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**Reenvisioning War Through Children's Eyes: Northern and Southern Literature in Post-Civil War America**

An honors thesis presented to the  
Department of History,  
University at Albany, State University of New York  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for graduation with Honors in History

Hannah Cast

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Research Advisor: Christopher Pastore, Ph.D.

May 2020

## Abstract

In post-Civil War America, the sectional divide between Northern and Southern states continued to cause conflict even after the fighting had ended. In order to uphold their memory of the conflict, authors from both sides used the publication of children's literature as a vehicle to spread their perspective. The Southern states wrote myths about the "Lost Cause" of the Civil War, a post-war invention to explain the South's defeat in the Civil War and to maintain a predominantly white political system. In the Northern states, authors illustrated a romantic view of the war in order to spread tales of patriotism and encourage continuing enlistment in the army. Although finally a union following the Civil War, the two parts of the United States could not be more different.

Historians have combed through Civil War archives and have come to understand many of the causes of the sectional divide that developed during Reconstruction. Most historians have focused on the ways those who lived through the war have memorialized the war over time, but what about the next generation? A closer look at children's literature reveals some of the ways sectional beliefs were inculcated in the next generation of Northern and Southerners. Children's literature is significant because the children who were influenced by the works became the future adult generation in the Reconstruction, Gilded Age, and Progressive Era. These periods, plagued with racism and conflict, were the result of interpretations of the Civil War that shaped American views on political and social issues. Drawing Southern children's literature from the late 19th and early 20th centuries and using Northern literature as a counterpoint, this paper will ask, how did children's literature influence the memory of the Civil War in the North and the South? These competing values are still ingrained in our culture today, and have created a ripple effect in which we cannot agree on our history. When we rethink of this period in terms of creating a generation of new beliefs, it encourages us to look into the root of how these beliefs were instilled.

## **Acknowledgements**

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the individuals around me. First, I would like to thank my peers in the Honors Thesis Seminar who constantly supported and challenged me throughout the academic year. Your comments and feedback is what thoroughly improved my paper.

To Dr. Wittern-Keller and Professor Pastore, thank you for the insightful feedback and patience with me throughout this process. Our thought provoking discussions constantly pushed me to work harder and open up new doors to the subject.

Moreover, I would like to thank my friends and family for listening to me rant about this subject endlessly. You steadily supported me and believed in me every step of the way. I am proud to say you are now nearly as passionate about the subject as I am

No one took more of the blunt of it than Natalie, thank you. I could not have done this without you.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
Acknowledgements.....	2
Introduction.....	4-10
Civil War Generals and Soldiers.....	11-18
Impossibility of Southern Victory and Northern Aggression .....	18-23
Southern Views On Slavery .....	23-29
Reconstruction.....	29-37
Northerners' Reactions.....	37-42
Lost Cause Throughout History.....	42-47
Conclusion.....	48-52
List of Figures.....	53-56
Bibliography.....	57-61

## Introduction

Q: "How were the slaves treated?"

A: "With great kindness and care in nearly all cases, a cruel master being rare, and lost the respect of his neighbors if he treated his slaves badly. Self-interest would have prompted good treatment if a higher feeling of humanity had not."<sup>1</sup>

From the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century, tens of thousands of children could be heard repeating questions and answers like this from memory at monthly Children of the Confederacy meetings. Organized by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the meetings were part of a wider effort to comprehend and rebuild the South at the end of the Civil War. Elite women established the first chapter of the UDC in Nashville, Tennessee in 1894.<sup>2</sup> The organization's principle objective was to use its members social status to perpetuate a conservative ideology consistent with the politics of white supremacy. In turn, its agenda perpetuated "The Lost Cause," a postwar narrative invention crafted to explain the South's defeat in the Civil War and to memorialize the Confederacy. The UDC swiftly became an influential women's organization in the early twentieth century, not only in terms of numbers, but also in its ability to maintain the memory and mission of the Confederacy.<sup>3</sup>

The UDC organized the Children of the Confederacy (C of C) as an auxiliary group. Under the tutelage of UDC members, descendants of Confederate veterans between the ages of six and sixteen were immersed in the study of Confederate culture. The goal of the C of C was to educate future generations of the South to remember the Civil War in keeping with "Lost Cause" beliefs. Catechisms like the one mentioned above advanced Lost Cause ideology, thereby

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. John P Allison, *A Confederate Catechism for Southern Children* (Concord, NC: Kestler Brothers Printers, 1946) Originally Printed in 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Amyl Heyse, "Women's Rhetorical Authority and Collective Memory: The United Daughters of the Confederacy Remember the South" *Women & Language* 33 no. 2 (2010): 31-53.

<sup>3</sup> Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2003) 3-7.

shaping the collective memory of Southern children. Although fewer in number, there are still twenty-three chapters actively promoting such catechisms today.<sup>4</sup>

Indoctrinating Southern children had serious consequences for the region. The UDC believed its efforts could structure the post-Reconstruction “New South” to be guided by the principles of the “Old South.” A younger generation was introduced to racial stereotypes that emphasized black inferiority and exaggerated the benevolence of slave owners. The Lost Cause narrative provided more than lessons about the past, for it also provided a political and social road map for the future.<sup>5</sup>

Before their meetings, the Children of the Confederacy were expected to memorize catechisms. The catechisms, or Southern history statements written by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, contained approved content and language pertaining to the Civil War. After the children saluted the Confederate flag and recited the Children of the Confederacy’s creed, the catechism ritual began. The chapter leader typically asked fifteen questions from the catechisms and then expected the children to stand if they knew the answer.<sup>6</sup> During this ritual, children rehearsed UDC-approved facts about the Civil War. In order to teach them the causes of the war, the leader asked questions such as, “Was Slavery the cause of the war?” The Children had to reply with the answer, “It was one of the issues, but the matter of 'States Rights' was the cause of the war.” Another popular topic in the catechisms was the relationship between slaves and their masters. The Children were asked, “What was the feeling of the slaves toward their masters?” The expected reply was, “They were faithful and devoted and were always ready and willing to serve them.” The catechisms also popularized the idea that the Confederacy had no chance of

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<sup>4</sup> Heyse, “Women’s Rhetorical Authority and Collective Memory” 31–53.

<sup>5</sup> Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*, 134-135.

<sup>6</sup> Amyl Heyse, “Reconstituting the Next Generation: An Analysis of the United Daughters of the Confederacy’s Catechisms for Children” *The Southern Communication Journal* (January 1, 2011).

winning the war because it was extremely disadvantaged. A leader asked, "If our cause was right why did we not succeed in gaining our independence?" The correct answer was, "The North overpowered us at last, with larger numbers, they had all the world to aid them, we had no one, we fought the world."<sup>7</sup>

The UDC felt it was necessary to indoctrinate its children because the South had been physically and economically devastated following 1865. The Civil War had left former Confederates resentful due to the damage imposed on the states. Land such as the Shenandoah Valley and Mississippi Valley were destroyed along with Atlanta, Columbia, and Richmond. Additionally, livestock was gone and four million slaves --ultimately the heart of the Southern economy-- were set free due to the Thirteenth Amendment. By the end of the war, 800,000 people were lost. One in three Confederate soldiers versus one in six Union soldiers were dead. As Robert J. Cook has written, society was also left with large numbers of disabled and disfigured veterans who tried, "to rebuild their lives in postwar society, their sense of selfhood as shattered as their broken bodies."<sup>8</sup>

Reconstruction started in the spring of 1865, but created a kind-of commemorative cold war between the regions.<sup>9</sup> Although both sides agreed that they had taken part in arguably one of the most important events in American history, they wanted to make sure that it was properly interpreted from their point of view. The North contended that the war was waged not only to

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Joan Waugh and Gary W. Gallagher, *Wars Within a War : Controversy and Conflict over the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009). Rollin G. Osterweis, *The Myth of the Lost Cause, 1865-1900*, (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1973). David Goldfield, *The Confederate and Neo-Confederate Reader: The 'Great Truth' About the 'Lost Cause.'* *Civil War History*, (Kent: Kent State University Press, December 1, 2011). Robert J. Cook, *Civil War Memories : Contesting the Past in the United States Since 1865*, (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Will Kaufman, *The Civil War in American Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 75-77.



preserve the union but also to eradicate slavery<sup>10</sup> According to Northerners, the Confederates had been traitors and launched the war to defend an immoral institution. Conversely, the South played down slavery as an issue and presented the war as a way to preserve the states' constitutional rights according to the Tenth Amendment. They were convinced that the Confederates fought nobly, but ultimately never stood a chance against the North's industrial economic dominance.

These competing memories of the Civil War have been studied extensively by historians. They have shown that the commemorative narrative of the Civil War reaffirms communities' cultural myths and traditions that help sustain their collective identity.<sup>11</sup> During the first half-century after Appomattox, and for most of the twentieth century as well, Americans preferred a story of a reconciled conflict to the reality of unresolved racial and legal discrimination. Paul H. Buck's *The Road to Reunion* emphasized the role popular literature and politics play in the reconciliation of the North and the South. He claimed that there was no "fundamental conflict" between the North and South, but that both agreed that the "negro problem" was "insoluble."<sup>12</sup> In the late 1960s the civil rights movement, coinciding with the Civil War centennial, made new memories and narratives possible as never before. Robert Penn Warren's 1961 novel *The Legacy of the Civil War* argued that the Southern memory of the conflict and The Lost Cause liberated the South from blame and portrayed them as "the innocent victim of a cosmic conspiracy." As for the North, Warren believed that they congratulated themselves for the Thirteenth Amendment, but ignored current issues of contemporary African Americans.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> James Gillispie, "Competing Memories" in *Civil War America: A Social and Cultural History*. ed. Maggi Morehouse and Zoe Trodd (New York: Routledge, 2013), 293-301.

<sup>11</sup> Heyse, "Women's Rhetorical Authority and Collective Memory" 31-53.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Herman Buck, *The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1937).

<sup>13</sup> Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 104-123.

In the next decade, Daniel Aaron's *The Unwritten War* argued that the memory of the Civil War should be subject for "reflective soul-searching." He believed that the two sections could learn more about themselves by examining the memory of the war.<sup>14</sup> In the final decades of the twentieth century, scholars agreed that both Northerners and Southerners downplayed the causes of the Civil War and racial issues in order to celebrate the valor of the soldiers and the complex reunion. The Lost Cause and the North's culture of reunion emerged as white men and elite women developed a common memory that paved the road for reconciliation.<sup>15</sup>

In the last twenty years, the Lost Cause ideology has invigorated Civil War research. Contention over the war's meaning has resurfaced in recent years over Confederate symbols and the National Park Service's effort to broaden interpretations at battlefield sites. Additionally, the decision whether or not to keep UDC-implemented monuments in public areas has stirred

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<sup>14</sup> Daniel Aaron, *The Unwritten War: American Writers and the Civil War* (New York: Knopf; distributed by Random House, 1973).

