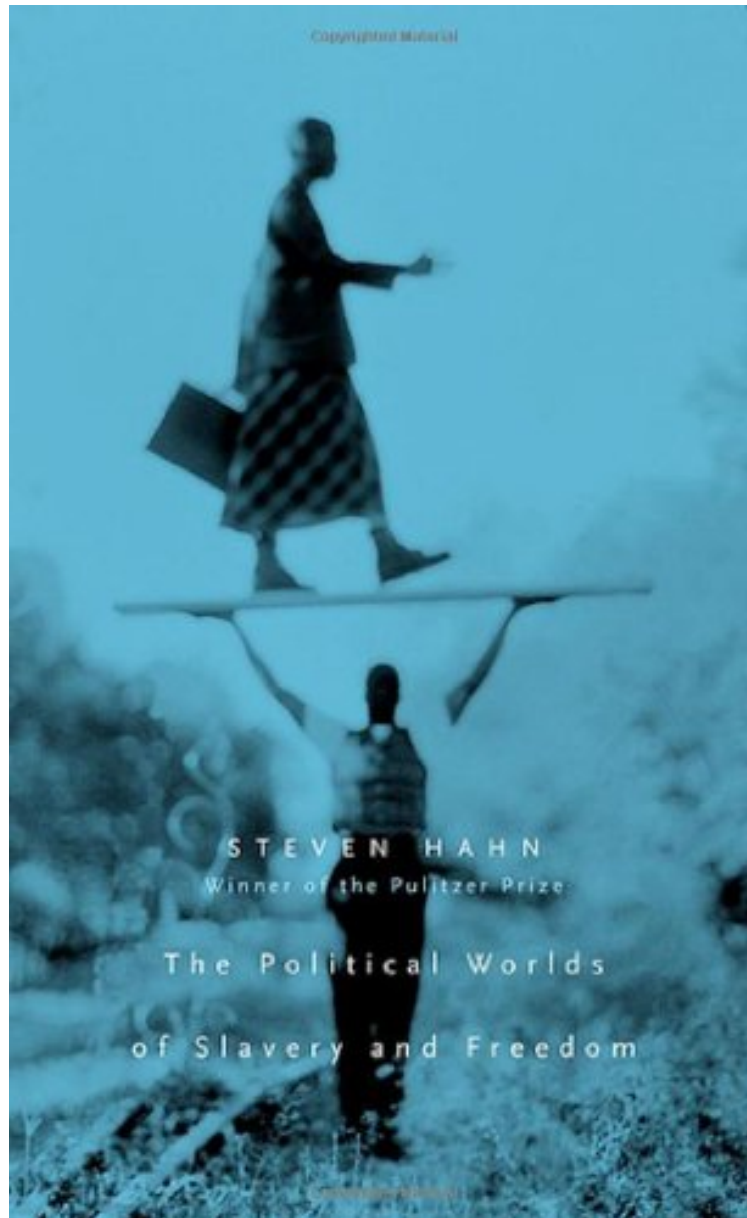


(Free and download) The Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom (The Nathan I. Huggins Lectures)

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Steven Hahn

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Steven Hahn : The Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom (The Nathan I. Huggins Lectures) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom (The Nathan I. Huggins Lectures):

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Awesome and Most Important Reading By Heather H. As we move into the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War THIS is THE book we all need to read. Go get it! 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Empowerment in African American History By Robin Friedman

