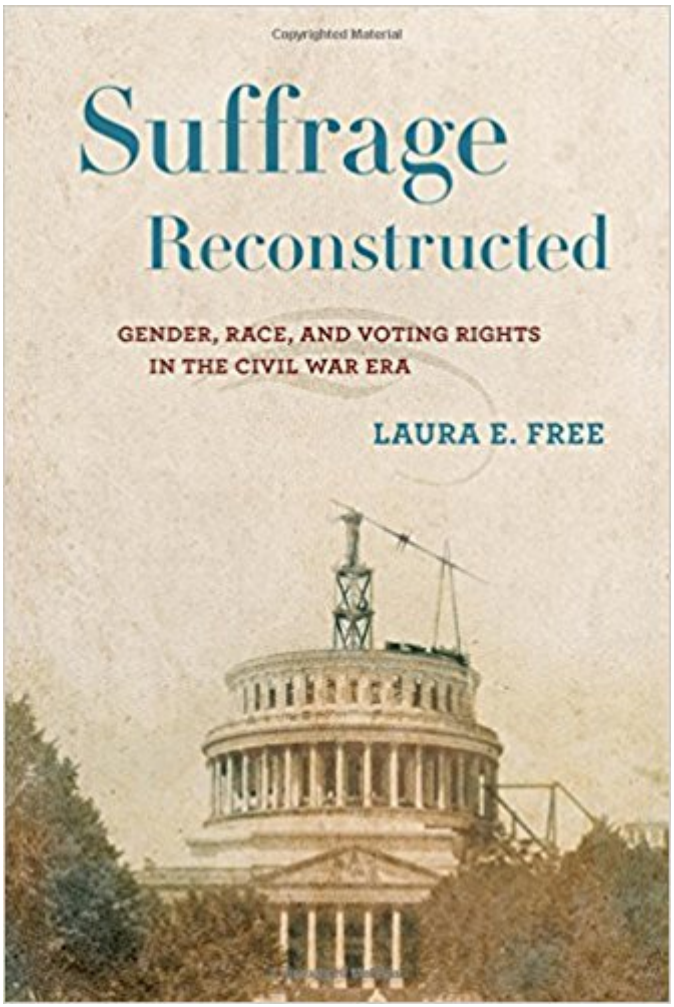
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Suffrage Reconstructed: Gender, Race, And Voting Rights In The Civil War Era



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Synopsis

The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified on July 9, 1868, identified all legitimate voters as "male." In so doing, it added gender-specific language to the U.S. Constitution for the first time. Suffrage Reconstructed is the first book to consider how and why the amendment's authors made this decision. Vividly detailing congressional floor bickering and activist campaigning, Laura E. Free takes readers into the pre- and postwar fights over precisely who should have the right to vote. Free demonstrates that all men, black and white, were the ultimate victors of these fights, as gender became the single most important marker of voting rights during Reconstruction.Free argues that the Fourteenth Amendment's language was shaped by three key groups: African American activists who used ideas about manhood to claim black men's right to the ballot, postwar congressmen who sought to justify enfranchising southern black men, and womenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s rights advocates who began to petition Congress for the ballot for the first time as the Amendment was being drafted. To prevent womenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s inadvertent enfranchisement, and to incorporate formerly disfranchised black men into the voting polity, the Fourteenth AmendmentÃ¢â ¬â„¢s congressional authors turned to gender to define the new American voter. Faced with this exclusion some woman suffragists, most notably Elizabeth Cady Stanton, turned to rhetorical racism in order to mount a campaign against sex as a determinant of oneÃ¢â ¬â„¢s capacity to vote. StantonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s actions caused a rift with Frederick Douglass and a schism in the fledgling woman suffrage movement. By integrating gender analysis and political history, Suffrage Reconstructed offers a new interpretation of the Civil WarÃ¢â ¬â œera remaking of American democracy, placing African American activists and womenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s rights advocates at the heart of nineteenth-century American conversations about public policy, civil rights, and the franchise.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The author depicts work by suffragists to turn voters against the (Fifteenth) amendment by using the racist language and stereotyping of the day, denigrating the very former slaves they had fought so hard to free. In doing so, they attempted to achieve voting rights for themselves by denying the same right to others. Free's book is an informative and sometimes shocking study of a little-known Reconstruction drama."Ã¢â ¬â ¢S. J. Ramold, CHOICE (January 2016)"Much of the work analyzing the Reconstruction constitutional amendments and their connection to women's rights has focused on the Fifteenth Amendment's restriction of suffrage to men. Hobart and William Smith College associate professor of history Laura FreeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Suffrage Reconstructed expands the discussion to a detailed analysis of the Fourteenth AmendmentÃ¢â ¬â„¢s deliberate inclusion of the word "male." While examining the expansion of voting rights, Free provides fresh insight into the dispute over who was considered worthy of full inclusion in American political life. She explains in detail how the debates led Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony to ally themselves with the racist language and political philosophy of the Democratic Party. . . .Free has made a valuable contribution to the discussion of womenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s rights and the history of suffrage in the United States."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Kathleen Gorman,The North Carolina Historical Review (July 2016) "Suffrage Reconstructed is a significant contribution to the intertwined histories of Reconstruction politics and women's suffrage. Laura E. Free offers a persuasive, innovative, and nuanced analysis of the political rhetoric that transformed citizenship after the Civil War. Free offers an original and necessary perspective on this pivotal moment in the nation's history."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Carol Faulkner, Syracuse University, author of Lucretia Mott's Heresy: Abolition and Women's Rights in 19th-Century America"In the crisp and lucid Suffrage Reconstructed, Laura E. Free delivers on her promise to shed light on how whiteness and manhood became synonymous with citizenship, why the word 'male' was introduced into the Constitution with the 14th Amendment, and what Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony hoped to accomplish with their tactical shifts after the war."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Elizabeth R. Varon, University of Virginia, author of Disunion!: The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789Ã¢â ¬â œ1859

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