<sup>15</sup> Paul M Angle, "The Tragic Years: The Civil War and Its Commemoration," *South Atlantic Quarterly* (Autumn 1961); Edward L. Ayers, Gary W. Gallagher, and Andrew J. Torget, *Crucible of the Civil War: Virginia from Secession to Commemoration*, (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2009); Catherine W. Bishir, "Landmarks of Power: Building a Southern Past, 1855-1915," *Southern Cultures* 1 (1993): 5-46; William A. Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); David W. Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War*, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, ed., *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Edward D. C. J.r. and Kym S. Rice Campbell, eds., Thomas L. Connelly and Barbara L. Bellows, *God and General Longstreet: The Lost Cause and the Southern Mind*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982); Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, eds., *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Drew Gilpin Faust, "We Should Grow Too Fond of It: Why We Love the Civil War," *Civil War History* 50 (December 2004) 386-383; Susan-Mary Grant and Peter J. Parish, eds., *Legacy of Disunion: The Enduring Significance of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003); Will Kaufman, *The Civil War in American Culture*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006); John R. Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005); John Pettegrew, "'The Soldier's Faith': Turn-of-the-Century Memory of the Civil War and the Emergence of Modern American Nationalism," *Journal of Contemporary History* 31 (1996): 49-7, W. Scott Poole, *Never Surrender: Confederate Memory and Conservatism in the South Carolina Upcountry*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004); Thomas J. Pressley, *Americans Interpret Their Civil War*, (New York: Free Press, 1962); David B. Sachsman and S. Kittrell Rushing, *Memory and Myth: The Civil War in Fiction and Film from Uncle Tom's Cabin to Cold Mountain*, (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2007).

speculation about what the Civil War means to society. Historians are currently discussing the significance of these symbols, by contemplating how the memory of the Civil War has come to reflect the sectional divide that persists over 150 years later. <sup>16</sup>

After examining children's literature, periodicals, and school books published after 1865, there were several themes present in nearly all of the works. In Northern literature stories were woven with valor, bravery, and piety, while Southern literature was consistent with Lost Cause rhetoric and blaming of Northern forces for their loss. The context of the literature led me to ponder various questions about the individuals behind the subject matter, publication, and how it has translated into current beliefs. Why was the South blaming the North for their losses in the war? Why spread this rhetoric to children? How widespread were these beliefs in the nation? Who implemented these beliefs? What role did children's literature publishers play in this? How did Northerners react to this rhetoric? Did the North do anything to combat the beliefs Southerners were spreading? What effect did this have on children? How did this translate into future generations? In what ways can we see these beliefs affecting American history? What role do these beliefs play into our current culture today? Can there be a line drawn directly between Southern children's literature and controversies like the attempted integration of Little Rock

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<sup>16</sup> Fred Arthur Bailey, "The Textbooks of the 'Lost Cause': Censorship and the Creation of Southern State Histories" *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 75 (Fall 1991): 507-533; William C. Davis, *The Cause Lost: Myths and Realities of the Confederacy*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996); Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, eds., *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); H. E. Gullett, "Women and the Lost Cause: Preserving a Confederate Identity in the American Deep South," *Journal of Historical Geography* 19 (1993): 125-141; Jack P. Jr Maddox, "Pollard's The Lost Cause Regained: A Mask for Southern Accommodation," *Journal of Southern History* 40: 595-612; Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson, *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003); Rollin G. Osterweis, *The Myth of the Lost Cause, 1865-1900*, (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1973); John A. Simpon, "The Cult of the Lost Cause," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 34: 350-361; Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980).

High School in 1957 and the current controversies over “Silent Sam” at the University of North Carolina?

This paper will argue that children’s literature published in the post-Civil War era played a vital role in the way Americans remember the conflict. The literature that children read in the years after the Civil War was an essential stepping stone for Southerners to implement the rhetoric of the Lost Cause. This children’s literature indoctrinated future generations of Southern Americans. Using Northern literature as a counterpoint, this paper will discuss school books and literature published in the South. The first section will consist of interpretations of famous generals and various soldiers’ valor. The second section will be about the impossibility of Southern victory and Northern aggression during the war. The third section examines Southern views on slavery, which will be followed by a section on Reconstruction. The final two sections discuss the Northern reaction to Lost Cause narratives and how the Lost Cause has persisted to the present day. Overall, these themes will show that white men and women in the South had a very different interpretation of the Civil War than what is taught in mainstream education today. Authors and publishers used children’s literature to teach the Lost Cause to developing minds and pass it off as truth. It has affected our culture in the United States not only in memory, but in the way we view race and politics today. Its effect was so profound that it can still be seen in American school books today.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Heidi Beirich and Susy Buchanan 2017: *The Year in Hate and Extremism*, (Southern Poverty Law Center Report, 2018).

## Civil War Generals and Soldiers

An essential subject in Lost Cause literature was noble and chivalric soldiers. Men such as Robert E. Lee, Thomas Jackson, J.E.B. Stuart were memorialized and symbolized as role models for children. Writing in 1895, J. L. M. Curry, a Southern textbook author wrote, “It would seem that all this should teach justice, and magnanimity; and chivalrous courtesy, and a ready recognition of the noble and valorous and knightly deeds which secured for the conquerors so much fame.”<sup>18</sup> This image of the noble Confederate soldier was not limited to Curry’s textbook. Lost Cause texts included these positive descriptions so that these figures could be what Southern children would imagine when looking back on the former Confederacy. If the narrative presented to school children was one that described these men as morally upright defenders of liberty who were tragically defeated in an unfair war, then the children would side with these tragic heroes.

One of the most venerated characters in Southern children’s books was General Robert E. Lee, who led thousands of troops on the battlefield against the Union Army. However, his stance on slavery has been heavily contested when telling the history of Robert E. Lee. Even if one acknowledged Lee’s military expertise, he would still be responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of Americans in defense of the South’s authority to own millions of human beings as property. However, Southern children’s literature ignored that. Lee was often portrayed as a saint. The authors described him as a skilled and courageous general, who could not be defeated, even though he ultimately was. In keeping with Lost Cause rhetoric, the 1895 children's book *The Life of Gen. Robert E. Lee, For Children, In Easy Words* by Mary L. Williamson states:

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<sup>18</sup> J. L. M. Curry, *The Southern States of the American Union: Considered in their Relations to the Constitution of the United States and to the Resulting Union*, (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1895).

In all these battles, of which I have told you, General Lee had never been really defeated; but he gave up at last because he had no more men and no more food. The Northern generals had all the men and food they asked for, as they had the world to draw from; but the South, being blockaded, or shut in by Northern ships of war, could not get what she needed from other lands.<sup>19</sup>

It was essential that Lee was not portrayed as a weak figure in the fight for slavery because this would have displayed Northern forces as the stronger, and more skilled side. Therefore, Williamson wrote that Lee was never truly defeated and was simply at a disadvantage. She continues to explain that the Northerners had such a large advantage that one could not compare Southern forces to them. This suggests the Southerners were unable to win, even if they tried.

Lee's views on slavery were often overlooked. In *The Life of Gen. Robert E. Lee, For Children, In Easy Words* Williamson ignored Lee's ties to slavery and his treatment of them. Furthermore, since the book is mainly about the Civil War, slavery was mentioned in very few places. However, at a more serious point, the author explains how Lee came to his senses about slavery, with very little detail. In four lines Williamson writes,

It was now time for Lee to carry out the will of old Mr. Custis and set free his slaves. Many of them had been carried off by the Northern men, but now he wrote out the deed and set them free by law. He wrote thus of them to Mrs. Lee: "They are all entitled to their freedom, and I wish them to have it. Those that have been carried away I hope are free and happy."<sup>20</sup>

The text suggests that slavery and the freeing of Lee's slaves played a very small part in the Civil War. Not once does the book mention slavery being the cause of the war or Lee being a major slave owner. In fact, in the previous quote it is mentioned that he believes that they are "entitled" to their freedom and that he hopes that they are happy.

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<sup>19</sup> Mary L. Williamson, *The Life of Gen. Robert E. Lee, For Children, In Easy Words*, (Richmond: B. F. Johnson Publishing Co., 1895), 92.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 60.

One reason Southern authors downplayed Robert E. Lee's ideas about slavery was that his treatments of African Americans rarely reflected the sanitized version of master-slave relations perpetuated by most Lost Cause narratives. He personally owned slaves that he inherited after the death of his mother, Ann Lee, in 1829. Then, following the death of his father-in-law, George Washington Parke Custis, in 1857, Lee inherited 189 enslaved people. Custis's will specified that the slaves of the family were to be freed within five years. Lee, as executor of Custis's will and supervisor of Custis's estates, drove his new-found labor force hard to lift those estates from debt. Concerned that the task might take longer than five years, Lee petitioned state courts to extend his control of the slaves.<sup>21</sup>

Lee's slaves knew that they would not be let free by him if it were only up to his goodwill. In 1859 a few of Lee's slaves Wesley Norris, his sister Mary, and their cousin, George Parks, escaped to Maryland where they were captured and returned to Arlington. In an 1866 account, Norris recalled: "We were immediately taken before Gen. Lee, who demanded the reason why we ran away; we frankly told him that we considered ourselves free; he then told us he would teach us a lesson we never would forget."<sup>22</sup> Subsequently, state courts in both 1858 and 1862 denied Lee's petition to indefinitely postpone the emancipation of his wife's enslaved people and forced him to comply with the conditions of the will. Finally, on December 29, 1862, Lee officially freed the enslaved workers and their families on the estate, coincidentally three days before the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth Brown Pryor, *Reading the Man: A Portrait of Robert E. Lee Through His Private Letters*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2007), 260-267.