Steven Hahn's new book, "The Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom" (2009) is based upon the Nathan L. Huggins Lectures Hahn delivered at Harvard University. The Huggins lectures are designed to explore important themes in African American history. Hahn is Professor of American History at the University of Pennsylvania. His best-known work, "A Nation under our Feet" (2004) was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, the Bancroft Prize, and the Merle Curti Prize in Social History. The book tells how rural southern African Americans took steps towards their own political empowerment beginning with the period of slavery and continuing through the Great Migration northward beginning early in the Twentieth Century. Hahn's new book continues the theme of "A Nation under our Feet" by examining how African American history illustrates the ideals and goals of "self-determination, self-governance, and self-defense". (Preface, xvi) Hahn wants to show how African Americans took control of their own destinies and tried aggressively to define their own characters beginning in the days of slavery. Hahn wants to counter what he perceives as received accounts that African Americans tended to respond reactively to slavery and segregation. He also emphasizes the separateness of African American political activity as African Americans attempted to find their own way and not simply seek equal rights in the larger society. Hahn's approach sympathizes with modern forms of African American political activity such as Black Power and the Black Panthers. It is somewhat critical of more mainstream approaches which emphasized the integration of African Americans as citizens with full rights and equality in American life. This approach sees African Americans as shared partners in the American dream rather than, perhaps, as having a separate dream. The approach Hahn questions is, I think, exemplified by the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, especially in his "I have a Dream" speech in Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1963. A recent book on King's speech, "King's Dream" by Eric Sundquist, which I have reviewed here on , emphasizes the manner in which King's dream was part of a shared American vision. While not entirely disagreeing with this account, Hahn tries to supplement and qualify it. The book consists of three dense and detailed lectures on empowerment in African American history. They are written in a scholarly yet provocative manner as Hahn tries to challenge received accounts and tries to explain why other accounts have had difficulty receiving a hearing. At times in the lectures, especially when he examines African American activity during the Civil War, Hahn seems to suggest that the evidence will support various competing accounts. At other times, he seems to me unduly dogmatic and insistent upon his own reading of events. The first lecture, "Slaves at Large": the Emancipation Process and the Terrain of African American Politics" is the most difficult and challenging of the three. Hahn attacks the view that there were two emancipations in American history: the emancipation of slaves in the North which was completed in the early part of the nineteenth century and the emancipation in the South which pitted the sections of the United States against each other in the Civil War. Hahn sees emancipation as a single continuous political process which effected the United States in its entirety. He compares free blacks in the North to maroons (communities of escaped slaves), who worked with and shared the fate of enslaved blacks in the South; and he argues that blacks in the North remained almost as much in need of emancipation as did those blacks still subjected to slavery. For Hahn, emancipation was an international political movement which began in the 18th Century (where historians tend not to look for it) and which still continues. The second essay, "Did we Miss the Greatest Slave Rebellion in African American History" argues that African American activity, in escaping from slavery and fighting in the Union Army, among other things, constituted a still-unacknowledged slave rebellion. Hahn draws parallels between the activities of African Americans during the Civil War, and the rebellion in Haiti led by Toussaint L'Overture in the late 18th and early 19th Century. Hahn tries to examine why Americans have, from the Civil War onward, avoided characterizing African American activity during the war as a rebellion against slavery. Hahn argues that African Americans were seen as dependent and passive and that the image of rebellion contradicts this. But Hahn seems himself to step back from a full characterization of the Civil War as a slave rebellion. He admits that the evidence may be viewed as equivocal and could be interpreted in other ways. The final essay deals with "Marcus Garvey, the UNIA and the Hidden Political History of African Americans." Garvey (1887 - 1940) was a Jamaican who attained a large African American following in the United States in the early 1920s. Garvey was a separatist who advocated a separate country for at least some African Americans in Africa. In some respects, Garvey's programme was similar to that of the American Colonization Society. W.E.B. DuBois denounced Garvey, and Garvey was ultimately deported from the United States. Hahn examines Garvey's movement, which remains alive in the United States today, and its followers. He tries to rehabilitate and defend Garvey's movement by finding in it a source of African American strength, distinctiveness and empowerment that had and continues to have an important impact on how many African Americans see themselves. Hahn has written a challenging book that will encourage its readers to examine their assumptions about both the African American experience and the American experience. Robin Friedman

Pulitzer Prize-winner Steven Hahn's provocative new book challenges deep-rooted views in the writing of American and African-American history. Moving from slave emancipations of the eighteenth century through slave activity during the Civil War and on to the black power movements of the twentieth century, he asks us to rethink African-

American history and politics in bolder, more dynamic terms. Historians have offered important new perspectives and evidence concerning the geographical expanse of slavery in the United States and the protracted process of abolishing it. They have also uncovered a wealth of new material on the political currents running through black communities from enslavement to the present day. Yet their scholarship has failed to dislodge familiar interpretive frameworks that may no longer make much sense of the past. Based on the Nathan I. Huggins Lectures at Harvard University, *The Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom* asks why this may be so and offers sweeping reassessments. It defines new chronological and spatial boundaries for American and African-American politics during the first half of the nineteenth century. It suggests, with historical comparisons, that we may have missed a massive slave rebellion during the Civil War. And it takes a serious look at the development and appeal of Garveyism and the hidden history of black politics it may help to reveal. Throughout, it presents African Americans as central actors in the arenas of American politics, while emphasizing traditions of self-determination, self-governance, and self-defense among them.

