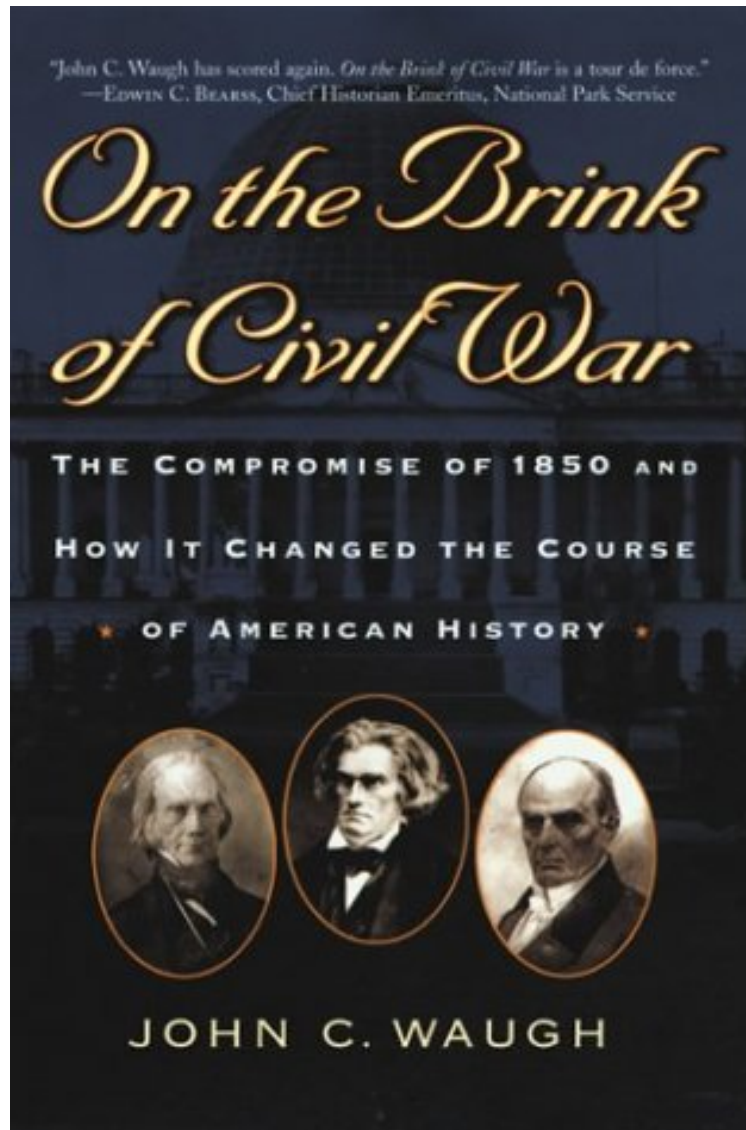


(Ebook free) On the Brink of Civil War: The Compromise of 1850 and How It Changed the Course of American History (The American Crisis Series: Books on the Civil War Era)

On the Brink of Civil War: The Compromise of 1850 and How It Changed the Course of American History (The American Crisis Series: Books on the Civil War Era)

John C. Waugh

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John C. Waugh : On the Brink of Civil War: The Compromise of 1850 and How It Changed the Course of American History (The American Crisis Series: Books on the Civil War Era) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On the Brink of Civil War: The Compromise of 1850

and How It Changed the Course of American History (The American Crisis Series: Books on the Civil War Era):

