

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

Civil War Memory

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Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Janney, Caroline E.	<i>Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and The Limits of Reconciliation</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016.

Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year. “Title,” in <i>Journal</i> ##, no. # (Date): #.
Blight, David W.	<i>Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory</i> . Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (Belnap), 2001.
_____.	<i>American Oracle: The Civil War in the Civil Rights Era</i> . Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011.
Cox, Karen L.	<i>Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture</i> . Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003.
Foster, Gaines M.	<i>Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
Gallagher, Gary W.	<i>Lee and His Generals in War and Memory</i> . Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998.

_____.	<i>Causes Won, Lost, & Forgotten: How Hollywood and Popular Art Shape What We Know About the Civil War.</i> Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.
Gannon, Barbara A.	<i>The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic.</i> Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.
_____.	<i>Americans Remember their Civil War.</i> New York: Bloomsbury, 2017.
Green, Hilary N.	<i>Unforgettable Sacrifice: How Black Communities Remembered the Civil War.</i> New York: Fordham University Press, 2025.
Green, Hilary N. and Andrew L. Slap, eds.	<i>The Civil War and the Summer of 2020.</i> New York: Fordham University Press, 2024.
Janney, Caroline E.	<i>Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause.</i> Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.

Organizations

Web Resources

URL	Name and description
https://kevinmlevin.substack.com/	Civil War Memory is the premier website and blog on Civil War Memory by Kevin Levin .

Other Sources

Scholars

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Barbara A. Gannon	Barbara.gannon@ucf.edu
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Karen L. Cox	Professor Emerita of History at the University of North Carolina at Charlottekcox@uncc.edu
Hillary N. Green	James B. Duke, Professor of Africana Studies, higreen@davidson.edu
Caroline E. Janney	John L. Nau III Professor of the American Civil War, University of Virginia, cej4b@virginia.edu

Topic Précis

Civil War Memory has been contested since the guns fell silent in 1865, partly because issues related to race still shape American life. In this sense, Memory is not how individuals remember but how people who lived through certain events agree to remember collectively. When those with a lived experience of events pass in Memory, the next generation selects a Collective Memory that serves their contemporary needs. This process begins with individual memory; not surprisingly, each side, the United States and the Confederacy remember the war differently. On one side, the Lost Cause, or Confederate Memory, ironically, the Confederates who lost the war won the battle of Memory. White Southerners constructed a Memory far from reality when they rejected the notion that the war was about slavery. Their victory rested on the white resistance to the ongoing struggle by African Americans to realize the full civil, political, and economic benefits of emancipation. Loyal Americans, particularly African Americans, who supported the Union, did not stand idly by; they remembered a war in which their generations served and sacrificed to preserve the Union and free the enslaved. Unfortunately, the Lost Cause, as opposed to the Union Cause, served the needs of Americans with no lived memory of the war. Instead, they embraced the Lost Cause, which suited their contemporary needs, including the shared interest of most white Americans in maintaining white supremacy. By the middle of the twentieth century, a small crack occurred in American racial attitudes due to Black Civil Rights activism; however, this led to a backlash that revived the Lost Cause, and the Confederate battle flag flew again on state flags. Much of the Civil War Memory issues in the United States today are related to the politics of race. Surprisingly, the Republican Party, created by Lincoln, embraced the Lost Cause. In contrast, the Democratic Party, which had rejected many of his emancipation policies during the war, embraced the Union Cause and its legacy.
