This book asserts that the Civil War marks the end of one era of American legal history, and the beginning of another. Abraham Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address is viewed as the beginning of a new kind of “covert” constitutional law – one with a stronger emphasis on equality in the wake of the abolition of slavery – which was legally established in the Amendments made to the U.S. Constitution between 1865 and 1870. The author asserts that the influence of this “secret constitution”, which has varied in degree from Reconstruction to the present day, is visible in the rulings of the Supreme Court on issues hinging on personal freedom, equality, and discrimination.

**Abraham Lincoln**

Gary Scott Smith

in *Faith and the Presidency: From George Washington to George W. Bush*

Like George Washington’s, Lincoln’s faith has been closely scrutinized, hotly debated, and often misunderstood. Both men attributed their success in war to divine providence, proclaimed days of public thanksgiving and prayer as president, rarely mentioned Jesus, and were intensely private about their personal beliefs. Lincoln was never baptized, never received communion, and never joined a church, but he had a thorough knowledge of the Bible and peppered his speeches with biblical references and allusions. Lincoln cited the Scriptures and discussed theologically significant questions in his addresses more than the avowedly Christian statesmen of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Some friends and associates claimed he remained an unbeliever all
his life who attended church and employed religious language to win voters, gain support for policies, and convince Americans to trust him. Others who knew the 16th president equally well contended that he became an orthodox Christian who regularly read the Bible, prayed habitually, and frequently used scriptural passages and illustrations to express his personal convictions. Many investigators conclude that in his later years Lincoln had a profound sense of God’s presence, accepted many central scriptural tenets, and valiantly strove to follow Christian ethics. Through years of wrestling with God, Lincoln developed a deep but unconventional faith. Although he did not become a born-again evangelical, he became increasingly receptive to Protestant orthodoxy. More than any other 19th-century president, he became known for seeking to base public policies on scriptural principles. Lincoln’s religious views helped shape his political philosophy and actions, most notably the way he dealt with slavery and interpreted the Civil War. After his assassination, Lincoln was deeply mourned and frequently eulogized as a martyr who offered a redeeming sacrifice for the nation’s sins. He became the second great hero of the nation’s civil religion.

The Great Task Remaining Before Us
Paul A. Cimbala and Randall M. Miller (eds)

Through informative case studies, this illuminating book remaps considerations of the Civil War and reconstruction era by charting the ways in which the needs, interests, and experiences of going to war, fighting it, and making sense of it informed and directed politics, public life, social change, and cultural memory after the war's end. In doing so, it shows that the war did not actually end with Lee's surrender at Appomattox and Lincoln's assassination in Washington. As the chapters show, major issues remained, including defining freedom; rebuilding the South; integrating women and blacks into postwar society, culture, and politics; deciding the place of the military in public life; demobilizing or redeploying soldiers; organizing a new party system; and determining the scope and meanings of union.

No Party Now
Adam I. P. Smith

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During the Civil War, Northerners fought each other in elections with almost as much zeal as they fought Southern rebels on the battlefield. Yet politicians and voters alike claimed that partisanship was dangerous in a time of national crisis. This book challenges the prevailing view that political processes in the North somehow helped the Union be more stable and effective in the war. Instead, it argues, early efforts to suspend party politics collapsed in the face of divisions over slavery and the purpose of the war. At the same time, new contexts for political mobilization, such as the army and the avowedly nonpartisan Union Leagues, undermined conventional partisan practices. The administration's supporters soon used the power of antiparty discourse to their advantage by connecting their own antislavery arguments to a powerful nationalist ideology. This book offers a reinterpretation of Northern wartime politics that challenges the “party period paradigm” in American political history and reveals the many ways in which the unique circumstances of war altered the political calculations and behavior of politicians and voters alike. As this book shows, beneath the superficial unity lay profound differences about the implications of the war for the kind of nation that the United States was to become.

