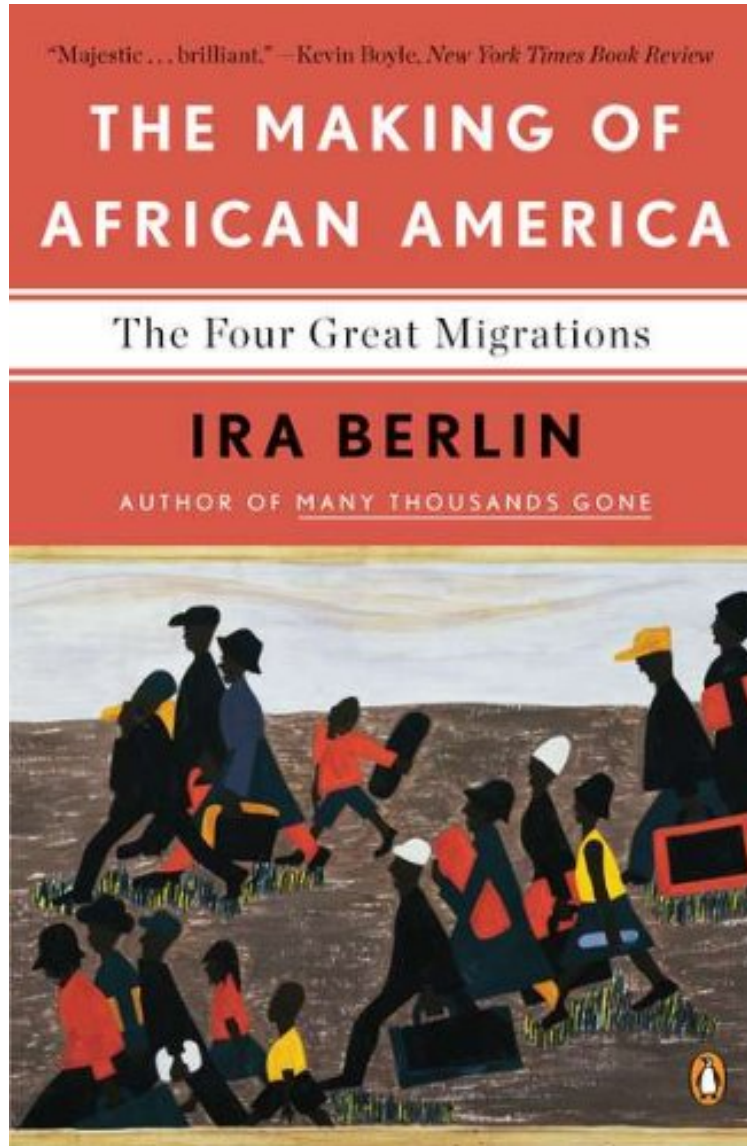


[Download pdf] The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations

The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations

Ira Berlin

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An award-winning historian's sweeping new interpretation of the African American experience. In this masterful account, Ira Berlin, one of the nation's most distinguished historians, offers a revolutionary-and sure to be controversial-new view of African American history. In *The Making of African America*, Berlin challenges the traditional presentation of a linear, progressive history from slavery to freedom. Instead, he puts forth the idea that four great migrations, between the seventeenth and twenty-first centuries, lie at the heart of black American culture and its development. With an engrossing, accessible narrative, Berlin traces the transit from Africa to America, Virginia to Alabama, Biloxi to Chicago, Lagos to the Bronx, and in the process finds the essence of black American life.

