

Civil War History for Children:

Then and Now

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**Presented to the American Culture Faculty
At the University of Michigan-Flint
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Liberal Studies
In
American Culture**

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Many people believe history is really as it was presented to them in school. School is the only place most people come into contact with the history of this country, and there are always updated narratives of historical events as new source material surfaces. The Civil War is one of those eras about which our perception is constantly changing. There is a plethora of books on this topic published every year, many aimed specifically at children. These works draw heavily on original source documents that include material from diaries and letters, many of which are recently discovered sources. A large percentage of these are targeted at middle school reading audience. This explosion of new books makes it even more important to look at how the stories of the Civil War, which was a defining moment in our national history, are being told to our children. Have the message and the way the story is told changed over the course of time? What messages about this war and war in general are authors and educators giving to children? Answering these questions will form the basis of this research.

The division of this research will be into two parts with the break point being 1960. A real change in how war was perceived occurred during this era. Protesting wars became more acceptable as a way to express attitudes during and after the Vietnam War. Those who are anti-war have taken their beliefs into the mainstream of American thought. This is reflected in the literature for children both in texts and non-textual literature. Earlier works, especially ones at the end of the nineteenth century, were very accepting of war as a means of settling differences with honor and bravery, a virtue to be exhibited both as an ideal and an experience. Thus, warfare and battles were described in positive, glowing terms.

Since the 1960's the descriptions of war have become more graphic with the realities of war getting the most emphasis. It seems at times that the horrors of war have overtaken the reasons any given war was necessary. Going to war as a last choice to preserve something important is often left out. Believing in something strongly enough to fight for it is not given priority. This can be seen in how the South is portrayed in most of the current literature. There is very little overt condemnation of the South for withdrawing from the Union, while there is often condemnation of slavery as a whole. In trying to be politically correct and not upset any one side, the resulting texts are often bland without creating a sense of the drama and hard choices faced by Americans in preserving the United States.

The Civil War is an ongoing topic of study, discussion and debate, in great part because of the popularization of history through documentaries such as Ken Burns' *The Civil War* on the Public Broadcasting System. Many Americans also belong to Civil War roundtables or discussion groups, take part in reenactments, and visit battlegrounds and other historic sites associated with this time period. Books for adults and children are being published that either highlight one particular aspect or bring to the fore a little known event or aspect of this conflict. These books complement the experiences that a student has already had through various non-print sources. It is very easy to locate material for any age group on all aspects of this war using a variety of media sources. This makes it especially important to look at the messages children are being given in these works.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, students got their information primarily from their general American history texts. Educationally, the Civil War has

been a part of social studies curriculum since the 1870s. The only supplemental material in a classroom may have been a map and possibly a dictionary. Today there is a multitude of material available in many forms. Classrooms now are stocked with a great deal of supplemental material in addition to textbooks, including maps, dictionaries, trade books on specific subjects, films, audio tapes and, of course, internet access. A typical unit on the Civil War includes more than just reading and memorizing material from one text. Students now become involved in learning about the times, people, politics, and battles surrounding this period.

As there is too much available material to adequately cover the entire Civil War conflict and all the cultural and sociological information, the focus of this thesis will be on how war has been presented to young people. This will allow for an in-depth textual analysis with a comparison of the presentations, both pre- and post-1960. The pre-1960 material will be subdivided with one section dealing with material immediately after the Civil War until 1910 and the other smaller section looking at material from 1910-1960.

This study will analyze and compare the information available in the time prior to 1960 with the material available since 1960, using information aimed primarily at middle school students. The pre-1960 material will be primarily that from the 1860s to 1910, while the post 1960 material will be primarily after 1980 to the present. Two categories of printed material will be looked at for both eras: texts and books, both fictional and non-fictional, including magazines for children. Middle school material was selected, as that is when this era is introduced and often the only time students will study this time period. The analysis of earlier works will focus primarily on textbooks with some other material such as children's magazines published during the Civil War, and some books, both

factual and fictional, aimed at a younger audience. One book originally published in the late 1890s and still in use today, is *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane.

The current material will focus heavily on trade books which are mostly in paperback, both fictional and non-fictional, with some reference to magazines and texts. These will range in complexity from picture books to historical works of some length. This range of complexity is necessary as the typical middle school population contains students of many reading levels. The messages being sent to the readers about this war will be explored in some depth. The major question that will be looked at is the way in which war in general is portrayed. To assist in this analysis, historiographic sources will be referenced in order to understand trends that have occurred over time in how history has been written. Two such sources will be Thomas Pressly's *Americans Interpret Their Civil War* and James McPherson's and William J. Cooper's *Writing the Civil War*. In his discussion of historical scholarship, Pressly poses a critical question that must be remembered when doing any analysis such as this. He asked, "To what extent has historical scholarship published in the decades and generations after an event added to the understanding of the event which was possessed by wise individuals who lived at the time the event occurred?"¹ Another source will be James W. Loewen's work, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. This work analyzes history texts as to how accurately they present American history.

