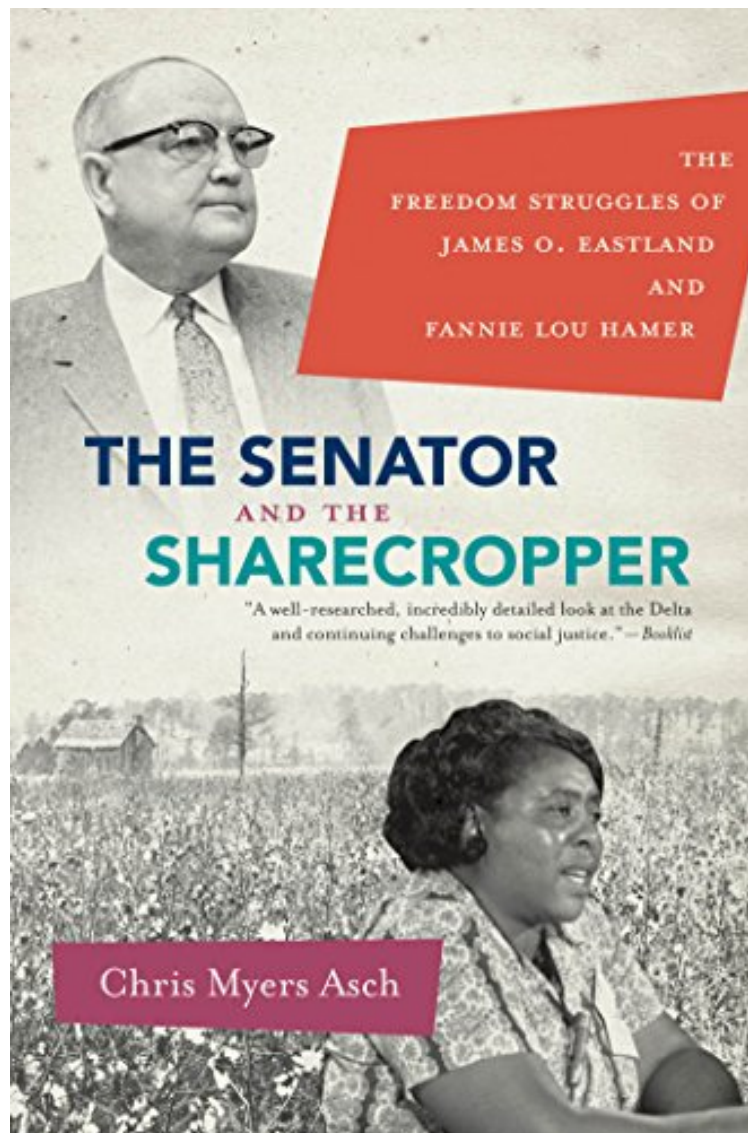


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## The Senator and the Sharecropper: The Freedom Struggles of James O. Eastland and Fannie Lou Hamer

Chris Myers Asch

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Chris Myers Asch : **The Senator and the Sharecropper: The Freedom Struggles of James O. Eastland and Fannie Lou Hamer** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Senator and the Sharecropper: The Freedom Struggles of James O. Eastland and Fannie Lou Hamer:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A very interesting book!By Deven BlackThis is the story of how the intersection of and conflict between a racist plantation-owning US Senator, James Eastland of Mississippi, and a poorly educated sharecropper, Fannie Lou Hamer, changed the Democratic Party and America. The story is told with tremendous detail and that detail can be overwhelming and distracting at times, particularly when the author diverges into intricate explanation of the earliest settlements and the minutia of the Delta cotton economy. The book's most dynamic and interesting character, Ms. Hamer, shows up far too late in the narrative, but when she does appear the book regains much of the compelling storyline that it should have throughout.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Compelling read. Remarkably relevant. Yet deeply informative about ...By ElizabethCompelling read. Remarkably relevant. Yet deeply informative about the reality of life in Sunflower County Mississippi in the 1950's and 1960's.Asch is a clear and thoughtful writer. He lets the dreadful facts speak for themselves.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Opens your eyes about what went on in the south ...By Steve LarsonOpens your eyes about what went on in the south, especially Mississippi. I was able to visit some of the places in the book. Fannie Lou Hamers memorial park was well done.

