

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

Copperheads

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Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Weber, Jennifer L.	<i>Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln's Opponents in the North</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Books

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Baker, Jean H.	<i>Affairs of Party: The Political Culture of Northern Democrats in the Mid-Nineteenth Century</i> . Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press. Reprint, New York: Fordham University Press, 1998.
Blair, William A.	<i>With Malice Toward Some: Treason and Loyalty in the Civil War Era</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014.
Churchill, Robert H.	<i>To Shake Their Guns in the Tyrant's Face: Libertarian Political Violence and the Origins of the Militia Movement</i> . Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009.
Klement, Frank L.	<i>The Copperheads of the Middle West</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.
_____.	<i>The Limits of Dissent: Clement L. Vallandigham and the Civil War</i> . Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1970.
_____.	<i>Dark Lanterns: Secret Political Societies, Conspiracies, and Treason Trials in the Civil War</i> . Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984.

Neely, Mark E., Jr.	<i>The Fate of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties.</i> New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
_____.	<i>The Union Divided: Party Conflict in the Civil War North.</i> Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002.
Sandow, Robert M.	<i>Deserter Country: Civil War Opposition in the Pennsylvania Appalachians.</i> New York: Fordham University Press, 2009.
Silbey, Joel H.	<i>A Respectable Minority: The Democratic Party in the Civil War Era, 1860–1868.</i> New York: W.W. Norton, 1977.
Smith, Adam I. P.	<i>No Party Now: Politics in the Civil War North.</i> New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
White, Jonathan W.	<i>Abraham Lincoln and Treason in the Civil War: The Trials of John Merryman.</i> Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011.
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Organizations

Web Resources

Other Sources

Scholars

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Google Keywords

Copperheads, or Peace Democrats, opposed the Civil War because they believed it was unjustified and being waged in an unconstitutional manner. Moreover, they came to believe

that the benefits of winning the war were not worth the cost. For several generations, historians adhered to the Republican view of Peace Democrats—that they were disloyal traitors both to the war effort and the Union itself. Beginning in the Vietnam era, historians began to reevaluate the “disloyalty” of the Democratic Party, pointing out that Democrats adhered to long-standing constitutional and economic positions, and that they had been in some cases illegally suppressed by the Lincoln administration. Several leading political historians came to the conclusion that the Democrats really were a loyal opposition. Recent scholarship has challenged this revisionist view asserting that, while Copperheads were loyal, they actively hampered the Union war effort and that Copperhead secret societies posed a real threat and danger to the Union. Current scholarship is splintered between those who view Copperheads as a loyal opposition and those who view them as a threat to the Union war effort.
