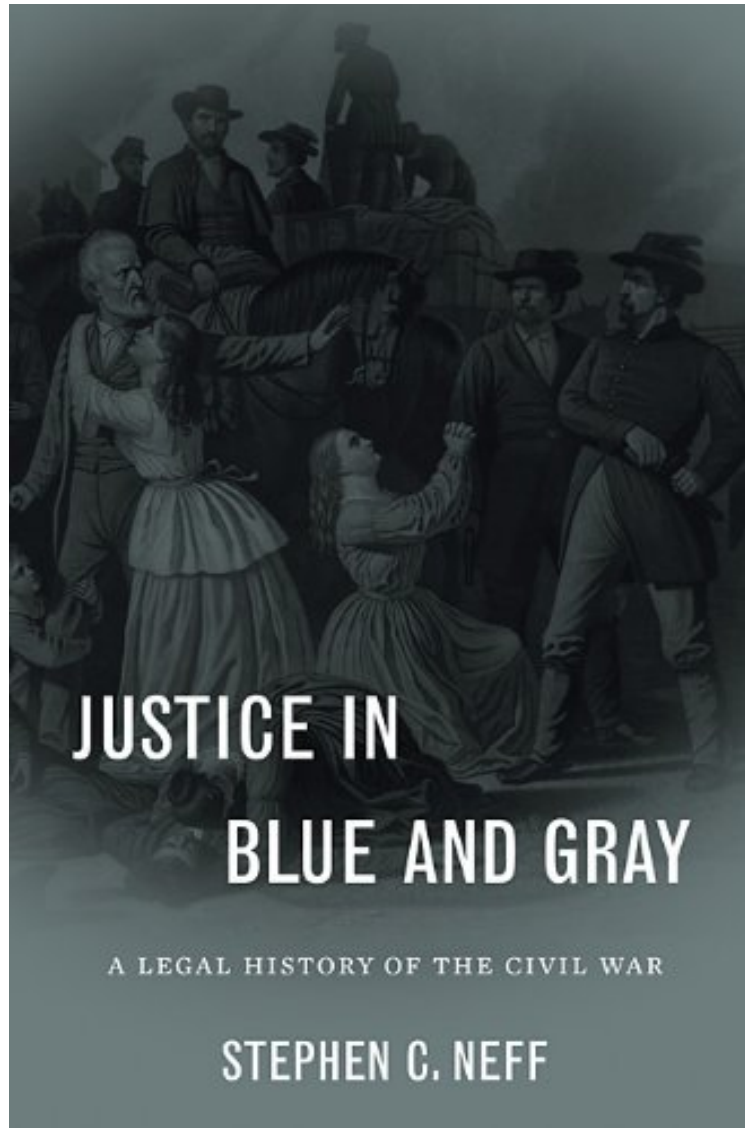


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Justice in Blue and Gray: A Legal History of the Civil War

Stephen C. Neff

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Stephen C. Neff : Justice in Blue and Gray: A Legal History of the Civil War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Justice in Blue and Gray: A Legal History of the Civil War:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A truly great readBy Suriya WickremasingheNever have I enjoyed a "serious read" so much. I read it first speedily, as one might a whodunnit to know what happens next. I then read it again, to savour each intriguing detail, and to enjoy the full flavour of Neff's consummate style, of which I know no equal. He takes the reader on an exciting voyage of discovery, with due warning whenever rough seas are approaching,

