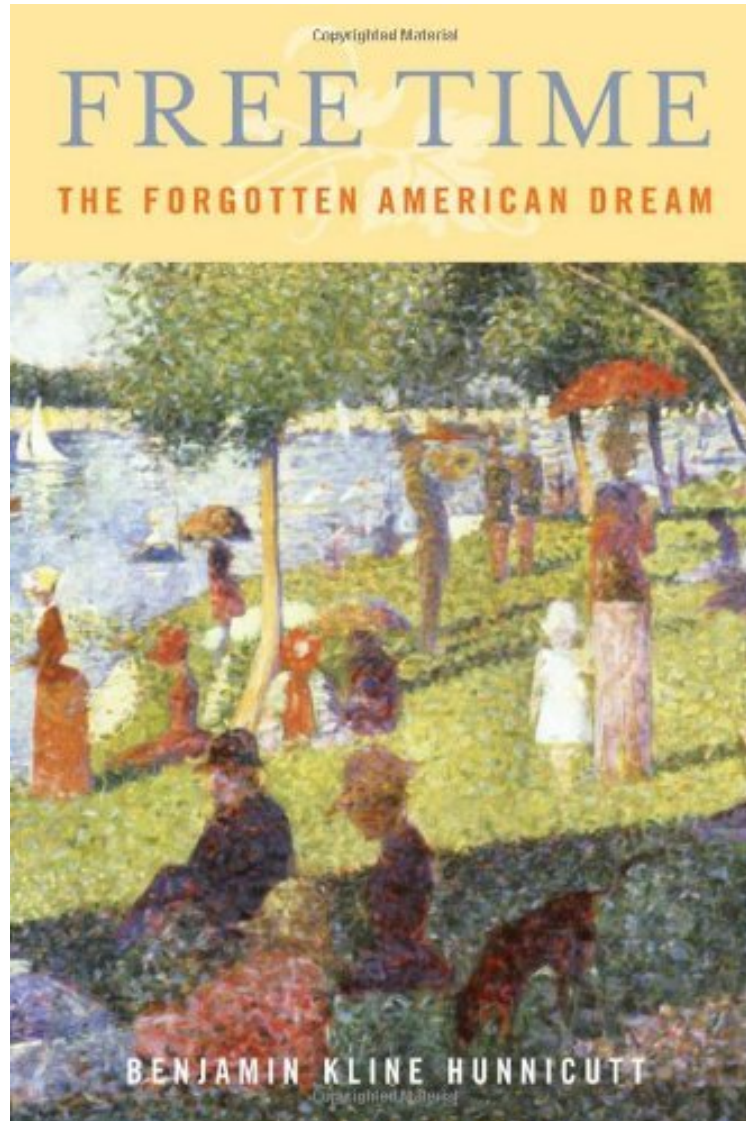


[Download free pdf] Free Time: The Forgotten American Dream

Free Time: The Forgotten American Dream

Benjamin Hunnicutt

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Benjamin Hunnicutt : Free Time: The Forgotten American Dream before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Free Time: The Forgotten American Dream:

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Reigniting the American DreamBy Jessica DeGrootBen Hunicutt begins his book, FreeTime: The Forgotten American Dream, by stating:ldquo;At one time economic progress and technological advances were understood to have a definite goal: abundance. After adequate economic progress was made so that everyone was able to afford the necessities of life (it was believed) our nation would be able to make real progress, exploring liberty that transcended material concerns and the marketplace hellip;ldquo;No longer preoccupied with economic concerns, we could begin to develop our potential to live together peacefully and agreeably, spending

