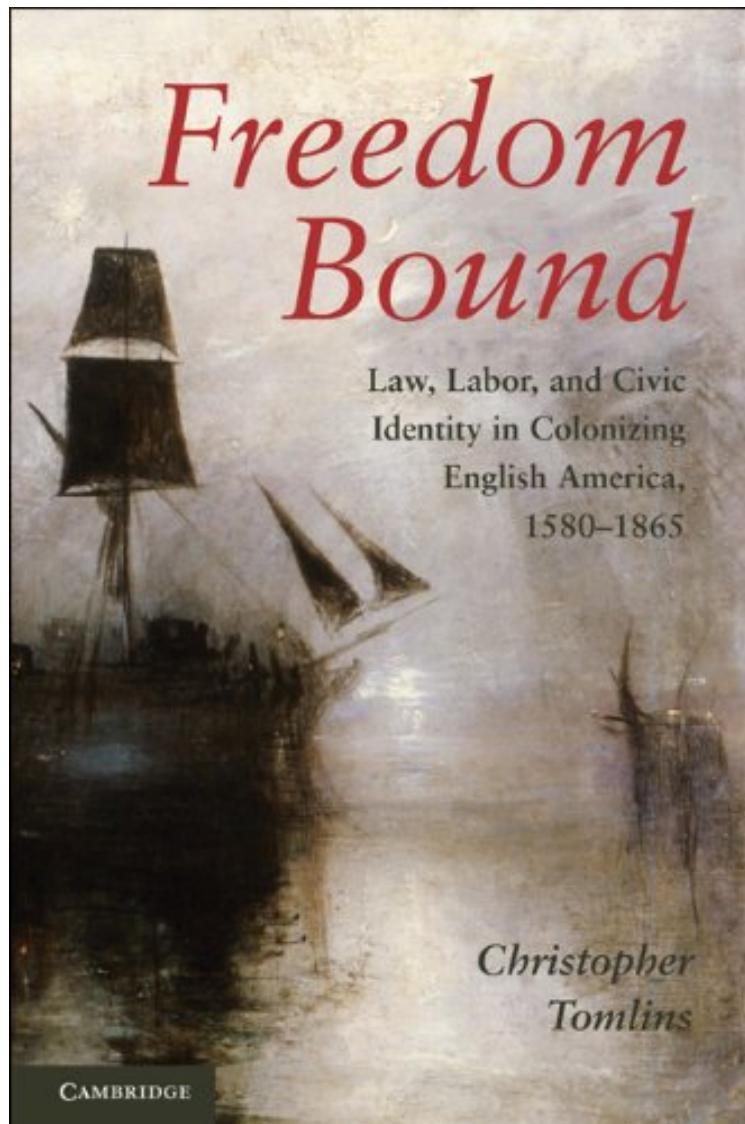


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Freedom Bound

Tomlins

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Tomlins : Freedom Bound before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Freedom Bound:

16 of 43 people found the following review helpful. Worth the struggle?By L.B.ETomlins' Freedom Bound provides an insightful challenge to the accepted narrative of legal history in the United States, but he does so in a way that is almost completely inaccessible. His writing style is challenging, to say the least. Tomlins shoots himself in the foot as convoluted sentence structure, legal jargon, and sheer minutia weigh down his argument. Unless you have a strong interest in legal or labor history (or are required to read this for class -- good luck), skip the book and read some of the articles it has/will spawn instead.

Freedom Bound is about the origins of modern America - a history of colonizing, work, and civic identity from the beginnings of English presence on the mainland until the Civil War. It is a history of migrants and migrations, of colonizers and colonized, of households and servitude and slavery, and of the freedom all craved and some found. Above all it is a history of the law that framed the entire process. Freedom Bound tells how colonies were planted in occupied territories, how they were populated with migrants - free and unfree - to do the work of colonizing, and how the newcomers secured possession. It tells of the new civic lives that seemed possible in new commonwealths, and of the constraints that kept many from enjoying them. It follows the story long past the end of the eighteenth century until the American Civil War, when - just for a moment - it seemed that freedom might finally be unbound.

"Freedom Bound is a truly magisterial work by one of the finest minds currently working in the field of legal history. It is about no less a topic than the origins of modern America - and, in particular, about the law that framed its genesis and its early development. In this exceptionally erudite study, Christopher Tomlins succeeds in achieving an unusual 'thickness' of description, notable alike for its breadth and depth, its subtlety and its comprehensiveness. Even more, he brings an acute analytic eye to a story of enormous complexity, making this a must-read for anyone with a serious interest in either modern American history or law and society." - John Comaroff, University of Chicago and American Bar Foundation

"Beautifully written, deeply researched, and elegantly argued, Freedom Bound is legal history that changes the way we understand U.S. history. Tomlins masterfully retells the story of America's founding by following the developing relationships among labor, law, and civic identity. While focused on early America, Freedom Bound speaks broadly to questions about freedom and equality that continue to define the nation's history into the twenty-first century." - Laura F. Edwards, Duke University

"An ambitious effort to remake the landscape of the history of the origins of American culture, Tomlins' learned and masterful volume may well turn out to be the most important work published in American history over the past quarter century. Transcending the conventional disciplinary categories - England and America, colonial and national - that contribute to the myopia of so many scholars, he leads his reader through a complex, sober, penetrating, and highly persuasive analysis of the fundamental and interactive role of labor, law, and civic imperatives in shaping American society from the late sixteenth century to the American Civil War. Challenging many existing orthodoxies, including the depiction of the American Revolution as a sharp break with the colonial past, it deserves the careful attention of any serious student of, not only the American past, but of the establishment of settler, colonial, and national regimes all over the globe." - Jack P. Greene, Johns Hopkins University

