

History 225
McKnight (Off. Hrs.
MW 1-2//; T/TR 10-11;
or by appt.)

Spring '97

Civil War & Reconstruction (1861-1877)

Texts for course: James McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom; Eric Foner, A Short History of Reconstruction; Gabor Boritt (ed.) Why the Confederacy Lost; Gerald Linderman, Embattled Courage.

Purpose & Performance: The focus of this course is on the Civil War and the immediate postwar period, the era of Reconstruction.

One cautionary note so as to not misrepresent the course, the instructor has no expertise in military history. He has not enthusiasm for military minutiae or what might be described as the "What-did-Robert-E-Lee-have-for-breakfast-on-the-third-day-of-Gettysburg" school of thought. At the same time he is interested in the speculation that Lee, suffering from angina and dosed with quinine, may not have been thinking correctly on the third day when he sent Pickett's division and many others into the jaws of almost certain death. So he rejects the other school of thought that prefers to fight the Civil War without mentioning the "unpleasant facts" of this fiery trial. The expectation is that the readings will provide a good interpretative overview of the military or battlefield side of the war and its impact on politics, diplomacy, economics, and the social side or the impact on the home front.

Class format: The course will be a mix of some traditional lecture, expected class discussion based on assigned readings, film excerpts, and a field trip.

Grades and all that: The grade in this course will be roughly based in the following manner:

Two hourly exams200 pts.
Final exam100 pts.
One assigned book report100 pts.
One unassigned book report.100 pts.

Informed class discussion will definitely count toward the final grade in the course.

Policy statement: You are expected to take tests and turn in assigned written work on the dates stipulated by instructor. In the event of an emergency you must notify the instructor before the scheduled assignment. The instructor insists on some documentation explaining the reason for missing any assigned work. The instructor reserves the right to determine the nature of any make-up work and

whether he will grade down any late assignment. As far as attendance is concerned you are permitted two unexcused absences. If you have more than two the instructor reserves the right to take this into account when computing the final course grade.

January 27th Orientation

29th And the War Came

Readings: McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom (hereafter cited as BCF), Chpts. 8 & 9.

February 3rd Organizing for War/Bean Counting North & South.

Readings: BCF, Chpts. 10 & 11; read also Introduction from Boritt (ed.) Why the Confederacy Lost(hereafter cited as Boritt).

5th Early Campaigns/Wartime Diplomacy.

Readings: BCF, Chpts. 12 & 13; read also the McPherson essay in Boritt.

10th. Commanders: Blue & Gray.

Readings: BCF, Chpts. 14 & 15; read also Gallagher essay in Boritt; Jones essay in Boritt is optional.

12th Evolution of Union War Aims

Readings: BCF, Chpts 15 & 16

17th Lincoln's Thunderbolt--The Emancipation Proclamation.

Readings: BCF, Chpts. 17 & 18

19th. Ken Burns film on Antietam

24th Book Report on Linderman's Embattled Courage due in class

26th Field trip (if it works out)

March 3rd First Hourly Exam

March 5th Politics of War

Readings: BCF, Chpt. 20; read also Ira Berlin "How the Slaves
Freed Themselves" on Library Reserve.

. **Mid-Semester Break**

March 17th . . . Gettysburg: A Second Turning Point

Readings: BCF, Chpts. 21 & 22

19th Lincoln and Black Freedom

Readings: BCF, Chpt. 23; read also Glatthaar essay in Boritt.

24th Grant/Sherman & Strategy of Raids

Readings: BCF, Chpts. 24 & 25; film excerpts from Burns'
"Valley of the Shadow of Death, 1864."

26th Election of 1864--A third Turning Point?

Readings, BCF, Chpt. 26; read also Mitchell essay in Boritt.

April 2nd. . . Endgame--The Hard Hand of War/the "Lincoln
Conspiracy"

Readings: BCF, Chpts. 27, 28 & Epilogue

April 7th **Second Hourly Exam**

History 225
Re: Class syllabus
Page three

- April 9th . . . Reconstruction: The Setting of the Era
 Read Eric Foner, Reconstruction (hereafter cited as Foner),
 Chpts. 1-3.
- April 14th . . . Presidential Reconstruction
 Read Foner, Chpts. 4 & 5
- April 16th . . . Congress Opposes Johnson
 Read Foner, Chpts 6 & 7
- April 21st Congressional Reconstruction--Black & White . .
 Read, Foner, Chpt. 8
- April 23rd . . . Grantism & Counter-Revolution
 Read, Foner, Chpts. 9 & 10
- April 28th . . . End of an Era.
 Read, Foner, Chpt. 11
- April 30th Toward the New South
 Read, Foner, Chpt. 12 & Epilogue
- May 5th Review for Final

- April 4th Second Hourly Exam
- 6th Reconstruction: The Setting of the Problem . . .
Read Foner, Reconstruction(hereafter cited as Foner),
Chpts. 1-3
- 11th Presidential Reconstruction
Read Foner, Chpts. 4 7 5; read also N. Silber, Chpt. 16
in Divided Houses
- 13th Congress Opposes Johnson
Read Foner, Chpts. 6 & 7; read also C. Clinton, Chpt. 17
in Divided Houses
- 18th Congressional Reconstruction-Black and White . . .
Read Foner, Chpt. 8
- 20th White Terror--The Klan Conspiracy
- 25th Grantism and Counter-Revolution
Read Foner, Chpts. 9 & 10; read also V. Bynum, Chpt. 18,
in Divided Houses
- 27th End of an Era
Read Foner, Chpt. 11
- May 2nd Toward the New South
Read Foner, Chpt. 12 & Epilogue
- May 4th open
- May 9th Review for final exam

History 225
Page five

Re: Outline/Notes w/ End of an Era--II

III Redeemer Program for the "New South"

A. Political Control

Redeemers built up the one-party rule in the South. Lasted until the 1950s. The so-called solid South. Generally its politics was marked by reaction and a dead hand against against any racial or labor progressive legislation.

