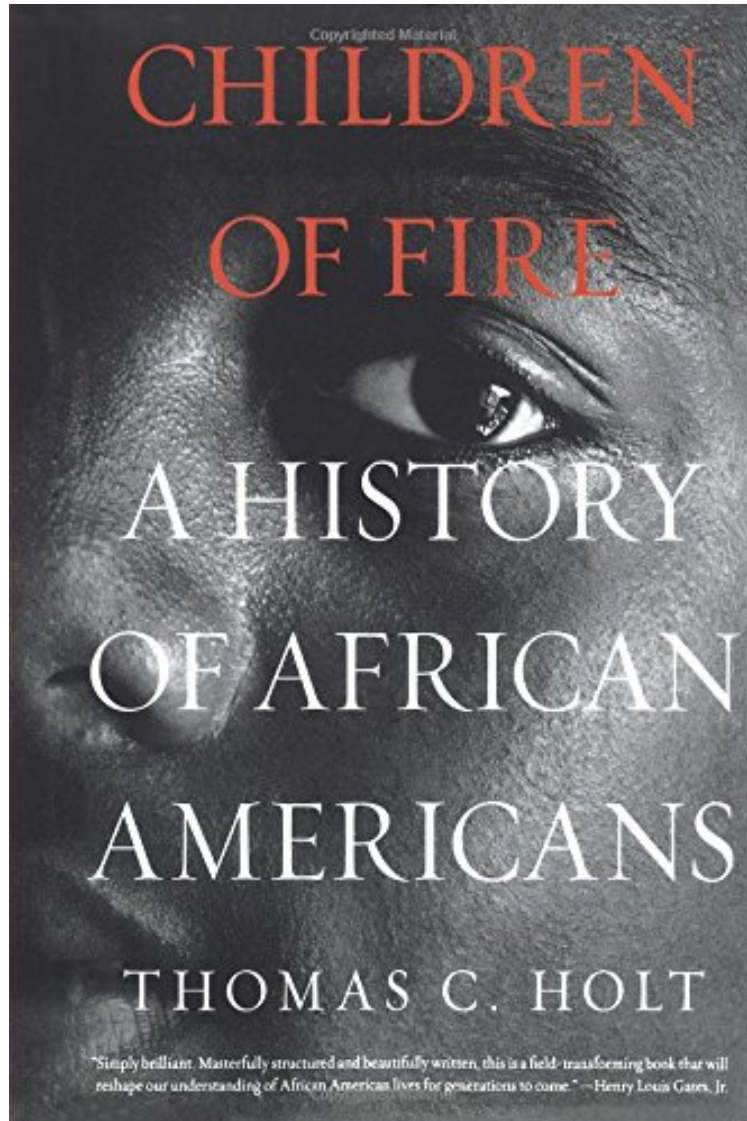


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Children of Fire: A History of African Americans

Thomas C. Holt

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Thomas C. Holt : Children of Fire: A History of African Americans before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Children of Fire: A History of African Americans:

15 of 16 people found the following review helpful. RemarkableBy Mark LevineIn the tradition of John Hope Franklin--- one of the dedicatees--- Holt has written an overview with an ambitious subtitle that he fulfills spectacularly in barely 350 pages. It goes back to Africa before the slave trade and ends virtually last month, with issues facing President Obama. In a book of this sort, one is obligated to be highly selective, and Holt has made his selections judiciously. He manages, somehow, to deal with major players--- Olaudah Equiano, Frederick Douglass,

Rosa Parks, and Obama are the "heroes"--- but the emphasis throughout is on less-known players and on the black population and its concerns as a whole, or as much as it can be. Holt manages to take a very clear, activist posture but to remain objective, and his writing is elegant. Some might quibble about emphases or omissions, as would be inevitable in a book of this sort, but this promises to be the standard overview of the "long" movement, and, when it appears in paperback, should be a common text in introductory African American History courses. Several years ago, this imprint published Harvard Sitkoff's *The Struggle for Civil Rights*, now a standards history of the shorter, mid-20th century movement. Holt's book will join both it and Franklin's text as indispensable. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Charmen Goehring Book arrived in great condition! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Engaging and enlightening By Max F. Miller Only half way through this and Prof. Holt's approach to the history has stretched my thinking in so many ways around the interplay of European and African cultures and the many complex dimensions of commerce, slavery, politics and religion.

Ordinary people don't experience history as it is taught by historians. They live across the convenient chronological divides we impose on the past. The same people who lived through the Civil War and the eradication of slavery also dealt with the hardships of Reconstruction, so why do we almost always treat them separately? In this groundbreaking new book, renowned historian Thomas C. Holt challenges this form to tell the story of generations of African Americans through the lived experience of the subjects themselves, with all of the nuances, ironies, contradictions, and complexities one might expect.

