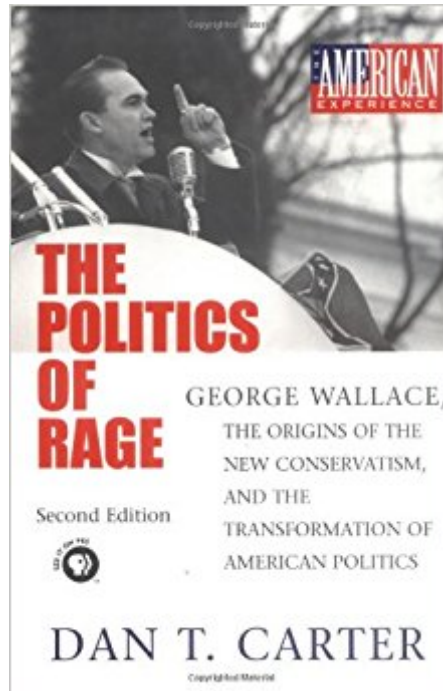


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Confederate Goliath: The Battle Of Fort Fisher



Synopsis

Combining biography with regional and national history, this work chronicles the dramatic rise and fall of George Wallace, a populist who abandoned his ideals to become a national symbol of racism and later begged for forgiveness.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Despite the title, this book is mainly an interpretive biography of former Alabama governor Wallace, with few revelations but more of a skeptical edge than Stephan Leshner's recent authorized bio, *George Wallace: American Populist*. (This book argues, contra Leshner, that Wallace did in fact vow not to be "out-niggered.") A history professor at Emory University, Carter (Scottsboro) has produced a detailed and readable account of Wallace—"the most influential loser in twentieth-century American politics"—as political animal, driven by ambition far more than by ideology, with a disarmingly folksy personal style. On the wrong side in so many civil rights-era clashes, from Bull Connor's brutality in Birmingham to the admitting of black students to the state university, Wallace nonetheless tapped the "Southernization" of suburban and ethnic white America, thereby fueling his two presidential bids. Though his crippling in a 1972 assassination attempt ended his political career, Wallace, as the author states in a coda, anticipated "the conservative groundswell that transformed American politics in the 1980s." Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Historian Carter's biography of the former Alabama governor and presidential candidate emphasizes Wallace's ability to exploit white racism and social conservatism to further his political career. It contends that he gave voice to themes that were to be used effectively by Republican politicians in their electoral victories of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Carter concludes that Wallace was the "most influential loser in twentieth century American politics." Another recent biographer, Stephen Leshner (George Wallace: American Populist, LJ 3/1/94), attributes to him an even wider influence—one affecting liberal and conservative politicians of both major parties. Carter's work has the more complete account of Wallace's administrations as governor and of his political campaigns, while Leshner's biography offers more insight into Wallace as a person. Academic libraries should have both volumes. For other collections, either would be an acceptable choice. —Thomas H. Ferrell, Univ. of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book, given Donald Trump's proximity to the white house, is more important than ever. It is also a highly detailed examination of the Civil Rights Movement against the person of George Wallace.

Before reading this book, I thought the title might be hyperbolic. It is not.

I can not put this book down. I don't recall reading any biography that I would classify a "page turner". Very thorough and obviously well researched, but not a slog. Just an absolute great read. Fascinating, evil person who impacted a lot in politics..

Well done Wallace bio. So fitting for a read in 2016

Dan T Carter is a superb historian who also writes well. There's not a better history of George Wallace and his political movement than this one.

All the cliched phrases that can be trotted out to describe this book are true: well-written, exhaustively noted, probing, keen analysis etc. For years many in the south (esp African Americans) have been resistant to embracing conservatism. Black Americans are the one true reliable voting bloc for Democrats regionally and in the nation overall. Far too many in the media were ready to lump Wallace into the same pen as the GOP more Libertarian/small govt wing best represented by Reagan and Goldwater. Wallace was except in matters of race a thorough-going liberal from the

FDR big-spender mold. This book explains quite clearly how Wallace saw race-baiting and proSegregation advocacy as the "next big thing" and not only hopped aboard but sought to commandeer the ship as well. He was able to mask his racism behind the rhetoric of the otherwise respectable conservatism which was even then taking form in the USA. The half-hearted, undeclared, no-win war in Viet Nam and the ballooning, budget-busting nondefense spending of the mid to late 60s left many otherwise liberal folks soured on activist govt. The Kennedy and LBJ administrations--comprised as they were of the so-called "best and brightest"-- ignored the impact their policies had on the newly "economically emancipated" lower working class whites who had heretofore been front and center fans of the old FDR coalition and its domestic agenda. Wallace recognized how these folks were not being heard by the two dominant parties. Though he was beset by novice incompetent staffers and an incoherent grab bag of policies (all of which suffered from an overlay of heavy racism) Wallace stepped in to fill the gap ignored by the D and R pols of that era. I think Carter is wrong to impute that Tom DeLay, Newt Gingrich and their ilk are somehow legatees of Wallace's mistrust of "elitist" Washington bureaucratic control. Its always amazing to hear politicians who've built their careers on denunciations of "Washington meddling" who've nonetheless spent their careers in DC politics. All told it was a great book. You sense the frustration of the Northern folks who were waylaid by the practical effects of LBJ's domestic reforms. The book invites all sorts of speculation. What if Wallace had denounced the Viet Nam war along with the War on Poverty as both being "unwinnable"? At one point in an off the cuff remark, Wallace's Veep nominee spoke out in FAVOR of abortion rights (thus alienating blue collar ethnic Catholics in the NE USA). What might have happened had Wallace forcibly spoken out against abortion? The 68 campaign predated the 1973 Roe v Wade holding. Perhaps Wallace could have made abortion/proLife Supreme Court nominees a secret weapon? Had he done so how might evangelical Christian conservatives reacted? What Dan Carter derides as Christian conservatives in the 60s were actually closer in spirit to the various neoNazi "Christian Identity" groups now based in Idaho and other largely white enclaves. To that extent Carter is akin to the many observers today who readily equate Christian "values voters" or proLifers to KKK fringe. The failed Wallace campaign was at best flypaper to isolate various fringe kooks. George Wallace saw that those could be used to advance him but he didnt want to be seen as their "spokesman" and the tensions this created within his campaign are evident throughout this superb book