This researcher's selection and interest in old American history books started with the inheritance of two American history books, one by C. B. Taylor published in 1833 and the other by D. H. Montgomery published in 1890. A collection of old texts was then

¹Thomas J. Pressly, *Americans Interpret Their Civil War*, (New York: A Free Press Paperback, fourth printing, 1969), 11.

started with the main criteria that the text had most likely been used in a school setting. This was usually evidenced by having a name inscribed on the flyleaf and the condition of the book. The collection includes texts from each decade following the Civil War through the 1940s. The primary selection is in texts from the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s. These texts were used in the Midwest and around Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The decision was made to use texts from this region, as it is the part of the country familiar to this researcher. Current texts will be those in use at various middle schools in the area around Flint, Michigan. This selection will include those from public and parochial schools from inner city to suburban settings to discover if there are any blatant biases, both sectional and towards war, and what differences occur between the two eras.

The choice of trade books was done on an ease of access basis. These books were all readily available in bookstores in the area. Many were purchased at different battleground bookstores especially around Gettysburg in the spring of 2002. No attempt was made to search out only the best examples. This collection includes everything from comic books to a children's history magazine to factual historical books to historical fiction. Two books that are especially appealing are the large format picture book, *Pink and Say* by Patricia Polacco and *Private Captain* by Marty Crisp. These books both deal with the involvement of children in the war, the first as soldiers and the second as relatives of those fighting. Another topic that seems to be popular to write about is Grace Bedell's letter to Lincoln suggesting that he grow a beard. The books about Lincoln's whiskers use the retelling of this story to demonstrate how young girls fit into the historical picture during the Civil War.

An additional chapter will briefly cover the non-print sources available. In the past these were illustrations in newspapers and books along with artwork such as the popular Currier and Ives prints and fine artwork ranging from the work of Winslow Homer to that of traditional landscape artists applying their skills to battleground depiction. Photographs, such as those by Matthew Brady, were also first used in the aftermath of battles to get war images out immediately. Much of this material is also available today and often used in current textbooks. Current non-print sources include everything from museums to preserved battlegrounds to videotape productions to reenactments with involvement as either participants or viewers. Music, then and now, has been a way to express feelings about this war. Today we also have soundtracks from movies and collections on tape of music from the Civil War period.

Finally, an appendix will be provided that details a representative selection of the books surveyed for this research. It will include many books in each of several areas; often these books were not referenced directly in the body of the thesis but help to round out the total picture of printed material available. Inclusion of such material will demonstrate the vast quantity of material available on many topics about the Civil War. One trend that has emerged over the past two years of while this researcher was collecting material is the increased availability of information about key Southern individuals. A recent set of biographies includes two books on Northern generals and two on Southern generals. Another series of books is about life in the Border States such as Maryland during the Civil War. These books present the different points of view in this conflict and how they affected everyday life.

PART I: PRE 1960 MATERIAL FOR CHILDREN

The material examined for this section focuses on textual criticism of general history books, and some book length works including periodicals of the times directed at a younger or general audience. The textual analysis will involve examining the sections on the Civil War from several viewpoints. The authors' purpose in writing, information included or excluded, slanted or neutral presentation, and word choice and usage as representative of the times will each be looked at in depth. Using these topics a picture of how war is presented will emerge.

The material from this time period can be divided into two sections. Each of the two chapters in this section will be divided into two parts reflecting a natural break in emphasis. The first contains those books written up until 1910. Most of those discovered were written in the 1880s and 1890s. A second, but smaller, grouping consists of those written from 1910 through 1960. An attempt was made to find one from each decade. The texts studied were found in various places. Most of them had been used in the midwestern states of Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana. By using books that were commonly used, it may be deduced that the information they contained was the information that students and young readers were actually receiving. Several were found in antique stores and others were found in used bookstores. Gettysburg was a good source for this material. An attempt was made to get texts from the South. Several more old texts were found in Galveston, Texas, but it was discovered that they were published in the North and gave a decidedly Northern slant to the Civil War. This decidedly Northern slant was not really surprising since virtually all the publishing houses were in the North. Since the Union forces were victorious, this decidedly Union slant is to be expected.

Chapter 1: Pre-1960 Texts

The history books used in schools from the end of the Civil War until the turn of the twentieth century were small in size compared to today's textbooks. Most have pages that are approximately five inches wide by eight inches long. This small format was possible because of the length of time covered. Texts grew in overall page size as time passed. By the mid-twentieth century texts were beginning to resemble the large page format used now. The total length varies between three hundred and six hundred pages. These earlier texts have tables of contents pages but rarely an index. For example, by 1956 the Thomas Bailey text, *The American Pageant*, was larger in size, used smaller print and contained over nine hundred pages and included a table of contents, index and appendix. Maps, charts, line drawings, lithographs and photographs are used to a varying degree in each book. The chapters dealing with the Civil War range from twenty-five to sixty pages.

