

The Tennessee Valley Civil War Round Table

Official Recommended Reading List

The Reading List is prepared and offered as a guide to learning and understanding the events and consequences regarding the most divisive event in our Nation's history. The recommendations are divided into two major categories. The first is, what our board believes, are books that will acquaint the student/enthusiast with the significant aspects of the Civil War. They are the starting point to understanding. As authors and books are evaluated the categories may be changed, added or deleted.

These books complement material used in classrooms around the Nation from elementary schools through Universities. Yet, any professional reading list is, of course, only an introduction and there is other material worth reading.

- Detailed Overview
- Campaigns and battles
- Biographies
- Memoirs
- Strategy and logistics
- Navy
- Political
- Reconstruction
- Novels and stories
- The Home front

The additional reading recommended compose titles that amplify the topics, provide detailed analysis, and additional insight into the Civil War. The books listed do not imply that the Round Table endorses the authors' views or interpretations. Nevertheless, these books contain thought provoking concepts relevant to the Civil War and illustrate the development of a unique American culture that still guide our political leaders in an ever changing world.

- The Campaigns and battles
- The Generals
- Presidents and other politicians
- Literature of the time
- Slave Memoirs and the African-American experience in the Civil War
- War in Northern Alabama
- Social histories

Finally, there is a section for the personal favorites of our members.

If you have a recommendation to add to the reading list let us know. Provide the title of the book and a short description (500 words or less) that illustrates why it contributes to the understanding of the Civil War. You may send your recommendation to the Newsletter editor through the website.

Detailed Over View of the Civil War:

Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era, James M. McPherson, Oxford University Press, 1988

McPherson has written a brilliant account of the American Civil War—the war that made the country what it is today. He discusses in clear, incisive detail the causes of the war, the military operations, the Soldiers, the leaders, and the political, economic, and social aspects of life in the Union and the Confederacy before and during the war. With many experts judging it to be the best one-volume history of the Civil War, it provides an excellent introduction to the most significant war fought by the American Army. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and required reading by University Professors across the Nation; United States Army Recommended Reading List

The Lost Cause, The Standard Southern History of the War of the Confederates by E.A. Pollard, E. B. Treat and Company publishers, New York 1867, 752 pages.

The United States is a different place now when compared to 1867; women can vote, civil rights legislation is 54 years old, church is no longer allowed in schools. No one is alive that remembers exactly what happened or why it happened and in many ways just as confused in 1866 as citizens are confused today regarding domestic political issues. The Lost Cause is the Southern interpretation of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Today, we rely principally upon honorable historians to analyze the plethora of data and interpret the events, social attitudes, and other conditions that existed in the 19th Century. Similar historians dissect the personalities of every key leader in Blue and Gray to criticize their judgment under fire, their post war analysis, and other personal limitations. Often quoting each other without investigating the facts of their quote, if facts are available, and they apply judgment based upon their perspectives regarding the country around them as they write not the perspectives of the country as it was in the 19th Century. If a student of the Civil War can get through the writing style of 19th Century America to understand their perspective, it may contrast with contemporary perspectives. The Lost Cause is a baseline for interpreting the events of the 19th Century and may add clarity to opposing arguments regarding either subject being pursued. It isn't that 19th Century perspectives are all together correct or faults but for the student of the Civil War and all its implications it is far more reasonable to assess the "Why" as close to the source of the perspective as possible than to accept the perspective of a contemporary historian without question.

Campaigns and Battles:

The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command, Edwin Coddington, Touchstone, 1984

In spite of its age, Coddington's work remains the authoritative single-volume text on the engagement. A perennial favorite among buffs, battlefield guides, and scholars, this masterpiece is eight hundred pages of exceptional military history.

Traversing the planning stages of the raid in May 1863 to the return of the Army of Northern Virginia to its namesake six weeks later. The Gettysburg Campaign provides balance and coverage through a chronological weave of troop movements, statistics, letters, dispatches, and eyewitness accounts. No stones, it seems, are left unturned, from the more famous boulders on the Little Round Top to the unsung but deadly rock wall along Oak Ridge.

