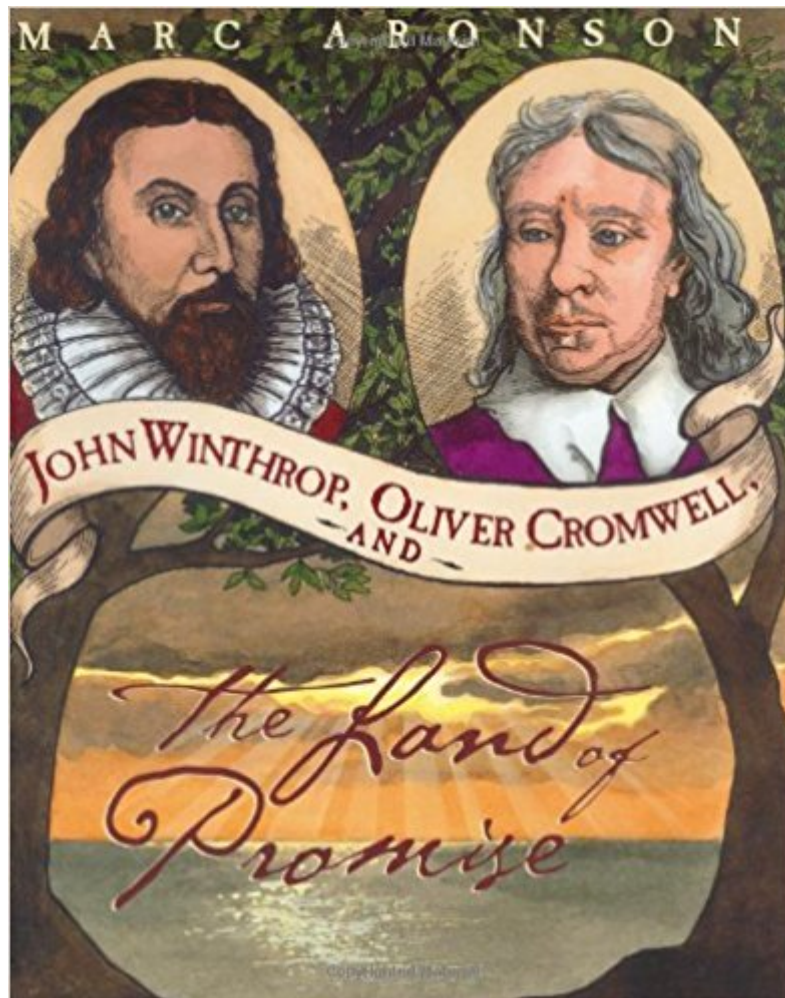


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John Winthrop, Oliver Cromwell, And The Land Of Promise



Synopsis

This carefully researched and insightful account by Sibert medalist Marc Aronson focuses on the intertwined lives of John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of the Puritan Commonwealth in England. Set against a broad canvas of the turmoil that engulfed Britain in the 17th century, the book examines the clashes of the monarchy and the church with Parliament, which led these two powerful men to take opposite courses. Here is a panoramic view of the period, from elaborate masques to the trial of a heretic, from wars fought against Indians to dramatic battles led by cavalry, from the toppling of a king to the search for the ideal society. Packed with literary allusions, vivid descriptions of significant events, and a cast of memorable figures, this sweeping account picks up where the highly acclaimed *Sir Walter Raleigh* leaves off, providing another riveting look at British and early American history. Cast of characters, maps, endnotes and bibliography, Internet resources, timeline, index.

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Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up
Continuing the trilogy he began in *Sir Walter Raleigh and the Quest for El Dorado* (Clarion, 2000), Aronson points out startling similarities between 21st-century fanatical religious extremists and the zealous religious leaders who sought to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth nearly 400 years earlier. Focusing on the lives of two prominent Puritans, Cromwell in England and Winthrop in New England, the author takes the viewpoint that "we are the heirs of

the radicals, not of the established government." He is fair and nonjudgmental in his clear, thorough explanations of the beliefs of the parties involved in the English Civil War and in the establishment of England's American colonies. Because this book is filled with a wealth of detailed historical information and unique analyses of philosophical issues, it will be challenging for readers without prior exposure to U.S. and British history. Sophisticated readers who come to it with a basic grounding in history and current events should find it fascinating and provocative. The author's extensive research is reflected in his multipaged endnotes and bibliography. The numerous illustrations include captioned reproductions of period maps, engravings, political cartoons, and drawings.

