



# Zeb Vance: North Carolina's Civil War Governor and Gilded Age Political Leader

*Gordon B. McKinney*

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In this comprehensive biography of the man who led North Carolina through the Civil War and, as a U.S. senator from 1878 to 1894, served as the state's leading spokesman, Gordon McKinney presents Zebulon Baird Vance (1830-94) as a far more complex figure than has been previously recognized.

Vance campaigned to keep North Carolina in the Union, but after Southern troops fired on Fort Sumter, he joined the army and rose to the rank of colonel. He was viewed as a champion of individual rights and enjoyed great popularity among voters. But McKinney demonstrates that Vance was not as progressive as earlier biographers suggest. Vance was a tireless advocate for white North Carolinians in the Reconstruction Period, and his policies and positions often favored the rich and powerful.

McKinney provides significant new information about Vance's third governorship, his senatorial career, and his role in the origins of the modern Democratic Party in North Carolina. This new biography offers the fullest, most complete understanding yet of a legendary North Carolina leader.

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