Reconstructing the National Body: Masculinity, Disability and Race in the American Civil War

SUSAN-MARY GRANT

in Proceedings of the British Academy, Volume 154, 2007 Lectures

Published in print: 2008 Published Online: January 2012
Item type: chapter

This lecture presents the text of the speech about masculinity, disability, and race in the American Civil War delivered by the author at the 2007 Sarah Tryphena Phillips Lecture in American History held at the British Academy. It discusses the centrality of the Civil War to America's national history, and also highlights the role of the dead in the construction both of Northern/Union nationalism and the Southern civic religion.
This chapter discusses the relationship between evangelical Protestantism and the American Civil War through the lives of Abraham Lincoln and William T. Sherman. The jeremiad script of evangelical Protestantism played a major role in sustaining both the Union's and the Confederacy's war efforts, even while Abraham Lincoln's own views on Providence evolved in a manner both similar to and distinctive from that of his contemporaries. Sherman, in contrast, represented the war's potential for fomenting godlessness, with the challenge his Deification of the State represented to conventional nineteenth-century Christianity. While evangelicals proved equal to the task of fending off this heterodoxy in the short term, the military and political forces Sherman represented had lasting effects on some postwar figures like Oliver Wendell Holmes, and in historical terms, they cannot be ignored.

The Spanish Civil War (1936–1939)

Austin Carson

This chapter analyzes foreign combat participation in the Spanish Civil War. Fought from 1936 to 1939, the war hosted covert interventions by Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union. The chapter leverages variation in intervention form among those three states, as well as variation over time in the Italian intervention, to assess the role of escalation concerns and limited war in the use of secrecy. Adolf Hitler's German intervention provides especially interesting support for a theory on escalation control. An unusually candid view of Berlin's thinking suggests that Germany managed the visibility of its covert "Condor Legion" with an eye toward the relative power of domestic hawkish voices in France and Great Britain. The chapter also shows the unique role of direct communication and international organizations. The Non-Intervention Committee, an ad
hoc organization that allowed private discussions of foreign involvement in Spain, helped the three interveners and Britain and France keep the war limited in ways that echo key claims of the theory.

Decline, Slavery, and War
Andrew R. Murphy

in Prodigal Nation: Moral Decline and Divine Punishment from New England to 9/11

Published in print: 2008 Published Online: January 2009
Item type: book

This book traces the emergence and development of the American jeremiad, a form of political rhetoric that laments the nation's decline from a virtuous past and calls it to repentance and renewal. Employed by Americans of all political persuasions since the earliest days of settlement, the jeremiad has proven to be a powerful way of invoking the American past in order to chart a brighter American future. Part I of the book focuses on three especially important episodes in the

Prodigal Nation
Andrew R. Murphy

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This chapter explores the important role played by the jeremiad in antebellum and Civil War America. It begins with the national day of fasting proclaimed by President James Buchanan in January 1861. Nineteenth-century Jeremiahs lamented their society's moral state, looked to the example of the nation's founders, and called their fellow Americans to reform. Surrounding these narratives of decline were deeply-rooted ideas of American chosenness, often fostered by varieties of millennialism that saw the United States as integral to the accomplishment of God's purposes in history. The chapter also explores two rival narratives to the mainstream American jeremiad during these years: an African-American jeremiad that called down God's justice on white oppressors, and the Southern “Lost Cause” narrative, which viewed the South as a quintessential Christian civilization and lamented its defeat as a sign of God's disapproval of Southern immorality. The chapter concludes with an examination of Abraham Lincoln's unconventional employment of the jeremiad tradition.
Jeremiad's history: early New England, Civil War America, and the rise of the Christian Right. Part II provides a critical analysis of the jeremiad's role in the American “culture wars” and politics more generally. In seeking to place the American past in the service of the American future, the book argues, the jeremiad takes not one form, but two: a traditionalist jeremiad whose view of the past depends heavily on claims about how things used to be, and emphasizes the importance of preserving concrete aspects of the past as we move toward an uncertain future; and a progressive jeremiad, which views the past as a repository of emancipatory principles articulated at the founding but never fully realized in practice. Acknowledging that both traditionalist and progressive jeremiads are deeply entwined with the nation's history, the book concludes with a call for a revived progressive jeremiad as most compatible with the deep diversity—cultural, religious, political, philosophical—that characterizes American society at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