Though Coddington is generally impartial, he openly contributes his views. He presents Meade in a favorable light, crediting the commander for making a string of sensible decisions in a rushed and traumatic environment. The author is lenient toward Jeb Stuart, suggesting the cavalry commander operated to the best of his abilities on vague orders. Longstreet does not receive a favorable review, depicted in several chapters as gloomy and inflexible corps commander. Yet whenever Coddington offers his perspective, he is careful to include viewpoints from other historians and participants of the battle. His endnotes are invaluable on this point alone, overflowing with the divergent details and opinions unveiled over the preceding century.

Most impressive is Coddington's attention to the lower levels of command and the physical conditions of the field. Rather than paint an operatic battle of wills and male bonding, he details the roles of communication, troop strength, terrain, and timing.

Within its military framework, The Gettysburg Campaign remains the best overview available.

Decision in the West: The Atlanta Campaign of 1864, Albert Castel, University Pr. of Kansas, 1992

In writing this book, Albert Castel provided the first detailed history of the Campaign published since Jacob D. Cox's version appeared in 1882. Unlike Cox, who was a general in Sherman's army, Castel provides an objective perspective and a comprehensive account based on primary and secondary sources that have become available in the past 110 years. Castel gives a full and balanced treatment to the operations of both the Union and Confederate armies from the perspective of the common soldiers as well as the top generals. He offers new accounts and analyses of many of the major events of the campaign, and, in the process, corrects many long-standing myths, misconceptions, and mistakes. In particular, he challenges the standard view

of Sherman's performance. Newer studies have been written about this campaign, but not better.

A Stillness at Appomattox; Bruce Catton, Anchor Books, 1990

The book narrates the final year of the Civil War from Wilderness through Petersburg, Virginia, and finally to the climax at Appomattox. Catton provides an emotionally charged account of the surrender scene, when Generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee finally meet. This is the third book in Catton's Army of the Potomac trilogy. US Army Recommended Reading List

April 1865: The Month That Saved America; Jay Winik, Harper Perennial, 2006

Written by a former government official with firsthand knowledge of several twentieth-century civil wars, this book recounts the pivotal events that occurred during the final month of the American Civil War and explains their significance. The momentous events included the fall of Richmond and the flight of the Confederate government, Confederate General Robert E. Lee's surrender to Union General in Chief Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, and President Abraham Lincoln's assassination at Ford's Theater. Winik argues that Lee's stoic dignity at Appomattox, combined with Grant's quiet magnanimity, set in motion the healing process that reunified North and South and made the United States a stronger nation than it had been before the war. United States Army Reading List

Biographies:

Lincoln, David W. Donald, Simon and Schuster, 1995

Pulitzer Prize-winning biography, *Lincoln* is a superb, one-volume portrait of Abraham Lincoln's life and presidency. David Donald brilliantly depicts Lincoln's gradual ascent from humble beginnings in rural Kentucky to into the political circles in Illinois, and finally to the presidency of a country threatened by division and civil war. Donald illuminates the gradual development of Lincoln's character, chronicling his tremendous capacity for evolution and growth, and illustrates what made it possible for a man so inexperienced and so unprepared for the presidency to become a great moral leader and one of the greatest presidents this country has ever seen.

Lincoln and His Generals; by T. Harry Williams, Vintage Books, 2011

First published in 1952, *Lincoln and His Generals* remains one of the definitive accounts of Abraham Lincoln's wartime leadership. In it, Williams

dramatizes Lincoln's long and frustrating search for an effective leader of the Union Army and traces Lincoln's transformation from a politician with little military knowledge into a master strategist of the Civil War. Explored in-depth are Lincoln's often fraught relationships with generals such as George B. McClellan, John Pope, Ambrose E. Burnside, Joseph Hooker, John C. Fremont, and of course, Ulysses S. Grant. In this superbly written narrative, Williams demonstrates how Lincoln's persistent "meddling" into military affairs was crucial to the Northern war effort and utterly transformed the president's role as commander in chief. United States Army Reading List

Memoirs:

