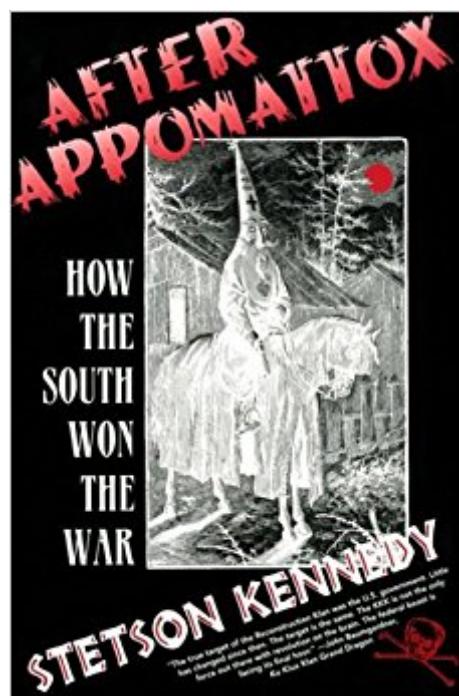


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After Appomattox: How The South Won The War



Synopsis

"Along with his wonderful abilities as a writer and scholar, Stetson possesses enormous courage, social involvement, and a big heart. . . . He's a brave man, of great conscience, and ought to be accorded a seat alongside Patrick Henry and other great freedom fighters."--Alan Lomax, Association for Cultural Equity"Throws a clear light on events of the post-Civil War era as they relate to current divisions of class and race in contemporary society. Kennedy's interpretation runs against that of many other scholars, but certainly it is well supported and coherent and has the added force of strong argument."--Patricia Waterman, University of South FloridaStetson Kennedy's premise--argued and documented here as never before--is that the verdict of Appomattox was largely reversed during Reconstruction. The determined southern oligarchy, he says, wrenched political and cultural victory out of military defeat. In this dramatic contribution to the history of Reconstruction, Kennedy brings to light thirty-three "long-buried" testimonials from victims and perpetrators of Ku Klux Klan terror that were taken by a Joint Congressional Committee in 1871-72. They form the core of this account of the decade following the Civil War, which Kennedy describes as a period of "Holocaust, demagoguery, chicanery, fraud, and psychological warfare that culminated in the Deal of 1876." That "deal," struck between Democrats and Republicans in a smoke-filled room of the Wormsley Hotel in Washington, D.C., essentially revoked the unconditional surrender of the South at Appomattox. It gave Republican Rutherford B. Hayes the victory in the disputed presidential election of 1876 in return for the withdrawal of federal troops from the southern states, and Kennedy contends that it diluted the power of the hard-won 14th and 15th Amendments and led to the imposition of the Jim Crow system after Reconstruction. Work on After Appomattox began with Kennedy's discovery of thirteen volumes of testimony--given to a Senate committee by former slaves--housed in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in the New York Public Library. The interviews--chilling, heartbreaking, and plain-spoken--describe how "the black and white targets of the Klan terror chose not to arm themselves or bond together for protection, counterattack, or counterterrorism. They simply stood as individuals against their tormentors, and, for refusing to renounce their rights, were often killed." Citing the testimony of one former slave, undeterred from voting by a near-fatal flogging, he quotes, "I can be strong in a good cause."Stetson Kennedy is the author of Palmetto Country, Southern Exposure, The Klan Unmasked, and Jim Crow Guide: The Way It Was, all reissued in paperback by UPF. He has received numerous honors recognizing his work for peace and racial equality, from the Negro Freedom Rally People's Award in 1947 to the 1991 Cavallo Foundation Award for civic courage. The grandson of a Confederate officer, he is a native of Florida and lives in Jacksonville.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Kennedy (Jim Crow Guide), longtime civil rights activist and student of American racism, argues here that Union victory in the Civil War was almost immediately reversed. Taking full advantage of the federal government's postwar leniency toward their rebellion, unreconstructed Confederates instituted a reign of terror against blacks and their few white supporters. Kennedy documents his case largely with testimonials taken by a congressional committee in 1871-72. They describe a pattern of brutality essentially unchecked by the Union occupying forces. At the same time, the South opened an intellectual offensive that succeeded in convincing its conquerors, well before the Compromise of 1876 gave the Republicans the presidency, that segregation and white supremacy would benefit the entire reunited nation. This depressing account highlights the difficulties of ``reconstructing'' any society unconvinced of a need to change. Illustrations not seen by PW.

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This is a remarkable book, which presages the thesis of Professor Downs' more recent book (also titled "After Appomattox") that the Civil War continued for many years after General Lee's surrender. This author convincingly demonstrates that unreconstructed Confederates- through an unprecedented campaign of violence and intimidation- successfully reimposed white rule in the South, despite the legislative accomplishments in Washington and the imposition of federal troops

to ostensibly enforce those new laws. Anyone wishing to understand how the outcome of the Civil War was effectively undone, and how it could continue that way for nearly 100 years, should start with reading this book.

I was so impressed by the book that I have already given away another copy as a gift. Once you grasp how the south legislated itself back into the same group that formed the confederacy, you can understand today's political climate.

Plenty to think about here. From the murder of Pres. Lincoln to the date of this book, the U.S. south did, indeed, get so much of what it wanted, aside from open, outright slavery. Southern politicians still hold sway in U.S. politics. How did they come out ahead in the several areas of great regional & national importance? How did reconstruction get so mucked up, ending in Jim Crow & the 100+ years of struggling to regain the ground lost in Johnson's term? Read it & find out. Read it together with other books dealing with the same topics, and you'll get a solid background on some of the most serious problems of our day, as well as their's.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and the evidence to support the assertion that despite losing the war the South was not reconstructed. I did however find that reading 31 different testimonies to the Joint Congressional Committee to be somewhat mundane. This book is a must for anyone who is interested in the history of the reconstruction and have only read the official version of these historical events.

This is one of the rare true historical accounts as to what happened after the Civil War. The testimonials by the ex-slaves give a chilling, but accurate account of what actually happened. The revisionist historians will probably frown but this is the only true account of "how the south won the war."

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