<sup>22</sup> John W. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, and Interviews, and Autobiographies*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press) 467-468.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

Thomas Jackson, also known as “Stonewall Jackson” was another popular Civil War general for the Confederate Army memorialized in Southern children’s literature. Often remembered as one of the most successful generals for the South, he forged his reputation from his tenacity during the Shenandoah Valley Campaign. After dying during the Battle of Chancellorsville, the Southern memory of Jackson lived on through their literature for children.<sup>24</sup>

Stonewall Jackson’s achievements on behalf of the South were memorialized in print. In the 1860s Mary L. Williamson published, *The Life of Stonewall Jackson* alongside *The Life of General Lee*, both of which became extremely popular for Southern children. Particularly in the book about Jackson, Williamson describes his life in intimate detail, in order to educate children of the South on their “great Southern hero.” Beginning with Jackson’s childhood through his life in the Civil War, the book’s goal was to idolize him in order to make children look up to Confederacy. Williamson did this by displaying Stonewall Jackson as brilliant, noble, and kind, who fought in the Civil War that “devastated the South.” However, this book was filled with Lost Cause rhetoric and influenced readers to interpret the text as truth.<sup>25</sup>

Prior to writing the section about Jackson’s part in the Civil War, Williamson made sure to establish a short history of the war from Southern perspective. On page 78 of “The Life of Stonewall Jackson” Williamson wrote, “Before going on with the life of our hero, I must tell you, in a few plain and truthful words, the causes of the Civil war.”<sup>26</sup> The author alludes to Lost Cause ideology by declaring that state’s rights was the cause of the war, therefore claiming that slaves were Southerner’s property. She even goes so far as to write, “Southern people also

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<sup>24</sup> James I. Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson : the Man, the Soldier, the Legend*, (New York: Macmillan Pub. USA, 1997).

<sup>25</sup> Mary L. Williamson, *The Life of Stonewall Jackson, For Children, In Easy Words*, (Richmond: B. F. Johnson Publishing Co., 1895).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 78.



believed that the negroes were the happiest and best cared for working people in the world, and that the North was trespassing upon their just rights.”<sup>27</sup>

In order to adhere to the rhetoric of displaying the North negatively, Williamson described John Brown as a symbol of war for Southerners. Therefore the story of John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry subsequently is described on page 82, “Many persons at the North thought that John Brown had died a martyr to the cause of slavery, while the people at the South saw that they could no longer enjoy in peace and safety the rights granted to them by the Constitution.”<sup>28</sup> Williamson explained to the children audience that Brown’s raid was not for a good cause and only threatened Southerners rights. In reflection to this story, Williamson references Jackson and goes on to write, “Major Jackson was truly Southern in feelings. He believed in the ‘Rights of States’ and also that the South ought to take her stand and resent all efforts to coerce and crush her.”<sup>29</sup>

The writing in children’s literature about Confederate generals and their valor during the war was a direct result of Lost Cause ideology. In the case of *The Life of Stonewall Jackson*, children across the South were distributed this book in order to receive the truth about the Civil War and Stonewall Jackson. Authors created a narrative of Jackson and the war which constructed a positive view of the South and their causes. In turn, authors illustrated the Civil War to look like an attack on the South with brave generals fighting against the north, a common theme for Lost Cause literature.

The Lost Cause narrative wed tales of valor with tales of religious righteousness, particularly when it came to Stonewall Jackson. One of the most popular topics that followed

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 78-79.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 82-83.

him was a myth describing “Jackson’s Sunday School.” In 1891 a pastor of Jackson’s Lexington Presbyterian Church, William White, declared that the general had been “the black man’s friend.”<sup>30</sup> He did in fact conduct a Sunday School for enslaved African Americans, which violated state law by encouraging literacy. However, the foundation of this fact is held with misunderstandings. Superficially, the school seemed as though it was a righteous act on Jackson’s part.<sup>31</sup>

It is essential to note what motivated Southerners to wave the banner of Christianity and preach it to slaves. The effect of Nat Turner’s rebellion, the most successful slave uprising, led to a widespread fear in the South. There was a new sensitivity to the danger that education could put new ideas into slave’s minds.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, oversight was required that the “proper” message was conveyed through religious teachings. The vast majority of religions in the South believed that God had “ordained slavery in the Old Testament.” Therefore, the Southerners felt the need to make sure that the slaves knew that “slavery was a divine commandment” through books such as, “The Religious Instruction of the Negroes In the United States” by Charles Colcock Jones.<sup>33</sup> This book allowed white Christians to teach African Americans “God’s intentions” in order to seek slave’s compliance with the institution. Therefore, children were inclined to believe that Jackson was against the evils of slavery and wanted education for African Americans in the South.

Regardless of the affection he may have shown toward enslaved people, and as politically ambivalent as he may have been about slavery, Jackson fully participated in a larger initiative

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<sup>30</sup> Thomas Taylor Castleman, *Plain Sermons for Servants*, (Alexandria: Stanford and Swords, 1851) 394-400.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 400.

<sup>32</sup> Charles Colcock Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes In the United States*, (Savannah: Published by Thomas Purse, 1842).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*.

intended not to end or undermine slavery, but to make slavery and racial inequality work.

Jackson's Sunday school fit seamlessly into a proslavery ideology that worked not to undermine slavery but to enforce it as the institution that worked according to "God's plan." However, as seen in Lost Cause literature, there is an underlying agenda that takes the place of factual evidence in order to interpret the side that the South wants to be seen. It may seem that Southern authors sought to memorialize Confederate generals and pay respect to the soldiers who fought in the Civil War. However, with an underlying Lost Cause agenda, their efforts have created a narrative of the Civil War that is historically inaccurate or only displaying half the truth in their favor.

An essential attribute of Lost Cause literature was the negative portrayal of Abraham Lincoln. As one of the most memorialized presidents in United States history, their goal was to erase his nobility and describe him as a tyrant. Advocates for the Lost Cause ideology could not prove the South as good, without attacking the leader who was against all they stood for. In a 1897 textbook titled "Lee's Primary School History of the United States," the author Susan Lee wrote, "He [Lincoln] was an awkward, ugly man, of plain origin and little education."<sup>34</sup> It continued to describe Lincoln as a "violent Republican" and said that he held that "the South has no rights in the territories."<sup>35</sup> When examining books and writing history for children of the South, UDC historians insisted that he was not a fit example of a leader for children to model themselves after. He was often described as war-mongering. His inauguration was seen as a belligerent threat against a South that was peacefully and legally defending its rights to secede from the United States. Lincoln's actions during and before the war fit the narrative that Lost

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<sup>34</sup> Susan Lee, *Lee's Primary School History of the United States*, (Richmond: B.F. Johnson Publishing Co., 1897), 181.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 181.

Cause writers created, which regarded the North as an entity which placed little value on the law and the Constitution.

The idolization of Confederates who fought in the Civil War is a tactic that Lost Cause authors use to indoctrinate children to see their hero as being the Confederate soldier. This allowed children to see the Confederacy as a positive thing and portray the cause of the war to be about a principled stance against overweening federal power not slavery. It is an inaccurate and ignorant way of looking at the Civil War. If children were only taught to idolize the Confederate veterans and believe that Abraham Lincoln incapable of leading the nation, their view of the past was substantially one-sided. This rhetoric is what construes and shapes history for the South by translating to young children false information.

### **Impossibility of Southern Victory and Northern Aggression**

After losing the Civil War, Southern authors used the Lost Cause as an opportunity to explain the reason the Southern states could not have prevailed over the Union. In the first two years of the war, the Confederates outperformed the Union. However, the battle of Vicksburg signaled the beginning of the end for the Confederacy as the Union took control of the Mississippi River, the nation's most important river. The constant Union military pressure and slave flight combined with rising internal dissatisfaction ultimately brought the Southern state to the verge of destruction.<sup>36</sup> Without the manpower and agriculture based on slave labor, the South's economic situation plummeted. The desire for public validation and vindication after the South had clearly lost the war drove the Lost Cause narrative of a victimized Southern people. The Southerners were unable to admit, or to realize that their actions had created a war that left

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<sup>36</sup> Cook, *Civil War Memories*, 34-38.

their states in shambles. By reclaiming the Civil War history and providing it with a pro-Southern interpretation, the devastation that they faced seemed less bleak. Therefore, Southern children's literature claimed the war was impossible for the Confederacy to have won due to all of the disadvantages from the start. In turn, this was the evidence they needed to show that the Northern states were the aggressors and that the Southern were the victims of the conflict.

Southern authors wrote continuously about how the Southern people were defending their constitutional rights to own slaves. Lost Cause writers like Susan Lee created the story of the South as the defenders of both the Constitution and defenders of the original intent of the Founding Fathers. Lee described it this way:

In 1861 the North maintained that the National Government was supreme; the South held to the views which both North and South held in the early years of the Republic—namely, that the States were sovereign and independent, and that the Federal Government could exercise only such powers as had been delegated to it by the Constitution.<sup>37</sup>

Lee opened with this interpretation of the Constitution and state sovereignty in order to justify the South's secession. What is more vindicating than making the decision to secede off the precedent set forth by the Founding Fathers? Many former Confederates agreed with this because of the association of the Confederacy's secession from the United States with the United States' separation from Great Britain. The Constitution, therefore, was believed by Lost Cause writers to be a just way to back Southern states' actions.

Southern children's authors also preached about the difficulties that the Confederacy faced against the Union in order to victimize the South. The authors dramatized the Confederacy's loss with the inability to win the Civil War by over-emphasizing their disadvantages. The South's disadvantages often prefaced the children's authors' description of

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<sup>37</sup> Lee, *Lee's Primary School History of the United States*, 178.

the conflict. The main idea that authors were trying to convey was that the Confederacy was disadvantaged from the beginning and it never had the chance to win the war. The disadvantages as outlined included the population difference between the two sides, the lack of resources the South had, and the lack of industrial capacity.

The significantly fewer number of men the South had compared to the North was often stated in authors' accounts of the Civil War. As stated previously, with the help of experienced generals, the South had an advantage over the North for the first part of the war. However, with an obvious decline in the number of Southern soldiers, the North was able to continually deploy men to various battles. Although it was a disadvantage the South faced, it is used in Southern children's literature to illustrate a picture of an enormous Northern army overtaking the Confederate soldier as if they did not have a chance. Mary Williamson wrote, "You must notice that from the first of the war, the South was much poorer in the number of men and arms than the North. There were at the North eighteen millions of whites; while at the South, there were only six millions."<sup>38</sup> Although the correct statistics for the North was 22 million and 9 million for the South, a fraction of that population fought in the war.<sup>39</sup> The large number in comparison led children to interpret the circumstances of battle differently from what reality was.

