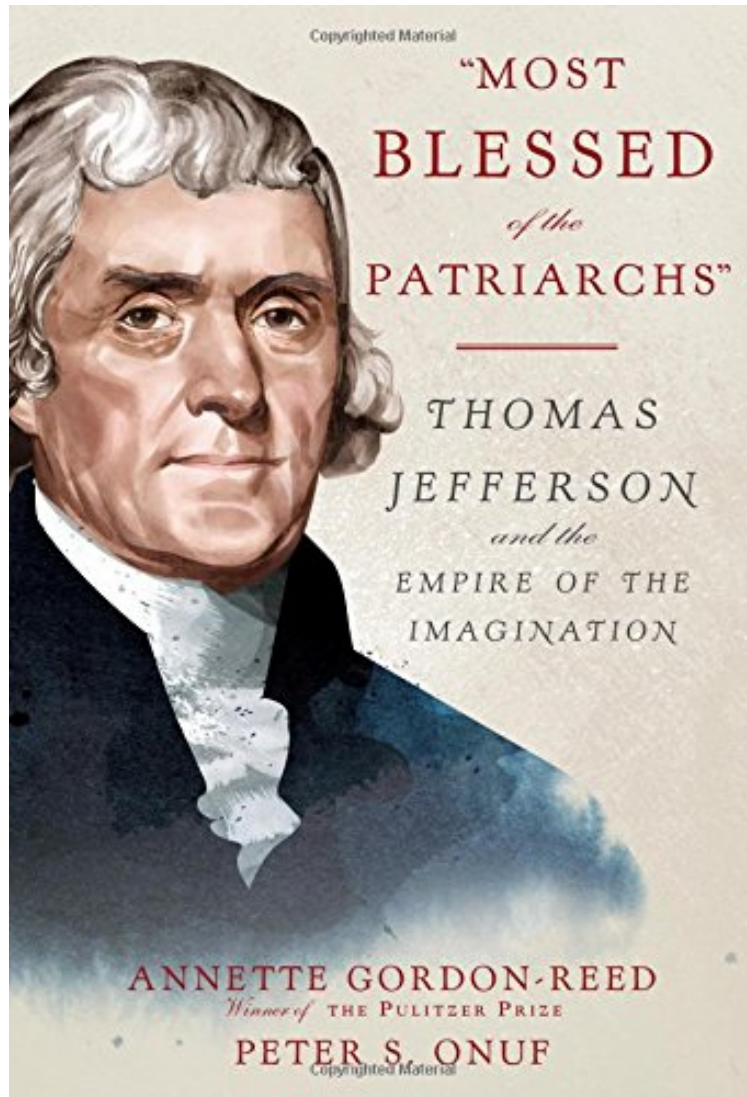


(Free read ebook) "Most Blessed of the Patriarchs": Thomas Jefferson and the Empire of the Imagination

"Most Blessed of the Patriarchs": Thomas Jefferson and the Empire of the Imagination

Annette Gordon-Reed, Peter S. Onuf
ebooks | Download PDF | *ePub | DOC | audiobook



#111642 in Books W W NORTON CO 2016-04-13 2016-04-13Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.60 x 1.40 x 6.70l, .0 #File Name: 0871404427400 pagesW W NORTON CO | File size: 20.Mb

Annette Gordon-Reed, Peter S. Onuf : "Most Blessed of the Patriarchs": Thomas Jefferson and the Empire of the Imagination before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised "Most Blessed of the Patriarchs": Thomas Jefferson and the Empire of the Imagination:

97 of 104 people found the following review helpful. Ignore the SaltBy Kellie HedgersDo not be fooled by the bad reviews--this is an excellent book. Annette Gordon-Reed and Peter Onuf are both excellent Jefferson scholars and this

is a well-written, informative, and insightful book. Some reviewers are treating this book like an attack on Jefferson--it's not. If you actually read it, it's very clear that Gordon-Reed and Onuf are not trying to make us think less of TJ or to dislike him--they are trying to make us think critically about him, and in ways that we haven't thought about him before. The main focus of the book is how TJ's home life and thought processes helped him view and deal with the world, so his private life is VERY relevant, despite what another review said (there's no way to understand what the man DID, unless we know how he THOUGHT and why). Most of the major criticism seems to be related to the fact that they treat Sally Hemings as a real person, rather than a moral stumbling block--they emphasize the Hemings-Jefferson relationship and use what information is available about it to analyze what exactly she and their children might have meant to Jefferson. Acting like the Hemings-Jefferson relationship didn't exist seems willfully ignorant at this point, given the weight of the circumstantial and DNA evidence. Is it really so horrible to contemplate that she might have meant something to Jefferson? Gordon-Reed and Onuf also have extensive analyses of how Jefferson conceived of gender and race, and those rank among the very best writing that I've read on Jefferson to date. They're fresh and insightful, and they add a lot of nuance to a man that you think you know everything about. In conclusion, check this book out. It made me feel like I was seeing a side of TJ I'd never seen before, and that's a rare thing for one of the most analyzed men in American history.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Excellent book. Well written and well documented. I found the lengthy section on the time Jefferson spent in France to be exceptionally long and cumbersome to read. Before that section, and afterward, the book moves along quite well and is very interesting to read. Very little time is given to his writing of the Declaration of Independence or his U.S. Presidency. I would like to have read more on how he formed his policies and programs as President. Jefferson's life was a contradiction from his early years until death. He would ardently profess certain beliefs and philosophy, but then live his life in complete opposition to what he had just written. It's difficult to know how he felt on any given issue because what he said was so different than what he did. Good book - very interesting - well documented.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Man Himself By MaryAn excellent study of Thomas Jefferson: his circumstances/the society in which he grew up and lived, his personality, his talents, his conflicts, the deep love he had for his family. Do we understand him better in reading "Most Blessed of the Patriarchs"? We certainly can perceive enduring characteristics: his appreciation for architecture, invention, scholarship; his reticence about his feelings; the contradictions in his personality, e.g.: valuing privacy at Monticello v. the satisfactions of public life; his attitude toward the institution of slavery and his part in it.. He was a complex man. I believe the exploration of this complexity is extremely valuable. Yes, we can judge--but with thought.