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Years before the Civil War began, another dark conflict threatened to shatter the Union. It was December 1849. The U.S.-Mexican War had just ended, doubling the size of the country. A grave problem emerged: whether slavery should be admitted into the new territories that were to be carved out of the vast new domain resulting from the war. This dilemma strained the relationship between the slave-holding South and the antislavery North. Other issues loomed as well: where to draw the Texas boundary line with the New Mexico territory, how to settle the Texas debt claims, and what to do about the problem of fugitive slaves escaping to the North and the slavetrade in the District of Columbia. The nation was on the brink of secession, dissolution, and civil war. *On the Brink of Civil War* tells the dramatic story of what happened when a handful of senators-towering figures in nineteenth-century American history-trying to hammer out a compromise to save the Union. The characters in this critical political drama included Henry Clay, seasoned politician and statesman known as the "Great Pacificator," who formulated an agreement in the Senate and would fight to get it through Congress; the gifted orator Daniel Webster, who helped Clay in his efforts by delivering the "Seventh of March" compromise speech on the Senate floor, one of the most memorable speeches in American history; and John C. Calhoun, a fervent defender of slavery and the South who, though nearing death, spoke to the Senate and demanded equal rights for the South in the new Western territories. Four young senators stepped into the fray to play their own unique, important roles: Henry Seward, the Whig from New York who many say controlled President Zachary Taylor and who opposed compromise; Stephen A. Douglas, the dynamic "Little Giant" from Illinois who favored agreement; Salmon P. Chase, the voice of the Free-Soilers and foe of compromise and concessions to the South; and Jefferson Davis, Mexican War hero and second only to Calhoun as the V

From Publishers WeeklyA byzantine legislative package arising out of the squabble between North and South over the spoils of the Mexican War, the Compromise of 1850 admitted California as a free state, referred the explosive issue of slavery in the former Mexican territories to an ill-defined formula of "popular sovereignty," and instituted a harsh and bitterly divisive Fugitive Slave Law. Intended to settle sectional strife, the Compromise unraveled during the subsequent decade; it served mainly to map the fault lines that would split the country in the Civil War. The crisis receives an engaging exposition in this colorful study, part of the American Crisis Series focusing on the Civil War era. Journalist and historian Waugh (*Reelecting Lincoln: The Battle for the 1864 Presidency*) gives a lucid account of the interminable Congressional wrangling between Northern abolitionists, Southern secessionists and uneasy moderates of both sections, which grew so intense that at one point pistols were drawn on the Senate floor. He concentrates on the personalities and rhetoric of the main legislative protagonists, especially Henry Clay, John Calhoun and Daniel Webster, the Senatorial orators who dominated the nation's politics in the first half of the century by patching together one legislative fix after another to paper over the widening sectional divide. Waugh's book is something of an elegy to, and a subtle condemnation of, the era of patriotic compromise embodied by this "great trio," whose sonorous reverence for the Union and the Constitution proved so unequal to the moral issues posed by slavery. Photos. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. John C. Waugh has scored again. *On the Brink of Civil War* is a tour de force and must reading if we are to comprehend why in 1850 the nation's political leadership succeeded only to fail when next challenged. (Edwin C. Bearss, Chief Historian Emeritus of the National Park Service)After the Mexican War, the United States came close to civil war. The process through which compromise prevailed is dramatically recounted by John C. Waugh, an experienced twentieth-century journalist now turning his attention and talents to past crises. Combining skillful reporting, careful research, and an instinct for the colorful, Waugh analyzes the statesmanship the nation would lack a decade later. (John Y. Simon, professor of history, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale)Jack Waugh has written the best book on the Compromise of 1850. Waugh, in a graceful, journalistic way, examines the views of each major figure and some minor figures. The great statesmen of the nation speak for the causes of the sections, and, with no compromise being popular, they nevertheless manage to prolong the peace for a decade. It is a marvelously written account; you'll root for the one side and then the other? a great read. (Grady McWhiney, Texas Christian University)Waugh has produced a splendid and quite readable volume. (History Teacher)A lucid, comprehensive, and wonderfully readable account of the crisis that could have resulted in the dissolution of the Union in 1850. (Keith Poulter, Publisher, North South magazine)About the AuthorJohn C. Waugh was a staff correspondent and bureau chief of *The Christian Science Monitor*. He is author of six books on the Civil War era, and served on the senior staffs of two national politicians, Nelson Rockefeller of New York and Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico.