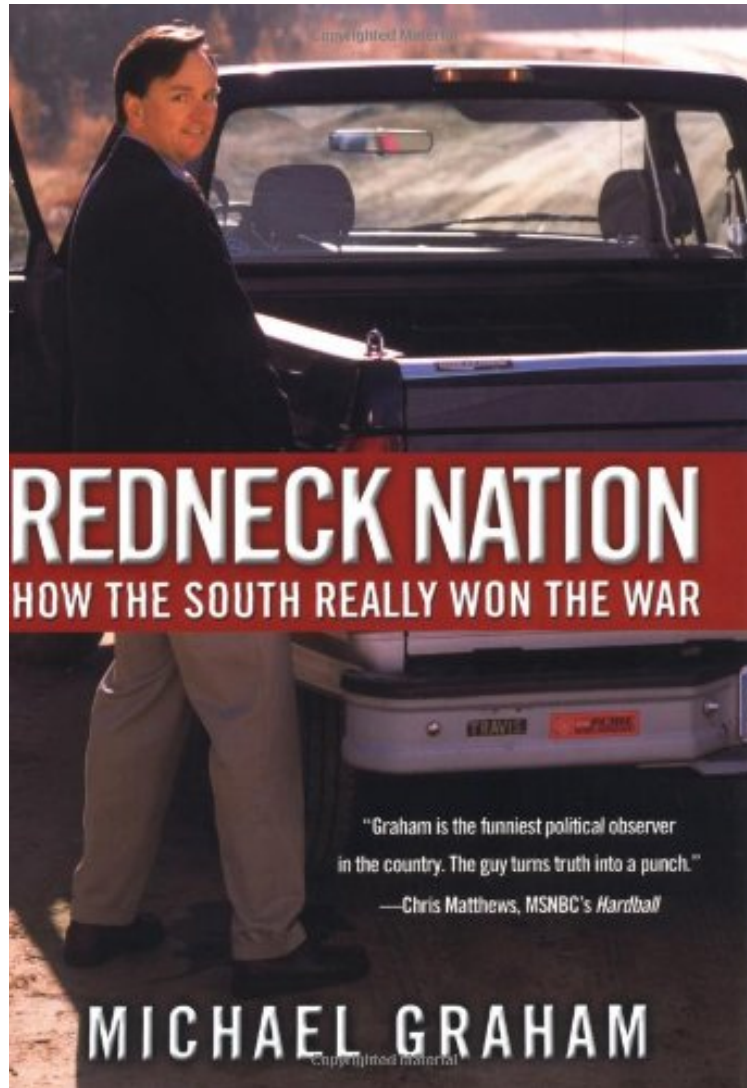


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Redneck Nation: How the South Really Won the War

Michael Graham

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Michael Graham : Redneck Nation: How the South Really Won the War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Redneck Nation: How the South Really Won the War:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. schollarly redneck historical referenceBy Kenneth T. HallMr. Graham through his thorough his extensive research and entertaining writing style presents a totally unecpected viewpoint on American culture.3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Funny Read on the SouthBy Michael TaylorI used to listen to Michael Graham when he was on WBT 1110, an AM radio station based out of Charlotte NC. He eventually went to I believe Charleston SC and now I believe he is currently based out of Washington DC.If I understand the book's premise correctly, it is this:1. The writer left the South as soon as he could because he was