Southern authors also emphasized the South's lack of resources. Williamson explained, "During these battles, of which I have told you, one-half of the Southern men were in rags, and many were without shoes. Yet shoeless, hatless, ragged and starving."<sup>40</sup> The author describes the Confederates as being ravaged physically by describing them without clothing, shoes, or water. Children may think to themselves, how would a Confederate soldier ever fight in the war without

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<sup>38</sup> Williamson, *The Life of Stonewall Jackson, For Children, In Easy Words*, 179.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, 180.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*.

all of those necessities? The answer is that they did have those necessities. Although, after hard campaigning there was no doubt that the typical Confederate soldier was dirty, dusty and probably had damaged clothes. Some men had partially torn clothing after hard marching and fighting, but they were issued new uniforms often enough to not be in "rags." This is shown through statistics of clothing shipments sent to the Northern Virginia regiment. The regiment of Northern Virginia received huge amounts of clothing on a regular basis. For example, between December 1862 and December 1863, the regiment, barely numbering 300-400 men, was issued 1090 jackets, 1839 pairs of pants, 1627 pairs of shoes, 1363 shirts, 967 pairs of socks, 1328 pairs of drawers, 378 caps and 44 hats.<sup>41</sup> In 1863 alone, the huge amount of clothing listed below was distributed to just four Confederate regiments – 5th South Carolina Cavalry, 36th Virginia Infantry, 47th North Carolina Infantry and 63rd Georgia Infantry:

6223 Jackets and coats  
8947 Pairs pants  
7576 Pairs shoes and boots  
8172 Shirts  
7284 Pairs socks  
7548 Pairs drawers  
5504 Hats and caps<sup>42</sup>

These were typical regimental issues to all Confederate units at this point in the war. However, by describing Confederate soldiers as poor and ill-equipped, children would think that the Confederacy was never in a position to win the war. This creates a deception of what the circumstances of the war were, and how the Southern soldiers were illustrated.

A final point that children's literature authors tried to push was the Southern geographical disadvantage. Susan Lee in *Lee's Primary School History of the United States* wrote,

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<sup>41</sup> Jeff Dugdale, *Never in Rags: Volume 1: The East*.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*.

Before going into the account of the struggle which lasted for four years I wish you to examine carefully the map of the Southern Confederacy. Observe that its entire Northern border was close to the United States. Take notice of its long sea coast which was mostly unprotected, and exposed to attacks from hostile vessels.<sup>43</sup>

The Anaconda plan was a military strategy proposed by Union General Winfield Scott early in the war. The plan called for a blockade of the Confederate states in order to strangle the land and ports of the South by Union land and naval forces. The Union used the Southern states border on the Mississippi and Atlantic coast line to complete this plan. Ultimately, it deprived Southern states of resources and outlets that were essential to their survival.<sup>44</sup> Southern authors reference the “long sea coast” in an explanation to explain another weakness that the South had to overcome. It illustrated the Union as a surrounding hostile force that attacked the Southern states on their most vulnerable side. However, the long coastline was not a disadvantage to the Southerners and they knew it. The coastline, because of its very length and difficulty, helped to protect the South from an effective Union blockade for years. It wasn’t until the last two years that the blockade became even partly effective.<sup>45</sup>

Myth making or the half telling of the truth is consistent throughout the spread of the Lost Cause. The goal of these various statements made by the authors was to claim that the South never had a chance in its fight against the Union. Although the Union had its strengths in the war, the Confederacy was strong in different areas. These points were not counteracted with their victimization because it lessened the effect of their rhetoric. Additionally, since the South had been devastated following the end of the conflict, the Lost Cause mythology softened the loss

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<sup>43</sup> Lee, *Lee's Primary School History of the United States*, 185.

<sup>44</sup> “Anaconda plan (MAY 3, 1861,” *American Heritage* 61, no. 1 (2011).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*



that the South endured and the discouragement that resulted in losing the war. These statements put them in the position of the victim and staged the North as the antagonists.

### **Southern Views On Slavery**

Southern narratives often argued that slavery was never as bad as Northerners described it. As mentioned previously in the paper, the UDC was instrumental in building on the myth first spread before the war by slaveholders of a loyal slave and a kind master. Therefore, this myth stood on the foundation that the Civil War was never fought over slavery, rather on state's rights to own their property. Lee wrote in a children's textbook,

Neither did the South secede to maintain slavery. The Constitution of Southern Confederacy forbade African slave-trade to be renewed. These were rights which the Supreme Court of the United States had declared they possessed under the United States Constitution, and which the Northern people refused to permit them to exercise.

However, when examining the Declaration of Causes of Seceding States written by individuals in Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia, the term "state's rights" cannot be found a single time. The word "state" can only be found when referencing the United States of America. Instead, the word slave, in its various forms, can be found eighty-three times.<sup>46</sup> The original intent of the seceding state's during the Civil War was to secede over slavery. Then one may ask, why would the UDC and other pro-Confederate individuals pass the reason for secession as being the North trying to take away their Constitutional rights? The answer lies in the economic and political value that enslaving African Americans had in Southern society.

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<sup>46</sup> *The Declaration of Causes of Seceding States written by Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia* (December 24, 1860).

The description of a slave's relationship with his or her owner is described by Southern authors as pleasant and caring. In *Elsie's Womanhood*, a popular Southern fictional series by Martha Finley written in 1875, the author describes the life of a young white girl growing up during the Civil War era. The family had several slaves, which suggests that they were a higher class family in the South. In this instance, the author describes the reaction of one of the slaves, Chloe, after hearing about the Emancipation Proclamation. Finley writes, "Going into the nursery half an hour later, Elsie was grieved and surprised to find Chloe sitting by the crib of the sleeping babe, crying and sobbing as if her very heart would break, her head bowed upon her knees, and the sobs half smothered." Elsie and Chloe proceed to have a conversation as to why Chloe is so upset. Chloe responds by explaining that she does not wish to have her own freedom. She pleads that she does not want to leave "her family." Then, Elsie ensures Chloe that she does not have to leave and that it is up to her own "free will" if she wanted to leave the plantation. Chloe follows by hugging her and sobbing while saying thank you.<sup>47</sup>

Although it is possible that a slave did not want to leave her owner, this fictional book passes the situation off as the norm. By describing this exchange in a popular fictional story, the emancipation of slaves now coincided with the idea that it tore family's apart and made slaves upset. Additionally, claiming that Chloe was allowed to leave the plantation under her own free will is shown to normalize the relationship between a slave and their owner, not pass it off as bondage. In reality, Chloe is forced against her will to live on a plantation and work for the family. Subsequently, children reading this book may then presume Chloe's reaction was a regular occurrence on a plantation in the South. Therefore, this strengthened the Lost Cause

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<sup>47</sup> Martha Finley, *Elsie's Womanhood* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1901), 265-266.

narrative claiming that the relationship between the owner and the slave was not negative, but a positive and safe environment.

Authors also deceived children about the relationship of slaves and their owners through illustrations. *The Two Little Confederates*, a fictional book, illustrates that slaves would go back to their previous “home” to visit their owners (Figure 1). Below the illustration, the caption reads “Some of the servants came back to their old home.” Rather than referring to them as *slaves*, the word that was used is servants. Additionally, the African Americans in the picture are illustrated with smiles and one holding a white woman’s hand, presumably the former owner. This suggests that the former slaves were happy to see their former owners and missed the plantation. By showing this occurrence the Southern authors encouraged children to assume a positive and loving relationship between slaves and their owners. One would then conclude that the system of slavery was not cruel if the former slaves were happy enough to go back. This adds to the idea of racism being separated from slavery, therefore strengthening the Lost Cause narrative given to children.

The image of how slaves dressed and acted were shown in illustrations throughout children’s literature. In chapter 29 in the textbook *Virginia: History, Government, Geography*, a chapter heading under the illustration reads, “How the Negroes lived under slavery.” In this image, all of the slaves are dressed in nice, clean clothes and fancy suits and dresses (Figure 2). It appears as though they are a family consisting of a man, woman, and children. Additionally, they are shown meeting a white man who is presumably their owner. To emphasize the idea of the slaves equality, the author shows white men working in the background on the ship while the slaves are being politely greeted and embraced by the man. Therefore, it appears as a normal exchange where the two groups are meeting for the first time. However, examining historical

data will confirm that African American families were torn apart, slaves were doing a majority of the work, and they were likely transported in shackles to their owner.<sup>48</sup> Below the illustration the author wrote, “Many Negroes were taught to read and write. Many of them were allowed to meet in groups for preaching, for funerals, and for singing and dancing.”<sup>49</sup> For a human, these are actions and privileges that should be included in an everyday life.

A closer examination of these illustrations allows us to understand the myth of the Lost Cause and how it affected the children growing up reading these historical and fictional books. The author’s reason was to pass off a truth that would further advance the idea that they were not wrong in the Civil War. Since the war was the largest conflict that happened up to that point, there was a lot at stake for Southerners. Slavery being the central issue, the South tried to mask the issue to prove that the North and their literature on the cause of the war was completely wrong. The descriptions of slavery were the opposite of what the North was claiming, therefore it made the North seem less credible in the South. This narrative continues to be engrained in American culture, and these children’s literature was the vehicle of this myth.

Children’s textbooks often emphasized that Africans were uncivilized and needed the guidance of whites. Specifically in the section titled, “Benefits and Evils of Slavery,” Lee wrote about her beliefs on why slaves “needed” white people and how slavery was a positive experience for them. She describes the slaves by writing, “The ignorant, heathen Africans had been greatly benefited by their two hundred and fifty years of slavery. Thousands and thousands of them had become civilized and Christianized as they could not have been in any other way.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Francis Butler Simkins, *Virginia: History, Government, Geography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964). 368.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Lee, *Lee’s Primary School History of the United States*, 197-203.

She continues on to write about their treatment at the plantation. In the textbook she wrote, “They were the happiest and best cared for working people in the world. Their owners could not therefore pity them, as the Northern Abolitionists professed to do.” However, in many textbooks the negative impact of slavery is not spoken about. In a surprising turn, Lee wrote,

There were also many benefits to slave owning whites, but there were likewise evils. Most Southern people felt this, and if they had been let alone would have taken steps to get rid of it gradually. But they felt that the North had no right to interfere with them or dictate to the them and to deprive them of their Constitutional rights.<sup>51</sup>

This line suggests that the South thought that slavery was wrong as well, but was going to purge the system from their society at their own pace, gradually overtime. This quote raises two key points. The first is that the South knew that slavery was wrong. Although she does say that they were the “best cared for in the world,” she does not admit that slavery was morally unjust.

Although they are not specifically mentioned, it may be a small detail that holds a lot of weight in the textbook. Additionally, the North is described as the aggressors. The South claimed that the North tried to strip the South of their Constitutional rights. As explained in the previous section, the South thought that having slaves was their Constitutional right, and seceding would have been applauded by the Founding Fathers. This, in turn, makes the North look as though they were the bad guys, and that the South were the victims.

