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# Southern Emancipator: Moncure Conway: The American Years, 1832-1865

*John d'Entremont*

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**John d'Entremont : Southern Emancipator: Moncure Conway: The American Years, 1832-1865** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Southern Emancipator: Moncure Conway: The American Years, 1832-1865:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Scion of three prominent families in Virginia is disowned after ...By Donald L Reed Scion of three prominent families in Virginia is disowned after leaving his church and traveling north to become friends with Emerson, Thoreau, and other transcendentalists, attends Harvard Divinity School, becomes an antislavery protagonist, and being unable to convince Lincoln to free the slaves (earlier), while at the same time trying to prevent the Civil War, promotes the abolitionist movement. He wrote a two volume biography of Thomas Paine, and his other writings were influential. Unable to avoid the war, he and his wife moved to England, where he embarrassingly claimed spurious authority to promote Europe's opposition to the Civil War. The writing urges the reader on, to follow this quixotic adventure against slavery and war. Absorbing history of this crisis in the New World, and the personal conflicts among leaders.

By his thirty-third birthday, Moncure Conway was a Virginian who had abandoned the South, a minister who had rejected Christianity, an aristocrat who had embraced radical abolitionism and feminism, and one of the first American expatriates. He would live another forty-two years as an important transatlantic writer, reformer, and freethought

minister, but in his American years he had already lived a lifetime and made his mark. This study of the antebellum South's most radical upper-class white male, whose life--until now--has eluded capture by historians, illuminates the demands of the antebellum Southern gentry, the nature of the abolitionist movement, the boundaries of 19th-century organized Christianity, and the tragic personal impact of the American Civil War. D'Entremont recounts Conway's dramatic career as social reformer, religious radical, and associate of such luminaries as Emerson, Wendell Phillips, Theodore Parker, Walt Whitman, and William Dean Howells. The book climaxes with the Civil War, which saw Conway, an abolitionist with two brothers in the Confederate army, agonized by his conflicting commitments to emancipation and peace. A brilliant portrayal of one of the most intriguing public figures in American history, *Southern Emancipator* combines important contributions to Southern history, women's history, and the history of antebellum reform and the American Civil War.

"A fascinating contribution to the intellectual history of the Civil War era. It is also a first-rate biography."--David Herbert Donald, Harvard University  
"D'Entremont uses Conway's life to make valuable observations about the southern family, organized religion, and the antislavery movement."--American Historical Association  
"A first-rate book, carefully researched and gracefully written. While most of the volume is straightforward and lively biography, it is also a searching look at both southern culture and northern reform."--Journal of Southern History  
"Scholars will find that this perceptive book provides a personalized dimension to the constraints of southern society and to the nature of the antislavery commitment."--Journal of the Early Republic  
"In an elegant and sensitive biography, John d'Entremont tells of the odyssey into exile and triumph of [a] remarkable man."--William F. McFeely  
"A tour de force based on painstaking research and reflecting exceptional insight and literary skill. Recommended."--Choice  
"D'Entremont's applaudable biography resurrects a fascinating but nearly forgotten life."--Booklist  
About the Author  
John d'Entremont is at Randolph-Macon Woman's College.