Personal Memoirs: Ulysses S. Grant; Ulysses S. Grant, Modern Library, 1999

A classic and honest study by one of America's greatest generals, this is one of the finest autobiographies of a military commander ever written. It has valuable insights into leadership and command that apply to all levels and in all times. Grant's resiliency under almost unimaginable stress during critical junctures of America's most bloody war makes him a fascinating and human case study of the "epitomized" Soldier. US Army Recommended Reading List

Reading the Man: A portrait of Robert E. Lee through his letters, Elizabeth Pryor, Penguin, 2008

A more recent compilation of Lee's private correspondence with commentary, which presents a more balanced but fair portrait of the man. There are surprises here: As commandant at West Point, Lee was authoritarian and not beloved by cadets, who resented his authoritarian ways. Although Lee had his doubts about the utility of slavery as an institution, his views on race relations were not enlightened and the Lee's never freed their slaves. However, these letters and Pryor's analysis reinforce one's appreciation of Lee's best qualities, including his devotion to friends and family, his sense of fairness, and his ability as a leader.

Fighting for the Confederacy, E. Porter Alexander, edited by Gary W. Gallagher, Univ. North Carolina Pr., 1989

This is one of the richest personal accounts of the Civil War. Alexander was involved in nearly all of the great battles of the East, from First Manassas through Appomattox, and his duties brought him into frequent contact with most of the high command of the Army of Northern Virginia, including Joseph Johnston, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and James Longstreet. No other Civil War veteran of his stature matched Alexander's ability to discuss operations in penetrating and illuminating detail. This is especially true of his

descriptions of Gettysburg and the siege of Petersburg. His narrative is also remarkable for its candid appraisals of leaders on both sides.

Incidents in the Civil War: Civil War Journals of Mary Jane Chadick, Nancy Rohr ed., Silver Threads Publishing, 2005

The civil war diary of Mary Jane Chadick of Huntsville, Alabama is a valuable source of information of the life and times of residents in North Alabama during the civil war and particularly the impact of Union occupation had on the populace. One of the first sources for regional and nationally recognized authors writing about the southern home front

Strategy and Logistics:

The Civil War in the West: Victory and Defeat from the Appalachians to the Mississippi, Earl J. Hess, Univ. North Carolina Pr., 2012

The Western theater of the Civil War, stretched 600 miles north to south and 450 miles east to west from the Appalachians to the Mississippi. If the South lost the West, there would be little hope of preserving the Confederacy. Hess's study of how Federal forces conquered and held the West examines the geographical difficulties of conducting campaigns in a vast land, as well as the toll irregular warfare took on soldiers and civilians alike. Hess also explains what was happening within the occupied territories, and how Federal policies toward the southern population changed dramatically as the war went on. The United States won in the west because their armies made much more effective use of technology, managed their superior resources much better, and because their commanders developed an aggressive strategy focused on destroying Confederate resources while undermining the southern people's confidence in victory. In the end, the Confederates did not manage their manpower, supplies, transportation potential, or leadership well enough to counter Union initiatives in this critical region.

Retreat from Gettysburg, Kent M. Brown, Univ. North Carolina Pr., 2005

As Hess presents military logistics at the macro-level, Brown presents logistics at a lower level, drawing on previously untapped sources to chronicle the massive effort of General Robert E. Lee and his staff as they sought to move people, equipment, and scavenged supplies through hostile territory and plan the Army of Northern Virginia's next moves. Even though the battle of Gettysburg was a defeat for the Army of Northern Virginia, Lee's successful retreat maintained the balance of power in the eastern theater and left his army with enough forage, stores, and fresh meat to ensure its continued existence as an effective force.

Navy:

Lincoln and His Admirals, by Craig Symonds, Oxford University Press, 2008

It fills the void resulting from the frequent neglect of the naval aspects of the Civil War. It is a comprehensive account of the events and personalities involved in this crucial phase of the Civil War that is told in a fine narrative style and the author provides a compelling story of how Lincoln's initial reluctance to command was replaced by an increasing confidence that led to his personal role in many great and small details of naval administration. It reflects the growth of Lincoln as a Commander-in-Chief and includes portraits of many naval officers nearly lost to history and tallies their strengths and weakness. It is both an academic work that is highly readable and will be of equal interest to readers be they scholars or general history fans. This book raises a number of questions about how a naval power can use that dominance to influence the course of events on the land.