"Take time to savor this magisterial book, the fruit of decades of research and reflection. Christopher Tomlins brilliantly revises our understanding of the ideas and practices that shaped the lives of working people, households, and politics, in an account that stretches from England's Atlantic empire to the eve of the U.S. Civil War. Be warned: many familiar generalizations lie shattered." - Linda K. Kerber, University of Iowa

"Christopher Tomlins has written a passionate, provocative, brilliant book about how law enabled English colonizers to justify taking what was not theirs and then to keep and work what they had taken. With wide-ranging erudition, he uncovers the legalities that shaped what the English expected to find; what they saw; how they interpreted what they found; how they justified what they did; and what social, political, and legal structures they erected in America. Freedom Bound is, by any standard, a magisterial work of stunning originality." - Bruce H. Mann, Harvard Law School

"This sweeping and superb magnum opus is a fascinating account of intricate patchworks of disparate legal systems and codes that ranges all across British North America. Law was anything but a national singularity; rather, it encompassed plural discourses and institutions. The constantly evolving relationship between various freedoms and unfreedoms gives the work a powerful and poignant story line." - Philip Morgan, Johns Hopkins University

"From the beginnings of colonization of the American mainland to the American Civil War, few historians have the knowledge or stamina to rewrite the narrative of American history on such a broad scale. Christopher Tomlins does and has: Freedom Bound is the story of how, from its first imaginings, freedom was bound, limited to white males, secured by the land Native Americans had claimed and populated and by the productive and reproductive labor of wives and slaves. Colonial America is not a time apart; rather it is, in Tomlins' retelling, the formative era of modern America. This is a demanding book - demanding in length, in the range of methodologies it so expertly employs, but most of all in its conclusions. Majestic. Unrelenting. Haunting. Unanswerable." - Barbara Young Welke, University of Minnesota

"Tomlins shows how the vast expanse of land available to British colonizers in North America created the conditions for unfreedom. Scarce labor - free and bound - had to be policed. As a technology of power, law was core to the project of creating the blueprints for the plural forms of colonial governance that provided flexibility in disciplining labor. Freedom Bound takes us from British workshops to the marchlands of North America, from America's initial European settlement to its struggle, after independence, as an expansive republic with the legacy of slavery. More importantly, with deftness, intellectual ambition, and remarkable erudition, it forces us to reconsider how new worlds harbor both potential utopias and dystopias. One word best describes this book: magisterial." - Steven Wilf, University of Connecticut

"What we have long needed is an original and challenging interpretation of early America as a whole. Is there another recent, and not so recent, book that has offered or even attempted the scope and provocation given in Freedom Bound? I can't think of one." - Sam Middleton, Journal of American Studies

"Comparative history can suggest how to read

the past anew-particularly comparative perspectives inspired by so broad-ranging and thoughtful a work as *Freedom Bound*." -Tamar Herzog and Richard J. Ross, *William and Mary Quarterly*"*Freedom Bound* illuminates and rewrites what the book marks off as a long foundational moment-a moving equilibrium a quarter of a millennium long-in early English American history. Through the lens of land and labor, Christopher Tomlins's text makes a case for the essential unity of this period with analytic reach, moral force, and literary sensitivity, extending across an expanse of enormous spatial and cultural diversity." Julia Adams, *William Mary Quarterly*"Tomlins is not the first person to write about the history of law that way. But I think he is more articulate than others have been in explaining exactly what he is doing and why he is doing it. It is this clarity of his method that I find especially valuable." -Stuart Banner, *William and Mary Quarterly*"*Freedom Bound* should - and I very much hope will - revolutionize the way we think about the history of American law and American history generally." Peter Onuf, *Journal of Legal Education*"... a magisterial synthesis and a work of original research, this brilliant, Bancroft Prize-winning volume has much to say about the complexities of law and colonialism, but it also broadens our understanding of law and legal culture in general." James D. Schmidt, *American Historical*"*Freedom Bound*... is long and complex. But it is worth the effort. The work is suffused with an extraordinary and subtle sensibility; and there are even flashes of downright poetry. This is an important book. Awesome, in fact. And also enriching: a real contribution." Lawrence M. Friedman, *Law and Politics Book About the Author* Christopher Tomlins is currently Professor of Law at the University of California, Irvine, on leave from the American Bar Foundation in Chicago, where he has been a Research Professor since 1992. Tomlins began his career at La Trobe University in Melbourne; he has also taught at the Marshall-Wythe Law School, College of William and Mary in Virginia; at Northwestern University Law School; and at Tel Aviv and Haifa Universities in Israel. His interests and research are cast very broadly - from sixteenth-century England to twentieth-century America and from the legal culture of work and labor to the interrelations of law and literature. He has written or edited six books, including, most recently, the multi-volume *Cambridge History of Law in America*, co-edited with Michael Grossberg. His publications have been awarded the Surrency Prize of the American Society for Legal History, the Littleton-Griswold Prize of the American Historical Association and the Hurst Prize of the Law and Society Association. Tomlins currently edits two Cambridge University Press book series: *Cambridge Historical Studies in American Law and Society* and *Cambridge New Histories of American Law* (with Michael Grossberg).