From Publishers WeeklyBerlin (*Many Thousands Gone*) offers a fresh reading of American history through the prism of the great migrations that made and remade African and African American life. The first was the forcible deportation of Africans to North America in the 17th and 18th centuries, followed by their forced transfer into the American interior during the 19th century. Then came the migration of the mid-20th century as African-Americans fled the South for the urban North, and the arrival of continental Africans and people of African descent from the Caribbean during the latter part of the 20th century. Berlin sees migration and the reshaping of communities to their new environments as central to the African-American experience. Movement is a matter of numbers, and Berlin provides them in detail kept fully readable by his attention to the cultural products of the shifts. In particular, he follows the church as it moves, the music as it takes on new themes, and kinship as it broadens. Berlin's careful scholarship is evidenced in his rich notes; the ordinary reader will be pleased by the fluidity and clarity of his prose. (Jan.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.From BooklistSlavery, migration, and, more recently, immigration all constitute the making of African Americans, a history older and far more complex than that of most other Americans. Historian Berlin explores the four great migrations that have produced the distinct culture of African Americans: the transatlantic slave trade; the migration of African slaves from the Atlantic coast inland to southern plantations; the great migration from the rural South to the urban North, particularly during World War II; and the latest movement in the diaspora, the immigration to the U.S. of people of African descent from Africa, the Caribbean, and Europe. Berlin analyzes the movements, the dynamics of changes in customs and mores, as well as the sense of place developed by African Americans as they adjusted to each migration, voluntary and involuntary. He explores the changes in culture, music, politics, social institutions, and economics that defined each movement and redefined African Americans. Berlin also explores the latest migration, tensions, and feelings of kinship between native-born African Americans and newcomers, and the ultimate impact on perceptions of what it means to be black in America. --Vanessa Bush Praise for *Many Thousands Gone* "Berlin...brings together in a magisterial synthesis much of what has now been learned about slave life during its first two centuries within the present United States." -Edmund S. Morgan, *New York of Books* "In this masterly work, Ira Berlin has demonstrated that earlier North American slavery had many different forms and meaning that varied over time and from place to place. *Many Thousands Gone* illuminates the first 200 years of African-American history more effectively than any previous study." -George Frederickson, *New York Times Book* "*Many Thousands Gone* is likely to remain for years to come the standard account of the first two centuries of slavery in the area that became the United States." -Eric Foner, *London of Books* "The result of Berlin's labours is a vital book, not simply in making sense of historical complexity, but in advancing a new and distinctive argument about the shaping of North America...the most original and most persuasive overall study of North American slavery for a very long time...It is, quite simply, a book of major importance for all historians of North America." -James Walvin, *Times Higher Education* "The result is the best general history we now have of the 'peculiar institution' during its first 200 years...*Many Thousands Gone* is a remarkable book, one that beautifully integrates two centuries of history over a wide geographical area. It is a benchmark study from which students will learn and with which scholars will grapple for many years to come." -Peter Kolchin, *Los Angeles Times Book* Recipient of the Bancroft Prize from Columbia University Recipient of the Frederick Douglass Book Prize Winner of the Elliott Rudwick Prize of the Organization of American Historians Finalist, National Book Critics Circle for Nonfiction Recipient of the Frank L. and Harriet C. Oswley Award of the Southern Historical Association Praise for *Generations of Captivity* "Ira Berlin has written what will undoubtedly become one of the indispensable books on North American slavery. *Generations of Captivity* traces the history of this dismal institution from its 17th-century origins to its 19th-century destruction in the maelstrom of civil war. He comes closer than any other contemporary historian to giving us an opportunity-in a single, readable volume-to come to grips with a subject very few of us wish to think about but which all of us surely need to consider: how millions of white Americans over the course of three centuries came to hold millions of black Americans in chattel bondage while managing to lose nary a moment's sleep

over their complicity in this monstrous enterprise...Berlin has given us a moving, insightful account of slavery in the United States. Readers will not soon forget the story he has told, nor should they. We still live with the consequences of this institution, and we should understand what slavery meant to the generations of captivity who lived it." -Charles B. Dew, New York Times Book "Berlin focuses on changes over time as it affected patterns of African American demography, family and community life, religious beliefs and practices, and labor in the field and workshop. In the process, he illuminates the rich complexity of slavery as it is shaped by various colonial powers (Spanish, French, British) in port cities and in rural areas...This compact volume offers an impressive overview of historic transformations and regional variations in the institution." -Jacqueline Jones, Washington Post "Where Generations of Captivity differs from previous histories is in its emphatically bottom-up approach, looking at slavery almost exclusively from the point of view of the slaves themselves, and in its relentless emphasis on the institutions cruelty." -Howard Temperley, Times Literary Supplement "Over the years Ira Berlin has established himself as one of the foremost scholars of North American slavery. His last book, Many Thousands Gone (1998), was concerned with the first two centuries of slavery in the United States. Generations of Captivity covers a lot of the same territory, but in doing so takes the story up to the American Civil War (1861-5) and beyond. The result is an absorbing work that demonstrates convincingly that slavery was not a static or monolithic structure but an evolving institution that changed dramatically between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries...As one might expect, Berlin pieces together this complex history with great skill and authority. He rarely falters and, just as important, contrives to make the vast literature on North American slavery vital and accessible. Generations of Captivity is more than a work of synthesis, however. By incorporating the nineteenth century slave experience, not the wider history of Atlantic slavery, Berlin has added immeasurably to our understanding of the "peculiar institution", as well as our understanding of antebellum America." -J.R. Oldfield, History