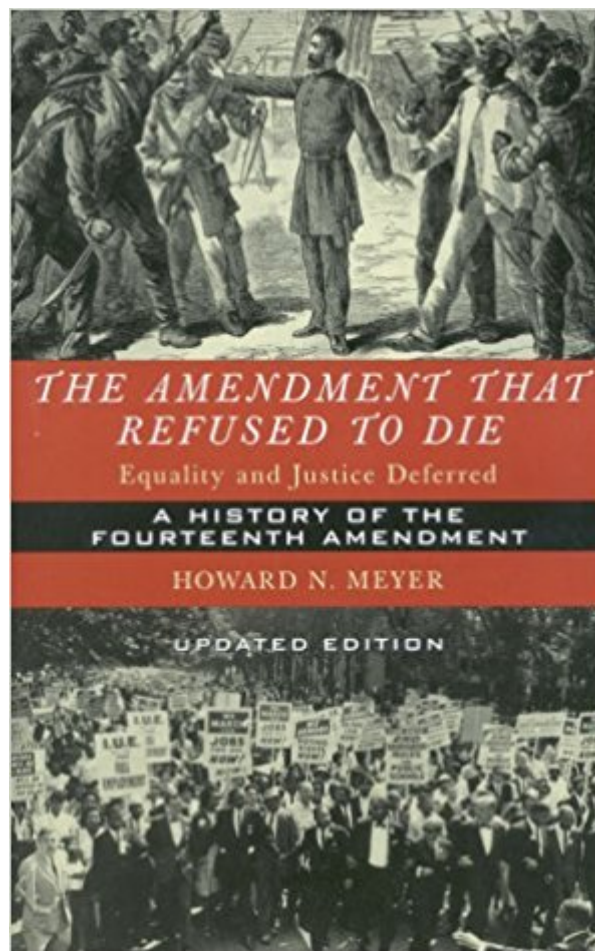




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The Amendment That Refused To Die: Equality And Justice Deferred: The History Of The Fourteenth Amendment



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Synopsis

Relying on both celebrated and little-known cases, this acclaimed chronicle of the Fourteenth Amendment "a constitutional guarantee of equality and freedom and the cornerstone of individual liberty as we know it" traces the amendment's fascinating origins in the aftermath of the Civil War; its near repudiation; violent reactions against it; its revival in the twentieth century; and, in a substantial new afterword, its recent challenges and setbacks. Meyer looks at current attacks against the amendment, which threaten affirmative action, desegregation, voting rights, abortion rights, gay rights, and protection from oppressive measures of the State.

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Customer Reviews

Meyer's book ought to be in every library in the country. Rather it ought to be out of every library, in constant use, by lawyers, judges, laymen, preachers, teachers, students of all ages, by all Americans concerned about the realization and preservation of individual freedoms and their constitutional guarantees. (Dudley T. Cornish *The Midwest Quarterly*) A book about the Fourteenth Amendment that is both lively and scholarly is rare in itself. This book is much more than that. It recaptures lost moments in American history, penetrates the social conflicts behind legal arguments, and does all this with clarity and style. (Howard Zinn, Author of *A People's History of the United States* and Professor Emeritus of Political Science, Boston University)

Howard N. Meyer is an attorney, labor arbitrator, and civil rights historian. In addition to *The Amendment That Refused to Die*, he is the author of a biography of Ulysses S. Grant, *Let Us Have*

Peace, and a biography of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Colonel of the Black Regiment.

If you are a normal person don't let the Forward to this book discourage you. It gets better. Overall this book was an enjoyable read. The first 3/4 of the book was well written, coherent, fair and had easily digestible chapters. It fell apart nearing the end. After reading this book I now understand the intention and implications of this amendment, namely, to apply to the States, the Bill of Rights for all Americans. Before reading this book I had little understanding that many States, both before and after the American Civil War, ignored the Bill of Rights in many areas. I understand better the legal, historical and cultural difficulties in applying this amendment and others. This book focused mainly on rights of black Americans, free speech and law enforcement. If you are a critical reader, you can overlook Mr. Meyer's strong opinions such as his excoriation of Justice Scalia's "we are one race, American". I am encouraged to learn of the perseverance of political minorities such as Thad Stevens, John Bingham, John Marshall and others. I may have found some new "political heroes." I learned more deeply that America always seems to correct her errors in regard to her American Constitutional ideal in law and culture although many times with a "snail's pace" and with many setbacks. I am more encouraged that the dignity of the human person may someday be protected in law, practice and culture as an American Constitutional ideal since it took a long struggle to understand the dignity of the black man, the ideal of free speech, tempered law enforcement and the like. I am disappointed that Mr. Meyer does not recognize a whole class of Americans who do not enjoy constitutional protections of the Bill of Rights, namely the pre-born. Defense of life from conception to natural death and of the family rooted in one man and one woman as the foundation of a healthy society should certainly enjoy the esteem of American Constitutional protections as well as rights of black Americans, free speech and law enforcement and the like.

My history classes glossed over the 14th Amendment. I remember them talking about the 13th and 15th Amendment, but the 14th was neglected. This is unfortunate, as it is the crown jewel of our Constitution. It had the potential--and the intent--to revolutionize America, making us a truly egalitarian society that took seriously the words of our Declaration of Independence: "All men are created equal." Unfortunately, as this book well documents, it has been stolen from us and most often used, not to protect the powerless from the powerful, but to protect the powerful who don't need protection. The Supreme Court, including The Five who now control the Court, has been a major force in twisting and mutilating this amendment to make the corporate elites more

powerful. This great book provides a tool to educate people about how America has lost its way, and how to get back on track.

Now in an updated and revised edition, Howard Meyer's *The Amendment That Refused To Die: Equality And Justice Deferred* is the fascinating and documented history of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. The 14th Amendment guarantees equality and freedom for U.S. citizens, and Meyer traces the amendment's origins in the aftermath of the Civil War; its near repudiation; violent reactions against it; and its revival in the 20th century. Very highly recommended for American political science students and Constitutional studies reading lists, *The Amendment That Refused To Die* surveys current attacks against the amendment in ways that threaten 14th Amendment based affirmative action, desegregation, voting rights, abortion rights, gay rights, and protection from oppressive measures of the State legislation.

I must confess I have not read through the entirety of *The Amendment That Refused To Die*, but I think recent events have made crystal clear to all the importance of the Supreme Court and its evolving use (and misuse) of the Fourteenth Amendment. This book was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize when it was first published and it has been updated to preserve its relevance.

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