

### After Lincoln: How the North Won the Civil War and Lost the Peace

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#### Recommended Citation

Jackson, W. Sherman (2015) "After Lincoln: How the North Won the Civil War and Lost the Peace," *Civil War Book Review*: Vol. 17 : Iss. 2 .

DOI: 10.31390/cwbr.17.2.14

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/cwbr/vol17/iss2/13>

## Review

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Spring 2015

**Langguth, A.J.** *After Lincoln: How the North Won the Civil War and Lost the Peace*. Simon and Schuster, \$28.00 ISBN 9781451617320

### Narratives of Reconstruction

This analysis of Reconstruction and after is written by an Emeritus Professor in the Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California. It is his fourth in a series on American history. The book is a collection of narratives on various personalities in Reconstruction. President Ulysses S. Grant is the central character throughout the book. The many players depicted are a mixture of radicals and moderates. One such character is Nathan Bedford Forrest, a lieutenant general in the Confederate army. Forrest was accused of slaughtering black Union troops at Fort Pillow, Tennessee in 1864, but was never tried and became the founder and the first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan in 1867. Under Forrest's leadership, the Klan grew to over fifty thousand in Tennessee, and throughout the south about five hundred thousand, by 1868. Forrest and the Klan embarked on a crusade to rid the south of Negro equality.

Hiram Revels is another person that Langguth describes as having a major role in Reconstruction. Revels was born to free parents in North Carolina and became an ordained minister having attended the Quaker Seminary in Indiana. He was elected to the United States Senate in 1870 to the seat once held by Jefferson Davis. Revels became the first African American to serve in that august body. Described as a free man without the resentments or ingrained deference of a former slave, Revels was educated and devoted to his family.

In contrast to Forrest's efforts to eliminate the rights of others, Revels maiden senate speech was an appeal for a general amnesty for his state's former Confederates. Like other Republicans, he wanted to disprove the accusation that they favored continuing the ban against whites voting in order to perpetuate Republican rule. He assured the Senate that black and white people were getting

along in the former Confederate states as quietly, pleasantly, harmoniously, and prosperously as the people in any of the northern states. He concluded his speech by saying that he was in favor of amnesty in Mississippi.

The author next turns his attention to Morrison Waite, who was appointed Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, replacing Salmon Chase in 1874. Despite his earlier position against slavery, Waite was no friend of the former slaves. By April, 1874 support for Negro rights diminished as the country turned toward the reconciliation and the promise of riches along an expanding frontier. Waite was determined to impose his will and carried his associates with him. When the Court ruled in *United States v. Cruikshank* in 1876 that indictments under the Enforcement Acts of 1871 against eight white defendants were invalid, blacks found voting difficult if not impossible. Waite's approach proved no more favorable to women when he and his colleagues ruled that women never possessed the right to vote in *Happersett v. Minor*.

Langguth concludes his historical analysis with a dissection of how Jim Crow originated through the person of Thomas Dartmouth Rice, an early nineteenth century northern actor, whose blackface caricatures of Southern blacks became the foundational stereotypes for southern laws. Rice performed a routine modeled from the mannerisms of a lame slave in Louisville, Kentucky to create what became Jim Crow. Subsequently, the term was attached to laws emasculating the rights of former slaves, becoming known as Jim Crow laws. Before Jim Crow became a household tradition in the South, former slaves might have agreed with the black Virginia legislator who announced in 1877 that he relied for protection of his rights on the well-raised gentlemen of the white South rather than on poor white trash. Jim Crow laws like the Eight Box Ballot were designed to screen out illiterate voters and by 1895, white officials had turned to poll taxes and literacy tests to suppress the black vote. Such actions by states were upheld by the U. S. Supreme Court as being within the legitimate powers of the states, outside the purview of the federal government.

*After Lincoln* is a well written account on how each branch of the government, especially the Supreme Court, failed to protect and preserve the promise of equality as manifested in the Reconstruction amendments and their subsequent enabling legislations. The book has over two hundred bibliographical references and 954 endnotes. Perhaps it is from a historian's perspective, which obviously could differ from the author's own journalistic background, but this reviewer felt that a major weakness of this book was the failure to document the

many quotes throughout the work. Many are not supported by proper citations. Yes, there are numerous notes at the end of the book. However, one has to engage in delicate mining to connect the quotes in the text with the notes.

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