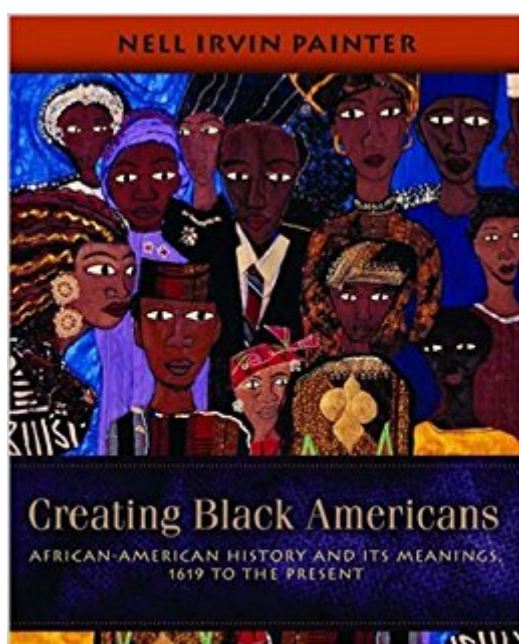


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# Creating Black Americans: African-American History And Its Meanings, 1619 To The Present



## Synopsis

Here is a magnificent account of a past rich in beauty and creativity, but also in tragedy and trauma. Eminent historian Nell Irvin Painter blends a vivid narrative based on the latest research with a wonderful array of artwork by African American artists, works which add a new depth to our understanding of black history. Painter offers a history written for a new generation of African Americans, stretching from life in Africa before slavery to today's hip-hop culture. The book describes the staggering number of Africans--over ten million--forcibly transported to the New World, most doomed to brutal servitude in Brazil and the Caribbean. Painter looks at the free black population, numbering close to half a million by 1860 (compared to almost four million slaves), and provides a gripping account of the horrible conditions of slavery itself. The book examines the Civil War, revealing that it only slowly became a war to end slavery, and shows how Reconstruction, after a promising start, was shut down by terrorism by white supremacists. Painter traces how through the long Jim Crow decades, blacks succeeded against enormous odds, creating schools and businesses and laying the foundations of our popular culture. We read about the glorious outburst of artistic creativity of the Harlem Renaissance, the courageous struggles for Civil Rights in the 1960s, the rise and fall of Black Power, the modern hip-hop movement, and two black Secretaries of State. Painter concludes that African Americans today are wealthier and better educated, but the disadvantaged are as vulnerable as ever. Painter deeply enriches her narrative with a series of striking works of art--more than 150 in total, most in full color--works that profoundly engage with black history and that add a vital dimension to the story, a new form of witness that testifies to the passion and creativity of the African-American experience. \* Among the dozens of artists featured are Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, Beauford Delaney, Jacob Lawrence, and Kara Walker \* Filled with sharp portraits of important African Americans, from Olaudah Equiano (one of the first African slaves to leave a record of his captivity) and Toussaint L'Ouverture (who led the Haitian revolution), to Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, to Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X

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## Customer Reviews

This new study by Princeton historian Painter (*Standing at Armageddon*, etc.) aims not merely to provide an updated scholarly account of African-American history, but to enrich our understanding of it with the subjective views of black artists, which she places alongside the more objective views of academics. The result is a book that contains both a compelling narrative and numerous arresting images, but that does not always successfully tie the two together. To be fair, Painter is a historian, not an art critic. Her primary purpose in including artworks is to illustrate historical points and to show black Americans as creators of their own history. Nevertheless, readers will likely be frustrated by the lack of analysis accompanying the images—Painter simply summarizes most of the art works, leaving much of their complexity and ambiguity unexplored. Thus, she inadvertently diminishes their power as complicated pieces of individual expression. Painter is clearly adept at writing straightforward history, however, and on this front the book is lucid, engaging and topical. It does an excellent job revealing both the African and the American dimensions of African-American history. And her work has the additional merit of following the past into the present, tracing the history of black Americans all the way up to the hip-hop era, the controversies surrounding black voters in the 2000 presidential election and the ongoing issues of incarceration and health care. 148 images, 4 maps. (Nov.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Painter, a Princeton professor of history, integrates art and history in this fascinating book, filled with powerful images of black art from photographs to paintings to quilts that tell the story of black America. The book begins with the history and imagery of slavery through the Civil War and emancipation, then traces the cultural influences of the civil rights movement, the black power era, and ends with the hip-hop era. Through each period, Painter offers historical context for the artistic expressions and examines how more contemporary sensibilities shaped remembrances of historical events. She explores the ways that context and historical interpretation influence the artist's