Debtor Diplomacy

Jay Sexton

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Published: Oxford University Press
Item type: book

The United States was a debtor nation in the mid-19th century, with half of its national debt held overseas. Lacking the resources to develop the nation and to fund the wars necessary to expand and then preserve it, the United States looked across the Atlantic for investment capital. The need to obtain foreign capital greatly influenced American foreign policy, principally relations with Britain. The intersection of finance and diplomacy was particularly evident during the Civil War when both the North and South integrated attempts to procure loans from European banks into their larger international strategies. Furthermore, the financial needs of the United States (and the Confederacy) imparted significant political power to an elite group of London-based financiers who became intimately involved in American foreign relations during this period. This study explores and assesses how the United States' need for capital influenced its foreign relations in the tumultuous years wedged between the two great financial crises of the 19th century, 1837 to 1873. Drawing on the unused archives of London banks and the papers of statesmen on both sides of the Atlantic, this work illuminates our understanding of mid-19th-century American foreign relations by highlighting how financial considerations influenced the formation of foreign policy and functioned as a peace factor in Anglo-American relations. This study also analyses a crucial, but ignored, dimension of the Civil War — the efforts of both
the North and the South to attract the support of European financiers. Though foreign contributions to each side failed to match the hopes of Union and Confederate leaders, the financial diplomacy of the Civil War shaped the larger foreign policy strategies of both sides and contributed to both the preservation of British neutrality and the ultimate defeat of the Confederacy.

The Argument for the Secret Constitution
George P. Fletcher

in Our Secret Constitution: How Lincoln Redefined American Democracy
Published in print: 2003 Published Online: November 2003
Item type: chapter

This chapter argues that the Civil War began with one set of purposes, and ended with another. The original motive for resisting Southern secession was preserving the Union, but the final goal was to abolish slavery and reinvent the United States on the basis of a new set of principles – at the heart of which lay the Reconstruction Amendments. The principles of this new legal regime are so radically different from our original constitution that they deserve to be recognized as a second American constitution. Where the first constitution was based on principles of nationhood as a voluntary association, individual freedom, and republican elitism, the guiding premises of the second constitution are organic nationhood, equality of all persons, and popular democracy – all themes signaled in Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address.

Civil War America
Peter Brock (ed.)

in Liberty and Conscience: A Documentary History of Conscientious Objectors in America through the Civil War
Published in print: 2002 Published Online: November 2003
Item type: chapter

Thirteen documents are presented, with an introductory text, illustrating the experiences of conscientious objectors in America in the Civil War. This war presented many pacifists, especially in the North, with an agonizing dilemma. An outline is given of provision made for conscientious objectors on both the Confederate and Unionist sides. The accounts cover: dilemmas over draft-age sons (1862); William Lloyd...
Garrison and his son's exemption from military drill at school (1864); conscript dilemmas (1863); draft experiences of a conscripted Shaker (1863); the civil war diary of a Quaker conscript (1863); trials of a Quaker conscientious objector in the Confederate army (1863); a reluctant conscientious objector (1863 onwards); a consistent war-tax objector (1861); a Mennonite farmer hires a substitute (1864); Brethren and Mennonites as exiles from the Confederate draft (1862); Adventists confront the draft (1863); the case of Benjamin Franklin (1862); and Christadelphians and the draft (1864).

Proceedings of the British Academy, Volume 154, 2007
Lectures
Ron Johnston (ed.)
Published in print: 2008 Published Online: January 2012
Item type: book

This volume of the Proceedings of the British Academy contains seventeen lectures delivered at the British Academy in 2007. Subject matter ranges from commemoration of the American Civil War, to an examination of our capacity as human beings to live in the world of imagination, and the opportunities and challenges that face cultural institutions in Britain today.

