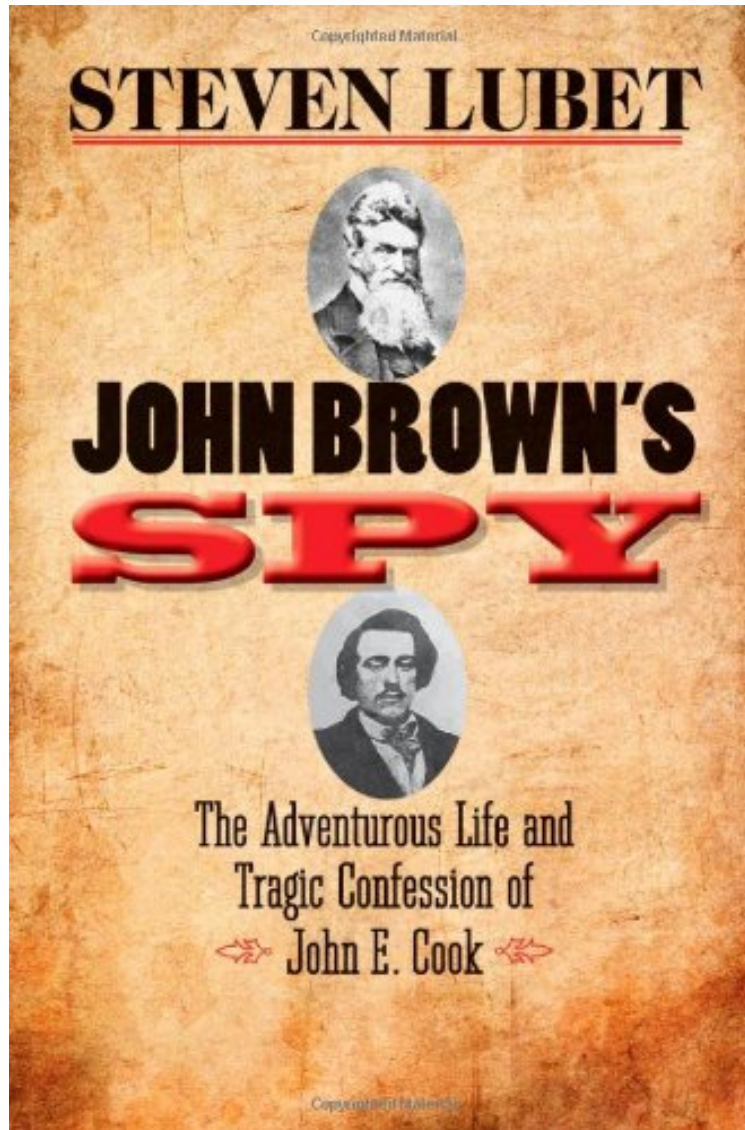


[Free read ebook] John Brown's Spy: The Adventurous Life and Tragic Confession of John E. Cook

John Brown's Spy: The Adventurous Life and Tragic Confession of John E. Cook

Steven Lubet

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Steven Lubet : John Brown's Spy: The Adventurous Life and Tragic Confession of John E. Cook before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised John Brown's Spy: The Adventurous Life and Tragic Confession of John E. Cook:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Lubet does it againBy Ann C"John Brown's Spy", the story of John Cook, Brown's lieutenant and subsequent betrayer, extends Professor Steven Lubet's winning streak, while expanding