The dialect of African Americans was extremely exaggerated as well as shown completely different from other characters in children’s books in the Post- Civil War South. A UDC implemented book titled, "De Namin' ob de Twins, and Other Sketches From the Cotton Land" is a book written in 1908 by Mary Fairfax Childs, who was born in 1870 in Lexington,

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

Kentucky, and later lived in Virginia. It was one of a slew of "black dialect"<sup>52</sup> works of the time; considered a form of poetry that used exaggerated phonetic spelling to caricature black speech and portrayed black people as comically foolish, childlike buffoons utterly dependent on whites for survival.

Childs herself was a UDC member and an officer in her own state's division, and she dedicated "Twins" to the UDC itself. The story, which intends to be humorous, revolves around an enslaved grandmother choosing names for her dead daughter's twin babies, who it refers to as "little darkies." In the preface Childs wrote, "The very fact that negroes made no attempt toward being humorous rendered them, as a race, irresistibly so."<sup>53</sup> This advances the belief that slave owners were superior to the slaves.

The Virginia textbook intimately describes the relationship of the slave and the owner. The author writes that the relationship is "a feeling of strong affection" in a majority of Virginian homes. Again, the slaves are described as servants saying, "The house servants became almost as much a part of the planter's family circle as its white members." The privileges are then described stating, "The Negroes were always present at family weddings. They were allowed to look on at dances and other entertainments." Then the slave system is described by saying that it, "demanded that the master care for the slave in childhood, sickness, and in old age. The regard that master and slaves had for each other made plantation life happy and prosperous." They continue to say that slavery at the time was "generally happy". Then beginning to reference about the Civil War the author states,

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<sup>52</sup> Mary Fairfax Childs, *De Namin' ob de Twins, and Other Sketches From the Cotton Land* (1908).

<sup>53</sup> Francis B. Simkins, Spotswood H. Jones, and Sidman P. Poole, *Virginia: History, Government, Geography* (1957) 102-103.

But they [slaves] were not worried by the furious arguments going on between Northerners and Southerners over what should be done with them. In fact, they paid little attention to these arguments.<sup>54</sup>

Misinformation such as this was often provided all the way into the 1970s in schoolbooks for children. Therefore, current day Americans would have read those words and taught it as reality in their seventh-grade classes no longer than 40 to 50 years ago. Since it was taught almost one hundred years after the Civil War, the Lost Cause myth was spread in Virginian classrooms to our future adults today.<sup>55</sup> This raises questions about what is still being taught to Southern children today. How could these textbooks survive after the civil rights movement, and even into the late twentieth century?

## **Reconstruction**

The history of Reconstruction has been hotly contested since 1877 when it ended. The original narrative that emerged from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries stated that Reconstruction had been a time of chaos and corruption. Authors, primarily in the South, believed it was a time when newly freed slaves were supported by the government and therefore ruled over the Southern states. Additionally, they believed society was restored to its natural order and put an end to the alliance of freed slaves, carpetbaggers, and scalawags after Reconstruction had ended. This narrative justified the violence and removal of the recently-won rights of African Americans. Consequently, dissenting voices remained mostly unheard before the Civil Rights movement in the 1950's and '60s.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Eric Foner, *Reconstruction : America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York, New York: Harper Perennial, 2014); Eric Foner, *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2019); Bernard Weisberger. *The Dark And Bloody*

The minority of post-Reconstruction accounts became widely popular in the late nineteenth century. Former slaves Frederick Douglass and William Wells Brown, two of the most famous anti-slavery speakers before the Civil War, sought both to vindicate the achievements of Reconstruction and denounce the violence exerted against the now unprotected freedmen. Douglass noted that the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments were considerable achievements for the United States, however the economic exploitation of freedmen reduced them to a state that was barely better than slavery. In William Wells Brown's book, *My Southern Home*, Brown called upon readers to look at millions of slaves who, "set at liberty in a single day... reconstructed the State Governments that their masters had destroyed; became Legislators, held State offices, and with all their blunders, surpassed the whites that had preceded them".<sup>57</sup> Douglas and Brown's work gave voice to freedmen by combatting the stigma placed on former slaves. The accomplishments of African Americans following the Civil War disproved with many of the Reconstruction accounts published by Southern authors. However, due to the publishing industry being controlled by predominantly white men and women, these accounts would not be widely heard until years later.

Despite accounts from African Americans, early twentieth-century historians played a central role in negotiating the idea of reconciliation over narrating a consensual past for the nation. This was one reason why the Southern interpretation of Reconstruction gained popularity. However, this negotiation was made possible by the preservation of racism across many states. The Dunning School, a group of Southern historians who published work on the Civil War and

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*Ground of Reconstruction Historiography. The Journal of Southern History*. Vol. 25, No. 4 (Nov., 1959), pp. 427-447 (21 pages); C Vann Woodward. *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913: A History of South*. (LSU Press, Jan 1, 1951); James Pike. *The Prostrate State: South Carolina Under Negro Government*. (New York: D. Appleton and Company. 1874); Henry Wilson. *History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America*. ( Cambridge: University Press: James R. Osgood and Company late Ticknor & Fields, and Fields, Osgood, & Co., 1872-1877.);

<sup>57</sup> William Wells Brown, *My Southern Home: or, The South and Its People* (Boston: A.G. Brown & Co., 1880), 245.



Reconstruction in the early twentieth century, emerged as the clear victor in its interpretation of Reconstruction. It held sway for several decades, thus providing the justification for the continued second-class citizenship of African Americans. In this literature, blacks were consistently stereotyped as savages who loved watermelon, stole chickens and fought with razors, therefore depicting them as inferior. Additionally, nostalgia for the antebellum days grew due to the rapid changes the nation was undergoing in terms of industrialization and urbanization, as well as the massive waves of immigrants that began to arrive in the last decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>58</sup>

Into the era of Civil Rights movements, historians began to move away from Southern views on Reconstruction and race. These new works are often referred to as the revisionist era of Reconstruction writing. The idea of the South writing history incorrectly was noted by many historians, therefore they began revising what Reconstruction actually meant. In the 1940s, historian E. Merton Coulter explained that the South “ had lost on the fields of carnage, but she was determined to win in the Battle of the Records.” Historians in the mid 1950s and ’60s were now backing the enfranchisement of freedmen, and correcting the perception of Reconstruction governments as ineffective and corrupt. The voices of dissent were predominantly black but some white historians also produced more balanced views of Reconstruction. This revisionist era has continued on through the twenty-first century, correcting the wrongs of past historians and depicting Reconstruction in more flattering light.

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<sup>58</sup> William Wells Brown, *My Southern Home: or, The South and Its People* (Boston: A.G. Brown & Co., 1880); George W. Williams, *History of The Negro Race In America From 1619 to 1880 : Negroes As Slaves, As Soldiers, and As Citizens*. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1885.) David W. Blight. *Race and Reunion*. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001); John David Smith. *The Dunning School: Historians, Race and the Meaning of Reconstruction*. (Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 2013).

Therefore, the Reconstruction era may be arguably labeled as a step in the opposite direction of equality for African Americans. Although on the surface, Reconstruction was the historical process of reintegrating the former Confederacy into an American nation, its history has been contested. Following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the ascension of Andrew Johnson to the presidency, the nation learned that it had a firm believer in state's rights in office. In a way, Johnson believed that the Southern states never gave up their freedom to govern themselves, and the federal government could not interfere with many of their state regulated institutions and laws.

Southern governments were given the pass by Johnson to continue their lives without reparations and without interference from the federal government on matters of race. One of his initial policies was giving back the Southerners their land that had been confiscated in order to distribute to the freed slaves by the Union army or the Freedmen's Bureau. As a result of the leniency, Southern states successfully implemented "black codes." which placed restrictions on freed blacks' activity.<sup>59</sup> After northern voters rejected Johnson's policies in the congressional elections in late 1866, Radical Republicans in Congress took hold of Reconstruction in the South. In March of that year, over Johnson's veto, Congress passed the Reconstruction Act of 1867, which temporarily divided the South into five military districts and outlined how governments based on universal suffrage were to be organized. The law also required Southern states to ratify the 14th Amendment, which broadened the definition of citizenship, granting "equal protection" of the law as well as due process of law to former slaves, before they could rejoin the Union. In February 1869, Congress

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<sup>59</sup> Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 20-34.

approved the 15th Amendment, which guaranteed that a citizen's right to vote would not be denied "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."<sup>60</sup>

Despite the new Amendments following the end of the war, Confederate veterans in Tennessee founded perhaps the most notorious hate-group in American history, the Ku Klux Klan. This invisible empire was responsible for countless acts of violence on African Americans and the spread of white supremacy. Ulysses S. Grant in 1871 took aim at the Klan and others who attempted to interfere with black suffrage and other political rights. However, white supremacy gradually reasserted its hold on the South after the early 1870s as support for Reconstruction decreased. Racism was still a prominent force in both the South and the North, and Republicans became more business oriented and less concerned with the freedmen as the decade continued. In 1874, the Democratic Party won control of the House of Representatives for the first time since the Civil War. Thus emerged a more conservative national government than the Radical Republicans who pushed for Reconstruction.

The party differences of Republicans and Democrats continued to create issues throughout the Southern states. In 1875, Mississippi Democrats waged a campaign of violence to take control of the area. However Grant refused to send federal troops, marking the end of federal support for Reconstruction-era state governments in the South. In the presidential election that year, Republican candidate Rutherford B. Hayes compromised with the Democrats in Congress on terms of an exchange for certification of his election; he would acknowledge the Democratic control of the entire South. Therefore the Compromise of 1876 marked the end of

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<sup>60</sup> Heather Cox Richardson, *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 25-37.

Reconstruction as a distinct period of struggle. A century later, the legacy of Reconstruction would be revived during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, as African Americans fought for the political, economic and social equality that had long been denied them (Figure 3).<sup>61</sup>

Throughout the years after the war, the continuing power of the Klan attracted flocks of white Southerners who undoubtedly used the Confederate flag as one of their many symbols of intimidation. Establishing a well-known base, eventually one of the most popular movies in 1915 was the *Birth of a Nation* which depicted the Ku Klux Klan as valiant saviors of a post-war South ravaged by Northern carpetbaggers and immoral freed blacks. This continuation of oppression and violence subdued African Americans and shows that although the slaves became free and escaped from slavery in the Old South, it did not mean escaping from societal subordination and control in the New South. Southerners continued to assert white supremacy and the ideals that the Confederacy fought for, invigorating the Lost Cause ideology.<sup>62</sup>

The United Daughters of the Confederacy actively supported the KKK through literature and their white supremacist society. The UDC officially recognized the Klan for helping restore southern home rule and white supremacy after the war. Karen Cox, author of *Dixies Daughters*, asserts, “During Reconstruction the Klan engaged in a campaign of violence and terror against Republican leaders, black and white, as well as the general population of freedmen. Its purpose was to thwart social and political change by any means necessary, and the Daughters regarded Klansmen as heroes.” This relationship between the KKK and the UDC created an opportunity to

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 145-167.

