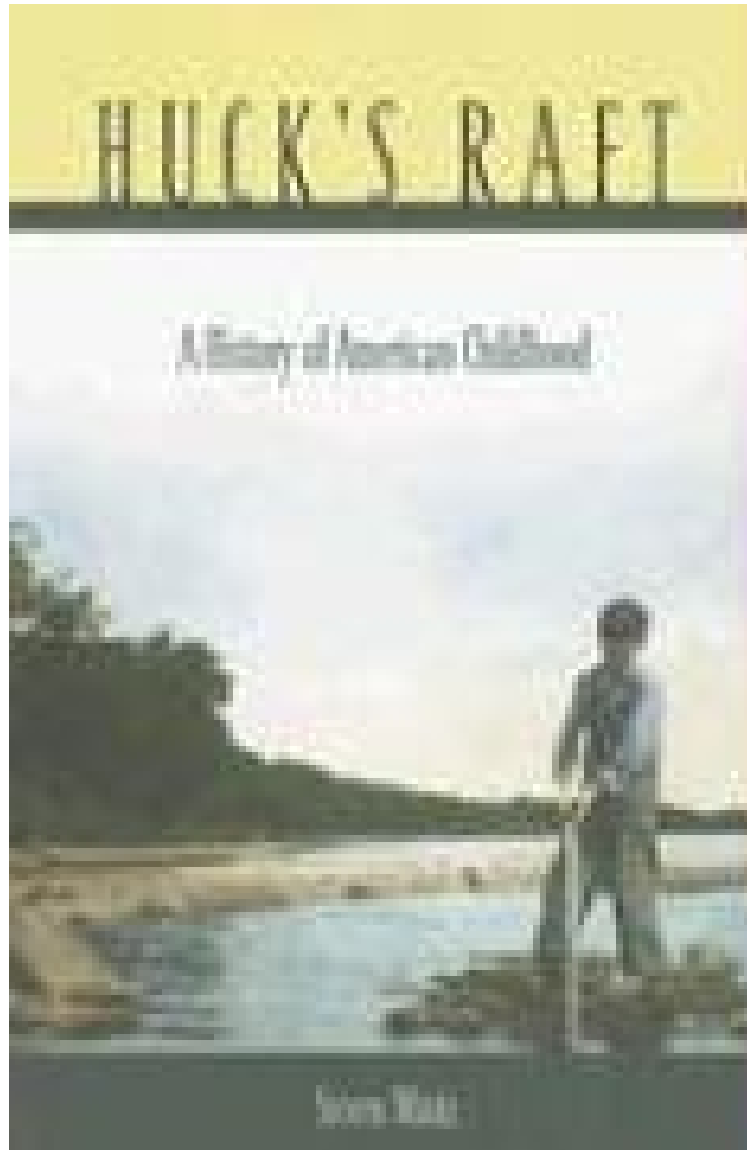


[Library ebook] Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood

## Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood

*Steven Mintz*

*\*Download PDF / ePub / DOC / audiobook / ebooks*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#529905 in Books 2006-04-30 2006-03-20Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.25 x 1.19 x 6.13l, 1.50 #File Name: 0674019989464 pages | File size: 64.Mb

**Steven Mintz : Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The author is giving a historical account of American childhood ...By Donna B.The author is giving a historical account of American childhood. While the content is somewhat interesting, the flow is not always very smooth. Sometimes, the writer is speaking about one time in history and then goes back to another. He will make a statement and then a couple of sentences later, say something opposite.

Therefore, sometimes, it gets confusing. I have to read this book for a class, I would not choose to read it and would probably put it down if I did not have to have a quiz on it, at every class. The author has used a lot of resources to write his book. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Children at play....and at work. By KOP ESFI initially purchased this book because the subject matter interested me, but lo and behold, subsequently it was the required text for a college history course I was enrolled in. It is a unique and fascinating look at 400 years of childhood in America. Mintz does a great job of explicating the changes that childhood underwent over the years and centuries. For instance: adolescence is a 20th century creation! Also, the Puritans viewed children as little adults and made no exceptions for their age. In the colonial period American Indian children (especially boys) lived such a carefree existence that frequently abducted colonist children refused to be reunited with their white biological parents mainly due to the life of arduous drudgery which constituted childhood in 18th century New England. This fine work is filled with fascinating bits of information as the aforementioned. It spans the period between the 17th century up to the period of the Columbine massacre, showing the myriad changes which accompanied childhood in America. Great reading and great history, highly recommended. If you have an interest in this subject matter you will not be disappointed. READ IT!!! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very interesting and great read! Sometimes you have to take it with ...By Molly Very interesting and great read! Sometimes you have to take it with a grain of salt because the sources aren't always there and facts are obviously not true. But this is a minor thing and obvious when it happens. Overall excellent history of children in America, a rare glimpse at something not often studied.

