

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

Johnny Reb and His Enduring Legacy

By **Richard G. Williams, Jr.**

Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title. City: Publisher, Year.</i>
Wiley, Bell Irvin	<i>The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy.</i> Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978.

Books and Articles

(A word of caution: There are many personal reminiscences by Confederate veterans and Confederate regimental histories written by veterans after the war, and they vary in quality and accuracy. Included in this bibliography are a selection but by no means an exhaustive list of these books, selected from among those recommended by Bell Wiley in *The Life of Johnny Reb.*)

Author	<i>Title. City: Publisher, Year.</i>
Berkeley, Henry Robinson and William H. Runge, eds.	<i>Four Years in the Confederate Artillery: The Diary of Private Henry Robinson Berkeley.</i> Chapel Hill: Virginia Historical Society/University of North Carolina Press, 1961.
Brown, Maud Morrow	<i>The University Greys: Company A, Eleventh Mississippi Regiment, Army of Northern Virginia, 1861-1865.</i> Richmond, VA: Garrett and Massie, 1940.
Caldwell, J. F. J.	<i>History of a Brigade of South Carolinians, Known First as Gregg's, and Subsequently as McGowan's Brigade.</i> Philadelphia, PA: King & Baird, Printers, 1866.

Casler, J. O.	<i>Four Years in the Stonewall Brigade.</i> Guthrie, OK: State Capital Printers Company, 1893.
Dinkins, James	<i>Personal Recollections and Experiences in the Confederate Army.</i> By an Old Johnnie Cincinnati, OH: Robert Clark Company, 1897.
Farrar, J. R.	<i>Johnny Reb, The Confederate: A Lecture.</i> Richmond, VA: W. A. R. Nye, Book and Job Printer, 1869.
Fletcher, W.A.	<i>Rebel Private Front and Rear.</i> Beaumont, TX: Press of the Greer Print, 1908.
Ford, A. P.	<i>Life in the Confederate Army Being Personal Experiences of a Private Soldier in the Confederate Army.</i> New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1905.
Gilmor, Harry	<i>Four Years in the Saddle.</i> New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1866.
Glatthaar, Joseph T.	<i>General Lee's Army: From Victory to Collapse.</i> New York: Free Press, 2008.
_____.	<i>Soldiering in the Army of Northern Virginia: A Statistical Portrait of the Troops Who Served under Robert E. Lee.</i> Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.
Hunton, Eppa	<i>Autobiography of Eppa Hunton.</i> Richmond, VA: The William Byrd Press, 1933.
Marten, James	<i>Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America.</i> Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.
McCarthy, Carlton	<i>Detailed Minutiae of Soldier Life in the Army of Northern Virginia.</i> Richmond, VA: Carlton McCarthy and Company, 1882.
McKim, Randolph H.	<i>A Soldier's Recollections: Leaves From the Diary of a Young Confederate, With an Oration on the Motives and Aims of the Soldiers of the South.</i> Longmans, Green, and Co., New York, 1910.
McMorries, Edward Young	<i>History of the First Alabama Volunteer Infantry, C.S.A.</i> Montgomery, AL: The Brown Printing Company, 1904.

McPherson, James M.	<i>What They Fought For, 1861-1865</i> . Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994.
_____.	<i>For Cause & Comrades</i> . New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
Mitchell, Reid	<i>Civil War Soldiers</i> . New York: Viking Penguin, 1988.
Mixson, Frank	<i>Reminiscences of a Private</i> . Columbia, SC: The State Company, 1910.
Moore, Edwin A.	<i>The Story of a Cannoneer under Stonewall Jackson</i> . New York and Washington: The Neale Publishing Company, 1907.
Noe, Kenneth W.	<i>Reluctant Rebels: The Confederates Who Joined the Army after 1861</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.
Power, J. Tracy	<i>Lee's Miserables: Life in the Army of Northern Virginia from the Wilderness to Appomattox</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.
Robertson, Jr., James I.	<i>Soldiers Blue and Gray</i> . Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998.
Rosenburg, R. B.	<i>Living Monuments: Confederate Soldiers' Homes in the New South</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993.
Shaver, Lewellyn	<i>History of the Sixtieth Alabama Regiment: Gracie's Alabama Brigade</i> . Montgomery AL: Barrett & Brown, 1867.
Smith, Daniel P.	<i>Company K, First Alabama Regiment or Three Years in The Confederate Service</i> . Prattsville, AL: Published by the Survivors, 1885.
Toney, Marcus B.	<i>The Privations of a Private. The Campaigns under Gen. R.E. Lee; the Campaign under Gen. Stonewall Jackson; Bragg's Invasion of Kentucky; the Chickamauga Campaign; the Wilderness Campaign; Prison Life in the North; the Privations of a Citizen; the Ku-Klux Klan; a United Citizenship</i> . Nashville, TN: Printed for the Author, 1907.
Watkins, Sam R.	<i>"Co Aytch," Maury Grays, First Tennessee Regiment, or a Side Show of the Big Show</i> . Chattanooga, TN: Times Printing Company, 1900.

