

1861: The Civil War Awakening
by Adam Goodheart

Alfred A. Knopf, April 11, 2011

As America marks the 150th anniversary of our defining national drama, *1861* presents a gripping and original account of how the Civil War began.

1861 is an epic of courage and heroism beyond the battlefields. Early in that fateful year, a second American revolution unfolded, inspiring a new generation to reject their parents' faith in compromise and appeasement, to do the unthinkable in the name of an ideal. It set Abraham Lincoln on the path to greatness, and millions of slaves on the road to freedom.

The book introduces us to a heretofore little-known cast of Civil War heroes—among them an acrobatic militia colonel, an explorer's wife, an idealistic band of German immigrants, a regiment of New York City firemen, a community of Virginia slaves, and a young college professor who would one day become president. Adam Goodheart takes us from the corridors of the White House to the slums of Manhattan; from the mouth of the Chesapeake to the deserts of Nevada; from Boston Common to Alcatraz Island; vividly evoking the Union at this moment of ultimate crisis and decision.

Adam Goodheart is a historian, journalist, and travel writer. His articles have appeared in *National Geographic*, *Outside*, *Smithsonian*, *The Atlantic*, and *The New York Times Magazine*, among others, and he is a regular columnist for the *Times*' acclaimed Civil War series, "Disunion." He lives in Washington, D.C., and on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where he is director of Washington College's C. V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience.

Advance praise for *1861*:

“*1861* is the best book I have ever read on the start of the Civil War. Sumter, secession, and Lincoln appear in a wonderfully fresh and illuminating light, supported by a cast of extraordinary players that few Americans know about. Penetrating, eloquent, and deeply moving, this is a classic introduction to the nation’s greatest conflict.”

—Tony Horwitz, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and author of *Confederates in the Attic*

“With boundless verve, Adam Goodheart has sketched an uncommonly rich tableau of America on the cusp of the Civil War. The research is impeccable, the cast of little-known characters we are introduced to is thoroughly fascinating, the book is utterly thought-provoking, and the story is luminescent. What a triumph.”

—Jay Winik, author of *April 1865*

“Combining a master historian’s sure command of original sources and a novelist’s deft touch with character and narrative, Adam Goodheart has produced the young century’s liveliest book about how a generation of remarkable and ordinary Americans alike variously provoked, resisted, and endured the dissolution of their country and the tragic march toward civil war. Major and minor characters, political movements, and whole towns and villages come alive under Goodheart’s expert scrutiny. The result is that rarest of history books: a work of remarkable original scholarship crafted into an irresistible read.”

—Harold Holzer, chairman of The Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation and author of *Lincoln President-Elect*

“Adam Goodheart brings to this book a rare combination of talent: passion and precision as a historian, grace and generosity as a writer. *1861* puts us in the young nation that was about to shed its skin and begin life as something new.”

—Richard Ben Cramer, winner of the Pulitzer Prize

“No one could capture Whitman’s ‘hurrying, crashing, sad, distracted year’ more vividly than Adam Goodheart has done in this magnificent book. *1861* isn’t merely a work of history; it’s a time-travel device that makes a century and a half fall away and sets us down, eyes and ears wide open, right in the midst of the chaos and the glory.”

—Anne Fadiman, author of *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award

1861 is a History Book Club Main Selection and a Military Book Club Main Selection for Spring 2011.

More about the author

Adam Goodheart is a historian, travel essayist, teacher, and critic. He is the author of *1861: The Civil War Awakening*, to be published in April 2011 by Alfred A. Knopf. He is a regular online columnist for the *New York Times* Civil War series, "Disunion."

Mr. Goodheart teaches American studies and history at Washington College, where in 2006 he became director of the C.V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience, a forum for fostering innovative approaches to studying, teaching, and writing about American history and culture.

A 1992 graduate of Harvard, Mr. Goodheart was a founder and senior editor of *Civilization*, the magazine of the Library of Congress, which won the National Magazine Award for General Excellence in its first year of publication. He has been a prolific writer and independent scholar, contributing frequent essays and reviews to such publications as the *New York Times* (where he also served as deputy editor of the Op-Ed page), the *American Scholar* (of which he is a contributing editor and former Editorial Board member), the *Atlantic Monthly*, *National Geographic*, *Preservation*, *Smithsonian*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and other publications. Mr. Goodheart is a contributing editor at *Travel + Leisure*, and his travel writing has appeared in *Outside*, *GQ*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, and other magazines. Among the prizes his work has received are the Lowell Thomas Award of the Society of American Travel Writers (2004) the Henry Lawson Award for Travel Writing (2005), and the A.D. Emmart Award for excellence in the humanities (2007); his essays have appeared in numerous anthologies, including several editions of *The Norton Reader*.

Among other current projects, Mr. Goodheart is director of the American Pictures Distinguished Lecture Series at the Smithsonian Institution, which he founded in 2008. He is co-director of the Poplar Grove Project, which has conserved and archived some 30,000 pages of historic documents dating from the 17th through the 20th centuries, in partnership with the Maryland State Archives. He is a member of the boards of directors of a number of cultural organizations, including the Maryland Humanities Council.

A native of Philadelphia, Mr. Goodheart lives on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and in Washington, D.C.

Selected broadcast media appearances:

CNN, C-SPAN, Fox News, PBS ("American Masters"), National Public Radio ("Morning Edition," "All Things Considered," "On the Media," "Here & Now,"), House & Garden Television, Maryland Public Television, CBS Radio, NBC Radio, CBC Radio, Australian Broadcasting Corp., Wisconsin Public Radio.

Selected public-speaking venues for *1861*:

Smithsonian American Art Museum/National Portrait Gallery, Library of Congress, National Constitution Center, New-York Historical Society, Museum of the City of New York, TimesTalks (*New York Times*), Virginia Historical Society, Maryland Historical Society, Lincoln Forum, Society for History in the Federal Government, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.