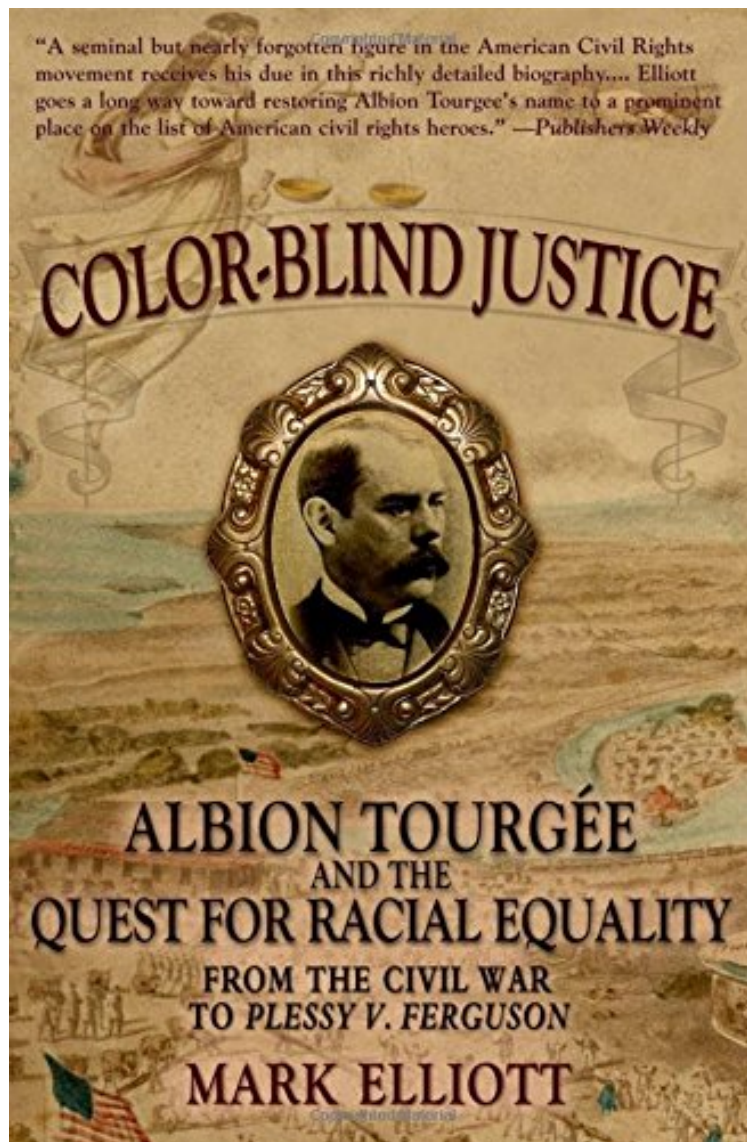


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## Color Blind Justice: Albion Tourge and the Quest for Racial Equality from the Civil War to Plessy v. Ferguson

Mark Elliott

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Highly RecommendedBy Gloria WolkeI have recommended this book so often that I was surprised to find I did not enter a review here. It is an inspiring story about one of the heroes of the United States, a hero not only because he was greatly advanced for his time, not only because he followed his speeches and his writings with action, but also because the actions he took put his family and himself in great danger. He actually sent his family to safety in the north, so that he could continue the fight. The author does an outstanding job of melding the life and times that influenced Tourgee with quotes from his writings and creating a story that is difficult to put down and unforgettable. Much as I enjoy getting instant books on kindle, I am glad I own the hardcover edition of this book. I consider it one of my prized possessions. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Karol Kucinski great1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Something for todayBy Don GilliamThis book talks about the retreat from reconstruction and the abandonment of civil rights for black people in America after the 1870's. It has lessons for us all in the retreat from the civil rights movement, and abandonment of concern for environment in America after the 1970's. It is not an easy book to get through, but it does illuminate the times.