From Publishers Weekly Holt (*Black over White*), professor of American and African-American history at the University of Chicago, constructs an interlocking historical chain of the lives of Olaudah Equiano (1745-1797), Richard Allen (1761-1831), Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), and W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963), whose trajectories reveal a more complex history of African-Americans than the one that simply moves in a linear fashion from slavery to the civil rights movement. Holt connects these men through their corresponding but still unique lives; for example, Equiano, Allen, and Douglass had been slaves, but in different times and places, and in different global contexts. Though moored by these extraordinary figures, Holt's history, replete with vignettes of the lesser known, is inspired by a sense "that ordinary people don't live history as it is taught by historians." A work of historiography as well as history, this book provides a fluid synthesis of the growing body of research in African-American history and letters as well as a thoughtful reconsideration of the work of previous historians. Provocative and bound to spur debate, Holt's study is readable, passionate, and partisan at moments, but balanced, resting upon rigorous scholarship. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. *Children of Fire* is simply brilliant. Thomas C. Holt has produced the first survey of African American history to rival John Hope Franklin and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham's *From Slavery to Freedom*. Masterfully structured and beautifully written, it reflects the mature work of a great historian with a firm and deep grasp of his subject. I learned something new on every page. It should be required reading not only of students of the African American experience, but of fellow historians as well. This is the crowning achievement of a storied career, the work of a sophisticated mind rendered in the most compelling rhetorical strategy. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. A brilliant, sweeping portrait of Afro-American history that transports the reader from the first arrival of slaves in Virginia in 1619 to the election of President Barack Obama. Like Alex Haley's *Roots*, this historic publication vividly reminds us of the long, painful experience of violence that African-Americans have endured and survived. Thomas C. Holt's *Children of Fire* is a monumental work that should be required reading for every American. William Ferris, Professor of History, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Thomas C. Holt has spent his lifetime pioneering in our understanding race and the significance of African Americans in the history of the United States. Simply brilliant, Holt's latest work is remarkable for its precision, intelligence, and heart. Delving into the real personal experiences of the people who create the narrative, this masterful book takes its place as the best synthesis of a complex story. Orville Vernon Burton, author *The Age of Lincoln* A remarkable achievement! Thomas C. Holt has distilled a lifetime of research into this elegant and sweeping volume. With an authoritative voice and a sure hand, he redefines the black experience through the powerful stories of generations of African Americans. Vernon E. Jordan, Jr. In the spirit of John Hope Franklin, Thomas C. Holt, in *Children of Fire*, resurrects the wonderful art of historical generalization embedded in richly contextualized stories of real people. Holt brings a wealth of learning and a graceful style to eight generations' of the African American saga. In each case and time period we see black people transplanted, transformed, and sometimes triumphant in a history that is always unfinished and conflicted. For serious teachers of African American history, this book assumes the rank of best one volume work. David W. Blight, author of *Race and Reunion* In this important new book, Thomas C. Holt offers a creative and thoughtful rethinking of the African American experience. *Children of Fire* illuminates previously unknown aspects of black life and then brilliantly reinterprets the entire history of black America, opening up unfamiliar fields of vision that allow us think anew. Ira Berlin, author of *The Making of African America* Placing all U.S. history in rich international context, this mesmerizing book shows Thomas C. Holt at his best: wise, subtle, visionary. *Children of Fire* challenges many truisms about African American life. A new history for the 21st century. Linda K. Kerber, author of *No Constitutional Right to*

Be LadiesChildren of Fire will immediately become a vital resource for all readers interested in studying and understanding African American history. Marian Wright Edelman, President, Children's Defense FundHolt does resist the temptation to make this a purely academic trade book. The information provided is direct and he does not exploit the use scholarly terminology to impress readers . . . Every party with a desire to learn about the saga of African-Americans, in a concise manner, will benefit and appreciate this book. Rosetta Codling, Atlanta ExaminerHolt ably moves through several centuries, and in an attempt to hold on to all of these accounts, he employs pivotal moments as stepping stones to lead the reader through the complex web of history. The 1892 Chicago World's Fair is one example, as is the death of Frederick Douglass in 1895. The author is at his best in the final chapters, when he shifts his focus to the Civil Rights era of the 1960s. Emmett Till, Rosa Parks, Medgar Evers and many others all find their rightful place in the history, allowing Holt to smoothly reveal the evolution from the initial slaves at Jamestown to the civil-rights heroes that continued struggling for freedom generations later. A story many readers have heard before, but one rarely rendered with such eloquence. Kirkus sAbout the AuthorThomas C. Holt is the James Westfall Thompson Professor of American and African American History at the University of Chicago, and the author of Black Over White.