

Forces that Shaped Modern America

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Readings and Resources

Films:

- *The Plow that Broke the Plains* (1936) and *The River* (1938). These two films about 19th-and early 20th-century American agricultural and industrial development were directed by Pare Lorentz and produced under the auspices of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "New Deal," a series of public works projects and reforms devised to pull the United States out of the Great Depression of the 1930s. Both films are available on Youtube on the FDR Library's channel:
 - *The Plow that Broke the Plains*:
<https://youtu.be/hzaV5FdZMUQ>
 - *The River*:
<https://youtu.be/fpz0XI6U97U>
- PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) has many short videos about major themes in US history:
<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/subjects/social-studies/us-history/>

Textbooks:

- Eric Foner's *Give Me Liberty* is an excellent textbook, but many may not have access to it.
- An accessible, new (2019), open-access, online textbook for American history is:
The American Yawp:
<http://americanyawp.com>

Other essential books:

- Eric Foner's *The Story of American Freedom* (W.W. Norton, 1994) is a tour of the varied ways Americans have understood, or failed to understand, the concept of "freedom."
- A broad history of American slavery is: Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African American Slaves* (Harvard University Press, 2003)

Websites:

- The American history digital collections of the Library of Congress are comprehensive. Some of the highlights are listed here with the old "American Memory" collections:
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>
- The Gilder Lehrman Institute's Resources page allows you to browse or search for topics of interest:
<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources>
- The "eras" and timeline section of the University of Houston's Digital History page is useful for background in US history:
<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu>