

Author stresses especially the importance of the 1960s which according to him played decisive role in lives of both men and he returns to the influence of this era many times during the reading. This sociological approach of seeing every aspect through the optics of the 1960s is quite interesting although I am not sure if it is applicable to every situation.

The publication is divided into seventeen chapters mapping complexly Clinton's and Gingrich's characters, personal life and their political career. What the both men had in common was the dissatisfaction with the situation inside their parties. That brought Gingrich at the head of Republican Revolution in 1994 and Clinton in front of New Democrats who were socially liberal but fiscally conservative. Many pages are devoted to the difficult situation of the Democratic Party and the revival of the G.O.P. and their tough cooperation in the House of Representatives and the degree of partisanship plays a role in American politics. Source of the conflict was the battle over the budget that led to governmental shut-down with political consequences for allegedly guilty party. Final compromise opened up the way for cooperation of both parties based on moderate support.

However, this book is not just about Clinton and Gingrich. It is also about the 1990s, the period when Cold War was over and the times looked peaceful and prosperous. Nevertheless it was necessary to give direction to this new energy and money. The high point in their cooperation was supposed to be described in motto: "Save the Social Security First." This entire endeavor ended with the Monika Lewinski scandal that moved the society for the remaining time when Clinton held the office. Gillon devoted almost whole two chapters to analyzing this delicate issue and the following consequences.

The author tries to be objective and to carefully handle the issue of the cooperation between the leader of the Republican revolution with Democratic President. Their careers in high positions were closely linked. According to Gillon, "The roots of the Clintons impeachment traced back to the cultural conflict of the 1960s, nurtured three decades of partisan wrangling." The statement is a bit controversial but it is interesting to follow author's thoughts and explanations from this perspective.

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Susan-Mary Grant, **The War for a Nation: The American Civil War**. New York: Routledge, 2006. 261 pp. ISBN 0-415-97990-0

Grant's *The War for a Nation: The American Civil War* offers a shorter overview of the war, utilizing mainly original historical sources, to provide a brief, but detailed, narrative of the Civil War. It seeks to introduce the military history of the war to readers who might be apprehensive of military history in general and who may never before have thought about how military history is, in fact, social history enacted on battlefields. The American Civil War was not a war of conquest, but a conflict of ideals. For the Union, the American republican experiment was at stake; for the Confederacy, it was the right to secede from

that experiment and to establish a separate nation. This book attempts to do justice to both sides of that equation.

The War for a Nation is not a synthesis. It does not attempt to explain or even enter the Civil War historiography. The focus throughout is on the war itself, not on what its participants made of it afterward nor what the several generations of Americans and American historians have made of it since. Wherever possible Grant sought to allow the Civil War participants, both on and off the battlefield, to speak for themselves, to attempt to convey their reactions to, and experiences of, the war as it was being fought, avoiding as much as possible the many post-war debates that sought to apportion blame or praise to individual generals at specific points in their Civil War careers.

In seeking to offer the general reader a flavor of as much of the war as possible, Grant rushed through, completely flanked, or simply not mentioned, events, people, and places that are important. Throughout, the main intention was to highlight the origins and general thrust of the war, from its long-term and more immediate origins in the secession winter of 1860–1861 to its conclusion by focusing on the way it was fought, the type of people who fought it, and the weaponry they fought it with. These elements are set within the broader context of the motivations, expectations, and experiences of soldiers and civilians as the war grew up in scope and in brutality to provide a clear picture of its impact on the political, military and social arenas of the nineteenth century America at war.

The structure of the book is broadly chronological, with a few exceptions. The opening chapter, “Portents,” provides a brief overview of the growth of both a national and a more dangerously sectional ideology in the period from America’s founding to John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859. Chapter 2, “Divisions,” focuses on the election of 1860, the subsequent secession of much of the South from the Union, and the birth of the Confederacy. Chapter 3, “The Road to Perdition,” describes the raising of the Civil War armies in the war’s early stages. Chapter 4, “All Quiet Along the Potomac,” explores McClellan’s ill-fated Peninsula Campaign, the importance of the blockade and the war at sea, and covers the first major engagement in the Western Theater, Shiloh, explaining the importance of gaining control of the Mississippi. Chapter 5, “Battle Cry of Freedom,” looks at the issue of emancipation in the second year of the war. Chapter 6, “Into the West,” juxtaposes events in the Western and Eastern Theaters, but not chronologically. Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg are placed in the broader context of the Confederate advance in the West. Chapter 7, “The People Embodied,” contrasts the political situation in the Union with that of the Confederacy. Chapter 8, “Lee’s Miserables” traces the evolution of the war from one of pitched battles to one of trench warfare and the development of a more structured, persistent and aggressive method of warfare that, in the end, brought down the Confederacy.

Throughout, the obvious purpose of this book is to introduce and explain the most significant war in the history of the American nation, showing how Americans at that time reacted to the reality of conflict that challenged all they held most dear, and what the conflict entailed.

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