Political:

Constitution of the United States of America:

<http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution.html>

Particular attention should be paid to the clauses regarding slavery, state rights, and withdrawing from the Union.

Constitution of the Confederate States of America:

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/csa_csa.asp

Particular attention should be paid to the clause regarding slavery and governing the Confederacy.

The Declarations and Ordinances of Secession of the Eleven Confederate States

http://www.civil-war.net/pages/ordinances_secession.asp

On this site, one may find the declarations and ordinances of their home or chosen state(s).

Most of the eleven states published Declarations, listing their reasons for seceding from the United States, in addition to Ordinances proclaiming their official secession from the Union. Alabama did not, and its reason for secession is contained in the Ordinance of Secession.

Inaugural Address of Abraham Lincoln:

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/lincoln1.asp

Second Inaugural Address of Abraham Lincoln:
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/lincoln2.asp

Inaugural Address of Jefferson Davis:
<https://jeffersondavis.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=88>
His first, delivered at Montgomery, AL 18 Feb 1861.

<https://jeffersondavis.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=107>
His second, delivered at Richmond Virginia 22 Feb 1862

**Two Speeches by Alexander Stevens, Confederate States Vice-President:
The ‘Cornerstone’ Speech, Savannah, Georgia-March 21, 1861; Speech to
the Virginia Secession Convention [Excerpt], April 23, 1861**

<http://www.ucs.louisiana.edu/~ras2777/amgov/stephens.html>

Reconstruction:

A Short History of Reconstruction, 1863-1877; by Eric Foner, Harper & Row 1990

A study of the Reconstruction era illustrating the expectations of the military, freedmen, political pundits and administration all impacting upon the American culture's prejudices and social justice issues for another century plus. Required reading by professors of Civil War history and reconstruction across the nation

Novels and Stories:

The Killer Angels; Michael Shaara, Modern Library, 2004

This Pulitzer Prize-winning novel (1974) recounts the battle of Gettysburg from a fictional point of view and was the basis for the 1993 film *Gettysburg*. The author tells the events immediately before and during the battle as seen through the eyes of Confederate Generals Robert E. Lee, James Longstreet, and Lewis A. Armistead; and Federal General John Buford and Col. Joshua L. Chamberlain; and a host of others. The author's ability to convey the thoughts of men in war as well as their confusion in the "fog of battle" is outstanding. United States Army Recommended Reading List.

The Red Badge of Courage; Stephen Crane, Tor Classics, 1990

A classic of American literature, this Civil War novel depicts a Union Soldier's terrifying baptism of fire and his ensuing transformation from coward to hero.

Originally published in 1895, its vivid evocation of battle remains unsurpassed. United States Army Recommended Reading List.

The Home Front:

A year in the South 1865; by Stephen V. Ash

The book illustrates the life of four Ordinary people living through and impacted by the political and military action of the American Civil War. Required reading by Civil War professors at the University of Alabama Huntsville.

Mothers of Invention: Women in the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War, Drew Gilpin Faust, University of North Carolina Pr., 1996

When Confederate men marched off to battle, southern women struggled with the new responsibilities of directing farms and plantations, providing for families, and supervising increasingly restive slaves. Drew Faust offers a compelling picture of the more than half-million women who belonged to the slaveholding families of the Confederacy during this period of acute crisis, when every part of these women's lives became vexed and uncertain.

Other Books that will amplify the understanding of the era and our Nation

The Campaigns and Battles

Gettysburg, Stephen W. Sears, Mariner Books, 2003

For those who prefer flowing narrative to meticulous examination, Stephen Sears's Gettysburg is a sound choice. Whereas Coddington analyzes, Sears humanizes. Author of Chancellorsville and A Landscape Turned Red; The Battle of Antietam, Sears does not provide anything particularly new or insightful on the subject of Gettysburg, but he can paint a scene with vibrant expression.

As with Coddington, he addresses the campaign from beginning to end, but he also acknowledges the political realities of the time. For example, he elucidates the terrific pressures heaved upon the commanding generals, especially Meade, who was ordered to catch the great Robert E. Lee and simultaneously protect the civilian centers of Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington.

