

The Human Tradition in the Civil War and Reconstruction (The Human Tradition in America)

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The Human Tradition in the Civil War and Reconstruction brings alive this decisive period in American history by taking the reader beyond the realm of generals, presidents, and the other towering figures of history and introducing fourteen individuals who represent the variety of people who made up the great mass of the nation in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Readers will meet women like LaSalle Pickett, whose activities not only reveal a good deal about marriage and gender during the period but also offer a fascinating look at the postwar southern propaganda effort on behalf of the 'Lost Cause.' A chronicle of the home front is offered in the piece on journalist, poet, and novelist Lucy Virginia French. The abolition movement, particularly as an outgrowth of religious conviction, is covered in the sketch of Charles Grandison Finney. The chapters on Robert Smalls and Willis Augustus Hodges illustrate the roles played by African Americans during the war and Reconstruction. Francis Nicholls's virulent southernism is counterpointed in the sketch of Charles Henry Foster, whose unionism in a southern state highlights the complexity of choices and motivations of Americans in the Civil War era. Readers will also meet people like Winfield Scott Hancock and Richard S. Ewell, whose experiences illustrate the challenges confronted by mid-ranking military commanders. The naval war, often a neglected aspect of the era, is the focus of the piece on Raphael Semmes and a chapter on common soldier Peter Welsh reflects the important part played by immigrants in this conflict.

An excellent resource for courses on this tumultuous era, *The Human Tradition in the Civil War and Reconstruction* examines a side of this historical period rarely seen in standard texts.



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