Civil War officer, Reconstruction "carpetbagger," best-selling novelist, and relentless champion of equal rights--Albion Tourgee battled his entire life for racial justice. Now, in this engaging biography, Mark Elliott offers an insightful portrait of a fearless lawyer, jurist, and writer, who fought for equality long after most Americans had abandoned the ideals of Reconstruction. Elliott provides a fascinating account of Tourgee's life, from his childhood in the Western Reserve region of Ohio (then a hotbed of abolitionism), to his years as a North Carolina judge during Reconstruction, to his memorable role as lead plaintiff's counsel in the landmark Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Tourgee's brief coined the phrase that justice should be "color-blind," and his career was one long campaign to make good on that belief. A redoubtable lawyer and an accomplished jurist, Tourgee's writings represent a mountain of dissent against the prevailing tide of racial oppression. A poignant and inspiring study in courage and conviction, *Color-Blind Justice* offers us an unforgettable portrayal of Albion Tourgee and the principles to which he dedicated his life.

From Publishers WeeklyA seminal but nearly forgotten figure in the American Civil Rights movement receives his due in this richly detailed biography by Elliott, history professor at Warner College. The Ohio-born Tourgee (pronounced Toor-zhay) served in the Union Army during the Civil War, studied law and found his life's calling in North Carolina during Reconstruction. African-Americans and civil rights advocates hailed him as a dedicated champion of the political, legal and economic rights of former slaves, while many southern whites called him a Yankee carpetbagger. Later, Tourgee (1838-1905) produced 15 novels, eight books of nonfiction, and hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles on race and racial injustice. In addition to founding the National Citizen's Rights Association in 1891, he helped write the nation's first antilynching law in Ohio in 1896 and served as lead attorney in the famed *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the first constitutional challenge to segregation argued before the Supreme Court. (Tourgee coined the phrase "color-blind justice" in his Supreme Court brief in that losing effort.) Elliott goes a long way toward restoring Albion Tourgee's name to a prominent place on the list of American civil rights heroes. 20 b/w photos. (Dec.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "In focusing on this largely forgotten activist and artist of Victorian America and his struggles to bring the United States into closer proximity to its ever-elusive ideals, Elliott undertook a task that was more daunting, for his subject pursued wildly different careers as a politician, a lawyer, and a novelist in pursuit of his goals. The author impressively succeeds in integrating these divergent strands into a coherent and illuminating whole."--Michael Thomas Smith, *s in American History* "An excellent biography, by far the best scholarly treatment of this important subject."--Mark S. Weiner, *American Historical* "No one has completed a more thorough, penetrating study of Tourgee and his multiple legacies than Mark Elliott."--Jane Dailey, *Civil War Book* "Elliott's masterful biography...defies easy capsulization...It tells a story of a remarkable and talented man who dedicated much of his life to a noble, yet often lonely, struggle...And it places Tourgee in the context of the momentous events that shaped his life and ideas...[T]his extraordinary biography ends by leaving it to others to judge the meaning of Tourgee's life in our own times. There is little doubt that it can still tell us a great deal about the human condition."--*Raleigh Daily News and Observer* "Mark Elliott...has synthesized a wealth of material and crafted a superb study.... Elliott writes with gusto and is provocative in his analysis. *Color-Blind Justice* is certain to become an invaluable source on Tourgee and on race relations in the United States during the second half of the 19th century."--*Richmond Times Dispatch* "A seminal but nearly forgotten figure in the American Civil Rights movement receives his due in this richly detailed biography...Elliott goes a long way toward restoring Albion Tourgee's name to a prominent place on the list of American civil rights heroes."--*Publishers Weekly* "Through deep research, great sensitivity to the racial and social contexts of the late nineteenth century, and some eloquent writing, Elliott shows us a Tourgee who truly was a pioneer of the tradition of antiracism in its early years. The work is also an excellent on-the-ground biography of a carpetbagger's experience in Reconstruction North Carolina. Tourgee was a major literary, legal, and political figure and this book finally may bring his story to a larger readership. As a

first book by a young scholar, it is impressive for its mature writing and creative research."--Avery O. Craven Award citation"Elliott's Color-Blind Justice is a fascinating study of a man and his principles against the rapidly changing background of the nineteenth century's second half."--Martin Hardeman, H-Net s"A wonderful biography."--The Journal of Law and History About the AuthorMark Elliott is Associate Professor of History at Wagner College.