From Booklist
Hahn, a University of Pennsylvania history professor and author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Nation under Our Feet* (2003), bases his new book on the Nathan I. Huggins lectures he recently delivered at Harvard. Unquestionably scholarly in preparation and presentation, the book is not completely limited to a scholarly readership because it imparts too much important information and too many new interpretations to be ignored by a good general reader with a solid background. Three longish essays isolate a body of “proof” standing behind Hahn’s abiding belief that although certain factors in black American history present themselves as real and authentic, most historians have largely been blind to them, and their virtual nonexistence in historians’ eyes have made them invisible to the general public as well. These three factors are that the U.S. was a slaveholding nation, and slavery existed not simply in the South; a great slave rebellion during the Civil War has been largely ignored; and Marcus Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association were a far bigger movement than has been credited. --Brad Hooper
Hahn has emerged as the pre-eminent historian of black politics in the apparently lost decades between the end of the Civil War and the stirrings of the modern civil rights movement... In *The Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom*, Hahn explains that the decades after Reconstruction were far from a political vacuum for Southern blacks. Instead, black people worked to wring as much as they could from the promises of the Reconstruction years, then regrouped after the Confederate counterrevolution in 1877 and continued to organize... At the heart of Hahn’s critique is an attempt to recover African-Americans as political actors: to insist that, under slavery and ‘freedom,’ in the North and South, black politics was everywhere. This politics has been obscured in popular history, and even in academic circles, because it sits so poorly with two cherished myths about American history: that a commitment to freedom was a strand in the nation’s political DNA, and that black people have patiently pursued integration since 1776. Hahn wants us to be bolder in exploring the hidden corners of black history, to set aside the integrationist narrative in search of the totality of black experience. (Nicholas Guyatt *The Nation* 2010-06-14)
We tend to think of the history of slavery in the United States in terms of bright lines separating North and South, slave and free, pre- and post-Emancipation. But this view, says Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Steven Hahn, vastly oversimplifies a complex and labile situation. Building a case against the received understanding, Hahn argues passionately in the lectures that make up this collection that the boundaries of slavery were indistinct. There were slaves and owners in the North—he reproduces an 1851 notice warning the ‘Colored People of Boston’ to ‘Keep a Sharp Look Out’ for ‘Kidnappers and Slave Catchers’—and communities of free blacks and escaped slaves even in the South, as well as a patchwork of laws and practices that reigned west of the ever mobile frontier and elsewhere outside the country’s borders. Furthermore, the perception of enslaved blacks as a powerless and inchoate mass, passive recipients of their emancipation, is belied by evidence of organized action on such a scale that Hahn considers it tantamount to a great slave rebellion unrecognized because of white America’s paternalistic myopia then and since, an intriguing proposition that is bound to stir controversy within academia and beyond. (Amanda Heller *Boston Globe* 2009-04-19)
No one has explained the story of emancipation, and its grassroots politics, as well as Steven Hahn. He demonstrates that the Civil War was but one turning point in a long history of resistance, rebellion, and mobilization on the part of slaves, refugee freedmen, and new post-war citizens. He crystallizes W. E. B. Du Bois’ argument, rooting it in the kind of research Du Bois could never do in Jim Crow America. Freedom came; but more so, it was seized and converted into a black politics that forever reshaped America. (David Blight, author of *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American History*)
Steven Hahn brings a luminous originality to every historical subject he touches. *The Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom* makes clear, once again, why he is one of the very best American historians writing today. (Marcus Rediker, author of *The Slave Ship: A Human History*)
In this important book, Steven Hahn raises and confronts compelling questions about the political activism of slaves and freed people that have been previously either ignored or insufficiently addressed. Especially intriguing is Hahn’s discussion of a black political underground from the emancipation period to World War II. This book will generate a much-needed debate among all concerned with political and cultural divisions in our society. (William Julius Wilson, author of *More than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*)
About the Author
Steven Hahn is Roy F. and Jeannette P. Nichols Professor in American

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