<sup>62</sup> Susan Campbell Bartoletti, *They Called Themselves the K.K.K. : the Birth of an American Terrorist Group* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010), 59-63.

not only push the white supremacist agenda, but to condone the Klan's actions as patriotism for the South.<sup>63</sup>

One of the most prominent UDC members, Laura Martin Rose, served as the historian and president of the Mississippi Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy in the early 1900s. One of her most famous contributions to the UDC was a textbook in which she defended the actions of the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>64</sup> Prior to the publication of the book, Rose published a pamphlet on the Ku Klux Klan, donating the proceeds from its sale to support the construction of a Confederate monument at Jefferson Davis's Mississippi home. Subsequently, in response to the popularity of this pamphlet, Rose wrote a textbook, *The Ku Klux Klan, or Invisible Empire* (1914), which she intended for southern children to read. In the schoolbook, Rose claimed the KKK was "more powerful than all else in bringing about a realization of 'things as they were during Reconstruction.'"<sup>65</sup> She was referring to the idea that the KKK tried to reestablish a racial superiority in the South that wavered during Reconstruction. Rose wrote that the Reconstruction era was "the dark cloud that enveloped the Southlands." She believed that the KKK activities were necessary to restore law and order to the region and to restore Anglo-Saxon supremacy to the South.<sup>66</sup> She also advocated that the movie *the Birth of a Nation* accomplished the "untold good" of the portrayal of a "tragic era."<sup>67</sup>

The collective memory of the South on Reconstruction was summed up in the idea by Rose that the southerners had been "trampled underfoot by ignorant and vicious negroes."<sup>68</sup>

Therefore, this gave the UDC the vindication it needed to spread the idea of the Klan as being

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<sup>63</sup> Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, 106-109.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 106-109.

<sup>65</sup> Laura Martin Rose, *The Ku Klux Klan or Invisible Empire* (New Orleans, LA: L Graham Co., 1914).

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>68</sup> Mrs. S. E. F. Rose Subject File, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

the heroes of the era who restored what was rightfully the Old South. The UDC believed that the Freedmen's Bureau was not a help to African Americans but the only purpose was to "demoralize" former slaves. Additionally, the UDC claimed that Southern whites were forced to endure a government composed of scalawags, carpetbaggers, and freedmen who could not read or write.<sup>69</sup>

Rose echoed themes expressed by Southern novelist Thomas Dixon and the Dunning School scholars, who argued that African Americans, encouraged by carpetbaggers, terrorized law-abiding southern whites during Reconstruction and that the Klan sought to restore order and preserve the purity of the white race.<sup>70</sup> According to Rose, the Klan committed acts of violence only after exhausting all other options. This interpretation constructed African American men as responsible for racial violence during Reconstruction. Rose believed that her work offered southern boys a model for proper behavior—that is, they should commit acts of violence if necessary to preserve justice and defend southern women from the advances of African American men. In recognition of her efforts to preserve the southern past, Rose succeeded Mildred Rutherford as the historian-general of the UDC in 1916, but her tenure was cut short by her death on 6 May 1917.<sup>71</sup>

Although on the surface the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Ku Klux Klan look very different, both groups emphasized the preservation of Southern memory. Both groups spread the same ideology of African American inferiority and a longing for the "Old South." However, the UDC were the individuals in the South primarily pushing the white supremacy agenda through children's literature, while the Klan terrorized the South more openly. The KKK

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<sup>69</sup> J. Vincent Lowery, *Laura Martin Rose* (Center for Study of Southern Culture, 2017).

<sup>70</sup> James B. Lloyd, *Lives of Mississippi Authors, 1817–1967* (1981), 238.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

is widely known for terrorizing African Americans and Republicans of the South, however the UDC were quietly pushing the same agenda except they focused on the next generation. Even though the rhetoric depicted clear sides of right and wrong, the Lost Cause was intended to be a cultural and academic movement rather than a terrorist one. To put it plainly, this movement did not intend to make the Old South rise again literally, just as the KKK did, but symbolically. Even with this variety of opinions, the Lost Cause was not about taking up arms again or continuing the fight for an independent Confederacy. The dreams of a reborn Confederacy had simply faded away by the late nineteenth century. However, Lost Cause advocates continued to defend the memory of the Confederacy. Education reform was a different type of warfare that the UDC implemented. They did not terrorize African Americans and Republicans in white robes and with burning crosses. Rather, they wrote books and implemented systems that would leave the same stain on history.<sup>72</sup>

### **Northerners' Reactions**

On an evening in June, young William and Susie, children living in an unnamed Northern state, sat below Uncle Rodman. He sat in a chair, reading a newspaper, while the two children conversed. Initially, the two children started pondering the cause of the Civil War and how it affected their community. Uncle Rodman, who was an older member of their family, laid his newspaper on the table beside him, took off his old silver-bowed spectacles and placed them on top of the paper. He looked contemplative, as if he was gathering his thoughts on how to address the young children of the household with such an important topic. He answered their question by beginning with the statement, "In a word, children, slavery was the cause of the war." William

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<sup>72</sup> Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 159.

and Susie could not believe what they were hearing, shocked by the simplicity of the terms their Uncle used to describe such a significant event. He continued to illustrate the war by saying “the rebellion was a stupendous piece of folly, as well as stupendous wickedness.” Uncle Rodman then explained that the South was determined to destroy the federal government because they could not control their legislation on slavery, so they seceded and formed a confederacy with slavery as their “cornerstone.” To ensure that the North was seen in positive light, Uncle Rodman vouched that the Union wanted to keep slavery only out of the new states, but the South did not want to submit to a decrease in power. He described the Southerners as “rebels, arrogant, conceited, and overbearing.”

This short story was an excerpt from the children’s periodical, *Our Young Folks*, published in the North. The point of view on the Civil War is very different from that told in a Southern book. Not only did the North blame the South for the Civil War, but slavery was said to be evil. Therefore, Lost Cause literature differed from their Northern counterparts from the late 1890s to the early 1910s. Much of Northern literature following the Civil War shadowed a Northern point of view and often disagreed with Southern Lost Cause ideology. Whether or not that was the purpose of the book is unknown; however, it is clear that the literature varied different when it came to the details on the cause of the war.

More literature such as the best-selling American history book throughout the twentieth century titled, *American History* by David Saville Muzzey published in 1911, also helped reflect how the Lost Cause stood in the opposite direction when retelling the story of the Civil War. Muzzey’s telling of the war was in correlation with the Union’s point of view during the Civil War and policies that Lincoln implemented. Muzzey described slavery as a fundamental evil of society, and asserted that it was the cause of the war. Additionally, he wrote that the North had



won the war through its wealth, resources, and manpower, therefore the South could not help but be overcome in defeat.

Muzzey's history book enlightened Northern children on Abraham Lincoln. He described him as intelligent, well-spoken, and one of the top leaders of the United States. Muzzey wrote, "Words have no power to tell the worth of Abraham Lincoln. His name, linked with the immortal Washington's, is forever enshrined in the hearts of the America People, for he was the savior of our country as Washington was its founder and father."<sup>73</sup> He believed that each student should learn the words by heart to Walt Whitman's "O Captain ! My Captain," which was written in 1865 about the death of Abraham Lincoln.<sup>74</sup>

Additionally, Muzzey emphasized slavery as the cause the Civil War. He noted that the South was spreading false information about the cause of the Civil War. He described the Southern states as a different region in term of its class system and lack of industry compared to the North. One of the issues with the class system was slavery being the "bane of the South," meaning that the enslavement of Africans was what they stood on as a society. Muzzey went to great lengths to assure that students retained this fact of the war, that a vile and corrupt way of life existed in the South. So contaminating was this evil that it provoked political, social, and spiritual battles among Americans in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. "Although slavery was the cause of the Civil War, both the North and the South insisted that the war was not begun on account of slavery. The South declared that it was fighting for its constitutional rights, denied by a hostile majority in Congress and destroyed by the election of a purely sectional president; while the North, with equal emphasis, insisted that it took up arms not to free the slaves but to preserve the Union. Simply put, whether or not one opposed or defended it,

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<sup>73</sup> David Saville Muzzey, *An American History* (Boston ; Ginn and Company, 1920), 468.

<sup>74</sup> Walt Whitman. *O Captain! My Captain!* (November 4, 1865).

slavery was the reason that men enlisted, fought, and died in the war. Muzzey did not just stop at this claim, rather he entertained Southern arguments over how the war started and undermined them.<sup>75</sup>

With two very different point of views being portrayed in Northern and Southern literature, the controversy over what the North thought of the South's Lost Cause ideology was not widely talked about among Northerners. In a sense, what had been done before the war had been done. The Northerners were not nearly as concerned with how the South portrayed the Civil War, because the South had lost and the North was moving on, grateful to be done with the war and Reconstruction. It was not important to Northerners how slavery was being portrayed and how it may or may not hurt future generations of Americans. However, as Lost Cause history textbooks became more prominent in Southern schools and as textbook committees started to eliminate books they did not approve of, Northern newspapers began to take notice and speak out against this sectional retelling of history. For example, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* wrote in 1922, "History is becoming, if it has not already reached that stage, a medium of propaganda." They continued on to say, "emphasized through the efforts of the Confederate Veterans to impose upon the children of the south their own interpretation of the Civil War, regardless of accuracy or the effect upon the nation. The veterans are attempting to pass on their old hates and rancors to their descendants." The Tribune identifies, less than forty years after the Civil War, that Confederate Veterans and Southerners alike were trying to pass off a sort of propaganda to young Southern children. In doing so, it distorted the facts of the war to fit its narrative. Using history as a platform to assert one's prejudices was as dangerous in the early twentieth century as it is in the twenty-first century.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> James McPherson, *What they fought for, 1861-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994).

<sup>76</sup> Quoted in "The Confederate Veterans' New Glands" *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, (June 23, 1922), 8.