Wert, Jeffrey D.	<i>A Brotherhood of Valor: The Common Soldiers of the Stonewall Brigade, C.S.A., and the Iron Brigade, U.S.A.</i> New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999.
Williams, David	<i>Johnny Reb's War: Battlefield and Home Front.</i> Abilene, TX: McWhiney Foundation Press, 2000.
Wyeth, John Allen	<i>With Sabre and Scalpel; The Autobiography of a Soldier and Surgeon.</i> New York: Harper & Brothers, 1914.

Organizations

Web Resources

URL	Name and description
https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/civil_war_series/3/sec1.htm	The National Park Service Civil War Series: The Civil War's Common Soldier

Other Sources

Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
<i>The Rebel: The Complete TV Series</i> , 1959-1961.	This TV show is available on DVD, 2015 by Shout Factory Studio.

Scholars

Name	Email
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Topic Précis

Johnny Reb—in popular culture, as well as the serious study of the Civil War—is the symbolic representation of the ordinary Confederate soldier. The name appears to have originated from the practice of Yankees calling out “Hello Johnny” or “Hello Reb”. Johnny Reb has been celebrated in popular culture with songs like “I’m a Good Old Rebel” and “Johnny Reb” as well as in television shows such as *The Rebel* which ran from 1959-1961. These popular culture portrayals helped cement this perspective of the common

Confederate soldier in the psyche of many Americans. It is the same perspective that is often reflected on the courthouse Confederate monuments that dot the Southern landscape to this day. Historian Bell Irvin Wiley brings some clarity to our understanding of Johnny Reb's common traits: "The average Rebel private belonged to no special category. He was in most respects an ordinary person. He came from a middle-class rural society, made up largely of non-slaveholders, and he exemplified both the defects and the virtues of that background. He was lacking in polish, in perspective and in tolerance, but he was respectable, sturdy and independent. He was comparatively young, and more than likely unmarried.... His craving for diversion caused him to turn to gambling and he indulged himself now and then in a bit of swearing. But his tendency to give way to such irregularities was likely curbed by his deep-seated conventionality or by religious revivals." "He had a streak of individuality and irresponsibility that made him a trial to officers during periods of inactivity. But on the battlefield, he rose to supreme heights of soldierhood. He was not immune to panic, nor even cowardice, but few if any soldiers have had more than he of élan, of determination, of perseverance, and of the sheer courage which it takes to stand in the face of withering fire. He was far from perfect, but his achievement against great odds in scores of desperate battles through four years of war is an irrefutable evidence of his powers and an eternal monument to his greatness as a fighting man." When Johnny Reb returned from the war after the surrender at Appomattox, he often came home penniless and with little means to rebuild his life. Many rank and file veterans simply wanted—for themselves and their posterity—a return to some semblance of normalcy after Lee's surrender. Johnny Reb was remembered and honored after their return for what they did after the war, as much as for what they did during the war. The awareness of the sacrifices of Johnny Reb became more prevalent as the old veterans began to die off. One might think that the type of sacrifice and loss that prompted such homage could sour the descendants of Johnny Reb toward any type of military service for several generations—especially service in the ranks of their conqueror. Ironically, the opposite is true. And that irony could be Johnny Reb's most enduring legacy. Johnny Reb's enduring legacy is evidenced by his descendant's disproportionate service in all branches of the U.S. Military. A 2013 study showed that while representing only 36% of the country's population, 44% of all recruits hail from the South (though while considering these statistics, it is also important to note that a significant number of these Southern recruits are black soldiers). Johnny Reb's legacy endures.
