



This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War (Vintage Civil War Library)

By Drew Gilpin Faust

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More than 600,000 soldiers lost their lives in the American Civil War. An equivalent proportion of today's population would be six million. In ***This Republic of Suffering***, Drew Gilpin Faust reveals the ways that death on such a scale changed not only individual lives but the life of the nation, describing how the survivors managed on a practical level and how a deeply religious culture struggled to reconcile the unprecedented carnage with its belief in a benevolent God. Throughout, the voices of soldiers and their families, of statesmen, generals, preachers, poets, surgeons, nurses, northerners and southerners come together to give us a vivid understanding of the Civil War's most fundamental and widely shared reality.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Battle is the dramatic centerpiece of Civil War history; this penetrating study looks instead at the somber aftermath. Historian Faust (*Mothers of Invention*) notes that the Civil War introduced America to death on an unprecedented scale and of an unnatural kind—grisly, random and often ending in an unmarked grave far from home. She surveys the many ways the Civil War generation coped with the trauma: the concept of the Good Death—conscious, composed and at peace with God; the rise of the embalming industry; the sad attempts of the bereaved to get confirmation of a soldier's death, sometimes years after war's end; the swelling national movement to recover soldiers' remains and give them decent burials; the intellectual quest to find meaning—or its absence—in the war's carnage. In the process, she contends, the nation invented the modern culture of reverence for military death and used the fallen to elaborate its new concern for individual rights. Faust exhumes a wealth of material—condolence letters, funeral sermons, ads for mourning dresses, poems and stories from Civil War-era writers—to flesh out her lucid account. The result is an insightful, often moving portrait of a people torn by grief. Photos. (Jan. 10)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Those who fret over the state of American universities will embrace this history by Drew Gilpin Faust. Academics appreciate how Faust explains so many social and cultural changes by recentering the story of the war on its massive toll in lives: the estimated 2 percent who died, or 620,000, would be equivalent to 6 million today. She also breaks new ground by reexamining the relationship of the war to modern institutions like the welfare state. Yet Faust constructs *This Republic of Suffering* in a way that will appeal to every reader—from the Civil War buff to the casual nonfiction reader. Some critics were a little queasy about the book's level of detail, both in describing death and the lives of its victims. But as more than one reviewer pointed out, for a nation at war, such writing and such reading are a duty.

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Review

“Extraordinary . . . profoundly moving.” —Geoffrey C. Ward, *The New York Times Book Review*

“**This Republic of Suffering** is one of those groundbreaking histories in which a crucial piece of the past, previously overlooked or misunderstood, suddenly clicks into focus.” —*Newsweek*

“A shattering history of the war, focusing exclusively on death and dying-how Americans prepared for death, imagined it, risked it, endured it and worked to understand it.” —*Los Angeles Times Book Review*

“Faust yanks aside the usual veil of history to look narrowly at life's intimate level for new perspectives from the past. She focuses on ordinary lives under extreme duress, which makes for compelling reading.” —*USA Today*

“Faust is particularly qualified to identify and explain the complex social and political implications of the changing nature of death as America’s internecine conflict attained its full dimensions.” —Ian Garrick Mason, *San Francisco Chronicle*

“Faust excels in explaining the era’s violent rhetoric and what went on in people’s heads.” —David Waldstreicher, *The Boston Globe*

“The beauty and originality of Faust’s book is that it shows how thoroughly the work of mourning became the business of capitalism, merchandised throughout a society.” —Adam Gopnik, *The New Yorker*

“Fascinating, innovative . . . Faust returns to the task of stripping from war any lingering romanticism, nobility or social purpose.” —Eric Foner, *The Nation*

“Eloquent and imaginative, Ms. Faust’s book takes a grim topic—how America coped with the massive death toll from the Civil War—and makes it fresh and exciting. . . . [A] widely and justly praised scholarly history.” —Adam Begley, *New York Observer*

