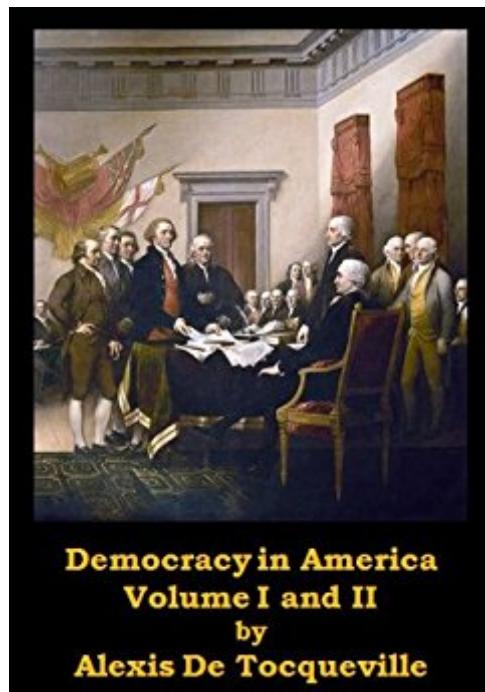


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Democracy In America, Volume I And II (Optimized For Kindle)



Synopsis

Endlessly quoted and referred to, Tocqueville's great history is as relevant now as when it was first published in the mid-19th century, and it remains the most penetrating and astute picture of American life ever written.

Book Information

File Size: 2074 KB

Print Length: 792 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publication Date: June 13, 2007

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00307S1MY

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #58,380 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #12 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Democracy #68 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Science & Medicine > Political Science #68 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Democracy

Customer Reviews

Just reading the other reviews I'm astonished at the number of people who liked this book and didn't fully realize they proved de Tocqueville right again. He points out that a materialistic society encourages each generation to not care a bit about previous/future generations. Its amazing how many people seem to think anything might be dated because it was written in 1830. Some things may have changed but the issues haven't. Ignore the date, this book is now. It is a required reading by most Political Science dept. courses about American political thought. The most resonating critiques arise from his examination of the synergistic effect of individualism and materialism on democracy. Also he forbodes the ills of a strong centralized government trampling on citizens- a warning calling out the need for strong local involvement by citizens. With todays media its ironic that

he calls Public Opinion the fourth branch of American government. I haven't seen the results of opinion polls on that last point though, I'm waiting for the Six O'clock news to tell me...

A classic. He vaguely knew that there might be a problem with the negro slavery but he did not give it much thought, probably because he was a man who thought more highly of property rights than of human rights. He was himself a man of property after all and a man of his times. He also doesn't give any thought to the fact that the leading revolutionaries after having gotten rid of the British turned against their less affluent followers and created the American constitution plus the Alien and Seditions laws. Or perhaps he just approved, he was involved in something rather similar in France after 1848. He absolutely believed that religion was necessary or at least necessary for other people. Here too he was very much a man of his times. Most propertied men in those days believed in "Voltaire for the father and the sons, Monsieur le Curee for the wife and the daughters". The people who promoted the Baptist missionary Billy Graham during the Cold War were of pretty much the same opinion. That said this is an absolutely must read.

This is a must for every citizen in the free world to read! This shows and makes the case why the United States is truly a great place. It also shows what an incredible system our founders put into place based on all of the other failed systems and taking from all of the greats in the past to create a country based on Liberty and Freedom. Every High School student should read this as well, instead of Saul Alinsky. We as a Nation need to get back to the core founding principles and this is a great read to see why it truly works. Homeschoolers it's a must!

...which is not something I would have expected to say about a long and very old classic. First, it's history. What today would be called social history. We learn a great deal about what everyday life was like in the early years of the Republic. Second, we see the foundation of the country from the point of view of a well-informed and widely travelled foreigner, who is for the most part sympathetic with our ancestors' bold new experiment. But third, and the most remarkable thing about de Tocqueville is how right he was about so many things, though he was spectacularly wrong about a few, and the jury is still out on yet others. Not incidentally, this is a cracking good translation. It was done about 1875, and the translator includes a few footnotes of his own--pointing out, for example, that the author was wrong when he predicted that states would never secede from the union. But it doesn't read like 19th century prose. It is mostly simple to follow and flows as a good narrative should. I found it hard to put down at the chapter endings. Though you have to. It's a long book. One

note on the Kindle edition: has not yet made the reader footnote-friendly. Jumping back and forth can be a major pain in the... Wherever you get such pains. And most of these footnotes are worth reading.

This often-quoted, seldom read book is for scholars and pundits. You really need to know something about American and French history to be able to judge the ideas of De Tocqueville. When I say "something" I really mean you need to know quite a bit. You need to know American history well beyond the thin gruel served in American high schools. You need to know 18th and 19th c. French history and culture, to understand when De Tocqueville is deceiving himself and when he is deliberately flattering the American reader. It is an important work, and no historian should continue to avoid reading it.

De Tocqueville is required reading for anyone interested in the U.S. Constitution. Written about 50 years after the adoption of the Constitution, De Tocqueville gives an "outsider" view of our Constitution and why it works better than any political system devised by the mind of man. More frightening, it demonstrates how far our government has strayed from the vision of the Framers. The nineteenth-century verbage can be difficult on occasion, but stick with it. It is worth the reading!

De Tocqueville was educated and well traveled. He came to the United States and spent some time here making various observations on how America was different from Europe."The position of the Americans is therefore quite exceptional, and it may be believed that no democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one. Their strictly Puritanical origin, their exclusively commercial habits, even the country they inhabit, which seems to divert their minds from the pursuit of science, literature, and the arts, the proximity of Europe, which allows them to neglect these pursuits without relapsing into barbarism, a thousand special causes, of which I have only been able to point out the most important, have singularly concurred to fix the mind of the American upon purely practical objects. His passions, his wants, his education, and everything about him seem to unite in drawing the native of the United States earthward; his religion alone bids him turn, from time to time, a transient and distracted glance to heaven. Let us cease, then, to view all democratic nations under the example of the American people" He is credited with originating the concept of American exceptionalism as a kind of black swan phenomenon, not as superior to others but uniquely different. (The precise wording 'american exceptionalism' was introduced much later, and the use of the term to indicate superiority is also an add on from other writers with their own agendas.) I was

impressed with the detail and thoughtful consideration of the things he had observed. Most travelers today would not carefully examine the legal systems of the countries they visited and how they played out in practice, not just on paper. Obviously the U. S. has changed since then and it is most instructive to note HOW it has changed.

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