Like Huck's raft, the experience of American childhood has been both adventurous and terrifying. For more than three centuries, adults have agonized over raising children while children have followed their own paths to development and expression. Now, Steven Mintz gives us the first comprehensive history of American childhood encompassing both the child's and the adult's tumultuous early years of life. Underscoring diversity through time and across regions, Mintz traces the transformation of children from the sinful creatures perceived by Puritans to the productive workers of nineteenth-century farms and factories, from the cosseted cherubs of the Victorian era to the confident consumers of our own. He explores their role in revolutionary upheaval, westward expansion, industrial growth, wartime mobilization, and the modern welfare state. Revealing the harsh realities of children's lives through history--the rigors of physical labor, the fear of chronic ailments, the heartbreak of premature death--he also acknowledges the freedom children once possessed to discover their world as well as themselves. Whether at work or play, at home or school, the transition from childhood to adulthood has required generations of Americans to tackle tremendously difficult challenges. Today, adults impose ever-increasing demands on the young for self-discipline, cognitive development, and academic achievement, even as the influence of the mass media and consumer culture has grown. With a nod to the past, Mintz revisits an alternative to the goal-driven realities of contemporary childhood. An odyssey of psychological self-discovery and growth, this book suggests a vision of childhood that embraces risk and freedom--like the daring adventure on Huck's raft.

From Publishers Weekly No aspect of American life is as shrouded in idealizing myth as childhood. In this compelling work of historical synthesis, University of Houston history professor Mintz argues forcefully if not originally that for most of the past three centuries childhood has been the exception rather than the norm. Responding to the exigencies of colonial life, Mintz writes, the Puritans unsentimentally mentored children as "adults in training." With the explosive rise of an urban, factory-based economy in the mid-19th century, childhood first emerged as a discrete period of development. Limited, home-based instruction was replaced by compulsory instruction in public schools but not all children benefited. For most young people in the years after the Industrial Revolution despite the mixed results of reformers childhood meant grim factory or farm labor, poverty, loneliness, exploitation (economic and sexual) and often unspeakable cruelty. Poor, immigrant and black children suffered disproportionately as the class gap widened. More recently, Mintz recounts, childhood has been refined and extended into the phenomenon of protracted adolescence. That childhood has mostly been less than ideal is not surprising. What may be, for many readers, is Mintz's portrait of just how far from the ideal this country has been and perhaps continues to be in meeting the health needs, education and welfare of all its children. 36 bw photos. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist \*Starred \* Mintz uses Huck Finn's raft as the image of the quintessential ideal American childhood, filled with adventure and exploration. But he reminds readers of the seriousness of Huck's life and the grim realities of American childhood from the early colonies, through the progressive era, and up to modern times. Mintz confers special attention on the childhoods of American slaves, Native Americans, and immigrants. Tracking the major social, economic, and cultural developments in the nation's history, Mintz focuses on their impact on the lives of children and adolescents. Culturally, children have been viewed as both inherently corrupt and as innocent, eventually coming to be seen as objects of affection; economically, they have been viewed as property, financial contributors, and major consumers; socially, they have spurred the creation of asylums, orphanages, and reform schools. Mintz traces changes in the legal status of children and in such laws as those establishing the age of sexual consent and restricting child labor. He also examines the evolving image of adolescents

