responded to the unprecedented changes unleashed by the war and the end of slavery. It addresses the quest of emancipated slaves’ searching for economic autonomy and equal citizenship, and describes the remodeling of Southern society; the evolution of racial attitudes and patterns of race relations; and the emergence of a national state possessing vastly expanded authority and one committed, for a time, to the principle of equal rights for all Americans. This “masterful treatment of one of the most complex periods of American history” (New Republic) remains the standard work on the wrenching post-Civil War period—an era whose legacy still reverberates in the United States today.

eric foner voices of freedom: Shades of Freedom A. Leon Higginbotham Jr., 1998-06-11 Few individuals have had as great an impact on the law--both its practice and its history--as A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr. A winner of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, he has distinguished himself over the decades both as a professor at Yale, the University of Pennsylvania, and Harvard, and as a judge on the United States Court of Appeals. But Judge Higginbotham is perhaps best known as an authority on racism in America: not the least important achievement of his long career has been *In the Matter of Color*, the first volume in a monumental history of race and the American legal process. Published in 1978, this brilliant book has been hailed as the definitive account of racism, slavery, and the law in colonial America. Now, after twenty years, comes the long-awaited sequel. In *Shades of Freedom*, Higginbotham provides a magisterial account of the interaction between the law and racial oppression in America from colonial times to the present, demonstrating how the one agent that should have guaranteed equal treatment before the law--the judicial system--instead played a dominant role in enforcing the inferior position of blacks. The issue of racial inferiority is central to this volume, as Higginbotham documents how early white perceptions of black inferiority slowly became codified into law. Perhaps the most powerful and insightful writing centers on a pair of famous Supreme Court cases, which

Higginbotham uses to portray race relations at two vital moments in our history. The Dred Scott decision of 1857 declared that a slave who had escaped to free territory must be returned to his slave owner. Chief Justice Roger Taney, in his notorious opinion for the majority, stated that blacks were so inferior that they had no right which the white man was bound to respect. For Higginbotham, Taney's decision reflects the extreme state that race relations had reached just before the Civil War. And after the War and Reconstruction, Higginbotham reveals, the Courts showed a pervasive reluctance (if not hostility) toward the goal of full and equal justice for African Americans, and this was particularly true of the Supreme Court. And in the Plessy v. Ferguson decision, which Higginbotham terms one of the most catastrophic racial decisions ever rendered, the Court held that full equality--in schooling or housing, for instance--was unnecessary as long as there were separate but equal facilities. Higginbotham also documents the eloquent voices that opposed the openly racist workings of the judicial system, from Reconstruction Congressman John R. Lynch to Supreme Court Justice John Marshall Harlan to W. E. B. Du Bois, and he shows that, ironically, it was the conservative Supreme Court of the 1930s that began the attack on school segregation, and overturned the convictions of African Americans in the famous Scottsboro case. But today racial bias still dominates the nation, Higginbotham concludes, as he shows how in six recent court cases the public perception of black inferiority continues to persist. In *Shades of Freedom*, a noted scholar and celebrated jurist offers a work of magnificent scope, insight, and passion. Ranging from the earliest colonial times to the present, it is a superb work of history--and a mirror to the American soul.

eric foner voices of freedom: *The Confessions of Nat Turner* Kenneth S. Greenberg, 2016-09-02 Twenty years after the publication of the first edition of this volume, Nat Turner and the rebels of 1831 remain central figures in American culture. Kenneth S. Greenberg's revised introduction updates the role of Nat Turner in American memory and also includes the latest scholarship on topics such as the importance of neighborhoods to the community of enslaved people and the role of women in resisting enslavement. New to this edition is a significant excerpt from David Walker's 1830 Appeal - a radical attack on slavery from a Boston based African American intellectual that circulated near the area of the rebellion and echoed key themes of *The Confessions of Nat Turner*. The Appeal will compel students to ponder the question of Turner's connection to a larger African American liberation movement. This volume's appendixes offer an updated Chronology, Questions for Consideration, and Selected Bibliography, tools that will serve to facilitate the use of this book in the classroom.

eric foner voices of freedom: Democracy May Not Exist, But We'll Miss It When It's Gone Astra Taylor, 2019-05-07 "A New Civil Rights Leader" explores what we mean when we speak of democracy and if democracy can truly ever exist (LA Times). There is no shortage of democracy, at least in name, and yet it is in crisis everywhere we look. From a cabal of plutocrats in the White House to gerrymandering and dark-money campaign contributions, it is clear that the principle of government by and for the people is not living up to its promise. The problems lie deeper than any one election cycle. As Astra Taylor demonstrates, real democracy—fully inclusive and completely egalitarian—has in fact never existed. In a tone that is both philosophical and anecdotal, weaving together history, theory, the stories of individuals, and interviews with such leading thinkers as Cornel West and Wendy Brown, Taylor invites us to reexamine the term. Is democracy a means or an end, a process or a set of desired outcomes? What if those outcomes, whatever they may be—peace, prosperity, equality, liberty, an engaged citizenry—can be achieved by non-democratic means? In what areas of life should democratic principles apply? If democracy means rule by the people, what does it mean to rule and who counts as the people? Democracy's inherent paradoxes often go unnamed and unrecognized. Exploring such questions, *Democracy May Not Exist* offers a better understanding of what is possible, what we want, why democracy is so hard to realize, and why it is worth striving for. "Astra Taylor will change how you think about democracy. . . . She unpacks it, wrestles with it, with the question of who gets included and how, and excavates the invisible assumptions that have been bred into our idea of democracy." —Ezra Klein, *The Ezra Klein Show* "An impressive contribution. . . . Taylor sets out to impart some coherence and substance to the term

in order to rescue it from ignorance and obfuscation and displays considerable intellectual nimbleness.” —Randall Kennedy, The New York Times Book Review “Magnificent, paradigm-shifting . . . Taylor’s deep and wide examination of democratic movements, conversations, and grassroots institutions makes the reader feel . . . democracy as pleasure of thinking and acting.” —The Los Angeles Review of Books

eric foner voices of freedom: Harriet Tubman Catherine Clinton, 2004-02-02 The definitive biography of one of the most courageous women in American history reveals Harriet Tubman to be even more remarkable than her legend (Newsday). Celebrated for her exploits as a conductor on the Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman has entered history as one of nineteenth-century America’s most enduring and important figures. But just who was this remarkable woman? To John Brown, leader of the Harper’s Ferry slave uprising, she was General Tubman. For the many slaves she led north to freedom, she was Moses. To the slaveholders who sought her capture, she was a thief and a trickster. To abolitionists, she was a prophet. Now, in a biography widely praised for its impeccable research and its compelling narrative, Harriet Tubman is revealed for the first time as a singular and complex character, a woman who defied simple categorization. A thrilling reading experience. It expands outward from Tubman’s individual story to give a sweeping, historical vision of slavery. --NPR’s Fresh Air

eric foner voices of freedom: *These Truths: A History of the United States* Jill Lepore, 2018-09-18 “Nothing short of a masterpiece.” —NPR Books A New York Times Bestseller and a Washington Post Notable Book of the Year In the most ambitious one-volume American history in decades, award-winning historian Jill Lepore offers a magisterial account of the origins and rise of a divided nation. Widely hailed for its “sweeping, sobering account of the American past” (New York Times Book Review), Jill Lepore’s one-volume history of America places truth itself—a devotion to facts, proof, and evidence—at the center of the nation’s history. The American experiment rests on three ideas—“these truths,” Jefferson called them—political equality, natural rights, and the sovereignty of the people. But has the nation, and democracy itself, delivered on that promise? *These Truths* tells this uniquely American story, beginning in 1492, asking whether the course of events over more than five centuries has proven the nation’s truths, or belied them. To answer that question, Lepore wrestles with the state of American politics, the legacy of slavery, the persistence of inequality, and the nature of technological change. “A nation born in contradiction... will fight, forever, over the meaning of its history,” Lepore writes, but engaging in that struggle by studying the past is part of the work of citizenship. With *These Truths*, Lepore has produced a book that will shape our view of American history for decades to come.