A groundbreaking work of history that explicates Thomas Jefferson's vision of himself, the American Revolution, Christianity, slavery, and race. Thomas Jefferson is often portrayed as a hopelessly enigmatic figure, a riddle, a man so riven with contradictions that he is almost impossible to know. Lauded as the most articulate voice of American freedom and equality, even as he held people, including his own family, in bondage, Jefferson is variably described as a hypocrite, an atheist, or a simple-minded proponent of limited government who expected all Americans to be farmers forever. Now, Annette Gordon-Reed teams up with America's leading Jefferson scholar, Peter S. Onuf, to present an absorbing and revealing character study that dispels the many clichés that have accrued over the years about our third president. Challenging the widely prevalent belief that Jefferson remains so opaque as to be unknowable, the authors, through their careful analysis, painstaking research, and vivid prose, create a portrait of Jefferson, as he might have painted himself, one "comprised of equal parts sun and shadow" (Jane Kamensky). Tracing Jefferson's philosophical development from youth to old age, the authors explore what they call the "empire" of Jefferson's imagination, an expansive state of mind born of his origins in a slave society, his intellectual influences, and the vaulting ambition that propelled him into public life as a modern avatar of the Enlightenment who, at the same time, likened himself to a figure of old "the most blessed of the patriarchs." Indeed, Jefferson saw himself as a "patriarch," not just to his country and mountain-like home at Monticello but also to his family, the white half that he loved so publicly, as well as to the black side that he claimed to love, a contradiction of extraordinary historical magnitude. Divided into three sections, "Most Blessed of the Patriarchs" reveals a striking personal dimension to his life. Part I, "Patriarch," explores Jefferson's origins in Virginia; Part II, "Traveller," covers his five-year sojourn to Paris; and Part III, "Enthusiast," delves insightfully into the Virginian's views on Christianity, slavery, and race. We see not just his ideas and vision of America but come to know him in an almost familial way, such as through the importance of music in his life. "Most Blessed of the Patriarchs" fundamentally challenges much of what we've come to accept about Jefferson, neither hypocrite nor saint, atheist nor fundamentalist. Gordon-Reed and Onuf, through a close reading of Jefferson's own words, reintroduce us all to our most influential founding father: a man more gifted than most, but complicated in just the ways we all are. 15 illustrations

They neither indict nor absolve Jefferson; instead, they aim to make sense of his contradictions for modern sensibilities. A fascinating addition to the Jefferson canon. - Publishers Weekly (starred and boxed) Gordon-Reed and Onuf, both highly reputable Jefferson scholars, strive to understand Jefferson's outlooks over his long life. Gordon-Reed

and Onuf's keen and fresh approach to Jefferson and his ideas will engage history buffs. - Booklist (starred review) With characteristic insight and intellectual rigor, Annette Gordon-Reed and Peter Onuf have produced a powerful and lasting portrait of the mind of Thomas Jefferson. This is an essential and brilliant book by two of the nation's foremost scholars, a book that will, like its protagonist, endure. - Jon Meacham, author of *Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power* A peerless team, Annette Gordon-Reed and Peter Onuf pierce the mysteries of Jefferson's character and at last offer a compelling explanation of how the republican statesman and plantation patriarch could coexist in a single soul. Jefferson's flaw was not hypocrisy but conviction, his unswerving belief in paternalism as empowering and beneficent. - Danielle Allen, author of *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality* This inspired collaboration takes us as close as we're likely to get to the way Thomas Jefferson understood himself and his times. Not content with clichés about a man who made his world anew, Gordon-Reed and Onuf show us the world that made the man. Here is Jefferson as he might have painted his own image, a self-portrait comprised of equal parts sun and shadow. - Jane Kamensky, author of *Copley: A Life in Color* About the Author Annette Gordon-Reed is the Charles Warren Professor of American Legal History at Harvard Law School. She lives in New York City and Cambridge, Massachusetts.