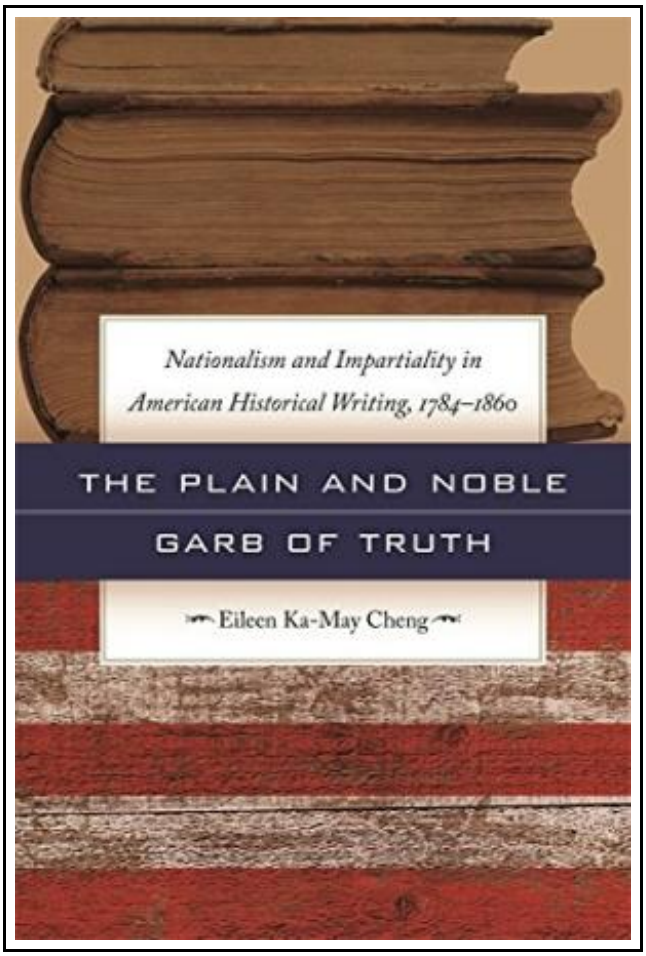
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University of Georgia Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, The Plain and Noble Garb of Truth: Nationalism and Impartiality in American Historical Writing, 1784-1860, Eileen Ka-May Cheng, American historians of the early national period, argues Eileen Ka-May Cheng, grappled with objectivity, professionalism, and other modern issues to a greater degree than their successors in later generations acknowledge. Her extensive readings of antebellum historians show that by the 1820s, a small but influential group of practitioners had begun to develop many of the doctrines and concerns that undergird contemporary historical practice. "The Plain and Noble Garb of Truth" challenges the entrenched notion that America s first generations of historians were romantics or propagandists for a struggling young nation.Cheng engages with the works of well-known early national historians like George Bancroft, William Prescott, and David Ramsay; such lesser-known figures as Jared Sparks and Lorenzo Sabine; and leading political and intellectual elites of the day, including Francis Bowen and Charles Francis Adams. She shows that their work, which focused on the American Revolution, was often nuanced and surprisingly sympathetic in its treatment of American Indians and loyalists. She also demonstrates how the rise of the novel contributed to the emergence of history as an autonomous discipline, arguing that paradoxically early national historians at once described truth in opposition to the novel and were influenced by the novel in their understanding of truth. Modern historians should recognize that the discipline of history is itself a product of history, says Cheng. By taking seriously a group of too-often-dismissed historians, she challenges contemporary historians to examine some ahistorical aspects of the way they understand their own discipline.".

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