A meticulous treatment of the life, times and indefensible delusions that shaped Wallace's career and made him widely reviled for what he was; an unapologetic racist, and southern redneck

bigot of the worst kind.

This is an excellent study on the political career of George Wallace, the former Alabama Governor famed for his stand against integration in the early 1960's and his subsequent runs for the Presidency. Carter portrays Wallace as a complex individual, who seems to have been motivated from the start more by ambition than principle. The book gives an extremely well researched and readable account of Wallace's early life, his family, friendships and formative experiences. Carter attempts to show that Wallace early on became politically ambitious for the Alabama Governor's office and that he originally adopted the stance of a moderate (for the time) southern populist, going so far as to refuse to break away from the Democratic party in 1948 and supporting Truman over Strom Thurmond and the Dixiecrat party. In the 1958 Alabama gubernatorial election Wallace was defeated by a more blatantly racist, segregationist opponent and vowed in a famed statement of racial epithet never to be the racial moderate in any future elections. True to his word he ran a 1962 campaign on the stance of continued defiance to federal government attempts to integrate Alabama schools and extend voting rights to the state's black population. Successfully elected, he made a national name for himself by his confrontations with the federal courts (including initially trying to defy or evade the court orders of man who had once been a good friend - Federal Judge Frank Johnson) and the Kennedy Justice Department. The book doesn't shy away from the resulting violence of some of Wallace's followers and the more extreme racist comments and actions of many of those who supported him in the 1960's. I think Carter makes a good case that by his disregard for federal law enforcement agencies and civil rights protesters that Wallace in some degree bore some of the responsibility for the actions of the more extreme and violent of those opposed to integration and expanded civil rights for black citizens. Carter also provides great detail into minds of the inner circle of those men who managed Wallace's candidacy in his state and later national campaigns for President, including talented speechwriter but also violent racist Klansman Asa Carter (no relation to the author), who would later become famous as the author of the historical novel that inspired the Clint Eastwood movie "The Outlaw Josey Wales". Biographer Carter's premise is that by Wallace's strong showings in the presidential elections of 1968 and 1972 (before he was derailed by an assassination attempt) that Wallace succeeded in moving the national political debate to the right, especially in the area of social policies and politics. Carter has gone on record in other books and speeches as trying to link the Republican policies of welfare reform, re-examination of affirmative action policies and anti-crime legislation as being directly descended from Wallace's bigoted early campaigns. While I think he stretches the point I do think that some of Wallace's populist appeal did

pave the way for successful Presidential campaigns of other southerners, such as Georgia's Jimmy Carter in 1976 and Arkansas' Bill Clinton in 1992 and 1996. Carter sees Republican Ronald Reagan as more of a direct descendant of Wallace, but this reviewer sees it as a fact that most successful Presidential races since 1968 whether Republican or Democrat have taken Wallace's anti-Washington bureaucrat populist rhetoric and support for a stronger defense and lower taxes as being more important than his racial stances. Of course Wallace himself moderated his racial stances through the succeeding years, until he was running as a populist with appeal to both blacks and whites in the 1980's and appealing for forgiveness to many of those he had wronged. Carter dutifully reports this later conversion, although he seems to question some of the sincerity behind the public conversion. The book doesn't represent itself as a conventional biography as much as an examination of Wallace's life and the effects of his political campaigns on national and regional politics, and for that reason I can forgive what I see as a failure of the book to give as much detail and scrutiny to Wallace's life after 1972 as Carter gave the previous years. The book does a powerful job of conveying the reality of Lurleen Wallace's life and trials as George's wife as well as her fights with the cancer that finally killed her. Her stint as a successful stand in candidate for Governor in 1966 and her short term in office before her death is given a good overview. However I would have liked to have seen as much detail and information on Wallace's later family and personal life, including his other marriages and relationships with his children. I also would have been interested in finding out more about the Alabama political scene of the 1980's and 1990's and Wallace's lasting effect on those politics, but I can't argue with the fact that Carter has written a masterful portrait on both the man and his era and the waves he caused by his political campaigns. A definite 5 stars for this award winning (justly so, I might add) political biography.

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