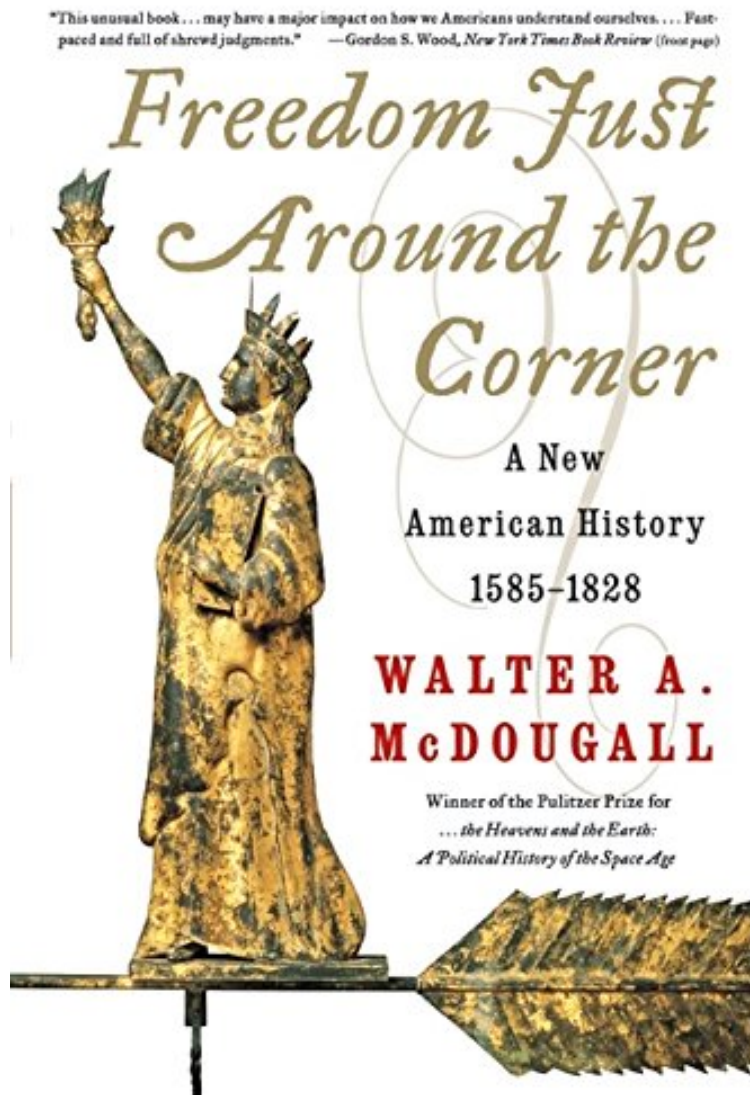


Freedom Just Around the Corner: A New American History: 1585-1828

Walter A. McDougall

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Walter A. McDougall : Freedom Just Around the Corner: A New American History: 1585-1828 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Freedom Just Around the Corner: A New American History: 1585-1828:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Loved It When They Didn't Talk Politics By L. M Young This history of the colonial and then pre-James Polk United States is billed as a history of "the brave, brilliant, and flawed people

who made America great...native-born and immigrant: German, Latin, African, and British; farmers, engineers, planters and merchants; Protestants, Freemasons, Catholics, and Jews...and the American scoundrels, speculators, rogues, and demagogues." And that's when it's at its best, talking about those little people who made up the US: teamsters, the rare woman planters like Caty Greene, pioneers, those who bucked the system and moved west, the Native Americans, etc. But, of course, to do a proper history, one has to get through the political machinations as well, and there you will find this volume harking back to a normal social studies book. So I pretty much read through it in fits and starts, dozing over the politics until they got back to the individual experiences of the individuals. There are some great pieces on Catherine "Caty" Green, the unconventional widow of General Nathaniel Greene, Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr, the southern planters vs. the northern farmers, etc. Plus McDougall profiles each of the states that entered the union following the revolution through 1848.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Terrific overview of early AmericaBy Fred D. Seth, Jr.Walter McDougall is a giant of the History field. This book and his follow-up "Throes of Democracy" cover American History from the earliest settlers through Reconstruction. The "Freedom" book covers up to the rise of Jackson. McDougall writes about the people who shape each era, smaller interesting contributors and those who made a huge impact but are now largely forgotten. Dr. McDougall's way with words makes this a page turner. It is a long read, but I was sorry to see it end. Whether you are a casual non-fiction reader or serious historian, reading this book is both an interesting and learning experience. I highly recommend it.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An American History for a new MilleniumBy Jeffrey W. BinderIt's not often that you get an erudite scholar of history who is also a gifted author (and yes, it IS possible to be one or the other). This book is history at its finest, on both counts. McDougall revisits stories you thought you knew and presents them in ways that will surprise and delight you. It's not just the secret personal stories behind the events (naughty Caty Greene, why the Virginians were shocked by the over-mountain men (and still are), it's the fact that he brings a wealth of knowledge to bear on new theories of who we are, what we brought with us, and what we left behind. In one brilliant passage, he describes the 4 Englands that created colonies, and the vital similarities and differences between them: the language quirks that exist today (East Anglian accents in Downeast Maine, for example), their attitudes toward community, education, commerce, and freedom. He shows us how different they were (and yes, there are passages on the Dutch, the Germans, and the African American slaves)...and what, in an astounding turn of events and cultures, brought these disparate groups together to create a nation. As Christopher Hill said, History has to be rewritten in every generation, because although the past does not change, the present does; each generation asks new questions of the past and finds new areas of sympathy as it re-lives different aspects of the experiences of its predecessors. Walter McDougall is the latest, brilliant historian for this generation.