embarrassed to be associated with the culture.² After spending some time in Northern locales, he came to understand that the rest of the country is just like the South, only with a different accent. Graham covers Southern culture and attitudes in a number of areas: racism/slavery, education, economics, living quarters, the American Civil War, etc. and comes to the conclusion that he sees similar attitudes throughout the United States. I found myself both snickering at some of the phrases and jabs directed at Southerners (I am born and raised in the South and am proud of it!) and Northerners. Quite frankly, I found myself agreeing with him on a number of issues, particularly that racism is wrong. However, I did not like some of the saucy language and phrases I read (quite a few cuss words). In my humble opinion, Graham could make his points without that kind of language. If the language was tamer, I would have given the book 4 stars. Complaint aside, I still thought the book was very funny and made good points.² of 2 people found the following review helpful. Fine chronicle of a nation gone to seed
By Michael Caracappa
On page 14, Michael Graham writes: "[T]he Civil War was a classically southern enterprise: A handful of clods -- without an army or a navy -- come up with the lousy idea of starting a war, and their fellow Southerners are too polite to tell them how stupid they are. After attacking Fort Sumter, the South proceeds to get its [...] kicked from Appomattox to Yazoo City, then announces, 'We never wanted slavery, anyway,' and blames the whole thing on the Yankees." Too bad REDNECK NATION was written before the Iraq War because Graham could have played up the similarities between his view of the Civil War and the Iraq invasion to bolster his argument that America has become a nation of yokels. In both wars, you had a Southerner leading a "handful of clods...starting a war." Both wars were instigated "without an army or a navy" -- in the case of the Iraq War, it was without an army or a navy capable of nation building or suppressing a guerrilla insurgency. Both wars at the outset had a delusional "Mission Accomplished" moment -- Fort Sumter and Bush's photo-op in a flight suit. In both wars, the rationale for war flip-flopped. For the Civil War, the belligerents' rationale switched from defending slavery to defending "states rights." For the Iraq War, the belligerents' rationale switched from eliminating a "grave and gathering threat" to America's security to spreading democracy throughout the Middle East. Graham identifies rampant cronyism as another symptom of why we are now a Redneck Nation. Cronyism was once part of the accepted way of life in the South, but is now assented to throughout the country. Graham says that in southern culture, whom you know has long been more important than what you know. Personal connections in the South trump merit or individual competence. He could have noted that the Bush administration raised cronyism to unprecedented heights in selecting contractors to operate in Iraq. For reasons of charity, we won't mention Katrina. Graham says that people in the South judge you based on the "Who's your daddy?" principle. If you wield an important last name, doors open for you in the South, regardless of your education or proven abilities. He cites Hillary CLINTON as a modern nationwide instance of someone with minimal accomplishments whose advancement is based almost exclusively on the prominence of her last name. Not surprisingly (Graham is a staunch Republican), he's silent on whether George W. BUSH would have become a Texas governor and a president of the United States without the Bush family name. Graham's right-wing blinders undermine his arguments at times. For instance, Graham decries "the progressive income tax...we insist that people who excel be punished for their efforts." Graham is contrasting today's society with the Golden Age of Meritocracy of the 1950s and '60s. Graham apparently doesn't know that the income tax was far more steeply progressive during the Golden Age of Meritocracy, with the highest incomes taxed at a 90 percent marginal rate. He also doesn't seem to comprehend that the gap between the rich and the middle class is about as wide as it has ever been, exceeding even the era of the robber barons and the great trusts, despite our "punishing" progressive income tax. How much are we "punishing" billionaire hedge fund managers -- who, by the way, are lightly taxed thanks to a convenient loophole in the tax code? Graham equates a high income with excellence of achievement. We don't want to "punish" excellence. But look around. The CEO of Countrywide Credit earned \$[...] million in one year while he drove his company into a ditch. Other CEOs in the financial sector also made insanely risky bets with the shareholders' money. Those CEOs earned tens of millions of dollars before the bets went sour, then earned additional tens of millions in severance pay when the board of trustees belatedly booted them from office. Is this the sort of excellence Graham worries that a progressive income tax punishes? Over all, though, Graham hits the right notes in exploring the steep decline of American society and culture. The Second American Enlightenment, which ran from roughly FDR to JFK, is now a distant memory. Graham defines the mindset that held sway during that period of enlightenment as "Northernism" (page 10): "Northernism represented meritocracy, the celebration of individual ability and achievement over race, class, and family connections. It represented culture, people who listened to jazz and attended operas without the word 'Ol' in the title. Northernism held high the standard of reason and demanded that all traditions and superstitions and heartfelt prejudices be measured by that standard." An excellent history of Graham's "Northernism" of the 1950s is William F. Buckley Jr's limpid and mellifluous GOD AND MAN AT YALE. Of course, Buckley's goal was to destroy "Northernism" (reason, skepticism, enlightenment) and reinvigorate religious enthusiasm. Buckley probably deserves as much credit as anyone for begetting the America of today, a Redneck Nation.

Forget the mint juleps and the debutante balls, for every slack-jawed yokel who swears he saw The Lizard Man out by the dump, there's a failed televangelist with a family full of hare-lips holding a position as lofty as, say, the President

of the United States. Because it's America that's ever more like the South, says Graham, not the other way around. Wafting up from the Mason-Dixon line and spreading like kudzu, redneckery has been absorbed from Bangor to Baha, he claims. The only real difference between Brooklyn and Birmingham is that you can't get a gun rack in a Trans Am.

From Publishers Weekly Despite having lost the Civil War, the South has somehow managed to win the "battle of ideas" across our nation, contends radio talk-show host Graham in this hilarious collection of essays covering such topics as Enron, the public school system, free speech, multiculturalism, racism and the "supreme triumph of the Redneck nation." Using quotes from H.L. Mencken, Gallup poll statistics and plenty of firsthand experience, the author examines this peculiar phenomenon with a cynical wit that spares no one, including himself. He begins by explaining the difference between the North and South, specifically between South Carolina, where he grew up, and New York, where he often traveled ("New Yorkers pretend they've read books they haven't. Southerners deny reading the ones they have"). Drawing from his own childhood in Dixie ("a land of few ideas, nearly all of them bad"), his college years at Oral Roberts University (which combined "the intellectual rigor of a Sunday school picnic with the sound theological theories of a slumber party s,ance") and the 27 years he's spent running away from the South, Graham wittily illustrates "Redneck" infiltration into mainstream politics through conspiracy theories, victim mentality (as witnessed by the popularity of such national programs as the Jerry Springer show) and segregation, in a book readers won't be able to put down. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. "I can't remember the last time I read a political book as witty and incisive..." -- Tucker Carlson "...An adroit and devastating cultural analysis with at least one laugh on every page..." -- Florence King "...dispels the Southern stereotype. Perfect for reading in bed with your sister." -- Bill Maher "Graham is the funniest political observer in the country..." -- Chris Matthews "Michael Graham's REDNECK NATION is funny and insightful. You'll really enjoy it." -- G. Gordon Liddy About the Author South Carolina native Michael Graham spent six years in stand up comedy and another six years as a GOP political consultant before beginning his career as a radio talk show host. He currently hosts "The Natural Truth" on 96.9 FM Talk in Boston, MA