Savage's lively and intelligent analysis traces the refocusing of the monuments themselves, from that of a single man, often on horseback, to commemorations of common soldiers or citizens; and from monuments that celebrate victory and heroism to memorials honoring victims. Typically it holds no relic or spiritual trace of a past presence. The site of the Lincoln Memorial, for instance, did not even exist in Lincoln's lifetime; it sits quite literally on mud dredged from the Potomac River bottom in the late nineteenth century by the Army Corps of Engineers. The memorial itself contains no actual relics of Lincoln. To write a history of the memorial landscape is to subvert it, to watch it emerge from the fog of "identity" and into the sharper light of human affairs.