In this fascinating study of race, politics, and economics in Mississippi, Chris Myers Asch tells the story of two extraordinary personalities--Fannie Lou Hamer and James O. Eastland--who represented deeply opposed sides of the civil rights movement. Both were from Sunflower County: Eastland was a wealthy white planter and one of the most powerful segregationists in the U.S. Senate, while Hamer, a sharecropper who grew up desperately poor just a few miles from the Eastland plantation, rose to become the spiritual leader of the Mississippi freedom struggle. Asch uses Hamer's and Eastland's entwined histories, set against the backdrop of Sunflower County's rise and fall as a center of cotton agriculture, to explore the county's changing social landscape during the mid-twentieth century and its persistence today as a land separate and unequal. Asch, who spent nearly a decade in Mississippi as an educator, offers a fresh look at the South's troubled ties to the cotton industry, the long struggle for civil rights, and unrelenting social and economic injustice through the eyes of two of the era's most important and intriguing figures.

From Publishers WeeklyArch, co-founder of the U.S. Public Service Academy and a former elementary school teacher in Mississippi's Sunflower County, chronicles the life and times of two Sunflower natives who became central civil rights figures: U.S. Senator James Eastland, scion of one of the region's oldest plantation families, and Fanny Lou Hamer, the sharecroppers' daughter who led the drive for voting rights in Mississippi. Hamer's involvement began in August, 1962, when she joined a group of 17 other African-Americans registering to vote; that courageous decision got her kicked off the plantation where her family eked out an existence. After that, "the movement" literally became her home, and she worked feverishly over the following years to challenge the status quo. As the chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Eastland fought long and hard against the demands of Hamer and others, successfully watering down civil rights initiatives in 1957 and killing them outright in '66. Asch does a commendable job illuminating mid-twentieth century cotton kingdom economics while keeping his narrative moving. Though Eastland looms larger in these pages, it's satisfying to watch the tide of history overtake the largely unrepentant (and all but forgotten) senator, and see Hamer, famously "sick and tired of being sick and tired," become a legend in the Delta and throughout the country. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.From BooklistInfamous senator Eastland and famed civil rights leader Hamer grew up only miles apart in the Mississippi Delta but in vastly different circumstances. Eastland, part of a wealthy cotton-planter family, became one of the most powerful men in the U.S. as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Hamer grew up a sharecropper on the receiving end of Eastland's efforts to protect the interests of the planters at the expense of the workers. Asch, who served as a Teach for America teacher in Sunflower, Mississippi, offers a detailed and impassioned look at the Delta that produced Eastland and Hamer and the historical, social, and economic factors that informed their lives. Eastland equated freedom with economic freedom of the planters and protection of the cotton industry; civil rights equaled communism. Hamer recognized in the tumult of the civil rights movement the moment when she and her neighbors could achieve the social justice that had been denied them for generations. Asch's book is a well-researched, incredibly detailed look at the Delta and continuing challenges to social justice. --Vanessa Bush Compelling...Asch uses the stories of Hamer and Eastland to understand the Sunflower County of the present, to comprehend the economic stagnation that African American residents still face today and to make sense of the unspoken rules that continue to govern racial interactions in the twenty-first century.-- s in American HistoryAsch does a commendable job illuminating mid-twentieth century cotton kingdom economics.--Publisher's WeeklyWeaves a story around these two main characters that is all too familiar to those who understand the tragic history of racism in the South.--The Journal of Mississippi HistoryAsch's book is a well-researched, incredibly detailed look at the Delta and continuing challenges to social justice.--Booklist