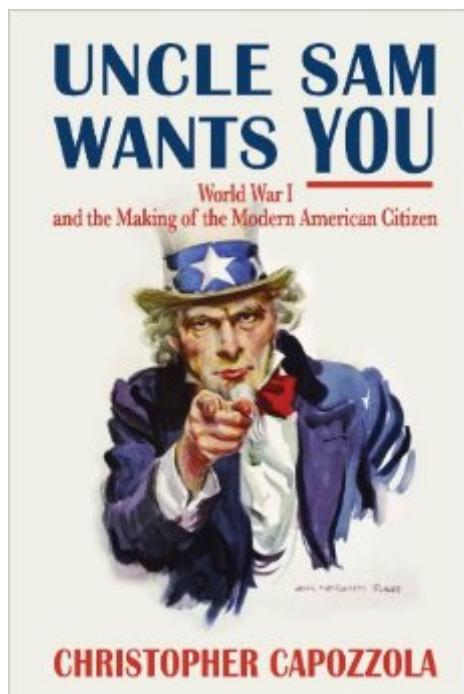


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Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I And The Making Of The Modern American Citizen



Synopsis

Based on a rich array of sources that capture the voices of both political leaders and ordinary Americans, Uncle Sam Wants You offers a vivid and provocative new interpretation of American political history, revealing how the tensions of mass mobilization during World War I led to a significant increase in power for the federal government. Christopher Capozzola shows how, when the war began, Americans at first mobilized society by stressing duty, obligation, and responsibility over rights and freedoms. But the heated temper of war quickly unleashed coercion on an unprecedented scale, making wartime America the scene of some of the nation's most serious political violence, including notorious episodes of outright mob violence. To solve this problem, Americans turned over increasing amounts of power to the federal government. In the end, whether they were some of the four million men drafted under the Selective Service Act or the tens of millions of home-front volunteers, Americans of the World War I era created a new American state, and new ways of being American citizens.

Book Information

Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (April 12, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0199734798

ISBN-13: 978-0199734795

Product Dimensions: 9 x 0.9 x 6.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (6 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #380,063 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #428 inÂ Books > Law > Legal History #595 inÂ Books > History > Military > World War I #1592 inÂ Books > History > World > Women in History

Customer Reviews

Great read, especially for those like me who got curious about the dichotomy in American life between federal power and social goals on the one hand, and individual freedom on the other. While the War Between the States certainly advanced federal power, this history reveals that it was World War I and the first unified national effort in global war that the necessity of federal controls to produce a monumental war effort ran headlong into the culture of individualism, and the greater influence of state and local governments that pre-existed it. Without the experience of World war I, it

would likely have been impossible for the US to have mobilized as it did for World War II, the Nazis might very well have won, the Japanese might very well have held onto China, and the US would be a second rate power, the Soviet Union a hodgepodge of German colonies, and Europe a pale poor place.

Capozzola brings life to the days of American involvement in WWI and a period in our history few learn about in school. The effects of Selective Service, the marginalizing of minority populations by their fellow citizens and the many stories, all well-documented, should be read by everyone lest we don't forget our real past. A good read as well!

Very intriguing topic, Capozzola provides the reader with an alternative view of home front atmosphere during WWI. He brings to light the many intricacies of volunteerism, coercion, patriotism, and civic responsibilities. Highly recommended for individual pursuing a master's degree in American History, especially if one's emphasis is on 20th century social history.

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