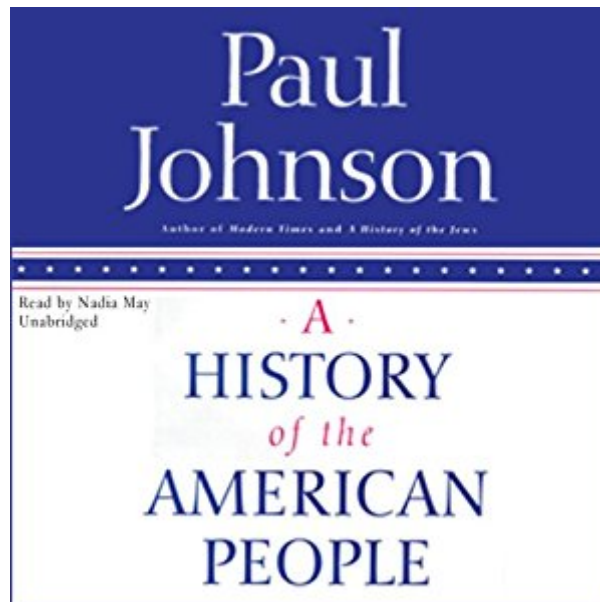


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A History Of The American People



Synopsis

The prize winning classic work on the post Civil War period which wrenched American society, now with a new introduction by the author. "The creation of the United States of America is the greatest of all human adventures," begins Paul Johnson's remarkable new American history. "No other national story holds such tremendous lessons, for the American people themselves and for the rest of mankind." Johnson's history is a reinterpretation of American history from the first settlements to the Clinton administration. It covers every aspect of U.S. history—politics; business and economics; art, literature and science; society and customs; complex traditions and religious beliefs. The story is told in terms of the men and women who shaped and led the nation and the ordinary people who collectively created its unique character. Wherever possible, letters, diaries, and recorded conversations are used to ensure a sense of actuality. "The book has new and often trenchant things to say about every aspect and period of America's past," says Johnson, "and I do not seek, as some historians do, to conceal my opinions." This is an in-depth portrait of a great people, from their fragile origins through their struggles for independence and nationhood, their heroic efforts and sacrifices to deal with the 'organic sin' of slavery and the preservation of the Union to its explosive economic growth and emergence as a world power and its sole superpower. Johnson discusses such contemporary topics as the politics of racism, education, Vietnam, the power of the press, political correctness, the growth of litigation, and the rising influence of women. He sees Americans as a problem-solving people and the story of America as "essentially one of difficulties being overcome by intelligence and skill, by faith and strength of purpose, by courage and persistence... Looking back on its past, and forward to its future, the auguries are that it will not disappoint humanity." This challenging narrative and interpretation of American history by the author of many distinguished historical works is sometimes controversial and always provocative. Johnson's views of individuals, events, themes, and issues are original, critical, and admiring, for he is, above all, a strong believer in the history and the destiny of the American people. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

A great writer who really makes history very enjoyable to read. This is the second book of Johnson's I have read, and both have been brilliant. He understands what history means, and relays it in such a profound and understandable way. Although an Englishman, he seems more than capable of writing on US history. Just as his book about the Jews was an excellent saga even though a gentile. His work should be required reading for anyone interested in how America has gotten where it is at present. I'm looking forward to reading the rest of his works.

In what is often considered his magnum opus, Paul Johnson crafts a grand narrative of the American people stretching some four and a half centuries. In it he seeks out the roots of American culture - or more accurately the American cultures which emerged and managed to simultaneously unite and divide the nation. Johnson then charts the course of the nation's history, illuminating the evolution of those cultures and giving a period-by-period analysis of politics, technology, the arts, and notable social developments. He thus manages to give a broad, all-encompassing view of America over a very broad period; quite an ambitious work. Despite the book's length (1088 pages) it is highly readable and never delves too deep into details as to lose the reader; Johnson never lapses from the larger narrative of the book.

An outsider's view of American History (British). Balanced and nuanced. Shows some sides of events that are not well known at all. Highly readable and engaging.

...are combined in the book by the Polymath Paul Johnson. Yes, it is long, but eminently readable and perfectly suited to an e reader. Mr. Johnson focuses on America's development, its religion, its expansion, and what constitutes an American character. A seamless narrative with elements of 'great man' and 'everyman' philosophy

This is the best narrative history of America in print today. What sets Johnson apart is that he is not afraid to offer opinion and criticism where it is needed - even when he must tell the truth about some of the sacred cows of the radical left. He also provides an interesting reading list for further study. Sadly this book is not often found in the last brick and mortar bookstore in America (B+N) as the reading level is too challenging and content too honest for the tweeting, texting generation.

I've now read this and Schweikart's Patriot's History of the US. It was inevitable as I read that I would compare the two. They are in many ways very similar. I enjoyed Schweikart and felt it was very easy to read. At the beginning I struggled with Johnson. I was reading 50 - 100 pages at a clip in Schweikart where at the beginning of Johnson I was struggling to get through 20 at a time. I'm not sure why that was... but as I got further into the book it got easier. It's 976 pages, so it's a fairly long book, but having finished it I am glad I read it. It is different than Patriot's History, but I don't see that as a good thing or a bad thing. As a side note, I found it interesting that Paul Johnson (author) is British. I found it interesting to see an Englishman's thoughts on our progress and that he seemed positive about a great deal of the things we have done, even things that were counter to England's interests. On the whole a good book, well worth my efforts in reading. Hope you enjoy as well.

I found this book to be just the best. An unbiased account of the people who formed a nation, starting with the story of the pilgrims, those people who came to a land for their freedom. That entire motive, freedom, carried through many years which developed into the greatest nation of free people. I appreciated the fact that the author was not political in his description of the events and people, but how each event and those people involved formed the outcome of events. Those events were happenings of that time and the people involved were the men and women of that time. Those people learned from previous events, history, and acted, sometimes not to the best for those involved, but to their thinking of that time. I keep Paul Johnson's book at the ready to glean historical events that can apply to today's happenings. Any History buff should find this book enjoyable.

Never is Paul Johnson a boring history read. It reads like a novel. I updated my forgotten US history with his books.

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