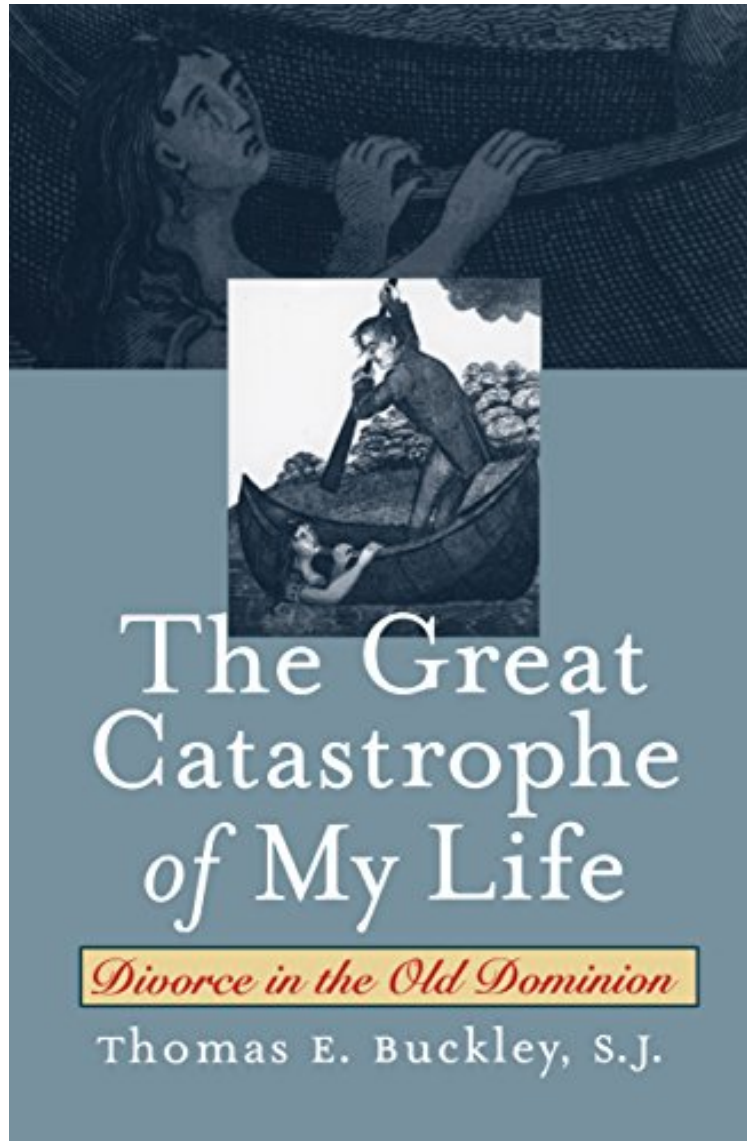


(Mobile pdf) The Great Catastrophe of My Life: Divorce in the Old Dominion

The Great Catastrophe of My Life: Divorce in the Old Dominion

Thomas E. Buckley

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Thomas E. Buckley : The Great Catastrophe of My Life: Divorce in the Old Dominion before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Great Catastrophe of My Life: Divorce in the Old Dominion:

From the end of the Revolution until 1851, the Virginia legislature granted most divorces in the state. It granted

divorces rarely, however, turning down two-thirds of those who petitioned for them. Men and women who sought release from unhappy marriages faced a harsh legal system buttressed by the political, religious, and communal cultures of southern life. Through the lens of this hostile environment, Thomas Buckley explores with sympathy the lives and legal struggles of those who challenged it. Based on research in almost 500 divorce files, *The Great Catastrophe of My Life* involves a wide cross-section of Virginians. Their stories expose southern attitudes and practices involving a spectrum of issues from marriage and family life to gender relations, interracial sex, adultery, desertion, and domestic violence. Although the oppressive legal regime these husbands and wives battled has passed away, the emotions behind their efforts to dissolve the bonds of marriage still resonate strongly.

"In the process of teaching us everything there is to know about divorce in antebellum Virginia, Thomas Buckley tells some remarkable stories, and he tells them well. (Jan Lewis, Rutgers University at Newark)" Buckley has written a book in which there is something for almost everyone. Those interested in gender, religion, social structures and relationships, cultural values, racial issues, and political and economic considerations during the period from the American Revolution to the Civil War will find this book helpful. . . . Buckley has certainly illustrated the trauma associated with divorce as well as provided useful data and perspectives that ought to stimulate further contemplation and understanding of southern societies.--*H-SouthWill* have obvious appeal to specialists, complementing the studies of law, marriage and gender. . . . General readers and undergraduates will find this a useful introduction into early nineteenth-century history.--*American Catholic Studies* Expose[s] southern attitudes and practices involving a spectrum of issues from marriage and family life to gender relations, interracial sex, adultery, desertion, and domestic violence.--*American Catholic Studies Newsletter* This book not only delineates clearly the complex process by which Virginians sought to end their marriages legally, but it also brings our attention to a substantial body of previously ignored evidence that sheds light on the workings of southern households. . . . Offers richly detailed narratives of the intimate lives of Virginians and makes for compelling reading.--*Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* This is a book that both fills an important gap in our historical knowledge and provides evocative tales of human heartbreak that still resonate.--*William and Mary Quarterly* Buckley is an artful storyteller. . . . It is from well-written books such as this one that we will begin to grasp the cultural factors that made family law in the North and the South so different.--*Journal of American History* A fine book, thoroughly researched and deftly written.--*Catholic Historical* *The Great Catastrophe of My Life* is a superb state study that enriches enormously our understanding not only of the texture of married life and divorce among white Virginians, but also of their interactions with and influence upon state policy. . . . Buckley [has a] talent for capturing . . . legal history in local communities.--*Law and History* A rare glimpse behind the curtain of Victorian propriety. . . . Admirable. . . . A model monograph. It ably frames and elucidates its subject [and] pushes its argument with refreshing modesty.--*Journal of Social History* In the process of teaching us everything there is to know about divorce in antebellum Virginia, Thomas Buckley tells some remarkable stories, and he tells them well. Historians of the South and of family, gender, and social life will value this book for the marvelous insights it gives us into the lives of ordinary men and women, their families, and their communities.--*Jan Lewis, Rutgers University at Newark* Buckley produces one of the most detailed views to date of antebellum southern families under stress.--*American Historical* Fascinating firsthand accounts of people's lives, cutting across boundaries of gender, race, and class. . . . This is the book for those interested in the religious, social, and legal history of antebellum Virginia. Here is a clear explanation of legislative divorce in the Commonwealth, woven together with a description of religious culture, peppered with well-told stories about ordinary Virginians, their families, and their communities.--*Richmond Times-Dispatch* About the Author Thomas E. Buckley, S.J., is professor of American religious history at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley and a member of the doctoral faculty at the Graduate Theological Union. He is editor of *If You Love That Lady Don't Marry Her: The Courtship Letters of Sally McDowell and John Miller, 1854-1856*.