

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

The Civil War in Film

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Resources

If you can read only one book

| Author | <i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year. |
|---|--|
| Sachsman, David B., S. Kittrell Rushing, and Roy Morris Jr., eds. | <i>Memory and Myth: The Civil War in Fiction and Film from Uncle Tom's Cabin to Cold Mountain</i> . West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2007. |

Books and Articles

| Author | <i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year. |
|---|--|
| Appleby, Joyce, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob | <i>Telling the Truth About History</i> . New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995. |
| Barrett, Jenny | <i>Shooting the Civil War: Cinema, History and American National Identity</i> . New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009. |
| Borchard, Gregory A. and David W. Bulla | <i>Lincoln Mediated: The President and the Press through Nineteenth-Century Media</i> . New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2015. |
| Carnes, Mark C. | <i>Past Imperfect: History According to the Movies</i> . New York: Henry Holt, 1995. |
| Chadwick, Bruce | <i>The Reel Civil War: Mythmaking in American Film</i> . New York: Vintage Books, 2009. |
| Cullen, Jim | <i>The Civil War in Popular Culture: A Reusable Past</i> . Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995. |

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| Eberwein, Robert | <i>The War Film</i> . New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004. |
| Gallagher, Gary W. | <i>Causes Won, Lost, and Forgotten: How Hollywood and Popular Art Shape What We Know About the Civil War</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013. |
| Kinnard, Roy | <i>The Blue and the Gray on the Silver Screen: More Than 80 Years of Civil War Movies</i> . New York: Citadel Press, 1996. |
| Kreiser Jr., Lawrence A. and Randal Allred, eds. | <i>The Civil War in Popular Culture: Memory and Meaning</i> . Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013. |
| Rollins, Peter C., ed. | <i>The Columbia Companion to American History on Film: How the Movies Have Portrayed the American Past</i> . New York: Columbia University Press, 2006. |
| Rollins, Peter C. and John E. O'Connor, eds. | <i>Why We Fought: America's Wars in Film and History</i> . Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008. |
| Sobchack, Vivian | <i>The Persistence of History: Cinema, Television and the Modern Event</i> . New York: Routledge, 1996. |
| Wetta, Frank J. and Martin A. Novelli | <i>The Long Reconstruction: The Post-Civil War South in History, Film, and Memory</i> . New York: Routledge, 2014. |
| Wills, Brian Steel | <i>Gone with the Glory: The Civil War in Cinema</i> . Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2011. |

Organizations

Web Resources

| URL | Name and description |
|---|---|
| https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_films_and_television_shows_about_the_American_Civil_War | List of Films and Television Shows About the American Civil War on Wikipedia. The Wikipedia page includes links with details about each film. |

Other Sources

Scholars

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|-------------------|--|
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Précis

The Civil War is a central focus of American history and American historical scholarship, and yet our image of the time is of Scarlett O’Hara as much as it is of Abraham Lincoln, and the pictures in our heads of Abraham Lincoln come from movies more than history books. The essence of great fiction may be its essential truth. *The Red Badge of Courage* is a meaningful, truthful picture of the Civil War. But are we equally well served by best-selling fictions, from *Gone With the Wind* to *Cold Mountain*? And can we put any trust at all in the stories and pictures of the Civil War provided by movies and television? Sometimes the answer is yes—as in the scene in *Gone With the Wind* where wounded Confederate soldiers lie on the ground at the Atlanta railroad depot waiting for medical attention. Also meaningful is the depiction in *Glory* (1989) of the African-American troops of the 54th Regiment of the Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry at the Battle of Fort Wagner, in which the sounds and scenes of war are harrowingly reenacted. Sometimes the answer is no. The final scenes of *The Birth of a Nation* depict the righteous Klan defeating the cowardly Union troops, who are African American. The Klan is seen riding to regain control of the town and to save Elsie (played by Lillian Gish) from being forced to marry Silas Lynch, and also to save the Camerons, who are being attacked by Lynch’s militia. Victorious, the clansmen parade in the streets as people wave and cheer from their windows. The list of Civil War movies, television miniseries, and documentaries that have been remembered through the years and which form our collective memory about the Civil War period include: *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), *The General* (1927), *Gone With the Wind* (1939), *They Died With Their Boots On* (1941), *The Red Badge of Courage* (1951), *Friendly Persuasion* (1956), *The Horse Soldiers* (1959), *How the West Was Won* (1962), *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966), *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976), *Roots* (1977), *The Blue and the Gray* (1982), *North and South* (1985, 1986, 1994), *Glory* (1989), *The Civil War* (1990), *Gettysburg* (1993), *Ride with the Devil* (1999), *Gangs of New York* (2002), *Cold Mountain* (2003), and *Lincoln* (2012). All in all, these movies and many others, taken together, for the last one hundred years, have provided each and every generation of Americans with the pictures in our heads—our collective memory—of the Civil War, and these views have affected the American experience from then until now.