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Gr. 7-10. Aronson has many gifts: an ability to take historical events and render them as if they were unfolding before us; a cold eye for the prejudices of partisan contemporary accounts; the wit to untangle the knot of conflicting interpretations. His subject is seventeenth-century Britain and America, and he centers his narrative on John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and the Puritan Oliver Cromwell, who deposed a king and became Lord Protector in England. Aronson is masterly at illuminating the reality of religious faith and the cataclysmic clash of beliefs that created fertile ground for ideas about democracy and equality. He doesn't downplay the demonization of Catholics in Britain or Pequots and other First Peoples in what would become America. The topic may not be a first choice for young people, but Aronson closes this interest gap by drawing parallels between the past and the present with the contemporary religious right, terrorism, and theocracy. The notes are a model of lucidity for any student wanting to find out more.

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This book is written from the perspective of a modern, left-wing, liberal. That is the best way to describe this to a modern audience, in my opinion. As someone who has studied the history of England and Oliver Cromwell, I found it extremely suspicious that the author depicted Cromwell as a "fanatic" while giving the impression that King Charles I was some sort of reasonable, even-handed ruler. In reality, Charles I was a Romanist who was working to betray England into the hands of the Jesuits and the Church of Rome. He was put to death because he betrayed the laws of England, and for his vicious treatment of Protestant Christians who wanted to live their lives according to Biblical teachings, and not be placed back under the authority of the Pope. King Charles outlawed the Geneva Bible, jailed those who owned copies of it, had people publicly flogged, had their ears

cut off, noses slit, and their faces branded with hot irons. In short, he was bringing back the methods of the Inquisition against those who resisted the "theological" reforms he sought to bring about. Cromwell (a Puritan) was a great Christian leader who ultimately put down the powers of tyranny in England, and abroad. When the Waldenses were being butchered by Rome in 1655, he put a stop to the slaughter and sent relief to those who survived. The reason he went to war in Ireland was to put a stop to the persecution of English Protestants who had been driven out of their homes and were being mass murdered by Rome. Cromwell was named the "Lord Protector of England" because he protected the English people from the powers of tyranny. He even sent a naval force to confront Muslim pirates who had enslaved English Christians in North Africa -- the Barbary pirates were defeated and the Sultan was forced to release the prisoners. Furthermore, the principles of tolerance Cromwell espoused concerning "freedom of conscience" were also very influential in the founding of America. For Marc Aronson to portray him as an extremist is an insult and betrays the political agenda of the author. The book was obviously written with an anti-Christian bias and is not true history. For a better history, I recommend Dr. Peter Hammond's essay, titled: "Oliver Cromwell: the Protector and the English Civil War."

great

This book is an enjoyable book about the founding of New England by the Winthrop Fleet Puritans. It describes the English Civil War and the ideas of Puritanism. It is great for high level children who are interested in history. It is also good for adults.

Like many Americans, I've long known that England's King Charles I was executed in the 1600's. After reading Marc Aronson's account, recommended to me by my history-teacher son, I now understand why. As the title suggests, author Aronson has penned two parallel stories about two societies, one ancient and the other brand new, and their struggles to define the rights of man. John Winthrop and Oliver Cromwell were a pair of strong-principled, like-minded puritans who chose to act upon their convictions in two different ways. Aronson clearly delineates their successes and failures, and brilliantly demonstrates how these two pivotal political movements resulted, 150 years later, in the founding of the United States. While I personally disagree with the premise that the death of King Charles was necessary, I can see why those who thought it was acted the way they did. This book is listed in the young adult genre, but it is anything but simplistic and suitable for adults as well, perhaps more so.

I borrowed this book from my library, hoping to learn something about the Puritans. Instead, I learned that Mr. Aronson believes the Puritans to be little better than the Taliban, and Charles I to be a well-intentioned ruler desperately trying to maintain peace within his country in spite of the "fire-breathing religious zealot[s]." Yes, he uses that phrase in narrative, and not in an ironic way, either. Mr. Aronson doesn't bother with the opinions of the Puritans. He doesn't consider that the "religious extremists" may have had a point in wanting to change the Church of England. Charles I would be very happy with this book; he would have turned it into a pamphlet warning his people about the big, bad Puritans. Please don't buy this book. Please don't borrow it from your library. The author doesn't deserve your support. Not for writing his opinion and calling it "history."

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