and their impact on modern culture and commerce. Readers who enjoyed Ann Hulbert's *Raising America* [BKL Mr 15 03] will love the breadth of perspective in this engrossing book. Vanessa Bush Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Huck's Raft is a rich and fascinating study of the realities of children's lives--and adults' ideas about children and our responsibilities towards them--throughout our nation's history. (Marian Wright Edelman, President, Children's Defense Fund) Huck's Raft is simply the best overview of the history of childhood in the US. Through masterful scholarship and lively writing, it persuasively exposes some widespread myths about family history, while telling fascinating stories about children's lives past and present. Mintz's work shows that historical understanding can guide our responses to the problems of children today. (Linda Gordon, author of *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*) Steven Mintz's *Huck's Raft* is the most comprehensive, culturally sensitive history of American childhood ever written. It illuminates in fascinating detail the variegated experience of the nation's children, but it is equally successful in revealing the mentalities of the adults who have shaped childhood over time. This book is sure to become the standard in the field. (John R. Gillis, author of *A World of Their Own Making: Myth, Ritual, and the Quest for Family Values*) At last, a synthesis of the scattered research on the history of youth. Meticulously researched and engagingly written, Mintz's book is sure to become a classic. (Stephanie Coontz, author of *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*) Huck's Raft is a breath of fresh air. This engaging and compelling account of the history of childhood in America is a tonic by a first-rate historian that is both scholarly and beautifully written. A must read for all those concerned with our youth today and in times past. (Frank F. Furstenberg, author of *Managing to Make It: Urban Families and Adolescent Success*) Steven Mintz's remarkable and comprehensive book provides the first important synthesis of childhood in American history. Learned and rich in detail, it will become indispensable for all those who want to know more about children's experiences over the past 400 years. (Paula Fass, author of *Kidnapped: Child Abduction in America*) Mintz revisits the treatment of children from the Puritan era up to the edge of the millennium, which he calls 'The Unfinished Century of the Child,' showing that we have alternately vilified our offspring (the Puritans believed they were born in sin) and glorified them (Victorian parents saw them as pure and angelic)...Mintz's thorough yet accessibly written study delves into the external forces that have shaped the lives of our young while also probing the internal developments in their collective consciousness. (Janet Sassi Library Journal 2004-07-15) No aspect of American life is as shrouded in idealizing myth as childhood. In this compelling work of historical synthesis, Mintz argues forcefully...that for most of the past three centuries childhood has been the exception rather than the norm...That childhood has mostly been less than ideal is not surprising. What may be, for many readers, is Mintz's portrait of just how far from the ideal this country has been--and perhaps continues to be--in meeting the health needs, education and welfare of all its children. (Publishers Weekly 2004-09-06) The children of the past did possess something lost to their descendants of today: freedom. Once kids were allowed to ride their bikes all over town or idle away the summer in daydreams; they could fail a course or even a grade, and no one got overly excited about it; they might even make serious mistakes and find themselves pregnant or working on the line at Ford rather than studying lines of poetry at college. But now, in our test-driven, increasingly regimented educational system, we forthrightly aim to leave no child behind, which means that we leave no child alone. Slow learners must be sped up, dreamy kids must be made to focus, all must wear uniforms, and, eventually, all must have prizes--or at least AP courses. In the past, parents might exploit their kids as little more than indentured servants or simply ignore them. Today we are their chauffeurs and social secretaries...This is, then, a rich and stimulating book, revealing how much childhood has changed over the centuries and how much some things never change...I suppose that every generation of adults tends to feel, when regarding the young people around them, that the barbarians are at the gates. But really, there's nothing for us to worry about: One day our children will have children of their own. (Michael Dirda Washington Post 2004-12-12) [Mintz] proposes to set the record straight in his sweeping study of American childhood that effectively synthesizes a large body of scholarship on its subject. The result is an engaging, sober and often poignant account of how adults have viewed and treated children and, equally important, how children's own experiences and life chances have been heavily influenced by economics, race and ethnicity...The compelling history of childhood he offers us is a valuable reminder that nostalgia for a golden age that never existed is not just misleading, but counterproductive. (Eric Arnesen Chicago Tribune 2005-01-02) [A] provocative, anecdote-packed analysis of American parents and their progeny. From Puritans to postmoderns, we have shaped our kids to match shifting cultural mores and social desires. (Char Miller San Antonio Express-News 2005-01-16) With the vast number of political and cultural decisions made in America under the guise of 'thinking of the children,' a book like Steven Mintz's brilliant *Huck's Raft*, which actually does offer plenty of thinking about children, is long overdue. Mintz is aiming to write nothing less than a complete history of childhood in America, tracing kids' lives from the Puritan era to today and examining the roles they've played as workers, soldiers, pioneers, inspirations, burdens, consumers and citizens. (Matt Konrad Ruminator 2005-01-01) [An] often fascinating and massively documented exploration of four centuries of American childhood...*Huck's Raft* is a work of scholarly integrity and humanist zeal. (Joyce Carol Oates Times Literary Supplement 2005-03-11) Were this simply a book of trivia about the years of childhood, it would be fascinating reading...However, this work is much more than a collection of curiosities. It is an ambitious attempt to retell the story of America with children as the focus of attention...This work of historical

synthesis is likely to become a classic that future historians will be hard-pressed to surpass. (Robert Holland Richmond Times Dispatch 2005-02-13) Steven Mintz' brilliant, wide-ranging, but remarkably concise study shows how complex an invention childhood has been in this country...The book is so good on the first 300 years or so of the story that it is somewhat surprising that Mintz is even more provocative on the last 50 years or so, especially on the most recent decade. It seems that no other account of *Columbine* or *'No Child Left Behind'* has been as thoughtful or persuasive...This is history at its most instructive and engaging. (William T. Hamilton Bloomsbury 2005-07-01) Steven Mintz's *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* offers an impressive and unprecedented synthesis of the relevant scholarly literature...[It] demonstrate[s] that childhood has never been a stable, innocent, or transcendent experience...Reflecting the prevailing literature, the book is a rainbow coalition of inclusion that arches over the panorama of American history. Anyone tempted to criticize the book as a 'clip job' misses the underlying importance of Mintz's signal accomplishment...To any parent trying to figure out what [kind of kid] he's got, the mundane manifestations of an innocent childhood are the clues to life. Mintz's book makes some sense out of this mystery. (James E. McWilliams Texas Observer 2005-09-09)[A] richly detailed study of how childhood in the US. has changed over time...Mintz uses history to debunk several myths--that childhood once was carefree, families were stable, and American childhood is the story of either steady progress or decline. (Steven G. Kellman USA Today Magazine 2005-03-01)