perspective and is subject to great variation over time. Although most of the works presented were created after the mid-twentieth century, they reflect a broader historical span as black artists have attempted to fill in the void of black images from earlier American history. Readers interested in black American art and history will appreciate this beautiful and well-researched book. Vernon Ford

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This is a review of "Creating Black Americans: African-American History and Its Meanings, 1619 to the Present," by Nell Irvin Painter. This book is an important work. You should read it. If you are in college, then you should sign up for a course that uses this book. This book is a scholarly work intended to serve as the principle textbook for a one-semester college course in introduction to African-American history. While the book is written with the academic professionalism expected in a college textbook, it is entirely accessible to everyone. The writing style employs a narrative technique that makes reading easy, enjoyable, and interesting (and, of course, educational). The author (Nell Irvin Painter) was a professor of history at Princeton University and UNC-Chapel Hill. It is obvious (from reading this book) that she has years and years of experience teaching this subject matter to bright, eager minds. After a little web-surfing, I found several discussions and videos of Professor Painter; she is a very intelligent, insightful, charming, wise, and wonderful woman. While the target audience for this book is college-aged adults, high school students should have an easy time reading it. Both high school and college kids would greatly benefit from discussions (arguments?) with elder relatives who either witnessed this history first hand, or who listened to the stories of their grandparents' generation. I did not find a table of contents listed on , so I am providing one:- Africa and Black Americans- Captives Transported, 1619 - ca. 1850- A Diasporic People- Those Who Were Free, ca. 1770 - 1859- Those Who Were Enslaved, ca. 1770 - 1859- Civil War and Emancipation, 1859 - 1865- The Larger Reconstruction, 1864 - 1896- Hard-Working People in the Depths of Segregation, 1896 - ca. 1919- The New Negro- Radicals and Democrats, 1930 - 1940- The Second World War and the Promise of Internationalism, 1940 - 1948- Cold War Civil Rights, 1948 - 1960- Protest Makes a Civil Rights Revolution, 1960 - 1967- Black Power, 1966 - 1980- Authenticity and Diversity in the Era of Hip-Hop, 1980 - 2005- A Snapshot of African Americans in the Early Twenty-First Century

My only complaint about this book is - - - it left me longing for more. The scope and depth of this book are perfect for a one semester college course; however, I am now quite curious to know so much more about the people and events and controversies touched upon in the book. The author packs the book with plenty of references, so the

interested reader has expert guidance to explore the material in greater depth. I wish I could spend some time with Professor Painter discussing the questions she raised in my mind with this book. I wish Ken Burns (or someone similar) would make a multi-part documentary of this book. Every American should know this history; making this book into a film series would make it more accessible to folks.

An excellent insight into how African Americans helped create America as we know it. We are all well versed on the struggle of the Black American in this country - but this book goes a step further. Good read.

Enlightening as a permanent part of my home library.

As a student, I feel that this book is a useful study guide. As an American college student, I feel that it is a good look into a part of our history that was washed over in compulsory education.

perfect condition!

This purchase arrived in a timely manner."There is no silence like the silence of great mountains."

Visual images anchors key events in American and African American history in the the reader's mind. Brings the subject matter to life.

good

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