eric foner voices of freedom: Freedom Riders Raymond Arsenault, 2011-03-11 The saga of the Freedom Rides is an improbable, almost unbelievable story. In the course of six months in 1961, four hundred and fifty Freedom Riders expanded the realm of the possible in American politics, redefining the limits of dissent and setting the stage for the civil rights movement. In this new version of his encyclopedic *Freedom Riders*, Raymond Arsenault offers a significantly condensed and tautly written account. With characters and plot lines rivaling those of the most imaginative fiction, this is a tale of heroic sacrifice and unexpected triumph. Arsenault recounts how a group of volunteers--blacks and whites--came together to travel from Washington DC through the Deep South, defying Jim Crow laws in buses and terminals and putting their lives on the line for racial justice. News photographers captured the violence in Montgomery, shocking the nation and sparking a crisis in the Kennedy administration. Here are the key players--their fears and courage, their determination and second thoughts, and the agonizing choices they faced as they took on Jim Crow--and triumphed. Winner of the Owsley Prize Publication is timed to coincide with the airing of the American Experience miniseries documenting the Freedom Rides Arsenault brings vividly to life a defining moment in modern American history. --Eric Foner, The New York Times Book Review Authoritative, compelling history. --William Grimes, The New York Times For those interested in understanding 20th-century America, this is an essential book. --Roger Wilkins, Washington Post Book World Arsenault’s record of strategy sessions, church vigils, bloody assaults, mass arrests,

political maneuverings and personal anguish captures the mood and the turmoil, the excitement and the confusion of the movement and the time. --Michael Kenney, *The Boston Globe*

eric foner voices of freedom: *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad* Eric Foner, 2015-01-19 The dramatic story of fugitive slaves and the antislavery activists who defied the law to help them reach freedom. More than any other scholar, Eric Foner has influenced our understanding of America's history. Now, making brilliant use of extraordinary evidence, the Pulitzer Prize-winning historian once again reconfigures the national saga of American slavery and freedom. A deeply entrenched institution, slavery lived on legally and commercially even in the northern states that had abolished it after the American Revolution. Slaves could be found in the streets of New York well after abolition, traveling with owners doing business with the city's major banks, merchants, and manufacturers. New York was also home to the North's largest free black community, making it a magnet for fugitive slaves seeking refuge. Slave catchers and gangs of kidnappers roamed the city, seizing free blacks, often children, and sending them south to slavery. To protect fugitives and fight kidnappings, the city's free blacks worked with white abolitionists to organize the New York Vigilance Committee in 1835. In the 1840s vigilance committees proliferated throughout the North and began collaborating to dispatch fugitive slaves from the upper South, Washington, and Baltimore, through Philadelphia and New York, to Albany, Syracuse, and Canada. These networks of antislavery resistance, centered on New York City, became known as the underground railroad. Forced to operate in secrecy by hostile laws, courts, and politicians, the city's underground-railroad agents helped more than 3,000 fugitive slaves reach freedom between 1830 and 1860. Until now, their stories have remained largely unknown, their significance little understood. Building on fresh evidence—including a detailed record of slave escapes secretly kept by Sydney Howard Gay, one of the key organizers in New York—Foner elevates the underground railroad from folklore to sweeping history. The story is inspiring—full of memorable characters making their first appearance on the historical stage—and significant—the controversy over fugitive slaves inflamed the sectional crisis of the 1850s. It eventually took a civil war to destroy American slavery, but here at last is the story of the courageous effort to fight slavery by practical abolition, person by person, family by family.

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