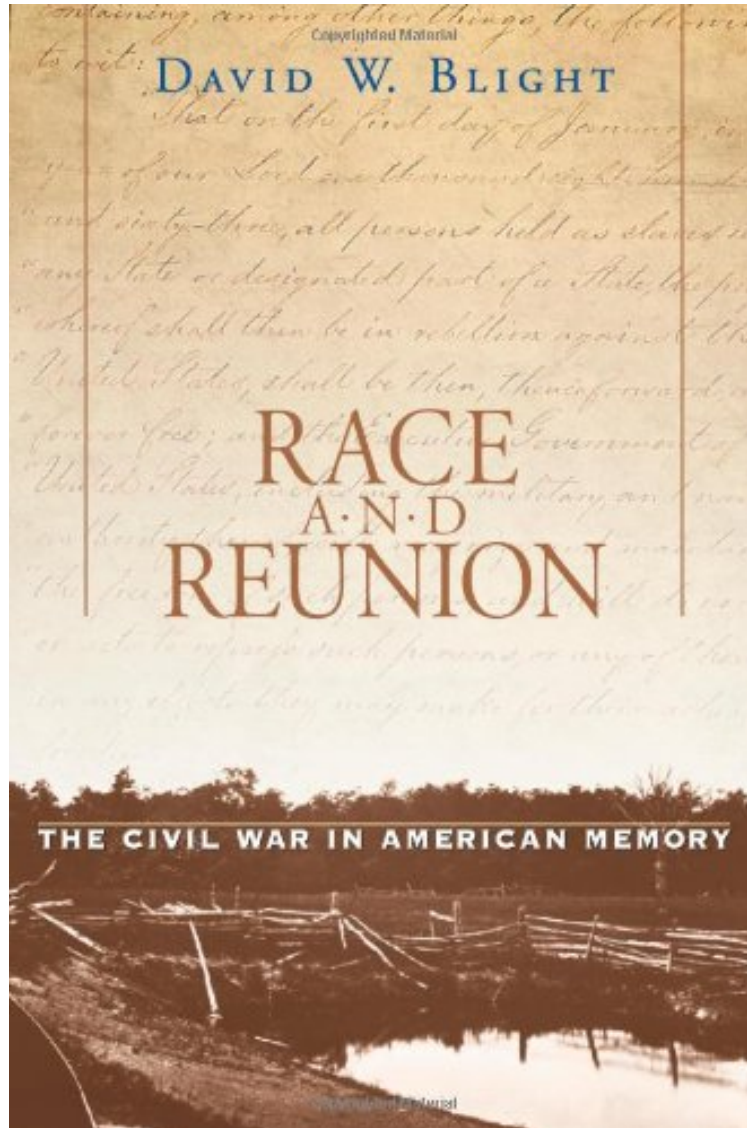


(Download free pdf) Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory

Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory

David W. Blight

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#92528 in Books Blight, David W. 2002-03-01 2002-01-28Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.25 x 5.50 x 1.25l, 1.27 #File Name: 0674008197528 pages | File size: 34.Mb

David W. Blight : Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A little disjointed and rather long, but interesting consideration ...By NekuA little disjointed and rather long, but interesting consideration of the reflections on the importance of racial issues following the U.S. Civil War. A beginning study of people's impressions of the war and how this resonates with people's consciousness.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Concise View of the Civil WarBy P B

IllingworthVery clear and concise with the reflections of the Civil War. This is a most read for those who want the best insight about the war and race issues.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. After the great Civil warBy Southwest Rain loverInteresting approach to a subject about which not enough is known.

No historical event has left as deep an imprint on America's collective memory as the Civil War. In the war's aftermath, Americans had to embrace and cast off a traumatic past. David Blight explores the perilous path of remembering and forgetting, and reveals its tragic costs to race relations and America's national reunion. In 1865, confronted with a ravaged landscape and a torn America, the North and South began a slow and painful process of reconciliation. The ensuing decades witnessed the triumph of a culture of reunion, which downplayed sectional division and emphasized the heroics of a battle between noble men of the Blue and the Gray. Nearly lost in national culture were the moral crusades over slavery that ignited the war, the presence and participation of African Americans throughout the war, and the promise of emancipation that emerged from the war. *Race and Reunion* is a history of how the unity of white America was purchased through the increasing segregation of black and white memory of the Civil War. Blight delves deeply into the shifting meanings of death and sacrifice, Reconstruction, the romanticized South of literature, soldiers' reminiscences of battle, the idea of the Lost Cause, and the ritual of Memorial Day. He resurrects the variety of African-American voices and memories of the war and the efforts to preserve the emancipationist legacy in the midst of a culture built on its denial. Blight's sweeping narrative of triumph and tragedy, romance and realism, is a compelling tale of the politics of memory, of how a nation healed from civil war without justice. By the early twentieth century, the problems of race and reunion were locked in mutual dependence, a painful legacy that continues to haunt us today.

