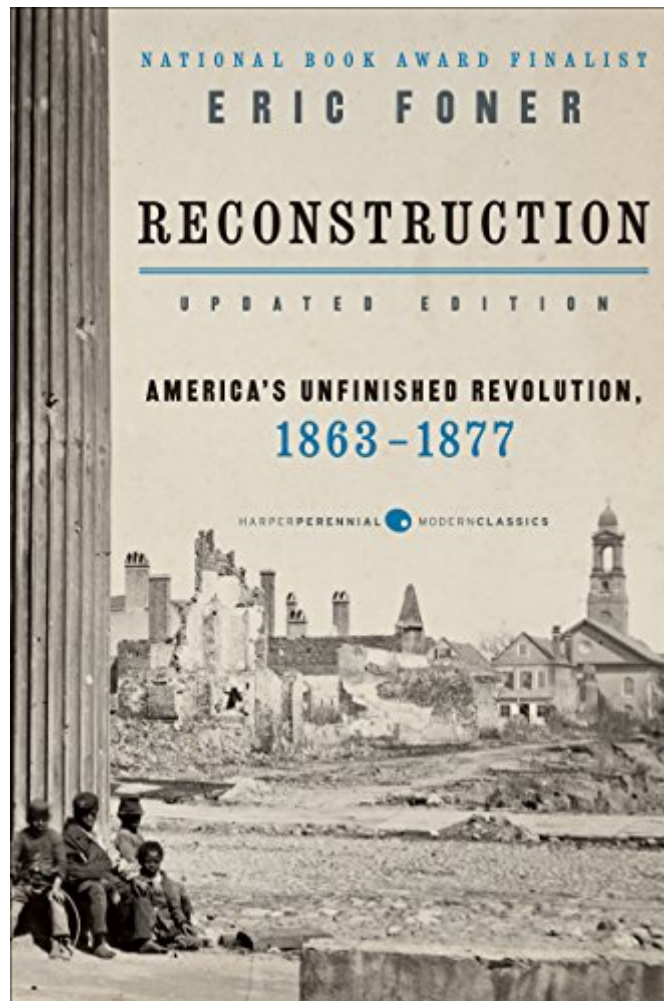


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Reconstruction Updated Edition: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-18



Synopsis

With a New Introduction From the "preeminent historian of Reconstruction" (New York Times Book Review), a newly updated edition of the prizewinning classic work on the post-Civil War period that shaped modern America Eric Foner's "masterful treatment of one of the most complex periods of American history" (New Republic) redefined how the post-Civil War period was viewed. Reconstruction chronicles the way in which Americans "black and white" responded to the unprecedented changes unleashed by the war and the end of slavery. It addresses the quest of emancipated slaves searching for economic autonomy and equal citizenship, and describes the remodeling of Southern society, the evolution of racial attitudes and patterns of race relations, and the emergence of a national state possessing vastly expanded authority and committed, for a time, to the principle of equal rights for all Americans. This "smart book of enormous strengths" (Boston Globe) remains the standard work on the wrenching post-Civil War period "an era whose legacy still reverberates in the United States today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I gradually read Eric Foner's comprehensive Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution,

1863-1877, updated ed. (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2014) on Kindle over a period of several months. The first edition was published in 1988. It is not possible to capture adequately in this review the breadth of Foner's research and analysis. Suffice it to say that he covers probably every important political, social, and economic development, both in the North and the South, during the years 1863 through 1877. The present review focuses on some but not all of his themes. I was impressed by Foner's meticulous documentation of the factual developments he discusses. For the most part, Foner lets the facts speak for themselves. Although he has an analytical framework, his interpretation is informed more by historical facticity than by a preconceived ideological orientation. His extensive knowledge of the facts on the ground is remarkable. This work clearly represents a lifetime of study of these decades of American history. One thread that runs through this work is the influence of classical liberalism and its intellectual precursors on Reconstruction and beyond. I recently read C. B. Macpherson's *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, a book written by a Canadian professor that did not address American history. Macpherson focused on the seventeenth-century English philosophers and thinkers who formed, as it were, the intellectual basis of the later laissez-faire theories of Adam Smith and his contemporaries in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment.

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