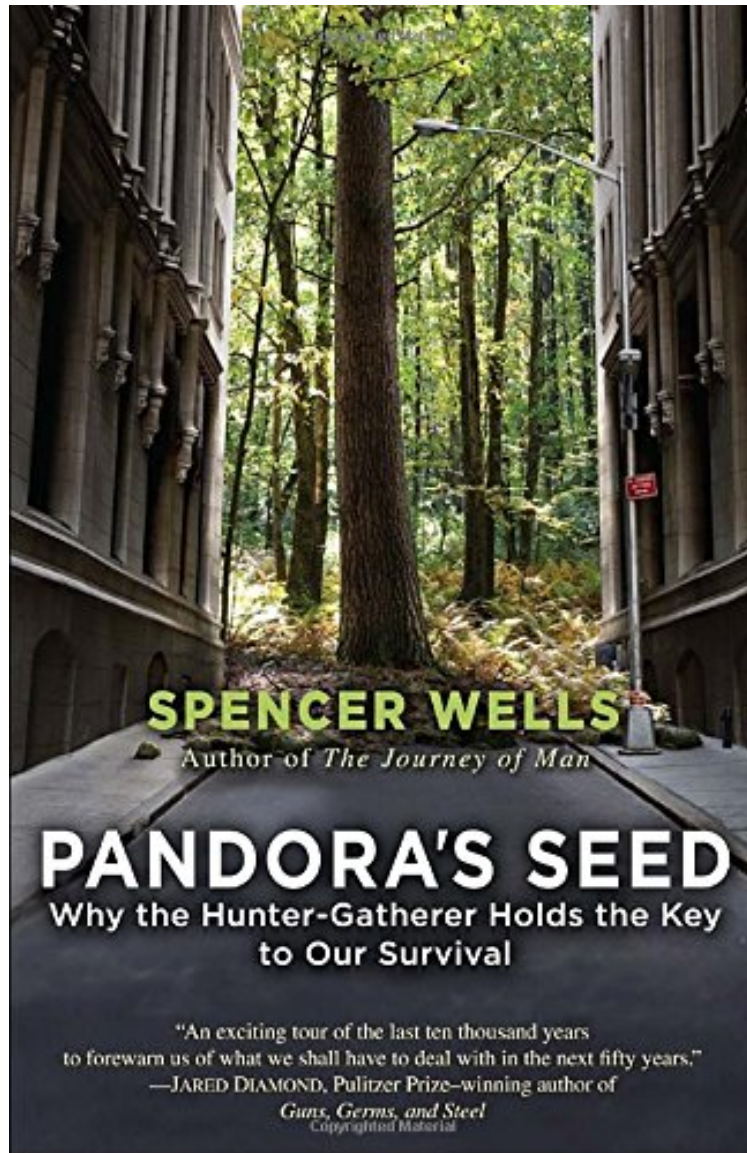


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# Pandora's Seed: Why the Hunter-Gatherer Holds the Key to Our Survival

Spencer Wells

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#253819 in Books 2011-09-13 2011-09-13 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.99 x .53 x 5.101, .43 #File Name: 0812971914256 pages | File size: 26.Mb

**Spencer Wells : Pandora's Seed: Why the Hunter-Gatherer Holds the Key to Our Survival** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pandora's Seed: Why the Hunter-Gatherer Holds the Key to Our Survival:

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Lewis Outstanding rationale for how we got here from there. Brings a much needed viewpoint for the positive future survival of humans in general. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Unforeseen Cost of Civilization By W. Dunning Well-written, a clear and fascinating story of mankind's advance into civilization over time, along with the costs of those advances, which would no have been known or understood as it progressed. Even now, we often fail to see some of the problems we have "inherited" as the costs of that advance. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well worth the read By Bonita F. McCarson In Pandora's Seed Wells not only informs but also challenges. The book is well written and interesting for the non-scientist. It gives a broad view of what we usually consider the progress of the human race and leads the reader to understand the hidden consequences of that progress.

Ten thousand years ago, our species made a radical shift in its way of life: We became farmers rather than hunter-gatherers. Although this decision propelled us into the modern world, renowned geneticist and anthropologist Spencer Wells demonstrates that such a dramatic change in lifestyle had a downside that were only now beginning to recognize. Growing grain crops ultimately made humans more sedentary and unhealthy and made the planet more crowded. The expanding population and the need to apportion limited resources created hierarchies and inequalities. Freedom of movement was replaced by a pressure to work that is the forebear of the anxiety millions feel today. Spencer Wells offers a hopeful prescription for altering a life to which we were always ill-suited. Pandora's Seed is an eye-opening book for anyone fascinated by the past and concerned about the future.

From Publishers Weekly More food but also disease, craziness, and anomie resulted from the agricultural revolution, according to this diffuse meditation on progress and its discontents. Wells (The Journey of Man), a geneticist, anthropologist, and National Geographic Society explorer-in-residence, voices misgivings about the breakthrough to farming 10,000 years ago, spurred by climate change. The food supply was more stable, but caused populations to explode; epidemics flourished because of overcrowding and proximity to farm animals; despotic governments emerged to organize agricultural production; and warfare erupted over farming settlements. Then came urbanism and modernity, which clashed even more intensely with our nomadic hunter-gatherer nature. Nowadays, Wells contends, we are both stultified and overstimulated, cut off from the land and alienated from one other, resulting in mental illness and violent fundamentalism. Wells gives readers an engaging rundown of the science that reconstructs the prehistoric past, but he loses focus in trying to connect that past to every contemporary issue from obesity to global warming, and his solution is unconvincingly simple: Want less. Bw photos. (June 8) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist A geneticist and author of two general-interest titles (The Journey of Man, 2002; Deep Ancestry, 2006), Wells in this work concentrates on the beginnings of agriculture some 10,000 years ago. Intrigued by traces of the transition from hunter-gatherer times that can be interpreted from the human genome, Wells chats with researchers on this topic and translates their methods and findings into jargon-free language. Combining the DNA discussions with descriptions of archaeological evidence, Wells maintains that putting away the spear and taking up the plow have not been unalloyed boons to humanity. Ascribing obesity, diabetes, malaria, dental decay, and other maladies to the carbohydrate- and sugar-rich diet unboxed by Pandora and the agricultural revolution, Wells further indicts another product of agrarian society, civilization, for contributing to mental illnesses. Pursuing this line of argument to modern anxieties about genetic selection in human reproduction and about climate change, Wells will appeal to a variety of science readers, including those interested in genetic anthropology, health, and the future course of human evolution. --Gilbert Taylor Spencer Wells takes us on an exciting tour of the last ten thousand years of our history in order to forewarn us of what we shall have to deal with in the next fifty years. Jared Diamond, professor of geography at UCLA and Pulitzer Prizewinning author of Guns, Germs, and Steel An important book for our times . . . If Spencer Wells continues producing books like this, he has the potential to become a pop anthropology guru like Margaret Mead, whose work engendered much good. The world needs to know not only how to want less, but also about how to want the things that will take us into the next ten millennia. New York Journal of Books Civilisation is the problem, not the solution. . . . Wells combines a cogent account of human evolution with an urgent call for global cultural reform. The Times (London) The seed from Pandora's box is spread far and wide in this stimulating and enjoyable book. Financial Times Well's writing combines a deep knowledge of the history of human evolution with a most engaging and lively manner of making that story come alive. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Alphonse Fletcher University Professor at Harvard University and author of Tradition and the Black Atlantic Well written . . . full of detail and fascinating anecdotes. New Scientist