Sears deftly balances orders of battle with human-interest stories. He also acknowledges that combat involves sights, sounds, and smells as well as the names of officers and regiments. As for the great what-ifs, he does not avoid them, nor does he take undue liberties. James Longstreet may have been correct, Sears suggests, that a drive to the south and east would have

produced far better results than giving battle at Gettysburg, but the author acknowledges that long-term effects of such a move were ultimately indeterminable. He is generally unkind to Richard S. Ewell and R.E. Lee for their aggressive tactics over poor terrain, but he also concedes that a general lack of sound information made their every decision a difficult one.

Six Armies in Tennessee: The Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns,
Steven E. Woodworth, Univ. of Nebraska Pr., 1998

While the capture of Vicksburg largely secured the Mississippi Valley for the Federal government, the Chickamauga-Chattanooga Campaigns largely settled the war for the Confederate Heartland. Chickamauga was the supreme effort by the Davis administration to reverse their string of defeats in the West and is usually counted as a Confederate victory, albeit a costly one. That battle—indeed the entire campaign—was marked by muddle and blunders occasionally relieved by strokes of brilliant generalship and courageous fighting. While Chattanooga and Knoxville may not have been bloody and costly defeats for the Southern armies, they were decisive: These campaigns ended significant Confederate presence in Tennessee and left the Union poised to advance upon Atlanta and the Confederacy on the brink of defeat in the western theater.

The Generals

Captain Sam Grant, Lloyd Lewis and **Grant Moves South** and **Grant Takes Command**, both by Bruce Catton, Little Brown, 1995.

A three-volume Ulysses S. Grant military biography: Catton wrote the second and third volumes of this trilogy, following the publication of *Captain Sam Grant* in 1950 by historian & biographer Lloyd Lewis. Catton made extensive use of Lewis's historical research, provided by his widow, Kathryn Lewis, who personally selected Catton to continue her husband's work. *Grant Moves South* (1960) shows the growth of Grant as a military commander, from victories at Forts Henry & Donelson, to Shiloh & Vicksburg. *Grant Takes Command* (1969) recounts Grant's success at Chattanooga, his promotion to Commanding General of the United States Army, and his leadership and strategy that won the Civil War one-year and one month after his elevation.

Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command, Douglas S. Freeman, Simon and Schuster, 2001

It is the most popular of Douglas Southall Freeman's works. It is a beautifully-written narrative that presents a multiple biography, the story of the leaders of the Army of Northern Virginia who fought under Robert E. Lee. This is a more-accessible, one-volume edition abridged by noted Civil War historian Stephen W. Sears, is essential reading for all Civil War buffs, students of war, and admirers of the historian's art.

The Presidents and other politicians

Lincoln at Gettysburg, Gary Wills, Simon and Schuster, 1992

The power of words has rarely been given a more compelling demonstration than in the Gettysburg Address. Lincoln was asked to memorialize the battle. Instead he gave the whole nation "a new birth of freedom" in the space of 272 words. By examining both the address and Lincoln in their historical moment and cultural frame, Wills reveals much about a president mythologized but often misunderstood. He shows how Lincoln completed the work of the guns, and furthered an intellectual revolution.

Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Simon and Schuster, 2005

Winner of the Lincoln Prize, this book illuminates Lincoln's political genius and mastery of men, as the one-term congressman and prairie lawyer rises from obscurity to prevail over three gifted rivals of national reputation to become president. It goes on to show how President Lincoln brought these disgruntled opponents- Seward, Chase, and Bates-together, creating the most unusual cabinet in history, utilizing their talents to preserve the Union, win the war, and abolish slavery.

Literature of the Time

Civil War Poetry and Prose, Walt Whitman, Dover, 1995.

Walt Whitman experienced the upheavals and horrors of the Civil War firsthand as a volunteer in Washington's military hospitals. This selection of poems, letters, and prose from that era includes "O Captain! My Captain!" "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," "Adieu to a Soldier," and many other moving works. In addition, Walt Whitman was a significant contributor, in terms of time and energy, to recovering the bodies of Civil War soldiers and in lobbying for National Cemeteries.

