



Capture the Flag: The Stars and Stripes in American History

Arnaldo Testi

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You see it everywhere: on bumper stickers, tee shirts, lapel pins, in shop windows, and in front of nearly every school or government building. Yet while the American flag is ubiquitous, as a symbol it is both heavily freighted and misunderstood.

Now an acclaimed European professor of American history brings a fresh perspective to the American flag, exploring its political, social, and cultural significance across the broad swath of its history. Mining a rich vein of materials from history, literature, music, and popular culture, Arnaldo Testi analyzes the symbolic importance of the flag to the national consciousness of this “nation of immigrants” and sees in it the very contradictions that make up our history: secularism and sacredness, freedom and empire, inclusiveness and aggressive self-confidence.

Using sources as diverse as Walt Whitman and Jimi Hendrix, and events as divergent as the American Revolution, the moon landing, and the terrorist attacks of September 11th, Testi reveals the central importance of the flag to the creation of our nation, the evolution of our national character, and the spread of American culture and power across the globe, while illustrating the varied and often conflicting meanings different Americans ascribe to it.

Whether you worship the flag or revile it, respect it or ignore it, **Capture the Flag** offers the reader a colorful and compelling exploration of the sway it holds on the American imagination.

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