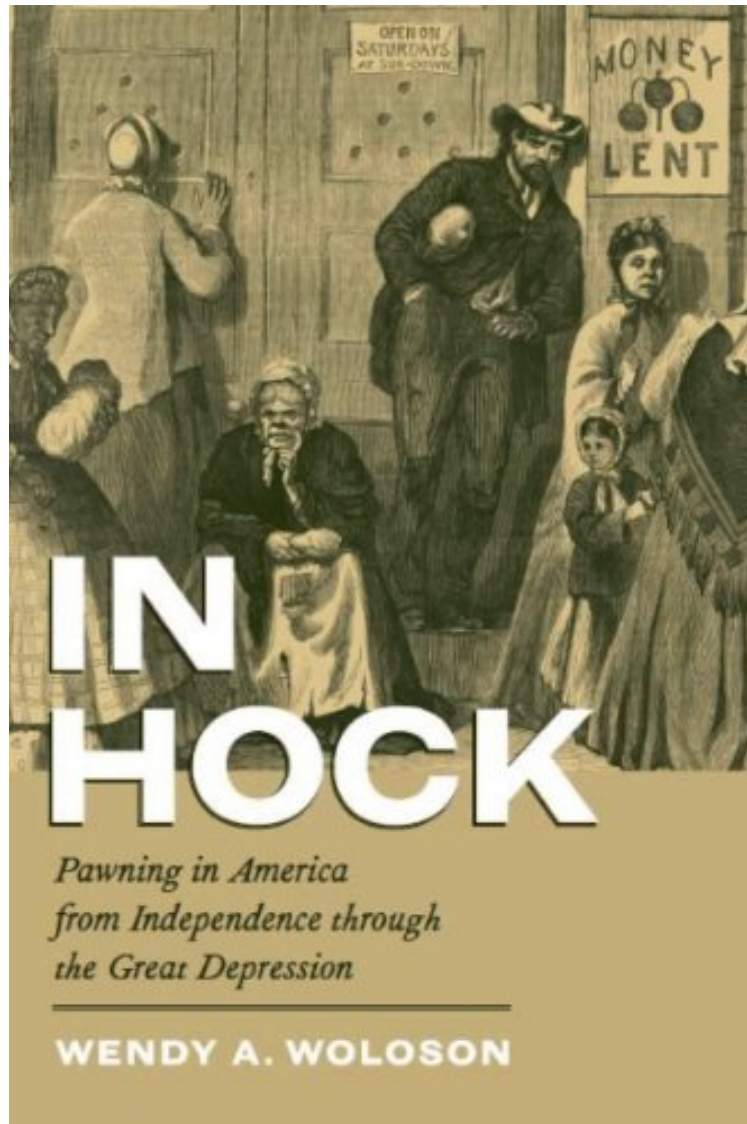


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In Hock: Pawning in America from Independence through the Great Depression

Wendy A. Woloson

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Wendy A. Woloson : In Hock: Pawning in America from Independence through the Great Depression before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In Hock: Pawning in America from Independence through the Great Depression:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Interesting History of a controversial industryBy BigTexThis book is a good history of pawning and instant cash industries. It seems that, like the poor, they will always be among us. Particularly relevant at a time when 30-40 percent of Americans are unbanked/underbanked and the middle class has

lost 30-40 percent of its wealth. There are some statements and assertions in the book that I'd like to see more notations, particularly the portions linking pawning to rise of capitalism.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book! If you are curious about the pawn ...By WigleyGreat book! If you are curious about the pawn business, this is the book to read.0 of 5 people found the following review helpful. terrible bookBy Sigourney Weaverthis is the worst business related book I have read out of the last 50 books I have purchased. The author attempts to advance theories about the extensive impact of pawn shops on the economy and "underclass", without presenting much if any concrete statistical data to back up her theories. The author delves into too much economic theory, and should have stuck to her background and training in history. I can't believe University of Chicago Press put out this crap.

The definitive history of pawnbroking in the United States from the nation's founding through the Great Depression, In Hock demonstrates that the pawnshop was essential to the rise of capitalism. The class of working poor created by this economic tide could make ends meet only, Wendy Woloson argues, by regularly pawning household objects to supplement inadequate wages. Nonetheless, businessmen, reformers, and cultural critics claimed that pawnshops promoted vice, and employed anti-Semitic stereotypes to cast their proprietors as greedy and cold-hearted. Using personal correspondence, business records, and other rich archival sources to uncover the truth behind the rhetoric, Woloson brings to life a diverse cast of characters and shows that pawnbrokers were in fact shrewd businessmen, often from humble origins, who possessed sophisticated knowledge of a wide range of goods in various resale markets.

“Few occupations are as misunderstood as pawnbroking. Wendy Woloson challenges the many myths associated with pawnbrokers: criminal accomplices, traffickers in stolen goods, immoral usurers, and predatory Shylocks. This original and insightful analysis of the informal and marginal economy explains how poor, working-class, and sometimes wealthy Americans adapted to economic hardship and temporary setback. In Hock reveals the forgotten evolution and hidden contradictions of the emerging consumer economy in modern America.”—Timothy J. Gilfoyle, Loyola University