



The Great Melding: War, the Dixiecrat Rebellion, and the Southern Model for America's New Conservatism (Modern South)

Glenn Feldman

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Audacious in its scope, subtle in its analysis, and persuasive in its arguments, *The Great Melding* is the second book in Glenn Feldman's magisterial recounting of the South's transformation from a Reconstruction-era citadel of Democratic Party inertia to a cauldron of GOP agitation. In this pioneering study, Feldman shows how the transitional years after World War II, the Dixiecrat episode, and the early 1950s formed a pivotal sequence of events that altered America's political landscape in profound, fundamental, and unexpected ways.

Feldman's landmark work *The Irony of the Solid South* dismantled the myth of the New Deal consensus, proving it to be only a fleeting alliance of fissiparous factions; *The Great Melding* further examines how the South broke away from that consensus. Exploring issues of race and white supremacy, Feldman documents and explains the roles of economics, religion, and emotive appeals to patriotism in southern voting patterns. His probing and original analysis includes a discussion of the limits of southern liberalism and a fresh examination of the Dixiecrat Revolt of 1948.

Feldman convincingly argues that the Dixiecrats—often dismissed as a transitory footnote in American politics—served as a template for the modern conservative movement. Now a predictable Republican stronghold, Alabama at the time was viewed by national political strategists as a battleground and bellwether. Masterfully synthesizing a vast range of sources, Feldman shows that Alabama was then one of the few states where voters made unpredictable choices between the competing ideologies of the Democrats, Republicans, and Dixiecrats.

Writing in his lively and provocative style, Feldman demonstrates that the events he recounts in Alabama between 1942 and Dwight Eisenhower's 1952 election encapsulate a rare moment of fluidity in American politics, one in which the New Deal consensus shattered and the Democratic and Republican parties fought off a third-party revolt only to find themselves irrevocably altered by their success. *The Great Melding* will fascinate historians, political scientists, political strategists, and readers of political nonfiction.

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