“**This Republic of Suffering** is a harrowing but fascinating read.” —Marjorie Kehe, *The Christian Science Monitor*

“If you read only one book on the Civil War this year, make it this one.” —Kevin M. Levin, *American History*

“Having always kept the war in her own scholarly sights, Faust offers a compelling reassertion of its basic importance in society and politics alike.” —Richard Wrightman Fox, *Slate*

“[An] astonishing new book.” —Adam Kirsch, *The New York Sun*

“A moving work of social history, detailing how the Civil War changed perceptions and behaviors about death. . . . An illuminating study.” —*Kirkus*

“Penetrating . . . Faust exhumes a wealth of material . . . to flesh out her lucid account. The result is an

insightful, often moving portrait of a people torn by grief.” —*Publishers Weekly*

“No other generation of Americans has encountered death on the scale of the Civil War generation. **This Republic of Suffering** is the first study of how people in both North and South coped with this uniquely devastating experience. How did they mourn the dead, honor their sacrifice, commemorate their memory, and help their families? Drew Gilpin Faust’s powerful and moving answers to these questions provide an important new dimension to our understanding of the Civil War.”

—James M. McPherson, author of **This Mighty Scourge: Perspectives on the Civil War**

“During the Civil War, death reached into the world of the living in ways unknown to Americans before or since. Drew Gilpin Faust follows the carnage in all its aspects, on and off the battlefield. Timely, poignant, and profound, **This Republic of Suffering** does the real work of history, taking us beyond the statistics until we see the faces of the fallen and understand what it was to live amid such loss and pain.”

—Tony Horowitz, **Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War**

“Drew Gilpin Faust has used her analytical and descriptive gifts to explore how men and women of the Civil War generation came to terms with the conflict’s staggering human toll. Everyone who reads this book will come away with a far better understanding of why the war profoundly affected those who lived through it.”

—Gary W. Gallagher, author of **The Confederate War**

“Drew Faust’s brilliant new book, **This Republic of Suffering**, builds profoundly from the opening discussion of the Christian ideal of the good death to the last harrowing chapters on the exhumation, partial identification, reburial and counting of the Union dead. In the end one can only conclude, as the author does, that the meaning of the Civil War lies in death itself: in its scale, relentlessness, and enduring cultural effects. This is a powerful and moving book about our nation’s defining historical encounter with the universal human experience of death.”

—Stephanie McCurry, author of **Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the political culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country**

“Whitman was wrong; the real war did get into the books. This is a wise, informed, troubling book. **This Republic of Suffering** demolishes sentimentalism for the Civil War in a masterpiece of research, realism, and originality.”

—David W. Blight, author of **Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory**

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Karen Strickland:

As we know that book is significant thing to add our information for everything. By a guide we can know everything we wish. A book is a list of written, printed, illustrated as well as blank sheet. Every year seemed to be exactly added. This guide This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War (Vintage Civil War Library) was filled with regards to science. Spend your time to add your knowledge about your scientific research competence. Some people has different feel when they reading a book. If you know how big benefit from a book, you can experience enjoy to read a guide. In the modern era like right now, many ways to get book that you wanted.

George Clark:

That book can make you to feel relax. This book This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War (Vintage Civil War Library) was vibrant and of course has pictures on there. As we know that book This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War (Vintage Civil War Library) has many kinds or variety. Start from kids until teenagers. For example Naruto or Investigator Conan you can read and think that you are the character on there. So , not at all of book are usually make you bored, any it can make you feel happy, fun and chill out. Try to choose the best book for you and try to like reading this.

Mitchell Diaz:

A lot of publication has printed but it takes a different approach. You can get it by net on social media. You can choose the very best book for you, science, comedy, novel, or whatever simply by searching from it. It is named of book This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War (Vintage Civil War Library). You'll be able to your knowledge by it. Without departing the printed book, it could add your knowledge and make anyone happier to read. It is most crucial that, you must aware about publication. It can bring you from one spot to other place.

Dan Fry:

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