



# Diary of a Christian Soldier: Rufus Kinsley and the Civil War

*David C. Rankin*

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## **Diary of a Christian Soldier: Rufus Kinsley and the Civil War** David C. Rankin

Rufus Kinsley was a farmer from rural Vermont who became an officer in one of the nation's first and most famous black regiments during the Civil War. *Diary of a Christian Soldier* offers a meticulous reconstruction of Kinsley's life and an annotated transcription of his hitherto unpublished wartime diary, which sheds light on a long neglected theater of the war—the battle for the bayou country of southwestern Louisiana—and illuminates the workaday routines of black and white soldiers stationed behind Union lines. Kinsley's diary reveals that he was a dedicated evangelical abolitionist soldier who believed that the war and its consequences were divine retribution for the sin of slavery and that he believed that the Civil War was not actually about saving the Union, but about freeing slaves. David Rankin's biography places Kinsley's Civil War experience in the context of his life and times. David C. Rankin, who has received fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies and the Charles Warren Center at Harvard University, has written extensively on slavery, the South, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. His articles have appeared in the *Journal of Southern History*, *Perspectives in American History*, and other publications; he is also the editor of *My Passage at the New Orleans "Tribune": A Memoir of the Civil War Era* (Louisiana State University, 2001).

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