Northerners bristled at the way Lincoln was openly slandered in many of the Southern textbooks. In an editorial in *The New York Times* also in 1922, Lost Cause writers were mentioned to “have no regard for the sensibilities of an enormous majority of their fellow-citizens in all parts of the country.” They continue on to write, “When they attack the memory of Lincoln—when they charge that by him what they call ‘the Confederate war’ was ‘deliberately and personally conceived’ and ‘he was personally responsible for forcing the war on the South’—then the only way to avoid the anger is to realize how far these statements are from accurate and to view them with astonishment.” *The New York Times* was baffled by the elements of Lost Cause, but to add that Lincoln caused hundreds of thousands of deaths was not something that they were going to let slip by.<sup>77</sup>

Leaders from the Civil War also commented on Southern Lost Cause ideology, particularly on the idea that the Northern forces brutally overwhelmed and took down the South. Therefore, to counter this assertion presented by supporters of the Lost Cause, former Union commander Ulysses S. Grant dismissed the claims of post-war Confederate writing stating: “It is said that we overwhelmed the South. In foreign journals and foreign assemblies it is put this way, that we overran the South with the scum of the world—with hirelings and Hessians....This is the way public opinion was made during the war, and this is the way history is made now. We never overwhelmed the South, and I am only sorry we could not have done so and ended the war and its miseries. What we won from the South we won by hard fighting, and the odds, when there were odds, were never decisive.”<sup>78</sup> Grant regarded the Lost Cause as a vehicle for false public opinion in the post-war South similar to how propaganda was used during the war. In other

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<sup>77</sup> *The New York Times* (June 23, 1922).

<sup>78</sup>Ulysses S. Grant, “The Relative Power of the North and South” *The New York Herald*, (May 31, 1878).

words, he viewed this narrative to be constructed more on emotion than accuracy. In addition to Grant, former Union commander William Tecumseh Sherman presented a clear answer as to where the blame for the wrong telling of the history of the Civil War. During a speech given on May 27, 1878, Sherman said: “There are such things as abstract right and wrong, and when history is written, human action must take their place in one or the other category. We claim that, in the great civil war, we of the National Union Army were right, and our adversaries wrong; and no special pleading, no excuses, no personal motives, however pure and specious, can change the verdict of the war.”<sup>79</sup> Sherman described the Lost Cause and how they were trying to retell the verdict of the Civil War. For these two veterans of the war, it had been alarming for the Southerners to tell a false narrative. However, from that point on, not many individuals had a say in what was right or wrong about the Civil War.

### **Lost Cause Throughout History**

After the turn of the twentieth century, the narrative of the Lost Cause continued to be spread years after the rise of children’s literature. The implementation Confederate monuments had been a staple for the Daughters of the Confederacy to advance the Lost Cause. These symbols of Confederate soldiers and benign displays of slavery were put in prominent public places such as court houses, government buildings, and most commonly in town squares in the South. Although no one can be sure of how many monuments have been implemented, historians believe around 1,700 remain throughout the South.

Children played a vital role in ceremonies that took place when a new monument was installed. At every unveiling, a young boy or girl pulled a cord that revealed the monument in order to symbolize a gift that connected the past and the future. Students were released from

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

schools for the ceremony and were most often urged to dress in either red or white to match the colors of the Confederacy. Thirteen young girls were then chosen to wear sashes bearing a state name – to represent each state of the Confederacy (even though there were only eleven states). On occasion, the children dressed in red and white would form into a choir in a pattern that showed a “living” Confederate flag. At the unveiling of Jefferson Davis’ monument, over 500 students formed the flag. This patriotism for the former Confederacy and the combination of children into the process showed an effort by the UDC to transmit Southern values into a future generation. Although these symbols were originally seen as mourning the loss of soldiers, and were placed in cemeteries, the statues were now no longer hidden away. This made them part of the political ideology of the South and the message that was being endorsed. Confederate monuments came to serve as symbols of the present and helped ensure a continuity of values held by a generation that pushed for Jim Crow laws and inequality.

The influence of the UDC and the control these monuments had over the United States is exemplified in 1914 when President Woodrow Wilson accepted a Confederate monument in Arlington National Cemetery. It is one of the most infamous Lost Cause displays, showing slaves fighting for the Confederacy, brave soldiers leaving their families, and more men marching into battle. The valiant display has a plaque underneath the statue stating that the war was a necessity and the soldiers did not endure it for fame or reward. One can interpret this monument as a symbol that the Confederacy needed to go to war to fight for their rights, and makes no mention of slavery. This monument is spreading the Lost Cause to this day due to the famous location and the prominent president who presented it. The United Daughters of the Confederacy showed a large amount of tenacity for its cause by being able to accomplish the installation of these monuments. They swiftly and confidently put these monuments in place rapidly throughout the

late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>80</sup> A bulk of these monuments went up during the first civil rights movements in the 1910's and the modern civil rights movements in the 1950s and 1960s, to combat the advancement of African American rights.

When the United States attention turned to foreign policy in the era of the World Wars, interest in the Civil War shifted. A clear example of this is the lack of implementation of Confederate monuments. After years of the monuments being installed at a steady rate, the number plummeted from an all-time high of forty three monuments built in 1911 to just two in 1919. The number fell to zero in the year 1944, towards the end of World War II. This idea of memorializing Confederate veterans in various places across the United States essentially lost popularity as the rise of nationalism in the United States connected the North and the South. A country that grew from 36 states to 50 in a matter of less than 100 years, had seemed to have left behind the remains of a divided nation, but, as we will see, did not leave behind the stigmas of racism and oppression.<sup>81</sup>

In the mid twentieth century the implementation of Confederate monuments began to rise again in the years of *Brown vs. Board of Ed*, the desegregation of Little Rock High School, and the Civil Rights act of 1964. Prior to that, the segregation and mistreatment of African Americans had become a staple for Southern states. The ideology of an inferior and superior race was not abandoned by a new war and a new century, but enforced with the continuation of Jim Crow laws. Although the rise of the civil rights movement sparked the most inspirational and active era for African Americans, the era also emphasized the luring hold the Confederate past had on Southern States. Time after time, Southern states continued to show their dissatisfaction

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<sup>80</sup> Robert E. Weir, *The Civil War in Popular Culture*, (Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 56-63.

<sup>81</sup> Heather A. O'Connell, "Monuments outlive History: Confederate Monuments, the Legacy of Slavery, and Black-White Inequality" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43, no. 3 (Feb 2020), 460-478.

of African Americans advancing socially in society. These instances were accompanied by violent outbursts, protests, and renewed Confederate symbolism.

Southern conflict with African Americans gaining rights was clearly displayed on September 23, 1957. In the early morning, a mob of about 10,000 white people were on a rampage of fighting, cursing and crying on the streets outside of Little Rock High School. A police line was almost unrestrained by the hysteria, but the police were able to hold it. The crowd roamed the streets, trying repeatedly to break through the police line while, “husky men and boys” fought with the police, broke car windows, and attempted to tip over a truck with African Americans in it. Meanwhile, women and teen-aged girls stood sobbing and pleading with other students to leave school, and some parents went into the school to retrieve their children from classrooms. Inside the school, there was yelling, confusion, and pushing among the students and staff. Overall, about 25 persons including men, women, and children, were arrested as a result of their actions.<sup>82</sup> To accent the violence, Confederate flags waved high next to a sign that read “Race Mixing is Communism.”<sup>83</sup>

Although the chilly morning started peacefully, the town was expected to show up at the school in a rage due to the new integration policy. Officers were armed with regulation revolvers and “billy clubs,” and set barricades in place for the mob that was foreseen to come. Nine African American students were about to go to their first day of school at Little Rock High School in 1957. It was the second time in three weeks that the students had attempted to attend the high school after the United States Supreme Court ruled racial segregation as unconstitutional. The harassment of the nine African American students continued throughout

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<sup>82</sup> *Arkansas Gazette*, Vol. 188 No. 308 (September 1957).

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

the day by the protesters. A society of white individuals protesting African Americans advancing their rights in school could not forget the hierarchy system they once held.

Perhaps one of the most well-known photos of the integration of African American and white students at Little Rock high school is an image of a young white boy, surrounded by what seems to be his other white classmates (Figure 4). All smiling, the boy is holding up the Confederate flag confidently showing a man in a suit. One can infer that from the image and the stance of the crowd, they were protesting the desegregation of Little Rock, justifying it with the Confederate Flag. In the photos of the Little Rock protests, the Confederate flag can be continually seen in the mobs of whites that were against the desegregation. This imagery and symbolism of the Confederate flag represents more than Southern states heritage. It symbolizes the message they were sending to African Americans at the time of the Civil Rights movement. Although the Confederate flag had been a long gone official flag of the South, the citizens used it to show their views on race and inferiority. By continually displaying this symbol, a clear message was drawn as to what white Southerners believed.

The Confederate flag made numerous appearances in the images from the Civil Rights movement. It was used to show that the South disapproved the advancing rights of African Americans. The Confederate flag made a prominent reappearance in the South following the end of World War II. A group of Southern states seceded from the Democratic Party and began their own political party, the Dixiecrats. The Confederate flag was synonymous with the Dixiecrat campaign in the 1948 presidential election. However, before 1948, it had appeared occasionally in Southern society; mostly at football games at Southern universities, and usually at Confederacy organization events. Once the Dixiecrats got hold of it as a matter of defiance against their Democratic colleagues in the North, the Confederate flag took on a new life, or a



second life. In the 1950s, as the Civil Rights Movement built up steam, it can be seen in more public displays. The flag built so much popularity in the 50's, to the point where the state of Georgia in 1956 redesigned its state flag to include the Confederate battle flag.<sup>84</sup>

The flag had and still remains a contentious issue for African Americans. It is a government endorsement of slavery and white supremacy. Flying in the faces of the oppressed during a movement meant to empower and protect the rights of African Americans, the flag represented more than the Civil War at the time. The ideology of the Lost Cause and the inferiority of African Americans coincided with the teachings of Southern views on the Civil War, slavery, and civil rights. The Confederate flag held value to Southerners who defied and rewrote the history of race and human conflict. The exact opposite of what African Americans were trying to achieve then and still today. Although the flag is memorialized as a piece of history and remembrance of patriotism, one cannot ignore the places that it was flown and the messages it was conveying.

## **Conclusion**

Children's literature published during the birth of the Lost Cause rhetoric has been the catalyst for present views on the Civil War. In recent years, Confederate monuments have been on the forefront of racial and political controversy. The rise of far-right politics has created an environment where racism and ethical differences have been at the forefront of our national political discussion. This has increased attention to Confederate monuments and what they

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<sup>84</sup>Kari A. Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 96-104.

represent to the towns in which they are displayed. Southern states' decision on whether to keep Confederate monuments up in prominent Southern areas has divided the nation. The message that these Confederate symbols are conveying is white supremacy to some, while others claim that it is memorializing their heritage. The controversy has led individuals to vandalize the monuments by dousing them with paint or even pulling them down.

