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Representative Americans: The Civil War Generation

Norman K. Risjord

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Americans in the middle decades of the nineteenth century were a people with boundless energy capable of heroic deeds, monumental achievements, and tragic errors. In The Civil War Generation, his newest volume in The Representative Americans series, noted scholar Norman K. Risjord uses biographical sketches to create a composite portrait of the United States during and immediately after the Civil War. Risjord begins his study with Stephen A. Douglas and Frederick Douglass, who provide two different viewpoints on the events leading to the conflict, while Harriet Tubman represents a form of social activism during the same years. Profiles of Stonewall Jackson and William Tecumseh Sherman, as well as infantryman James Anderson, give the reader an insightful view of the men fighting the war. Risjord then leads the reader inside both the Northern and Southern governments as well as the Reconstruction Era through the eyes of people such as William H. Seward and Thaddeus Stevens. Looking at the postwar period, Risjord examines the social and economic changes the conflict wrought, describing the lives of Clara Barton and Cornelius Vanderbilt. As the nation's eyes turned westward, the tragic tale of Crazy Horse unfolds, as well as the chronicle of two of the first scientists to explore the new land. Masterfully written and eminently readable, The Civil War Generation brings to life one of our nation's most turbulent decades and will be of great value to students of the Civil War.

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