Uncle Tom's Cabin, Harriet Beecher Stowe, originally published 1852.

Stowe's powerful abolitionist novel outraged a nation, and fueled the fire of the human rights debate in 1852. This incendiary novel quickly draws the reader into the world of slaves and their masters. Stowe's characters are powerfully and humanly realized, her underpinning deeply theological, her denunciations strident and compelling. In the first year after it was published, 300,000 copies of the book were sold in the United States; one million copies were sold in Great Britain. .

Slave Memoirs and the African-American Experience in the Civil War

A Slave no More- Two Men who escaped to Freedom, with their own narratives, David W. Blight, Harcourt, 2007.

This book was inspired by two newly uncovered slave narratives, the authenticated memoirs of Turnage and Washington. Handed down through family and friends, these accounts tell gripping stories of escape: Through a combination of intelligence, daring, and sheer luck, the men reached the protection of the occupying Union troops. Using a wealth of genealogical information, the author and editor has reconstructed their childhoods as sons of white slaveholders, their service as cooks and camp hands during the Civil War, and their climb to black working-class stability in the north, where they reunited their families.

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Harriet Jacobs, originally published in 1861, Dover, 2001.

One of the few extant slave narratives written by a woman, this is a valuable historical record of the continuing battle for freedom and the preservation of family. Harriet Jacobs' (1813–1897) strong personality and faith carried her from a life of servitude and degradation in North Carolina to liberty and reunion with her children in the North. Written and published in 1861, this book frankly recounts the horrors she suffered as a slave, and her eventual escape after several unsuccessful attempts.

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, originally published in 1845.

Former slave, impassioned abolitionist, brilliant writer, newspaper editor and eloquent orator whose speeches fired the abolitionist cause, Frederick Douglass (1818–1895) led an astounding life. Physical abuse, deprivation and tragedy plagued his early years, yet through sheer force of character he was able to overcome these obstacles to become a leading spokesman for his people. Douglass provides graphic descriptions of his childhood and horrifying experiences as a slave as well as a harrowing record of his dramatic escape to the North and eventual freedom.

Published in 1845 to quell doubts about his origins — since few slaves of that period could write — the *Narrative* is admired today for its passion, sensitive and vivid descriptions and storytelling power.

Sable Arm: Black Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865, Dudley Cornish, University Pr. of Kansas, 1987

A classic, this book was the first work to fully chronicle the remarkable story of the nearly 180,000 black troops who served in the Union army. Hailed by such distinguished historians as T. Harry Williams and George B. Tindall, this work inspired further, more recent study of the United States Colored Troops (USCT), and paved the way for the exploration of the black military experience in other wars.

Twelve Years a Slave, Solomon Northrup, originally published 1853m Barnes and Noble, 2007.

This memoir was the basis for the Academy Award-winning film. This is the story of Solomon Northup, who was born and raised as a freeman in New York. Having achieved a modestly successful version of the American dream, with a house, a wife and two children, he was drugged, kidnapped, and sold into slavery in the deep south. These are the true accounts of Northrup's twelve hard years as a slave before he regained his freedom with the help of a Canadian working on his plantation. Word of his enslavement was sent to New York, where state law provided for aid to free New York citizens kidnapped into slavery. Family and friends enlisted the aid of the Governor of New York, and Northup regained his freedom on January 3, 1853.

Up from Slavery, Booker T. Washington, originally published in 1901, Dover 1995.

Born a Virginia slave, Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) rose to become the most influential spokesman for African-Americans of his day. In this eloquently written book, he describes events in a remarkable life that began in bondage and culminated in worldwide recognition for his many accomplishments. In simply written yet stirring passages, he tells of his impoverished childhood and youth and, in the superb first chapter, of his and his family's first days of freedom following the end of the war.

The War in Northern Alabama

From Conciliation to Conquest: The Sack of Athens and the Court Martial of Colonel John B. Turchin, George C. Bradley and Richard L. Dahlen, University of Alabama Pr., 2006

Colonel John B. Turchin was court-martialed for authorizing his men to sack Athens, Al in retaliation for the local support rendered to Confederate irregulars in the summer of 1862. Because of the 'conciliation' policy, he was court-martialed, convicted on conduct unbecoming of a United States officer, and dismissed from military service. Because the conciliation ("kid gloves") policy was changing into 'hard war' policy, Turchin was soon reinstated to service and promoted to Brigadier General by the Lincoln administration. This

book personalizes the changing Federal policies toward the un-reconciled Southern population.

