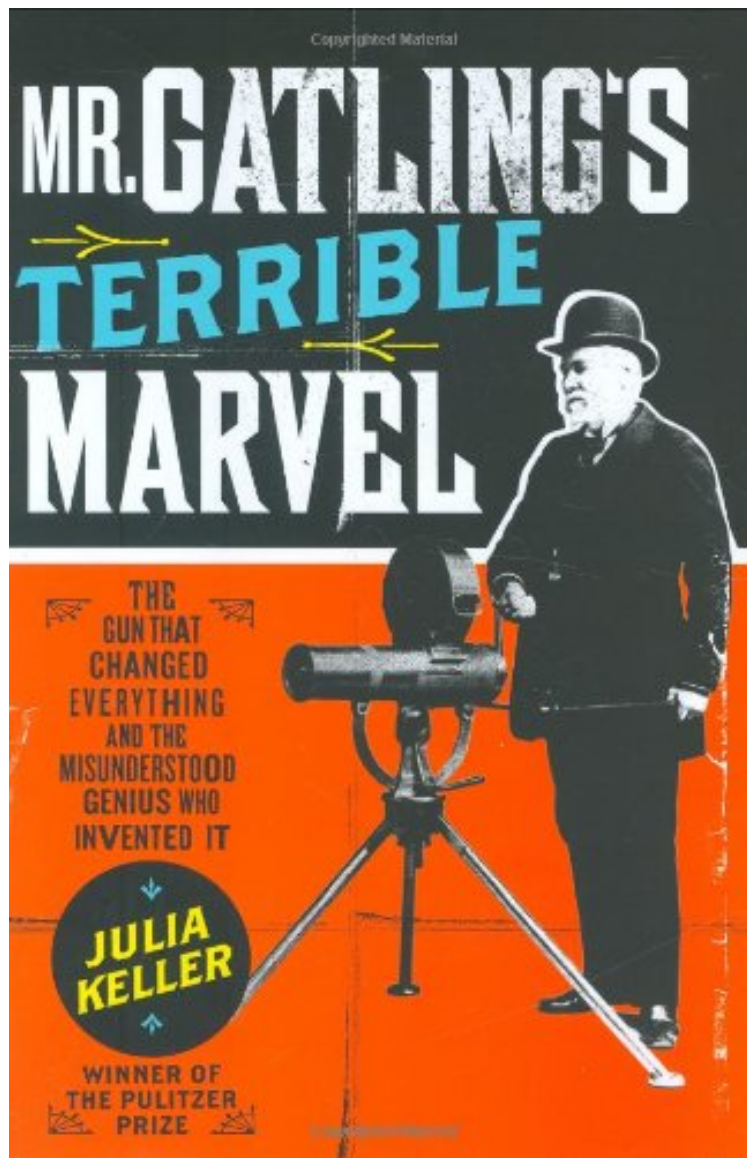


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Mr. Gatling's Terrible Marvel: The Gun That Changed Everything and the Misunderstood Genius Who Invented It

Julia Keller

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Julia Keller : Mr. Gatling's Terrible Marvel: The Gun That Changed Everything and the Misunderstood Genius Who Invented It before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mr. Gatling's Terrible Marvel: The Gun That Changed Everything and the Misunderstood Genius Who Invented It:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good for basic introduction to subject
By Charles Schenfeld
Plodding recounting of the Gatling story. Neither comprehensive historically nor technically detailed. Good for basic introduction to subject.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three Stars
By Lonnie W. Morris Jr.
get at library
4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. I really wanted to like this book
By Adam Kalle
I bought the book thinking I was going to get a history of the Gatling Gun. Sadly the book was about the US patent office in antebellum America and other sundry topics. No technical specification of any of the many versions of the Gatling Gun that were produced were in the book. There were no discussions of the gun's employments in battles. The author spent the first 2/3rds of the book and mentioned Gatling perhaps 4 times and the gun not at all. The book should be entitled "a rambling walk through the patent office with brief digressions on the Gatling Gun" Very disappointing.

Soon after its debut at the time of the Civil War, the Gatling gun changed the nature of warfare and the course of world history. Discharging 200 shots per minute with alarming accuracy, the world's first machine gun became vitally important to protecting and expanding America's overseas interests. Its inventor, Richard Gatling, was famous in his own time for creating and improving many industrial designs, from bicycles and steamship propellers to flush toilets, though it was the gun design that would make his name immortal. A man of great business and scientific acumen, Gatling used all the resources of the new mass age to promote sales across America and around the world. Ironically, Gatling actually proposed his gun as a way of saving lives, thinking it would decrease the size of armies and, therefore, make it easier to supply soldiers and reduce malnutrition deaths. The scientists who unleashed America's atomic arsenal less than a century later would see it much the same way.

From Publishers Weekly
Keller, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, analyzes the nexus between invention and culture in this incisive and instructive cultural history cum biography. Her subject is the iconic Gatling gun, the first successful machine gun, and its inventor, Richard Jordan Gatling, a 19th-century tinkerer and entrepreneur. A gifted amateur inventor, he registered his first patent—for a mechanical seed planter—in 1844 and had 43 lifetime patents. In 1862, with the Civil War raging, Gatling invented a six-barrel, rapid-firing (200 rounds per minute) gun based on his seed planter. Initially rejected by the Union army, the gun finally came into use in 1866 as a bully and enforcer against striking workers and in the Indian Wars; its legacy—the mechanization of death—didn't become fully apparent until the killing fields of WWI. A celebrity in the 19th century, Gatling was soon reviled for his terrible marvel and then consigned to obscurity. Keller rescues Gatling and anchors his remarkable life firmly in the landscape of 19th-century America: a time and place of egalitarian hope and infinite possibility. (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
From Booklist
The Gatling gun, named after Richard Gatling (1818–1903), was a weapon having a cluster of barrels designed to be discharged automatically when rotated about an axis. Keller, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, posits that although the gun is a deadly weapon, its story is not altogether grim. It's also the story of a nation on the rise and of a person whose career was tied to "that creative and economic boom." The author presents as a genius, a man of decency, vision, and ambition who held dozens of patents for a variety of life-enhancing gadgets, including plows, bicycles, flush toilets, and dry-cleaning machines. He also was a man who became rich but lost money through bad breaks and an unwillingness to be anything less than honest in his business dealings. The book includes an eight-page, black-and-white photo insert. In thorough detail, Gatling's life and work come to life. --George Cohen "This book is a carnival...bursting with colorful characters, uncanny connections, and contagious enthusiasm." ---Debby Applegate, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Most Famous Man in America*