From Publishers WeeklyAlmost all the dominant views of the Civil War and its aftermath, including Reconstruction and "reunion," prevalent in this country until the coming of the civil rights movement, were the direct result of an extensive Southern propaganda war, argues Blight (Amherst College professor of history and black studies), remnants of which are still flourishing in various racist subcultures. As W.E.B. Du Bois noted a century ago, shortly after the war, the North was tacitly willing to accept the South's representation of the conflict in exchange for an opening of new economic frontiers. Blight sets out to prove this thesis, surveying a mass of information (the end notes run to almost 100 pages) clearly and synthetically, detailing the mechanics of mythmaking: how the rebels were recast as not actually rebelling, how the South had been unjustly invaded, and how, most fabulously of all, the South had fought to end slavery which had been imposed upon it by the North. His argument that this "memory war" was conducted on a conscious level is supported by the Reconstruction-era evidence of protest, by blacks and whites alike, that he unearths. Yet these voices failed to dissuade the vast majority of Americans both North and South who internalized some version of the story. This book effectively traces both the growth and development of what became, by the turn of the 20th century and the debut of *The Birth of a Nation*, the dominant racist representation of the Civil War. A major work of American history, this volume's documentation of the active and exceedingly articulate voices of protest against this inaccurate and unjust imagining of history is just one of its accomplishments. (Feb. 19) Forecast: This book will be the standard for how public perceptions of the Civil War were formed and propagated in a manner directly analogous to today's doublespeak and spin control. It will be a regular on course syllabi, and will be glowingly reviewed, but the wealth and diversity of sources may keep some general readers away. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From BooklistThe year 1913 saw two separate ceremonies commemorating great events 50 years previously: elderly Union and Confederate veterans shook hands at the Gettysburg battlefield, and W.E.B. DuBois staged an elaborate "National Emancipation Exposition." Together they struck discordant chords of memory about the Civil War, which Blight examines in this incisive discussion of how the conflict was popularly remembered in the half-century following Appomattox. He closely examines the types of memorializations of the war, such as the creation and observance of Memorial Day, the erection of statues to Robert E. Lee and Robert Gould Shaw, soldiers' reunions, soldiers' memoirs, popular literature, and anniversary orations by such figures as Frederick Douglass. Within these modes of expression Blight recounts the strong tide in the post-war years for "reunion on Southern terms," politically by the overthrow of the Republican Reconstruction governments in the South, and ideologically in "Lost Cause" writings justifying secession and slavery. Freed blacks suffered the consequence of the ascendance of a sentimental view of the war and amnesia about its central issue. Gilbert TaylorCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved Blight describes how Americans decided to remember the devastation of the Civil War during the decades that followed...[He] has distilled a mass of historical material into an impressive, clearly written volume that...reads well and rings true. (Kirkus s 2000-11-15)Blight traces America's tragic pursuit of national reunification and reconciliation after the Civil War at the expense of the conflict's emancipationist legacy. He ponders such threats to this legacy as Lost Cause myths, fading and sometimes revisionist veteran recollections, financial panics and commercial greed, political scandals, 'loyal' slave narratives, urbanization and industrialization, and the emotionally charged rituals of war-related celebration days among others. The author resurrects the voices and prose of African American activists who fought to preserve the emancipationist legacy in an indifferent, even hostile, milieu.