A powerful reinterpretation of the founding of America by a Pulitzer Prizewinning historian. The creation of the United States of America is the central event of the past four hundred years," states Walter McDougall in his preface to Freedom Just Around the Corner. With this statement begins McDougall's most ambitious, original, and uncompromising of histories. McDougall marshals the latest scholarship and writes in a style redolent with passion, pathos, and humour in pursuit of truths often obscured in books burdened with political slants. With an insightful approach to the nearly 250 years spanning America's beginnings, McDougall offers his readers an understanding of the uniqueness of the "American character" and how this character has shaped the wide ranging course of historical events. McDougall explains that Americans have always been in a unique position of enjoying "more opportunity to pursue their ambitions any other people in history." Throughout Freedom Just Around the Corner the character of the American people shines, a character built out of a freedom to indulge in the whole panoply of human behaviour. The genius behind the success of the United States is founded on the complex, irrepressible American spirit. A grand narrative rich with new details and insights about colonial and early national history, Freedom Just Around the Corner is the first instalment of a trilogy that will eventually bring the story of America up to the present day, a story epic, bemusing, and brooding.

From Publishers WeeklyAnyone aspiring to write a multivolume history of the U.S. reckons with illustrious predecessors, especially the histories of Daniel Boorstin and Richard Hofstadter (the latter never completed). But those histories were interpretive; they had a particular slant on the past. McDougall's is more explanatory. It provides up-to-date understanding of much that happened in our early history but without a sharply etched point of view. It's thus a bit like a textbook, struggling to keep readers' attention on all it packs in. Fortunately, in this regard it succeeds wonderfully well. Briskly written, deeply researched, fact-filled and satisfyingly wide in its coverage, it's mainly a history of the public attributes of the colonies and early nationthe ethnic and racial groups (including Native Americans), its states, religious denominations, political parties, wars and institutions. There's little social history here or the history of ideas and culture, little about subjects like women, gays, historical myths and memory. But no single history, not even in a projected three volumes, can cover everything. McDougall's particular strength is that he keeps individuals front and center: the work is alive with humans and their struggles and achievements. Pulitzer Prizewinner McDougall (for *The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age*) says at the start that his theme will

be the conditions that made for Americans' world-known "hustling" behavior and mentality. Fortunately, he quickly drops this line. There's a better and more fitting word for people's desire to better their lot: ambition. That's what this book has in full measure. Maps not seen by PW. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Bookmarks Magazine It might be unfashionable these days to embrace American exceptionalism. Yet that's exactly what McDougall, a history professor at the University of Pennsylvania and Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age*, has done, to great acclaim. In revealing who and why we are what we are, he has written an imaginative, evenhanded, and masterful history that shows the freedoms and high costs of our hustling nation. His impressive research covers all the major events of our first 200 years, plus some; he entertains with humorous, passionate writing. Only historian Foner competitive, perhaps? criticizes Freedom's top-heavy approach and inadequate interpretations. The general consensus: Freedom is an important contribution not only to its field, but to all Americans. Copyright 2004 Phillips Nelson Media, Inc. About the Author A professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania, Walter A. McDougall is the author of many books, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Heavens and the Earth* and *Let the Sea Make a Noise*. . . . He lives in Pennsylvania with his wife and two teenage children.