One of the most recent controversies was on the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hills campus with the Confederate memorial called, “Silent Sam.” In 1911, the United Daughters of the Confederacy put up the statue to portray “a handsome and suitable monument on the grounds of our State University, in memory of the Chapel Hill boys, who left college, 1861-1865 and joined our Southern Army in defense of our State.” The name “Silent Sam” came from the idea that the soldier did not have a box of ammunition to go along with the rifle he carries. After 1965, the statue has been defaced multiple times and sparked debate over the Confederate monument's meaning. However, an upset student body said their final goodbye as they ripped down the statue in August 2018. The question of what to do with the remains and has continued to fuel a heated battle. The university thought it had found an answer in November when it reached an agreement to give the statue to the North Carolina Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and fund a \$2.5 million trust to display it somewhere off campus. But rather than settle the issue, the pact infuriated professors, alumni and students, who accused the university's board of governors of entering into a back-room deal with a white nationalist group.

This is one out of the many controversies of Confederate monuments that has led individuals to question the reasoning behind the establishment of Confederate memorials. Not only that, many are realizing the message that the Confederacy and the memorials portray is often steeped in white supremacy. This opens the discussion for a larger view on the Civil War

and the products of a generation that was unsatisfied with the result of it. While the North flourished with little destruction and economic militaristic gain, the South was physically and economically devastated after using all of its resources on the war. Slavery, the main cause of the Civil War, was heavily disputed by the South. After the war, they spread lies on how life as a slave actually was. The emergence of the Lost Cause in children's literature has been a breeding ground for Southern ideology. By teaching a future leading generation of Southern states the “truth” on the Civil War and controlling the publishing industry that was educating youth, the Lost Cause silently infiltrated the minds of Southerners. It has created a rippled effect lasting generations all the way up through the present day.

The Daughters of the Confederacy have been the main reason this ideology has been communicated to Southern children. The creation of the Children of the Confederacy and their rituals fostered an environment to advance Civil War myths. For Southerners who could not join the Children of the Confederacy, the UDC rapidly moved to control the publication of school and fiction books that had underlying themes of racism and white supremacy. Authors of these books created vehicles to spread Lost Cause ideology and implemented this myth in the way Southern Children grew up. The UDC played arguably one of the most essential roles in how the foundation of racism and white supremacy became instilled in Southern youth after the Civil War. One of their main subjects taught was Southern interpretation of slavery.

The interpretation of slavery has been at the forefront of the elements involving the Lost Cause. In the South, slavery was not taught to be the cause of the war. Rather, it was state's rights. This allowed Southern authors to whitewash how slaves were treated and pass it off as fair. The cruelty and inhumanity of the system has been reduced down to piety and graciousness. The misinterpretation of how life was on a plantation for slaves was described as a loving, family

relationship. Authors wrote that slaves were treated like family and they were upset to know that after the Civil War they would be free.

The education of Southern children was shaped by UDC historians, who were in charge of writing the truth for these textbooks. The continuation of textbook policies shaped a generation to be uneducated on the real dangers of slavery, racial superiority, and the significance of the Civil War. This basis of education was translated into the 20th century during the era of Jim Crow laws and racial segregation. The systematic oppression of African Americans was pushed by individuals in the South that had grown up with the generation that had either participated in the Civil War or lived right after it. Therefore, the product of a racist generation created an environment where it was justified to treat African Americans brutally and unfairly. This is shown through the opposition of African American advancement in rights and the brutal attacks by organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan.

The Confederate flag became a frequent tool of opposition to the Civil Rights movement. It was often used in instances when individuals were opposing the advancement of African American rights. As it was waved next to racist messages and was flown by white supremacists, the message of what the Confederacy represented was a clear position in this debate. To this day, African Americans testify how the Confederate flag makes them feel in reference to the emotions it invokes. Robert Bonner, a historian focusing on the debate over the Confederate flag, reaffirms this by explaining that while Southerner's may be prideful of their heritage, African American's see the flag imaginatively soaked in blood.<sup>85</sup>

Data gathered by the Southern Poverty Law Center exemplifies the dangers left behind by the misinformation of slavery and the Civil War. It offers an in-depth analysis of 15 state

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<sup>85</sup> Robert Booner, *Colors and Blood: flag passions of the Confederate South* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002), 45-48.

standards and 10 popular U.S. history textbooks, including two that specifically teach Alabama and Texas history. Schools, to this day, are still inadequately teaching the history of American slavery. Educators are not sufficiently prepared to teach about slavery, textbooks do not contain enough information on it, which results in children across America lacking the basic knowledge of the origins of slavery and the impacts on race perception in the United States. The report revealed that only eight percent of high school seniors surveyed could identify slavery as the central cause of the Civil War. Most could not name the amendment to the U.S. Constitution that formally ended slavery. Fewer than half (forty-four percent) correctly answered that slavery was legal in all colonies during the American Revolution. The point is that the Lost Cause ideology did not stop at the Southern borders. It has infiltrated the North and the South. Most northern children today will answered “state’s rights” instead of “slavery” when asked about the cause of the war. The miseducation on the dangers of slavery implemented by the South after the Civil War will be evident until our education system across the United States correct the wrongs in their children’s literature and properly inform educators.<sup>86</sup>

This paper argues that children’s literature fueled Lost Cause ideology in the years following the Civil War. The creation of fiction and textbooks for children encouraged the view of the Confederacy to ignore the hardships and struggles that African Americans endured. The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the rest of Southern individuals enabling this rhetoric can be seen clearly throughout the twentieth century and into today. It is arguable that the reason for many prejudices root back to how we teach our children to think. When we examine history in relation to the education of children, society is confronted by the issue of premeditated actions

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<sup>86</sup> Kate Shushter, “Teaching Hard History” (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2018).

on the part of adults. When enabling adults introduce specific experiences and morals into the lives of children, it is usually with forethought. The issue of white supremacy and African American inferiority needs to be examined with this in mind. As the products of generations to come continue to discuss a war that changed our country forever, adults should keep in mind historical fact, and strengthen the history told in children's literature.

List of Figures



Figure 1

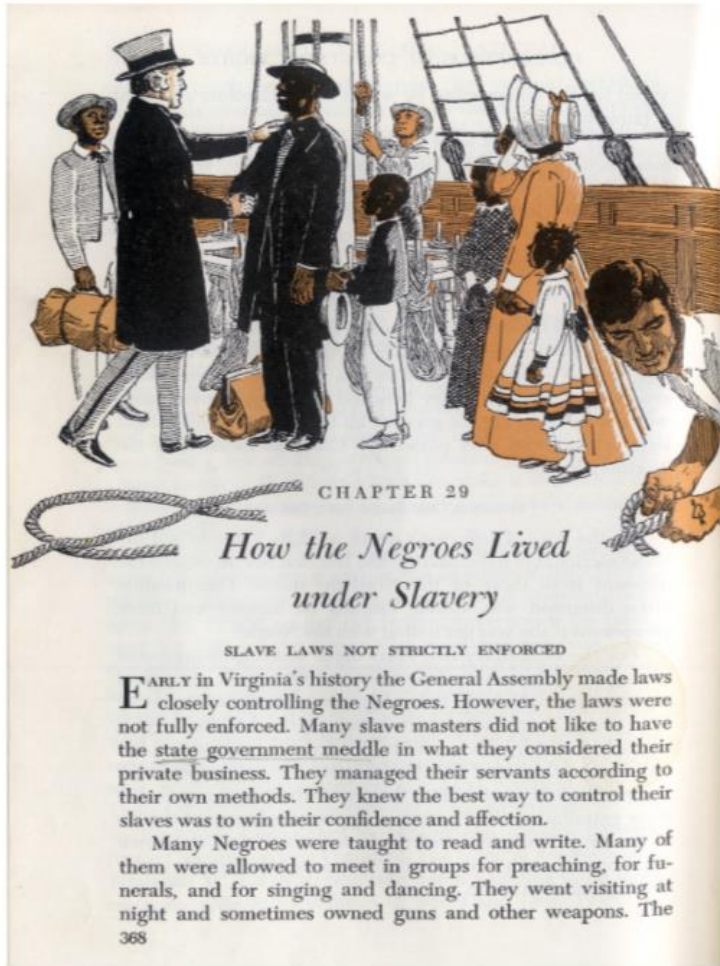


Figure 2



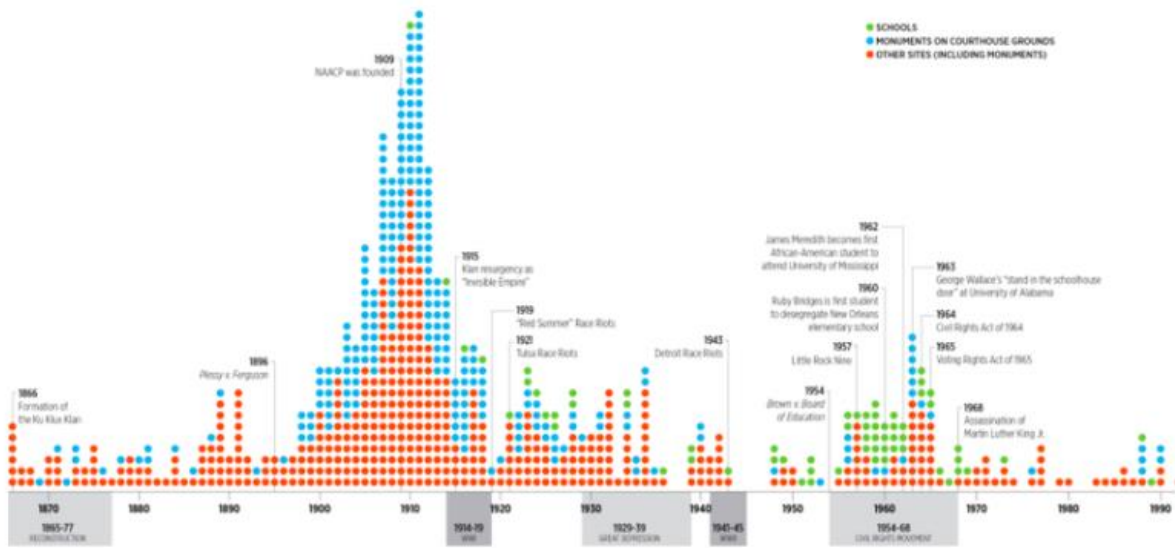


Figure 3



Figure 4

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