(John Carver Edwards Library Journal 2000-12-01) This book effectively traces both the growth and development of what became, by the turn of the twentieth century and the debut of *The Birth of a Nation*, the dominant racist representation of the Civil War. A major work of American history, this volume's documentation of the active and exceedingly articulate voices of protest against this inaccurate and unjust imagining of history is just one of its accomplishments. (Publishers Weekly 2001-02-12) [Blight examines] discordant chords of memory about the Civil War...in this incisive discussion of how the conflict was popularly remembered in the half-century following Appomattox...Blight recounts the strong tide in the post-war years for 'reunion on Southern terms'...Freed blacks suffered the consequence of the ascendance of a sentimental view of the war and amnesia about its central issue. (Gilbert Taylor Booklist 2001-02-15) As Blight conclusively demonstrates, the [post-Civil War] United States was caught up almost immediately in a 'tormented relationship between healing and justice,' and the abolitionist, emancipationist view of the war's aims quickly receded into the background...African Americans kept alive their own memories of slavery, the war and Reconstruction...but not until long after World War I did they begin to find a hearing for their grievances and yearnings. (Jonathan Yardley Washington Post Book World 2001-02-04) In *Race and Reunion*, David W. Blight demonstrates that as soon as the guns fell silent, debate over how to remember the Civil War began...Blight's study of how Americans remembered the Civil War in the 50 years after Appomattox exemplifies these themes. It is the most comprehensive and insightful study of the memory of the Civil War yet to appear...Blight tells this story in a lucid style and with an entirely appropriate measure of indignation...*Race and Reunion* demonstrates forcefully that...it still matters very much how we remember the Civil War. (Eric Foner New York Times Book 2001-03-04) [Blight] begins and ends his tour de force study of America's memory of the [Civil] War at the Gettysburg reunion and notes that black veterans were virtually invisible on that occasion--the black presence at Gettysburg in 1913 was as menial laborers--and that while Wilson spoke, his administration was aggressively segregating federal agencies in Washington...This is a story of mammoth and tragic sweep, with consequences that are very much alive in present-day America. David Blight tells it with a passionate, soulful voice, a voice of conviction based on an intimate knowledge of a sweeping array of sources. *Race and Reunion* is a brilliant book. (Mark Dunkelman Providence Sunday Journal 2001-04-01) Denying that the South fought for slavery [in the Civil War] was a key element in a decades-long ideological battle eventually settled in a devil's bargain: reconciliation between whites North and South, purchased at the price of racial segregation. The story of how that bargain was struck is told by historian David Blight in *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*...*Race and Reunion* is a deeply unsettling, pioneering work that raises far more questions than it can possibly answer: questions that should continue to trouble us...The myths and lies forged over a century ago still have us locked in their chains. (Paul Henry Rosenberg Philadelphia City Paper 2001-03-22) Blight's eclecticism and erudition make this sweeping historical saga a pleasure to read...This powerful book is a part of [an] intellectual and political tradition. *Race and Reunion* challenges us to take seriously the clashes over the Civil War's contested legacies and symbols, which Americans continue to debate into the twenty-first century. (Catherine Clinton American Prospect 2001-06-18) David Blight's *Race and Reunion* is one of the most fascinating and rewarding scholarly books of the past few years for the general reader with an interest in American history...Blight describes clearly the ways in which the culture of commemoration related to the politics and social struggle of Reconstruction. His haunting account of violence in the post-war South is only one example of the eloquence that characterizes the book...Blight is scrupulously fair in his judgments. He is equally alert to the Northern white self-congratulation that inflated the legend of the Underground Railroad and the racist pretension that shaped the version of history peddled by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. He is especially alert to the way that even-handedness has served as a tool for suppressing memory of the moral issues at the heart of the Civil War by turning attention to the spectacle of combat and the bravery of the soldiers on both sides. This sensitivity to social values makes *Race and Reunion* more than an achievement of scholarship. It is a contribution to contemporary politics and culture that deserves a wide audience. (Thomas J. Brown State, SC 2001-04-01) The immensely important but neglected story of 'the Civil War in American memory' is the subject of David W. Blight's *Race and Reunion*...[This book] will strongly influence the writing of post-Civil War history for decades to come. Indeed, *Race and Reunion* is surely one of the four or five most important works in American history written in the past decade. More convincingly than any other historian I know of, Blight explains one of the most troubling questions for the understanding of American history: why it became accepted wisdom from the 1870s to the 1960s, among American historians as well as white students from grade school through college, that states' rights, not slavery, was the cause of the Civil War or, as many Southerners have long insisted on our calling it, 'the War Between the States.' (David Brion Davis New York of Books 2002-07-18) Blight's analysis is compelling. His writing has a lyrical quality that underscores the tragic story he has to tell. This is an important book that should command a wide readership among those interested in race relations in the US. It should be required reading in Mississippi. (Francis D. Cogliano Times Higher Education Supplement 2002-06-14) Blight demonstrates how, in the aftermath of the war, the needs of memory and the excessive focus on battlefield experience all but obliterated the role played by African Americans, and the promises made them. All told, this thoughtful, timely study presents a somewhat pessimistic view of the role played by the memory of this key conflict in the making of American's self-image, which, in the turn to sentiment rather than fact, lost much of its

ideological integrity. (Fionghuala Sweeney History 2004-10-01)David W. Blight's book, published in 2001, explores how the past is connected to the present by looking at the ways in which Americans have remembered the Civil War. His deeply researched and carefully crafted study argues that after the war white veterans, Union and Confederate, facilitated the reconciliation of the two sections by consciously avoiding the fact that slavery had brought on the sectional conflict, choosing instead to celebrate the courage that they and their comrades had brandished in battle. Less consciously, they and their fellow Americans found this new narrative--this rewriting of history based on a kind of historical amnesia--comforting and restorative. Reunification became a joyful event, but it came at a steep price. After Reconstruction, Northerners and Southerners alike took hold of a "Lost Cause" ideology that showed pity toward the South in its defeat, accepted Jim Crow policies that deprived blacks of their civil rights, and pushed for policies and practices that would ensure white supremacy across the land. Blight carefully avoids grinding axes as he makes his argument, which taken as a whole helps to explain why America today continues to wrestle with the seemingly endless and divisive issue of race, even while a black man resides in the White House. Here is a powerful book, artfully written by a scholar of learned poise who believes that by knowing the past we might better know ourselves. (Glenn W. LaFantasie Salon 2010-12-26)