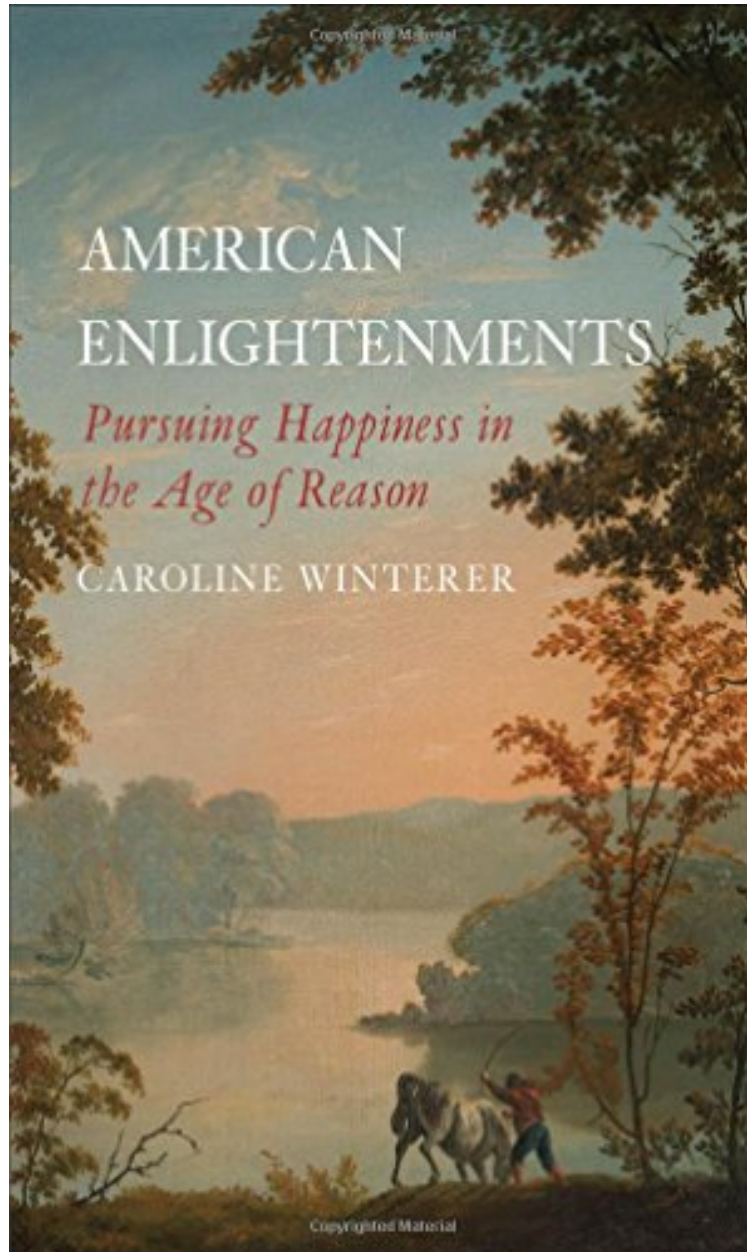


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American Enlightenments: Pursuing Happiness in the Age of Reason (The Lewis Walpole Series in Eighteenth-Century Culture and History)

Caroline Winterer

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Caroline Winterer : American Enlightenments: Pursuing Happiness in the Age of Reason (The Lewis Walpole Series in Eighteenth-Century Culture and History) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *American Enlightenments: Pursuing Happiness in the Age of Reason (The Lewis Walpole Series in Eighteenth-Century Culture and History)*:

2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Good course work material
By BarryAZ
Very fascinating work -- offering a view of the depth of American Enlightenment thinking distinct from the English, Scottish, or French Enlightenment.
4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The author even questions whether the Enlightenment's goals were better served by the rabble of republics or under the ...
By Karl R. Neice
American Enlightenments by Caroline Winterer is a thorough and very readable account of the so-called Enlightenment of the 1600s-1700s, for years thought to have emerged from the salons of Europe and then its principles applied in the New World, resulting in the founding of the republic of the United States. The author contends that this is a made-up story to differentiate post WWII Americans from the dictatorships that threatened the U.S. during the Cold War. But colonists during the Enlightenment had more discussions and trading of scientific data at the time with Europe through the republic of letters, the birth of exchanging of knowledge over long distances by an increasingly literate populace. It was the on-ground findings and experience and discovery of freedom from ancient royal castes that broke the ice on new ideas, and not the aristocratic European salons that spurred the Enlightenment into the areas of science still the domain of unlocking God's plan government and religion. The essays explore Americans' attempts to ennoble the New World's past with explanations of ancient native civilizations of mound-builders in the south and midwest, and of the Olmec, Aztec, Maya and Inca advancements, as well as the counting of remaining Indian cultures aimed at eventually subdividing the land because it was not subject to enlightened use. Also explored are the attempts to enlighten the use of slavery in the Americas, and the Enlightenment's affect on America's burgeoning religious cultures. The author even questions whether the Enlightenment's goals were better served by the rabble of republics or under the guidance of ambitious modern monarchies. All and all a very enlightened (couldn't resist) look at New World history and philosophy from the point of view at the time and not what we wish or need it to be.

A provocative reassessment of the concept of an American golden age of European-born reason and intellectual curiosity in the years following the Revolutionary War. The accepted myth of the American Enlightenment suggests that the rejection of monarchy and establishment of a new republic in the United States in the eighteenth century was the realization of utopian philosophies born in the intellectual salons of Europe and radiating outward to the New World. In this revelatory work, Stanford historian Caroline Winterer argues that a national mythology of a unitary, patriotic era of enlightenment in America was created during the Cold War to act as a shield against the threat of totalitarianism, and that Americans followed many paths toward political, religious, scientific, and artistic enlightenment in the 1700s that were influenced by European models in more complex ways than commonly thought. Winterer's book strips away our modern inventions of the American national past, exploring which of our ideas and ideals are truly rooted in the eighteenth century and which are inventions and mystifications of more recent times.

"[Winterer] reminds readers that the Enlightenment in the US was not synonymous with the American Revolution and that Americans not only absorbed Enlightenment thought but also contributed to it in important ways." Choice