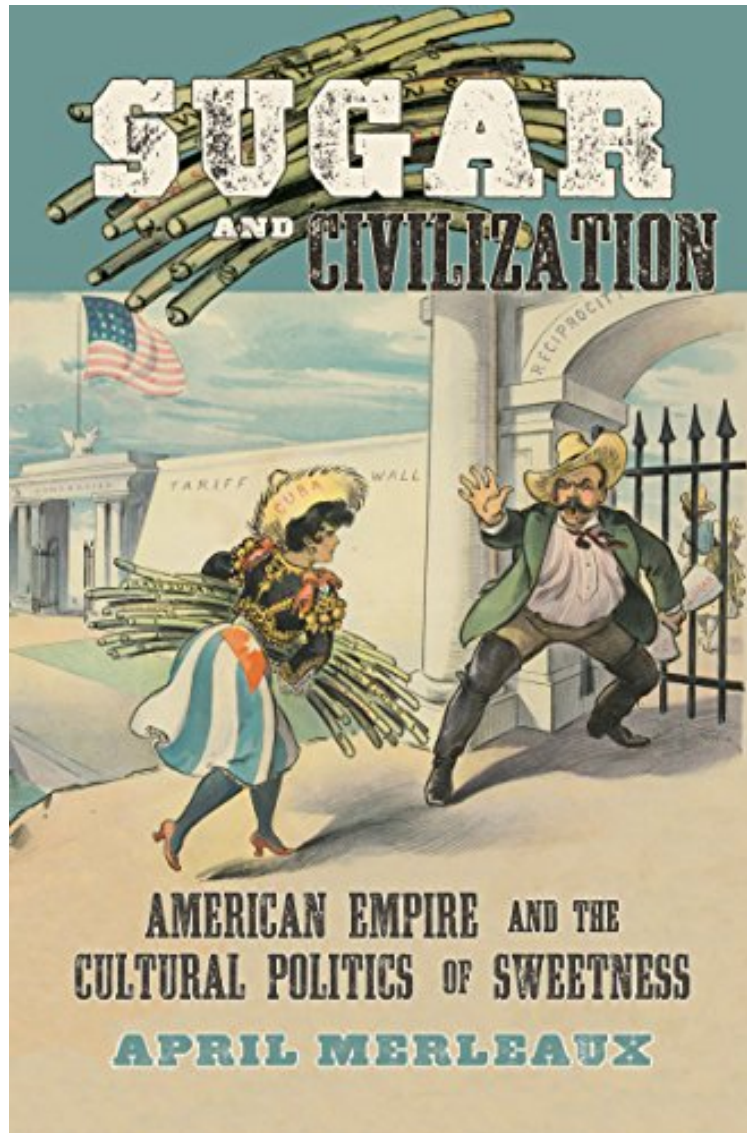


[Free] Sugar and Civilization: American Empire and the Cultural Politics of Sweetness

Sugar and Civilization: American Empire and the Cultural Politics of Sweetness

April Merleaux

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In the weeks and months after the end of the Spanish-American War, Americans celebrated their nation's triumph by eating sugar. Each of the nation's new imperial possessions, from Puerto Rico to the Philippines, had the potential for vastly expanding sugar production. As victory parties and commemorations prominently featured candy and other sweets, Americans saw sugar as the reward for their global ambitions. April Merleaux demonstrates that trade policies and consumer cultures are as crucial to understanding U.S. empire as military or diplomatic interventions. As the nation's sweet tooth grew, people debated tariffs, immigration, and empire, all of which hastened the nation's rise as an international power. These dynamics played out in the bureaucracies of Washington, D.C., in the pages of local newspapers, and at local candy counters. Merleaux argues that ideas about race and civilization shaped sugar markets since government policies and business practices hinged on the racial characteristics of the people who worked the land and consumed its products. Connecting the history of sugar to its producers, consumers, and policy makers, Merleaux shows that the modern American sugar habit took shape in the shadow of a growing empire.

[Merleaux's] research is notable for helping us to comprehend an imperial state as it is operated across different—and differentiated—sites.--Diplomatic History
An exceptionally rich work. . . . Through the lens of sugar, April Merleaux examines some of the deepest tensions in U.S. history.--American Historical Association
Merleaux's geographically expansive and deeply researched book is a welcome addition to work on empire, trade, and consumption. Her powerful epilogue on refined sugar's current reframing as poor food for poor people making poor choices reminds us that inequalities still persist in the empire.--Journal of American History
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s April Merleaux deftly shows how sugar crystallized the American empire at the dawn of the twentieth century. By uncovering connections between sugar, capitalist imperialism, and racial ideologies, *Sugar and Civilization* stands as an essential and highly original analysis of the past.--Jeffrey Pilcher, University of Toronto, Scarborough
In a book of breathtaking scope and research, April Merleaux expertly weaves together the issues of empire, immigration, economy, consumption, and race, creating an innovative exploration of sugar's role in molding the modern United States. Extraordinary, ambitious, and a pleasure to read.--Jason Colby, University of Victoria
About the Author
April Merleaux is associate professor of history at Florida International University.