

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

Sectionalism

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Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	"Title," in <i>Journal</i> ##, no. # (Date): #.
McPherson, James M.	"Antebellum Southern Exceptionalism: A New Look at an Old Question," in <i>Civil War History</i> 29, no. 3 (1983): 230-44.

Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year. "Title," in <i>Journal</i> ##, no. # (Date): #.
Ayers, Edward L.	<i>In the Presence of Mine Enemies: War in the Heart of America, 1859-1863</i> . New York: W.W. Norton, 2003.
Baptist, Edward E.	<i>The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism</i> . New York: Basic Books, 2016.
Berlin, Ira	<i>Many Thousands Gone</i> . Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998
Bynum, Victoria E.	<i>The Free State of Jones: Mississippi's Longest Civil War</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016.
Current, Richard Nelson., and David Herbert Donald	<i>Why the North Won the Civil War: Essays by Richard N. Current</i> . New York: Collier Books, 1962.
Davidson, Donald	"Where Regionalism and Sectionalism Meet," in <i>Social Forces</i> 13, no. 1 (1934): 23-31.
Faulkner, William	<i>Absolom, Absolom!</i> . London: Chatto and Windus, 1969.

Foner, Eric	<i>Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877</i> . New York: Harper Perennial, 2014.
Freehling, William W.	<i>The South versus the South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the Civil War</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
Gallagher, Gary W.	<i>The Confederate War: How Popular Will, Nationalism, and Military Strategy Could Not Stave off Defeat</i> . Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.
Hämäläinen, Pekka K.	<i>The Comanche Empire</i> . New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009.
Hammond, John Craig	"Slavery, Sectionalism, and the Constitution of 1787," in <i>Common-place: The Journal of Early American Life</i> 16, no. 4 (Summer 2016).
Harris, J. William	<i>Deep Souths: Delta, Piedmont, and Sea Island Society in the Age of Segregation</i> . Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.
Lepler, Jessica M.	<i>The Many Panics of 1837: People, Politics, and the Creation of a Transatlantic Financial Crisis</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
McCardell, John	<i>The Idea of a Southern Nation: Southern Nationalists and Southern Nationalism, 1830-1860</i> . New York: W.W. Norton, 1979.
McDonald, Forrest, and Eugene D. Genovese	"Debate: Nationalism or Sectionalism?," in <i>OAH Magazine of History</i> 2, no. 4 (1987): 2-3.
McKenzie, Robert Tracy	<i>Lincolmites and Rebels: A Divided Town in the American Civil War</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
Olmsted, Frederick Law	<i>A Journey in the Back Country</i> . New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1907.
Rutherford, Malcolm, Marianne Johnson, and William J. Barber	<i>The Emergence of a National Economy. the United States from Independence to the Civil War: Sectionalism: 1820 to the Civil War</i> . London: Pickering & Chatto, 2004.
Schivelbusch, Wolfgang	<i>The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery</i> . New York: Picador, 2004.

Snay, Mitchell	"Conclusion: Religion, the Origins of Southern Nationalism, and the Coming of the Civil War," in <i>Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South</i> , 211-18. University of North Carolina Press, 1993.
Sokol, Jason	<i>There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975</i> . New York: Vintage Books, 2007.
_____.	<i>All Eyes are Upon Us</i> . New York: Basic Books, 2014.
Taylor, Alan	<i>The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies</i> . New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011.
Turner, Frederick Jackson	"Geographic Sectionalism in American History," in <i>Annals of the Association of American Geographers</i> 16, no. 2 (1926): 85-93.
Woodward, C. Vann	<i>The Burden of Southern History</i> . Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1960.
_____.	<i>The Strange Career of Jim Crow</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Organizations

Web Resources

URL	Name and description
https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Clays_Last_Compromise.htm	"Clay's Last Compromise." U.S. Senate: Senate Stories 1801-1850.

Other Sources

Scholars

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Topic Précis

Sectionalism is the idea that individual communities of people, sharing a set of cultural, economic and geographic realities, create individuated sections and loyalties within a larger polity, and it existed long before and continued long after the Civil War. The most obvious example of sectionalism in the U.S is the contest between the North and the South in the Civil War. But to focus on this ignores “the various geographic provinces of the United States and the regions within them, and exhibiting itself in economic, political, and cultural fields”. In the early days of the Republic, “American society encompassed an assortment of geographically grounded differences that nonetheless pointed toward a national unity: settled, older regions against newer ones; cities against the countryside; capital-lending areas against debtor regions; manufacturing districts against agricultural.” And sectional differences were reflected in the Constitution. The bicameral congress and the 3/5th clause are but two examples of how sectionalism affected the basic structure of government. Nineteenth century sectionalism saw disputes over the War of 1812, unpopular in New England but not elsewhere. A revolution in transportation in the North saw merchants and producers in the north oriented away from Europe and towards North America, while in the South agricultural trade continued to focus on Europe. Westward expansion created a series of sectional crises. The nineteenth century could well be described as the century of sectional compromises: Missouri Compromise (1820); Compromise of 1850; Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854); Crittenden Compromise (1860). As a result of the Civil War the economy of the South largely imploded, the manufacturing and industrial economy of the north boomed both during the war and in the war’s aftermath as it became the nation’s leading supplier of the materials of physical reconstruction. And with the destruction of the system of slavery, much of what made the South exceptional vanished with the last of the plantation system. Southern traditionalists used reconstruction-era racially based violence and oppression of the newly emancipated slave population to preserve their uniqueness. Early twentieth century neo-confederates and southern traditionalists doubled down on racial violence and the re-subjugation of African-Americans living in the South. Today the sectional differences between North and South appear to many, but not to all, somewhat vestigial, or of another age, the rise of urban centers in the South as well as with the industrialization of a once agricultural region having erased much of southern heritage and difference. But the need to preserve Southern distinctiveness is still present as is shown by today’s conflicts over the removal of various Confederate monuments which some consider heritage and others perceive as monuments to a legacy of hate. Regardless of interpretation, such monuments are unified in one aspect. They stand as representations of a time in the U.S. when extreme sectionalism led to a tragic and bloody conflict in which not only the North pitted itself against the South, but Americans killed other Americans over profound sectional differences.