Confederate Finance and Diplomacy
Jay Sexton
in Debtor Diplomacy: Finance and American Foreign Relations in the Civil War Era 1837-1873
Published in print: 2005 Published Online: January 2010
Item type: chapter

This chapter describes cotton as the key commodity of the 19th-century Atlantic economy. It explains why the Confederacy was given much-needed arms and munitions. It discusses the British cabinet's planned intervention in the Civil War, most likely by joining France in extending an offer of mediation to the warring sides.
This examination of Union and Confederate foreign relations during the Civil War from both European and American perspectives demonstrates that the consequences of the conflict between North and South reached far beyond American soil. The book explores a number of themes, including the international economic and political dimensions of the war, the North's attempts to block the South from winning foreign recognition as a nation, Napoleon III's meddling in the war and his attempt to restore French power in the New World, and the inability of Europeans to understand the interrelated nature of slavery and union, resulting in their tendency to interpret the war as a senseless struggle between a South too large and populous to have its independence denied and a North too obstinate to give up on the preservation of the Union. Most of all, the book explores the horrible nature of a war that attracted outside involvement as much as it repelled it.

This chapter assesses whether the class structure of the South changed in the postbellum era and whether different individual and locational attributes predicted who would come to occupy preferred social positions. It suggests another source of categorical uncertainty during Reconstruction and beyond. While many Southern journalists and politicians celebrated the expansion of an entrepreneurial middle class at the time, this class actually declined numerically in the proverbial New South. Moreover, the “decaying” planter class was remarkably persistent, both in its dominance of the top of the wealth distribution and its involvement in the postwar industrialization of the region. The social categories of planters and middling Southerners that were deployed in popular discourse—and within the “New South Creed”—thus had little in common with the reality of class structure following the Civil War.
This chapter turns to travel narratives from global hot zones where the examination of everyday life reveals the emergence of a new form of warfare shifting the balance of power in Europe and Asia.

Latin epics such as Virgil's Aeneid, Lucan's Civil War, and Statius' Thebaid addressed Roman aristocrats whose dealings in gifts, favors, and payments defined their conceptions of social order. This book argues that these exchanges play a central yet overlooked role in epic depictions of Roman society. Tracing the collapse of an aristocratic worldview across all three poems, it highlights the distinction they draw between reciprocal gift giving among elites and the more problematic behaviors of buying and selling. In the Aeneid, customary gift and favor exchanges are undermined by characters who view human interaction as short-term and commodity-driven. The Civil War takes the next logical step, illuminating how Romans cope once commercial greed has supplanted traditional values. Concluding with the Thebaid, which focuses on the problems of excessive consumption rather than exchange, the book closes its case that these poems constitute far-reaching critiques of Roman society during its transition from republic to empire.
This concluding chapter traces the decline of nonviolent theology as social reformers invested messianic hopes in a series of individuals – Frederick Douglass, John Brown, and Abraham Lincoln – who were willing to use violence to bring about social change. Douglass was certainly a radical Christian liberal, though he advocated a limited use of violence to achieve radical liberal ends. Brown blended some radical liberal themes with a strong emphasis on apocalyptic violence and an orthodox understanding of God's overarching providence. But it was Lincoln who helped the entire nation to see God's presence in the violence of the Civil War rather than the nonviolent actions of individual reformers. The popular Christological interpretation of Lincoln's death pushed radical Christian liberalism to the sideline of the American consciousness.

Touched with Fire
David E. Shi

in Facing Facts: Realism in American Thought and Culture, 1850–1920

Published in print: 1996 Published Online: October 2011
Published by: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195106534.003.0004

The Civil War was a pivotal event in American political and social history. However, it also served as the hinge in the nation's cultural development, a turning point after which intellectual life and artistic expression were perceptibly different. Underneath the Civil War's romantic veneer lurked grim realities. Gender roles especially felt the conflict's transforming impact. Most of America's promising young writers and artists did not participate in the Civil War. The war reinforced Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.'s developed skeptical materialism. Walt Whitman had urged “relentless war” to end secession, but he, too, changed his exuberant tone after witnessing the war's grim reaping. The war's “mortal reality” gave greater depth, poignancy, and clarity to Whitman's Drum-Taps. Over the years Romanticism formed around the Civil War, making it stirringly unreal. The soul-numbing war depicted in John Esten Cooke and John W. De Forest's writings, Winslow Homer's illustrations, and Alexander Gardner's photographs soon disappeared.