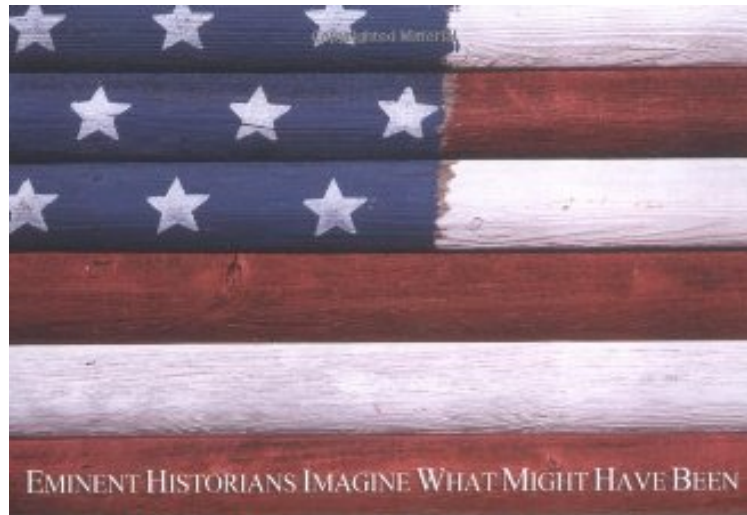


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What Ifs? of American History: Eminent Historians Imagine What Might Have Been

From Berkley

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What Ifs?™ of American History

From the *New York Times* Bestselling Creators of *What If?*™

NEW ESSAYS BY

ANTONY BEEVOR, CALEB CARR,
ROBERT DALLEK, JOHN LUKACS,
JAY WINIK, AND OTHERS

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From Berkley : **What Ifs? of American History: Eminent Historians Imagine What Might Have Been** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised **What Ifs? of American History: Eminent Historians Imagine What Might Have Been:**

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good BookBy M. KopeczkyGood book easy to read and interesting.10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Imaginative Speculation On Roads Not TakenBy W. C

HALLThe introduction to one of the selections in this book suggests that it can be thought of as an "American Baedeker of roads that could have been, or almost were, taken." That's as good a description of any of this third volume in the "What If?" series of historical speculations. Once more, editor Robert Cowley has assembled a panel of noted historians and novelists, who offer all sorts of intriguing possibilities--an America without a revolution; what might have happened if the plot to assassinate Lincoln had also succeeded in killing Vice President Johnson; what might have been the consequences if the US and Britain had actually gone to war over a South American boundary dispute in 1896; and what might have happened had John F. Kennedy not been murdered. The tone of the pieces varies from the tongue in cheek (speculation on what the true motives behind Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communist crusade might have been) to the truly frightening (a picture of the world in 1972, ten years after the Cuban Missile Crisis leads to a widespread launch of nuclear weaponry). Playing "What If?" can be an interesting parlor game, but it can also help to illuminate the importance of real-life decisions. In the scenario of a world where both Lincoln and Johnson are killed, the resulting chaos triggers a decision by Robert E. Lee to endorse the wish of Jefferson Davis and many others in the Confederate military--not to lay down arms at that point, but to continue the fight as a guerrilla war, one that might have ended up costing countless more lives and prevented the nation's sectional breach from ever healing. With contributions from writers of the caliber of Caleb Carr, Robert Dallek, Tom Wicker and Jay Winick, the reader can be assured of an entertaining as well as a thought-provoking read. My one complaint is about the decision to include two pieces from the first book in the series, published in 1999. The jacket copy says these are pieces any American history collection would not be complete without. That strikes me as a rather thin excuse for the recycling. A big part of this book's audience will obviously be readers who have purchased the first two volumes, which are still easily available. If the publishers wanted to include some reprinted material, they could have easily mined the rich archives of the alternate history genre.--William C. Hall0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Land of the FreeBy Reader in the PacificThe fact that many of writers in this collection have written for the popular press means that this book is READABLE. The writing and ideas presented waiver somewhat. Some of the essays can hold 10-25 pages, some only a few paragraphs. The piece on the Cuban Missile Crisis has plenty to say about Soviet capabilities

Did Eisenhower avoid a showdown with Stalin by not taking Berlin before the Soviets? What might have happened if JFK hadn't been assassinated? This new volume in the widely praised series presents fascinating "what if..." scenarios by such prominent historians as: Robert Dallek, Caleb Carr, Antony Beevor, John Lukacs, Jay Winick, Thomas Fleming, Tom Wicker, Theodore Rabb, Victor David Hansen, Cecelia Holland, Andrew Roberts, Ted Morgan, George Feifer, Robert L. O'Connell, Lawrence Malkin, and John F. Stacks. Included are two essential bonus essays reprinted from the original New York Times bestseller What If?-David McCullough imagines Washington's disastrous defeat at the Battle of Long Island, and James McPherson envisions Lee's successful invasion of the North in 1862.

From Publishers WeeklyThe 18 contributors to this latest installment of the What If? series are indeed eminent: they include David McCullough, Tom Fleming and Robert Dallek (though series editor Cowley might have found more than one woman for his roster). For historians whose works are bound by facts, there must have been pleasure in letting their imaginations engage instead in speculation, though the "shadow universe" presented here is still rooted in the historical record and reflects back on it. In "Might the Mayflower not have sailed?", for example, Theodore K. Rabb enumerates a series of "strokes of luck" that enabled the Pilgrims to come to America, including Sir Edwin Sandys's propitious takeover of the Virginia Company. And in "What if Watergate Was Still Just an Upscale Address?", Lawrence Malkin and John Stacks wonder what would have happened Nixon hadn't been forced to resign the presidency. Americans would be less cynical, they speculate, and, more surprisingly, the U.S. might have had a national health insurance plan. Other essays ask fascinating questions about the the Civil War and the Cuban missile crisis. A pleasure for history buffs longing to engage in some footloose imagination, this book drives home the fact that even momentous political events can hinge on a few uncontrollable events. Maps and bw photos. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. About the Author Robert Cowley is the founding editor of MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History, which was nominated for a National Magazine Award for General Excellence. Cowley has held several senior positions in book and magazine publishing.