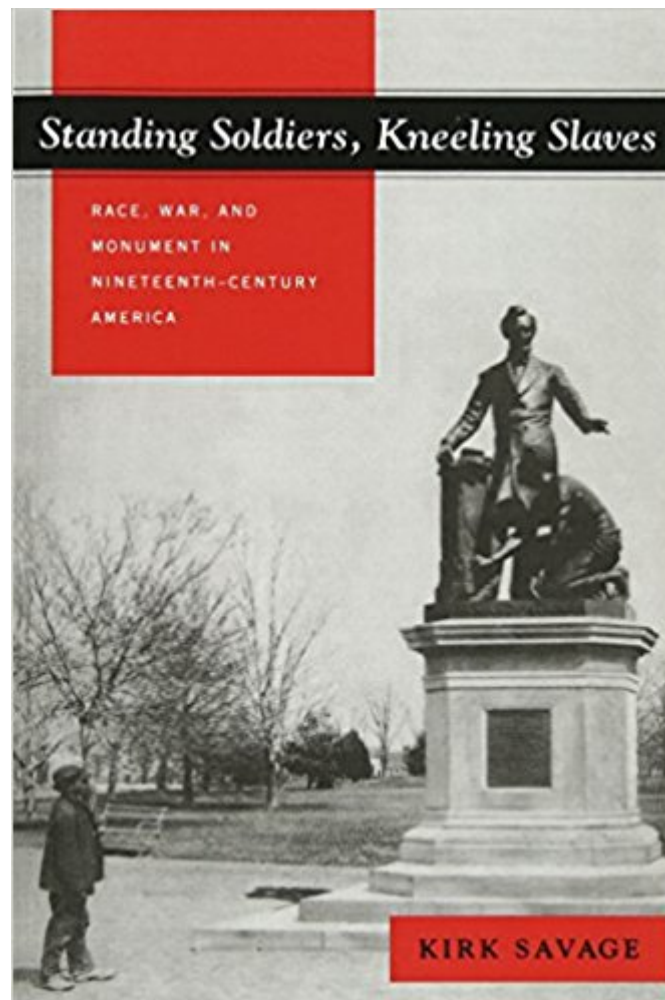




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Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, And Monument In Nineteenth-Century America



Synopsis

The United States of America originated as a slave society, holding millions of Africans and their descendants in bondage, and remained so until a civil war took the lives of a half million soldiers, some once slaves themselves. *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves* explores how that history of slavery and its violent end was told in public space--specifically in the sculptural monuments that increasingly came to dominate streets, parks, and town squares in nineteenth-century America. Here Kirk Savage shows how the greatest era of monument building in American history arose amidst struggles over race, gender, and collective memory. As men and women North and South fought to define the war's legacy in monumental art, they reshaped the cultural landscape of American nationalism. At the same time that the Civil War challenged the nation to reexamine the meaning of freedom, Americans began to erect public monuments as never before. Savage studies this extraordinary moment in American history when a new interracial order seemed to be on the horizon, and when public sculptors tried to bring that new order into concrete form. Looking at monuments built and unbuilt, Savage shows how an old image of black slavery was perpetuated while a new image of the common white soldier was launched in public space. Faced with the challenge of Reconstruction, the nation ultimately recast itself in the mold of the ordinary white man. *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, the first sustained investigation of monument building as a process of national and racial definition, probes a host of fascinating questions: How was slavery to be explained without exploding the myth of a "united" people? How did notions of heroism become racialized? And more generally, who is represented in and by monumental space? How are particular visions of history constructed by public monuments? Written in an engaging fashion, this book will appeal to a wide range of readers interested in American culture, race relations, and public art.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Winner of the 1998 John Hope Franklin Publication Prize, American Studies Association "In a richly detailed and engagingly written study, art historian Kirk Savage traces the development of ... monuments in the context of the nation's still-uncompleted attempt to deal with the issues of race and collective memory."--The Boston Globe "Savage's book ... underscores the importance of reading diverse texts--including mute monuments from the past. Racism, chiseled into our country's foundation, continues to confuse our commemorative rituals and, alas, our historical memory."--Raleigh (NC) News and Observer "In a challenging addition to recent work on the place of the Civil War in American memory, Kirk Savage shows ingenuity in his analysis and interpretation of post-war commemorative sculpture."--The Times Literary Supplement "[Savage's] astute observations reveal not only the theoretical foundation of racism embedded in sculpture but the importance of the aesthetic dimension of racial history. . . . [A] tour de force."--Library Journal "Well researched and elegantly written, this work is a powerful statement about the relationship of the Civil War and race to monuments and public space."--Florida Historical Quarterly

"Kirk Savage joins the growing literature on the politics of public memory and commemoration with the rich scholarship on race and nationhood. His book is a finely conceptualized, beautifully argued study of the challenges of representing the new postwar relationship of black to white."--Angela Miller, Washington University "In my town there are equestrian statues of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson (Nat Turner has not yet found his monument, to say nothing of Sojourner Truth). In nearby Richmond, a twenty-four-foot statue of Arthur Ashe is dwarfed by sixty-foot statues of Lee and other Confederate heroes. Kirk Savage's *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves* eloquently and authoritatively exposes the way racial dominance has been literally built into the public space that surrounds us--space in which it is, for this reason, increasingly difficult to live."--Eric Lott, University of Virginia, author of *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* "In a fascinating study of public space and the less-than-public contradictions of nineteenth-century culture, Kirk Savage sheds light not only on memory and monument, but also on the invention of the 'popular' itself."--Henry Louis Gates, Jr. "A finely conceptualized, beautifully argued study of the challenges of representing the new postwar relationship of black to white."--Angela Miller,

The paperback edition is not a printed edition: it is an extremely cheap reprint, probably from a PDF, with a disastrous loss of quality of all illustrations: they are very heavy in contrast, show smudges, hazing and streaks; in many cases, you can hardly see what is represented in the images.

A careful and thorough look at the American people, our history and psyche, and how we memorialize the significant events of our National adventure. Mr. Savage beautifully and remarkably blends the art, politics, and public remembrance of what is surely our most significant struggle as a nation - defeating slavery.

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