War's Desolating Scourge: The Union Occupation of Northern Alabama,
Joseph W. Donelson, Univ. Press of Kansas, 2012

When General Ormsby Mitchel and his Third Division, Army of the Ohio, marched into Huntsville in April 1862, they initiated the first occupation of an inland region in the Deep South during the Civil War. As an occupying force, soldiers were expected to adhere to President Lincoln's policy of conciliation, a conservative strategy based on the belief that most southerners were loyal to the Union. Confederate civilians in North Alabama not only rejected their occupiers' conciliatory overtures, but they began sabotaging Union telegraph lines and trains, conducting guerrilla operations, and even verbally abusing troops. Confederates' dogged resistance compelled Mitchel and his men, and later the Army and the Lincoln administration, to reject conciliation in favor of a "hard war" approach to restoring Federal authority in the region. Danielson's study reveals that Federal troops' creation of punitive civil-military policies—arrests, compulsory loyalty oaths, censorship, confiscation of provisions, and the destruction of civilian property—started much earlier than previous accounts have suggested.

Social Histories

This Republic of Suffering, Drew Gilpin Faust, Vintage 2008

More than 600,000 soldiers lost their lives in the American Civil War. An equivalent proportion of today's population would be six million. Drew Faust reveals the ways that death on such a scale changed not only individual lives but the life of the nation, describing how the survivors managed on a practical level and how a deeply religious culture struggled to reconcile the unprecedented carnage with its belief in a benevolent God. Throughout, the voices of soldiers and their families, of statesmen, generals, preachers, poets, surgeons, nurses, northerners and southerners come together to give us a vivid understanding of the Civil War's most fundamental and widely shared reality.

Board member's Personal Favorites

Marjorie Reeves

Immortal Captives: The Story of 600 Confederate Officers and the United States Prisoner of War Policy: Mauriel Phillips Joslyn.

This lady did a wonderful job of research on the 600 Confederate Officers that were overly abused by the Union System.

Using the 600 officers to retaliate against the Confederacy was also an illegal action in the days of the Civil War. A major hurdle was that the Union did not recognize the Confederacy as a real sovereign country, so its prisoners were at first treated as outlaws. The 600 officers, who ranked from colonels to the lowest grade, were brought to Charleston Harbor in South Carolina and placed on Morris Island. The Union was attacking Charleston, trying to force a surrender. The Confederate military commander of Charleston was accused of using imprisoned Union officers to get the Union artillery to stop bombing the city. This is not true, though; the prisoners were only passing through and were kept from dangerous areas of Charleston and were later moved to a safer prison in the interior of the state. Part of the reason the Union sought to retaliate was in revenge for the prison conditions at Andersonville and the like. Mauriel P. Joslyn used various letters, diaries, and other primary sources to write this book, bringing it to a very personal level. She lets the actors in this episode tell the story, adding explanations and other information to supplement the quotes. There are several black and white photos and maps, including photos of some of the prisons in which the 600 were interred in; some of the 600 are also seen.

David Lady

Ordeal by Fire: A Short History of the Civil War, Fletcher Pratt, Dover, 1997 (reprint)

A one-volume history, this was the first book that I ever read about the American Civil War. Over fifty years later, after wearing out two copies, I still return to my third copy of this book to read my favorite chapters. Fletcher Pratt was determined to remind us that the Civil War was a WAR, long and bloody and dramatic, with the issue in doubt from the beginning till very near the end. He emphasized that the Civil War was about slavery and secession, two questions that it answered forever. He wrote this history with the skills of a novelist and the passion of a participant (Pratt's for the Union, and no doubt about it). Some of his chapters read like scenes from a play; his "robust prose," made use of short, punchy, active sentences and vivid character descriptions. I recommend this to anyone with a love for this era and for good writing in general.