his field of play. With each book he demonstrates a greater command not just of legal history, but of history in general. Lubet's story breaks new ground in both areas. This reader had never heard of Cook before, and does not often read biographies. But this one is spellbinding. Even though you know the outcome, you are caught up in the suspense. Lubet's writing style is fluid and engaging. His sense of humor adds to the book's attraction. His characterization of John Brown as "the ultimate free radical" will charm even the non-chemist reader. Or his description of Senator James Mason as one courtroom observer who "stood out as an island of dignity in a loutish sea." Lubet's attention to detail gives testimony to the breadth and depth of his research. He has uncovered physical descriptions of many of the dramatis personae. Brown himself, with his biblical prophet's sternness, has often been described. But no one has depicted, for example, trial judge Richard Parker: "stoop-shouldered and heavysset, with a bulbous nose and tight unsmiling lips" or John Cook himself: "short and slight, he had delicate features, full lips, bright blue eyes, and blond curly hair that fell in ringlets about his face." Now that's writing! The characters come alive. And that's not all, folks. Lubet has even unearthed the detailed geography of the various sites cited: "The jail stood across the street from the courthouse, separated by several barrooms and lawyers' offices." Lubet tempers his tale with laudable caution as to what is and is not known. He makes use of locutions which grade the probabilities of his and others' descriptions of events, from "would have" to "likely" to "doubtless" and "surely" (those bizarre English words which in fact mean their opposites), up to the overwhelmingly probable which he describes, as he should, as fact: "Cook's attorney, Alexander McClure "took Cook into a corner" to discuss his defense. It is inconceivable that a lawyer would do otherwise, surrounded by jailers and ill-wishers. Speaking of dramatis personae, Lubet provides not only a comprehensive index (again testifying to his meticulous research), but a separate list of them all. It's not a cast of thousands, but it is about a hundred. This reader is very grateful indeed not to have had to seek them out in the general index each (or almost each) time their names appeared. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Lubet makes clear, as he has done in earlier work, that the Civil War was not predominantly, as is sometimes claimed, about states' rights, but about the abominable institution of slavery, and its overthrow. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Unique view of famous Harpers Ferry raid By Jim Bendat We've all heard about John Brown and Harpers Ferry, but most of us probably don't know too much about a lot of the planning and details behind that 1859 event. Steven Lubet's book provides a truly unique perspective. My favorite part of the book involved some terrifically creative arguments made by one of the attorneys that led to treason counts being dismissed against his black clients. And, for me, the biggest surprise was when I learned about the old "interested party" court rule that prohibited a defendant from testifying in his or her own defense. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Little Known Information By Judy Schaefer Little known information about a well known time in our history is revealed in this book. For those who love history and mystery, you will love this book. A fascinating narrative that takes the reader into the heart of Harper's Ferry and John Brown's plans.

John Brown's Spy tells the nearly unknown story of John E. Cook, the person John Brown trusted most with the details of his plans to capture the Harper's Ferry armory in 1859. Cook was a poet, a marksman, a boaster, a dandy, a fighter, and a womanizer—as well as a spy. In a life of only thirty years, he studied law in Connecticut, fought border ruffians in Kansas, served as an abolitionist mole in Virginia, took white hostages during the Harper's Ferry raid, and almost escaped to freedom. For ten days after the infamous raid, he was the most hunted man in America with a staggering \$1,000 bounty on his head. Tracking down the unexplored circumstances of John Cook's life and disastrous end, Steven Lubet is the first to uncover the full extent of Cook's contributions to Brown's scheme. Without Cook's participation, the author contends, Brown might never have been able to launch the insurrection that sparked the Civil War. Had Cook remained true to the cause, history would have remembered him as a hero. Instead, when Cook was captured and brought to trial, he betrayed John Brown and named fellow abolitionists in a full confession that earned him a place in history's tragic pantheon of disgraced turncoats.

From Booklist *Starred * Lubet, Williams Memorial Professor of Law at Northwestern University, brings to center stage a man who, until now, has been a footnote in American history: John E. Cook, one of the chief architects of the Harper's Ferry armory raid, in 1859. John Brown, alone of his men, has grabbed the historical spotlight. This compulsively readable history's focus on Cook gives readers a behind-the-scenes look at both this gentleman rogue and all the machinations that led to the disastrous raid and the trial and imprisonment of both Brown and Cook. Lubet emphasizes the moral choices made by both men. Most perplexing are the choices made by Cook, who spied for Brown in order to set up the raid, knew more than anyone about the plan, and then betrayed Brown. Lubet's narrative starts from the Charlestown and Virginia jail cells in which Brown and Cook spent their last days, juxtaposing their characters and choices from the start. Lubet traces the origins of the raid, the raid itself, and its aftermath, all as a lens onto the Civil War. He sustains a compelling narrative (especially in showing how the way that Brown spoke at his trial and execution greatly aided the abolitionist cause) while strewing his tale with fascinating details, like the fact that actor John Wilkes Booth attended Brown's execution. Riveting. --Connie Fletcher "John Brown inspired millions as a martyr for liberty, but he convinced just twenty-one men to fight with him at Harper's Ferry. The most colorful

and morally complex of them was John Cook—a lispig libertine, a crack shot, a spy who couldn't stop talking. Steven Lubet's rich and revelatory account of Cook's amazing life and confounding death is a wartime adventure and a legal thriller, a personal odyssey and an important American story."—Daniel J. Sharfstein, author of *The Invisible Line: A Secret History of Race in America*