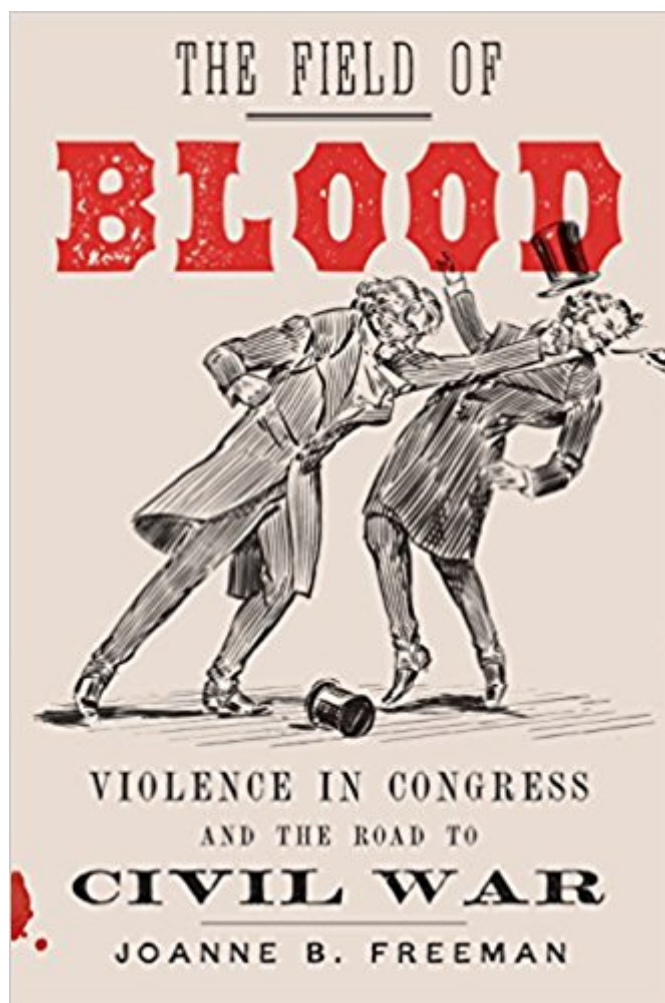


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The Field Of Blood: Violence In Congress And The Road To Civil War



Synopsis

The previously untold story of the violence in Congress that helped spark the Civil War. In *The Field of Blood*, Joanne Freeman recovers the long-lost story of physical violence on the floor of the U.S. Congress. Drawing on an extraordinary range of sources, Freeman shows that the Capitol was rife with conflict in the decades before the Civil War. Legislative sessions often were punctuated with mortal threats, canings, flipped desks, and all-out slugfests. When debate broke down, congressmen drew pistols and waved Bowie knives. One representative even killed another in a duel. Many were beaten and bullied in an attempt to intimidate them into compliance, particularly on the issue of slavery. These fights didn't happen in a vacuum. Freeman's dramatic accounts of brawls and thrashings tell a larger story of how fisticuffs and journalism, and the powerful emotions they elicited, raised tensions between North and South and led toward war. In the process, she brings the antebellum Congress to life, revealing its rough realities—the feel, sense, and sound of it—as well as its nation-shaping import. Funny, tragic, and rivetingly told, *The Field of Blood* offers a front-row view of congressional mayhem, and sheds new light on the careers of John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, and other luminaries, as well as introducing a host of lesser-known but no less fascinating men. The result is a fresh understanding of the workings of American democracy and the bonds of Union on the eve of their greatest peril.

Book Information

Hardcover: 384 pages

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (April 10, 2018)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0374154775

ISBN-13: 978-0374154776

Shipping Weight: 1.7 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

Joanne B. Freeman, a professor of history and American studies at Yale University, is a leading authority on early national politics and political culture. Author of the award-winning *Affairs of Honor*:

National Politics in the New Republic and editor of The Essential Hamilton and Alexander Hamilton: Writings, she is a cohost of the popular history podcast BackStory.

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