more of our time and energy forming healthy families, neighborhoods, and cities; increasing our knowledge and appreciating of nature, history and other peoples; exploring our beliefs and values together; finding common ground for agreement and conviviality; living virtuous lives; practicing our faiths; expanding our awareness of God; and wondering in Creation. This goal can even be found in the Declaration of Independence; our unalienable rights, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Hunnicutt traces the 200 year history of Americans fighting not just for better wages, but also for an increase in leisure, achieved by a steady decrease in work time. Whether these Americans believed that shorter working hours offered them a practical way to make real the freedoms promised by the revolution, or after the Civil war when they fought to free themselves from the chains of the capitalist world where competition, control, and self-seeking infused every transaction. Women, side by side with men fought for these changes - using phrase such as "bread and roses" to capture their combined agenda of increased wages and increased leisure. These industrial feminists fought for shorter hours to make room in their lives, and in the lives of the men around them, for cooperation, caring, mutuality, and conviviality. Using the job as a stepping stone to better things, taming it gradually by shortening the work hours of all and so eventually subordinating work and the marketplace to the more important business of living freely. What happened? Why in the 1970s did the fight for shorter hours plateau, and even more recently, why have these long fought for changes been reversed by a steep incline in work hours? Hunnicutt asks, have we lost sight of the American Dream? And perhaps even more poignantly wonders what do we stand to lose if we don't once again join together like our fellow revolutionaries to reclaim it? As president and founder of ThirdPath Institute - an organization that is all about people "creating more time for life" - it was powerful to read about the long history of men and women fighting for the changes we believe are so critical to the health of our nation, and to be reminded that our mission has its roots in the Declaration of Independence - "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." 7 of 10 people found the following review helpful. "free time" for "higher progress" By Hamsi Paschal came to know about Mr. Hunnicutt from his statement in a documentary "Frohes Schaffen" (happy working) by Konstantin Faigle in German TV. Being so amazed of the topic "labour-leisure" I started to read context literature and first of all "free time". This book helps me a lot to sharpen my view and understanding of our development as social and working beings. Other authors like Richard Sennett do not have this sound historical review like Benjamin Hunnicutt. I guess not only Europeans learn what the American Dream is/was all about. This old dream seems to be too modern - like WW - at present but is worth trying to start again. And it needs books like this to have a better idea where we stand now and how to start to get on track again. The book is easy to read for those who are not native English speakers - like me. The Kindle version is much cheaper than the printed book, it comes with a dictionary and shipment abroad lasts a second. Can you ask for more? 3 of 11 people found the following review helpful. An interesting look at a very different America By Bob Nolin The goal of "Free Time" is to remind us about "the forgotten American Dream," which is not, as you might think, home ownership. As I learned from the book, once upon a time, and for well over a hundred years, the most fervent hope of working class America was to be able to spend less time at work. I found it fascinating to learn that, as the Industrial Revolution brought in automation and a reduction in the need for labor, pretty much everybody believed that the future would certainly lead to a shorter and shorter work week. Eventually, we'd all work just a few hours a week. Not a few hours a *day*, but a *week*. This idea held sway for such a long time (up until the end of WWII more or less), it's a wonder it has disappeared from the history books and from our collective memory. The history of this idea takes up most of this book, and is fascinating reading. What's puzzling about this book is that the author seems to believe that we lost our way, pretty much due to FDR caving on a bill that would have led to shorter work hours as a way to increase employment. Instead, FDR flip-flopped and began to espouse a "Full Time - Full Employment" philosophy, which has been our mantra ever since. We lost sight of the original American Dream. What happened, it seems to me, is that as technology began to produce more and newer things, we began to want more and newer things. It's basically human nature, to continue to grasp after that which we do not have. It's a vicious circle. We would be happy if only we had [new product, new home, new spouse, new job]. Then we get that thing, and soon realize, no that wasn't what would make me happy, it's [some other new product, etc.]. This is so obvious that I don't understand how the author could fail to see it. His heart is in the right place, certainly. We would all be much better off if we could learn to be happy with less, to realize happiness doesn't come from material things. Yet Hunnicutt seems to think that it was FDR that duped us, and ad men who misled us, and we just need to get back on the right path. He writes: "Scarcity has not always seemed to be eternal; it was not always understood as the everlasting human condition or the foundation of our nation's economy. For the most part, perpetual scarcity is a twentieth-century invention. Before then, most Americans assumed that it would be possible for reasonable people to eventually satisfy their needs as the economy and technology improved and the nation advanced. Traditionally, too much wealth, too much materialism, was understood to impede human progress, leading to greed and envy (twin sins that fed on each other), luxury, indolence, and the slavery of selfishness." At a time when wealth becomes ever more concentrated and greed grows ever stronger, it's hard not to agree with that last statement. America has become much too selfish, and has lost its way, no question. But as I write this, America has just gone through yet another Black Friday weekend, and the consumer feeding frenzy that is the "Holiday Season" is in full swing. It is somehow fitting that the time of year

once reserved for reverencing the Christian values of humility, charity, and love is now the time when we give full vent to our insatiable consuming hunger. Americans work more now than they have since the 1920's, six weeks more per year than their European counterparts. And why do we work 40, 50, 60 hours a week? To make more money, of course. To buy things. "Free Time" is an odd book, in that it contains a very detailed history of an idea, which is followed by a completely mistaken interpretation of the data. I have to think the author was letting his own desire for things to be different color his thinking. This does not detract much, however, from a valuable addition to research into the labor movement and the history of ideas in America. Worth your time, if you've got some to spare.

Has the "American Dream" become an unrealistic utopian fantasy, or have we simply forgotten what we are working for? In his topical book, *Free Time*, Benjamin Kline Hunnicutt examines the way that progress, once defined as more of the good things in life as well as more free time to enjoy them, has come to be understood only as economic growth and more work, forevermore. Hunnicutt provides an incisive intellectual, cultural, and political history of the original "American Dream" from the colonial days to the present. Taking his cue from Walt Whitman's "higher progress," he follows the traces of that dream, cataloguing the myriad voices that prepared for and lived in an opening "realm of freedom." *Free Time* reminds Americans of the forgotten, best part of the "American Dream" - that more and more of our lives might be lived freely, with an enriching family life, with more time to enjoy nature, friendship, and the adventures of the mind and of the spirit. Benjamin Kline Hunnicutt is a Professor of Leisure Studies at the University of Iowa. He is also the author of *Kellogg's Six-Hour Day* and *Work Without End: Abandoning Shorter Hours for the Right to Work* (both Temple).