The Democratic party played on the old cult of the Antebellum South--the mythology of the "Lost Cause." The South was always attached to the noble cause of preserving the Constitution of their fathers who stood against the encroaching power of Northern majorities who threatened to stamp out the South's filial devotion to state rights. The South fought the Civil War to protect state rights(nothing about slavery), white supremacy, and honor against the wicked centralizing horde of Lincoln Republicans. Then the South fought against these same tendencies during the Reconstruction Era to return to wrest control from "outsiders" who planned to impress upon them "foreign" governments and corrupt black rule.

Forgotten in all this mythologizing of the "Noble Cause" and the Redeemer Myth was the Confederacy's own centralizing wartime government in Richmond, the Confederacy's decision for emancipation in the last months of the war, the massive desertion rates among the Gray forces, and the sudden collapse of Old Dixie. With the Redeemer Myth was the convenient exclusion of the fact that the short-lived congressional Reconstruction governments--with all their faults--were still the best govts. the South had ever had to that point in time.

The Redeemer governments played on the theme that the South could remain independent only if it voted Democratic. Their program for the one-party South was white supremacy, sectional patriotism, and a new morality. With these virtues in place the Redeemers would construct a "New South"--built on the fruits on industrialization and progress.

The Rdeemers built up political machines at the grassroots level and controlled "courthouse politics." They used the poll tax, ballot box stuffing, open fraud, gerrymandering of electoral districts, the black vote when it served their purpose, and unadulterated violence when necessary to carry the day and keep their power intact.

History 225

Page six

Re: Outline/Notes w/ End of an Era--II

B. Economic Policies of the Redeemers

1. Economic retrenchment: Expenditures by these govts were on the average about 75% lower than the Radical governments they replaced. The motto was "Spend nothing unless absolutely necessary."

The public sectors of the South suffered. Public education was one of the areas hit hardest. School terms fell off by 20%; illiteracy rose. In Tennessee the illiteracy rate from Reconstruction days went up 50% in the 1880s.

The "New South" was building a pool of ignorant whites-Rednecks--who would in turn provide the political support for the coming racist demagogues of the turn of the century and into the 20th century.

Retrenchment meant the decline in all other public services and welfare programs--public institutions set up by the congressional govts to aid the blind, the poor, the insane, all deteriorated and largely vanished.

C. Labor policies--reversion back to policies to control the labor of southern blacks. Foner points out a recrudescence of Black Code-like provisions against vagrancy, enticement laws, the transformation by law of the sharescropper system to the point where it took away the sharecropper's rights to any claim on the crop.

1. Convict lease system was the most telltale indication or litmus test about the deterioration of free labor system in the "New South." The states made available to corporations--usually Northern businesses like rrs, timber, and mining--access to prisoners in the state penitentiaries. They were hired out to make money for the states.

To assure a steady recruitment of "prisoners" Mississippi showed the way w/ the "pig law." The law made the theft of property valued as little as \$10.00 or more a grand larceny charge with prison sentences as high as five years in the "slammer."

Prisoner conditions on this system: read from addendum.

History 225

Re: Some selected sources useful for further illumination of materials covered in the course

- Wm. Davis, *The Cause Lost: Myths and Realities of the Confederacy* (1996) for his essay "Myths and Realities of the Confederacy."
- Charles Royster, essay "Fort Sumter: At Last the War," in Gabor Boritt(ed.), *Why the War Came*
- Wm. Davis, *ibid.*
- Gabor Boritt, "And the War Came: Lincoln and the Question of Individual Responsibility," in Boritt (ed.), *And the War Came*(1996)
- James McPherson, "The War of Southern Aggression," essay in his *Drawn With the Sword: Reflections on the American Civil War*(1996)
- Wm. Davis essay in *ibid.* Part I a series of essays on Jefferson Davis and His Generals."
- Gabor Boritt (ed.), *Lincoln's Generals*(1994)
- Edwin Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union: The Untold Story of Military Intelligence in the Civil War*(1996)
- Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians*(1995)
- Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Partners in Command: The Relations Between Leaders in the Civil War*, (1994).
- James McPherson, *Why They Fought, 1861-1865* (1996)
- Ibid.* "Who Freed the Slaves?" in his *Drawn With the Sword*.
- Ibid.* "Antebellum Southern Exceptionalism. A New Look at an Old Question," in his *Drawn With the Sword*.
- Gary Gallagher (ed.), *The Third Day at Gettysburg & Beyond* for his essay "Lee's Army Has Not Lost Any of Its Prestige." (1994)
- James Kegel, *North With Lee and Jackson: The Lost Story of Gettysburg* (1996)
- Thomas Goodrich, *Black Flag: Guerrilla Warfare on the Western Border, 1861-1865*(1995).
- Ibid.* *Bloody Dawn: The Story of the Lawrence Massacre* (1991)
- Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri During the American Civil War* (1989).
- Ibid.* *Sherman*
- Duane Schultz, *Over the Earth I Come: The Great Sioux Uprising of 1862*.(1992)
- Ibid.* *Quantrill*(1996)
- Mark Neely, Jr., "Was the Civil War a Total War?" *Civil War History*, vol. 37, no. 1 (March 1991).
- John B. Walters, "General Sherman and Total War," *Journal of Southern History*, vol. 14 (November 1948).
- Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans* (1991).
- Ernest Furgurson, *Ashes of Glory: Richmond at War*(1996).