



## Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves

By Kirk Savage

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### Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves By Kirk Savage

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.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

*Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves* is a history of race in America as seen through the depiction of slavery in sculptures and monuments. Kirk Savage, an assistant professor of art history at the University of Pittsburgh, shows that blacks were seldom depicted in sculpture until after the Civil War, at which time there was a nationwide impetus to commemorate the end of the war and emancipation. Savage considers these statues and monuments to be a lost opportunity: instead of representing a new sense of race in America, the statues featured old stereotypes, the "kneeling slaves" of the title. Far more common were statues featuring ordinary soldiers. The great irony, Savage argues in this thought-provoking book, is that black soldiers--who "were most clearly representative of a national purpose," the fight for equality--were seldom represented in celebratory monuments.

#### From Library Journal

Boldly investigating the meaning of race, the experience of war, and the function of the public monument, Savage (history of art and architecture, Univ. of Pittsburgh) probes the landscape of collective memory on which the art forms of commemoration in the public sphere depicted the shift from slavery to freedom in post-Civil War America, the greatest era of U.S. monument building. The author brilliantly illuminates the cultural and artistic problems in the representational battleground of public space as groups competed to construct history in the language of sculpture. His astute observations reveal not only the theoretical foundation of racism embedded in sculpture but the importance of the aesthetic dimension of racial theory. This tour de force is for any serious collection on U.S. history, art, architecture, or race relations. Highly recommended. ?Thomas J. Davis, Arizona State Univ., Tempe  
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#### Review

### 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*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Ruth McMillian:**

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important take action, like looking for your favorite reserve and reading a reserve. Beside you can solve your long lasting problem; you can add your knowledge by the guide entitled *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*. Try to the actual book *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves* as your good friend. It means that it can being your friend when you really feel alone and beside regarding course make you smarter than in the past. Yeah, it is very fortunated for you personally. The book makes you much more confidence because you can know anything by the book. So , let's make new experience in addition to knowledge with this book.

#### **Beth Stewart:**

The ability that you get from *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves* may be the more deep you searching the information that hide in the words the more you get considering reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to comprehend but *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves* giving you joy feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in selected way that can be understood simply by anyone who read it because the author of this guide is well-known enough. That book also makes your current vocabulary increase well. So it is easy to understand then can go together with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We suggest you for having this kind of *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves* instantly.

#### **Derrick Minor:**

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**Thomas Lemos:**

That book can make you to feel relax. This book Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves was vibrant and of course has pictures on the website. As we know that book Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves has many kinds or type. Start from kids until teenagers. For example Naruto or Detective Conan you can read and think you are the character on there. So , not at all of book are usually make you bored, any it offers up you feel happy, fun and unwind. Try to choose the best book for you personally and try to like reading that will.

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