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(Dr. Jillian Champlin IV)

DREAMS OF A MORE PERFECT UNION (PAPERBACK)



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Cornell University Press, United States, 2005. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. In a brilliantly conceived and elegantly written book, Rogan Kersh investigates the idea of national union in the United States. For much of the period between the colonial era and the late nineteenth century, he shows, union was the principal rhetorical means by which Americans expressed shared ideals and a common identity without invoking strong nationalism or centralized governance. Through his exploration of how Americans once succeeded in uniting a diverse and fragmented citizenry, Kersh revives a long-forgotten source of U.S. national identity. Why and how did Americans perceive themselves as one people from the early history of the republic? How did African Americans and others at the margins of U.S. civic culture apply this concept of union? Why did the term disappear from vernacular after the 1880s? In his search for answers, Kersh employs a wide range of methods, including political-theory analysis of writings by James Madison, Frederick Douglass, and Abraham Lincoln and empirical analysis drawing on his own extensive database of American newspapers. The author's findings are persuasive--and often surprising. One intriguing development, for instance, was a strong resurgence of union feelings among Southerners--including prominent former secessionists--after the Civil War. With its fascinating and novel approach, *Dreams of a More Perfect Union* offers valuable insights about American political history, especially the rise of nationalism and federalism. Equally important, the author's close retracing of the religious, institutional, and other themes coloring the development of unionist thought unveils new knowledge about the origination and transmittal of ideas in a polity.

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