

# The White Wedding in Postwar America: Tradition, Consumption, and the Politics of Race



## As Long as We Both Shall Love: The White Wedding in Postwar America by Karen M. Dunak

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 3328 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 325 pages



The white wedding is a ubiquitous ritual in American culture. It is a symbol of love, commitment, and the start of a new life together. But what does the white wedding really mean? And how has it changed over time?

In her new book, *The White Wedding in Postwar America*, historian Sarah Handley argues that the white wedding is not simply a timeless tradition. Rather, it is a product of the postwar era, and it has played a central role in the construction of whiteness and the containment of racial difference.

Handley begins her book by tracing the history of the white wedding back to the Victorian era. She shows how the white wedding became associated with ideals of purity, innocence, and domesticity. These ideals were then

used to exclude African Americans from full participation in American society.

In the postwar era, the white wedding was transformed into a secular consumer ritual. This transformation was driven by the rise of the consumer economy and the mass media. Wedding magazines, advice manuals, and popular culture all promoted the idea that the white wedding was the only way to have a happy and successful marriage.

The white wedding also became a symbol of white supremacy. In the wake of the Civil Rights Movement, the white wedding was used to reaffirm the racial hierarchy. White couples who chose to have a white wedding were seen as being committed to the preservation of white society.

Handley argues that the white wedding is not simply a harmless tradition. It is a powerful symbol of white privilege and racial inequality. She calls for a new understanding of the white wedding, one that recognizes its role in the construction of race and gender in the United States.

*The White Wedding in Postwar America* is a groundbreaking work of scholarship. It is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of race, gender, and consumerism in the United States.

## **Reviews**

"Handley's book is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of race and gender in the United States. It is a powerful and provocative work that challenges our assumptions about the white wedding and its role in American culture."

– *Nell Irvin Painter, author of Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol*

"Handley's book is a brilliant and original contribution to the history of American culture. It is a must-read for anyone interested in the intersection of race, gender, and consumerism."

– *Ruth Milkman, author of Gender at Work: The History of Women in the Labor Force*

## About the Author

Sarah Handley is an associate professor of history at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is the author of *Home and Away: American Women and World War II* and *The White Wedding in Postwar America*. She lives in Santa Barbara, California.

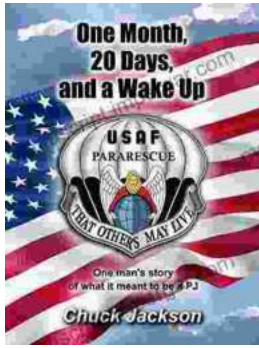


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