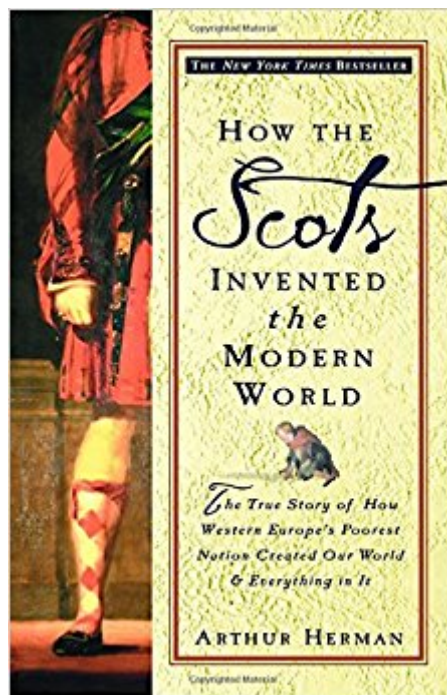


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How The Scots Invented The Modern World: The True Story Of How Western Europe's Poorest Nation Created Our World & Everything In It



Synopsis

An exciting account of the origins of the modern world Who formed the first literate society? Who invented our modern ideas of democracy and free market capitalism? The Scots. As historian and author Arthur Herman reveals, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Scotland made crucial contributions to science, philosophy, literature, education, medicine, commerce, and politics—contributions that have formed and nurtured the modern West ever since. Herman has charted a fascinating journey across the centuries of Scottish history. Here is the untold story of how John Knox and the Church of Scotland laid the foundation for our modern idea of democracy; how the Scottish Enlightenment helped to inspire both the American Revolution and the U.S. Constitution; and how thousands of Scottish immigrants left their homes to create the American frontier, the Australian outback, and the British Empire in India and Hong Kong. How the Scots Invented the Modern World reveals how Scottish genius for creating the basic ideas and institutions of modern life stamped the lives of a series of remarkable historical figures, from James Watt and Adam Smith to Andrew Carnegie and Arthur Conan Doyle, and how Scottish heroes continue to inspire our contemporary culture, from William "Braveheart" Wallace to James Bond. And no one who takes this incredible historical trek will ever view the Scots—or the modern West—in the same way again.

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Customer Reviews

"I am a Scotsman," Sir Walter Scott famously wrote, "therefore I had to fight my way into the world." So did any number of his compatriots over a period of just a few centuries, leaving their native

country and traveling to every continent, carving out livelihoods and bringing ideas of freedom, self-reliance, moral discipline, and technological mastery with them, among other key assumptions of what historian Arthur Herman calls the "Scottish mentality." It is only natural, Herman suggests, that a country that once ranked among Europe's poorest, if most literate, would prize the ideal of progress, measured "by how far we have come from where we once were." Forged in the Scottish Enlightenment, that ideal would inform the political theories of Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith, and David Hume, and other Scottish thinkers who viewed "man as a product of history," and whose collective enterprise involved "nothing less than a massive reordering of human knowledge" (yielding, among other things, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, first published in Edinburgh in 1768, and the Declaration of Independence, published in Philadelphia just a few years later). On a more immediately practical front, but no less bound to that notion of progress, Scotland also fielded inventors, warriors, administrators, and diplomats such as Alexander Graham Bell, Andrew Carnegie, Simon MacTavish, and Charles James Napier, who created empires and great fortunes, extending Scotland's reach into every corner of the world. Herman examines the lives and work of these and many more eminent Scots, capably defending his thesis and arguing, with both skill and good cheer, that the Scots "have by and large made the world a better place rather than a worse place." --Gregory McNamee --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Focusing on the 18th and 19th centuries, Herman (coordinator of the Western Heritage Program at the Smithsonian and an assistant professor of history at George Mason University) has written a successful exploration of Scotland's disproportionately large impact on the modern world's intellectual and industrial development. When Scotland ratified the 1707 Act of Union, it was an economic backwater. Union gave Scotland access to England's global marketplace, triggering an economic and cultural boom "transform[ing] Scotland... into a modern society, and open[ing] up a cultural and social revolution." Herman credits Scotland's sudden transformation to its system of education, especially its leading universities at Edinburgh and Glasgow. The 18th-century Scottish Enlightenment, embodied by such brilliant thinkers as Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith and David Hume, paved the way for Scottish and, Herman argues, global modernity. Hutcheson, the father of the Scottish Enlightenment, championed political liberty and the right of popular rebellion against tyranny. Smith, in his monumental *Wealth of Nations*, advocated liberty in the sphere of commerce and the global economy. Hume developed philosophical concepts that directly influenced James Madison and thus the U.S. Constitution. Herman elucidates at length the ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment and their worldwide impact. In 19th-century Britain, the Scottish Enlightenment, as

popularized by Dugald Stewart, became the basis of classical liberalism. At the University of Glasgow, James Watt perfected the crucial technology of the Industrial Revolution: the steam engine. The "democratic" Scottish system of education found a home in the developing U.S. This is a worthwhile book for the general reader, although much of the material has been covered better elsewhere, most recently in T.M. Devine's magisterial *The Scottish Nation: A History, 1700-2000* and Duncan A. Bruce's delightful *The Mark of the Scots*. (Nov.)Forecast: Clearly modeling this title on Thomas Cahill's *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, Crown may be hoping for comparable sales but probably won't achieve them.Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I grew up in Scotland, so the title had a certain irresistible appeal(!), but this book provided context that was missing entirely in my history classes in school. It's certainly no puff-piece for Scotland, because the author minces no words describing the darker side of 17th and 18th Century Scottish culture, but it is a scholarly and well-rounded view of the birthplace of the Enlightenment and its profound effect on Western thought, politics and education. The USA is my adopted country, as it has been for so many Scots, and although I knew much of the Scottish influence on the founding of this country, I had no idea it ran so deep or wide.I wouldn't dream of spoiling the surprises for anyone who has not read this yet, other than to say that no-one who is a student of American history can afford not to read this book. The depth of research and the unvarnished, warts-and-all approach Mr. Herman takes to his subject matter make it a must read.

Scotland. I found this book to be much more than I expected. The spread of knowledge through the Scottish population was an amazing achievement that influenced our country as much as England. The great universities of Glasglow and Edinburgh gave rise to so much of our common culture, surpassing Oxford and Cambridge for over 200 years. A great eye-opener of a story! Thanks

a very interesting and well written cultural history of the Scots influence on the world.

Very interesting history of how the Scots contributed to our ideas of the relation of individuals to society.

Way to long winded. Some of the historical stuff was endless and some of it seemed to be irrelevant.

A well-written, engaging, relevant, and enlightening review of very important history of civil progress. I highly recommend this work to all who would strive to more completely understand our historical heritage in order to guide a logical and rational journey into the future.

Great

Makes me proud to be Scot..

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