



# A Saga of the New South: Race, Law, and Public Debt in Virginia

*Brent Tarter*

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In the lead-up to the Civil War, Virginia, like other southern states, amassed a large public debt while striving to improve transportation infrastructure and stimulate economic development. *A Saga of the New South* delves into the largely untold story of the decades-long postwar controversies over the repayment of that debt. The result is a major reinterpretation of late-nineteenth-century Virginia political history.

The post–Civil War public debt controversy in Virginia reshaped the state’s political landscape twice. First it created the conditions under which the Readjuster Party, a biracial coalition of radical reformers, seized control of the state government in 1879 and successfully refinanced the debt; then it gave rise to a counterrevolution that led the elitist Democratic Party to eighty years of dominance in the state’s politics. Despite the Readjusters’ victory in refinancing the debt and their increased spending for the popular new system of free public schools, the debt controversy generated a long train of legal disputes—at least eighty-five cases reached the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, and twenty-nine reached the Supreme Court of the United States. Through an in-depth look at these political and legal contests, *A Saga of the New South* sheds new light on the many obstacles that reformers faced in Virginia and the South after the Civil War.



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#### **Belia Gillespie:**

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to perform! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their particular friends. Usually they undertaking activity like watching television, planning to beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Would you like to something different to fill your personal free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book is usually option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing you will ask may be what kinds of reserve that you should read. If you want to try look for book, may be the publication untitled A Saga of the New South: Race, Law, and Public Debt in Virginia can be great book to read. May be it may be best activity to you.

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