so that you face them confident of sailing safely into the next harbour. I started off with shamefully little knowledge of the American Civil War. And, though I am a lawyer, my generation did not have the law of war as part of our international law syllabus, it being - with an optimism that now seems incredible - assumed no longer relevant to post World War Two. So everything was new, and fascinating. An added bonus is the book's extraordinary relevance to the present day. One certainly does not need a legal background to enjoy this book. But I would recommend it to the cognoscenti too (for which read also smarty-pants know-alls) for its value as an example of a true erudition which is unassuming, unpretentious, and gently witty. I only wish there were a paperback edition so that I could buy lots of copies for friends. As it is, I have been badgering pals all over the world to buy their own. Repeated checks on, alas, show that second hand copies of Neff's books, if available at all, are generally as or more expensive than new. Suriya Wickremasinghe (Sri Lanka) 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. excellent book By Mably This is a truely inspiring book and a must have for all Civil War historians. This is a superficial overview of the Civil War and law, but one that will not disappoint. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Interesting legal history of US Civil War By César González Rouco I was surprised that no one else had made a comment before to this work and somehow worried I could not understand it. Far from that, it is easy to follow and in order to savour it one only needs to be a curious layperson. However, although the subject is very interesting, because of the author's style, the book, without being dry, is not engaging: certainly it will not become a best-seller. So my rate is between 5 (content) and 3 (pleasure). I will also suggest reading the following books on Lincoln and/or the Civil War in addition to this work: 1) "Lincoln: a biography" by Benjamin P. Thomas (a classical biography, written more than half a century ago which has passed the test of time with brilliant qualifications); 2) "Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era" by James M. McPherson (nowadays the standard, very readable, one-volume history of US Civil War); 3) "What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War" by Chandra Manning (slavery as the prime cause of the Civil War); 4) "Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime: From the Sedition Act of 1798 to the War on Terrorism" by Geoffrey R. Stone, specially chapter II "The Civil War: Mr. Lincoln's First Amendment" (in fact, all the book is worth-reading); and 5) "Lincoln's Constitution" by Daniel Farber (how Abraham Lincoln faced the constitutional issues brought on by the US Civil War).

Stephen Neff offers the first comprehensive study of the wide range of legal issues arising from the American Civil War, many of which resonate in debates to this day. Neff examines the lawfulness of secession, executive and legislative governmental powers, and laws governing the conduct of war. Whether the United States acted as a sovereign or a belligerent had legal consequences, including treating Confederates as rebellious citizens or foreign nationals in war. Property questions played a key role, especially when it came to the process of emancipation. Executive detentions and trials by military commissions tested civil liberties, and the end of the war produced a raft of issues on the status of the Southern states, the legality of Confederate acts, clemency, and compensation. A compelling aspect of the book is the inclusion of international law, as Neff situates the conflict within the general laws of war and details neutrality issues, where the Civil War broke important new legal ground. This book not only provides an accessible and informative legal portrait of this critical period but also illuminates how legal issues arise in a time of crisis, what impact they have, and how courts attempt to resolve them.

An essential book for understanding America's bifurcated legal system in wartime--the criminal courts under an established jurisprudence and military commissions pursuant to the law of war. Indeed, many issues Neff examines--sovereignty, detention, civil liberties in wartime--are relevant today. This is an original and vital contribution to history and constitutional law that is also accessible to general readers. I unequivocally recommend it. (Frank J. Williams, former Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court and founding chair of the Lincoln Forum) All of the participants in the American Civil War--Unionists, Confederates, generals, soldiers, civilians, and politicians--operated in a thicket of laws. Neff untangles the legal strands and makes them intelligible and fascinating. Included in his book are all the crucial topics: civil liberties, treatment of civilians, confiscation of property, pardons and amnesty, slavery and emancipation. Thorough yet succinct, *Justice in Blue and Gray* is the best book so far to bring together all the legal conflicts that shaped the Civil War. (Michael Vorenberg, Brown University) [Neff] shows us how the legal events of [the Civil War] resulted in the formation of legal principles that today influence American and international legal systems. He brings its history into the 21st century with analyses of terms such as "combatants, military tribunals, detention of persons without due process, unlimited incarceration and habeas corpus." I frequently had to remind myself that I was reading about the war between the states--not the War on Terror... Neff has included so much in this impressive and useful work... What he has done for legal scholarship in showing the modern relevance of meaningful legal history is deserving of high praise, and of an enthusiastic recommendation for it to be read, especially in governmental houses of justice. (Philip Kemp Times Higher Education 2010-07-08) About the Author Stephen C. Neff is Reader in Public International Law at the University of Edinburgh School of Law.