One aspect interesting to the modern reader is the emphasis is given to each event during the Civil War. Often battles that today are associated with this war, such as Antietam and Gettysburg, are given a very brief mention. Most of these texts present a dry recitation of the course of the war from battle to battle with some mention of the political climate both in the North and the South. The older texts are more likely to include more descriptive prose, thus making them read like a story. There is very little mention as to the effect of the war on the population in and around battle sites. Often it is the omissions that are really telling. Casualty counts are often omitted or in small print as a footnote or a postscript at the end of a chapter. The ensuing two parts of this chapter will detail these findings.

Part One: Post Civil War Texts Until 1910

It is important to keep in mind the mindset of this period when studying texts. These earlier texts were written by those who participated in or knew many of those who were a part of this conflict. It was felt that it was important for children to be raised as patriotic Americans. This was a virtue that was deemed important to pass on to future generations. As this was a period of imperialism on the part of the major powers including the United States, there was an increased emphasis on creating a populace which was very patriotic.

Author's Purpose

It is helpful to look at why authors chose to write the texts before delving into the actual Civil War sections. Authors of these textbooks were generally trying to convince their audience that their book was of the highest scholarship and was non-biased, and therefore should be the history text of choice. William Swinton, writing in 1871, claimed in his preface that the tone of his text was “free from partisan bias of sectionalism, politics or religion, a tone of treatment as completely as possible American.”² Writing in 1872, W.H. Venable states in his preface, “The object aimed at in the preparation of this book was to produce a systematic, brief, clear and authentic history of the United States for the use of schools.”³

Sectional Bias

An author's bias towards the North, despite claims to present a fair recitation of the facts, was quite easily discernable. The position taken by most of the texts was that

²William Swinton, *A Condensed School History of the United States, Revised Edition*, (New York: Ivison, Blakeman & Co., 1871 – no date was given for the revision), iv.

³ W. H. Venable, *A School History of the United States*, (Cincinnati and New York: Wilson-Hinkle and Co, 1872), vii.

the North was fighting for a just cause. In 1875 John J. Anderson put forth the Union view of the battle of Antietam when he wrote, "...the great battle of Antietam was fought. Lee was defeated, his loss in the battle and during the campaign being not less than twenty-five thousand men."⁴ The current interpretation is that this battle was more of a draw with neither side making any gains. The real omission here is that the Union casualty count is not given. The combined casualty counts have led this battle to be called the bloodiest day in American history.

In other texts a similar bias can be discerned. When talking about the progress of the war in early 1861, Thomas Wentworth Higginson described how the war was progressing in eastern Virginia as having "opened badly."⁵ When things were going well for the South authors usually stated that it was going poorly for the Union. John Bach McMaster's text did a lot of editorializing to convey McMaster's own beliefs. He described the beginning of the war as follows: "Thus was begun the greatest war in modern history. It was no vulgar struggle for territory, or for maritime or military supremacy. The life of the Union was at stake."⁶ This quote demonstrates that he felt that the war was good, justified and necessary. To further support this viewpoint he uses a quote from Abraham Lincoln: "Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish."⁷ Another author, Robert Mackenzie, writing during the same decade, listed the reasons for the war in a similar but more descriptive manner, stating:

⁴ John J. Anderson, *A Grammar School History of the United States*, (New York: Clark & Maynard Publishers, 1875), 172.

⁵ Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Young Folks' History of the United States*, (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1887), 297.

⁶ John Bach McMaster, *School History of the United States*, (New York: American Book Company, 1897), 383.

⁷ McMaster, 383.

There was a deep feeling of indignation at the traitors who were willing to ruin their country that slavery might be secure. There was a full appreciation of the danger, and an instant universal determination that at whatever cost, the national life must be preserved.⁸

This quote demonstrates the opinion of one who reflected the attitude of the winning side. Statements with similar sentiments can be found in most texts of the era. One conclusion that can be drawn from these types of statements is that there was no choice but war and that war was the acceptable and normal way to settle conflicts.

Another author, Mrs. George Runyan gave a more neutral accounting of the reasons for the war. Her account of the Civil War period tended to contain more balance between Southern and Northern rationales for the war but it is somewhat dry with only occasional bursts of analysis. In her text she states:

At this time the *good of the union* was forgotten in the schemes and ambitions of political leaders. In order to gain power many unprincipled men in the South were anxious to *destroy* the union while men of the same character in the North were willing to *abuse* the union for the same purpose.⁹

As can be seen in the italicized phrases, Mrs. Runyan was very willing to vilify both sides for going to war, but her use of the word “destroy” to characterize the South and “abuse” for the North leads the reader to see that her sentiments lay with the preservation of the Union. This was an unusual anti-war view for the texts of that time.

Alexander Johnston in an 1887 text was careful to give both names for the Battle of Shiloh. It was very rare to find any mention of both sides having different views or interpretations of this war. He initially defines the battle as “Pittsburgh Landing, or Shiloh” in the paragraph heading. At the end of the paragraph he demonstrates his Union

⁸ Robert Mackenzie, *America, A History*, (London, Edinburgh, & New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1889), 208.

⁹ George D. Runyan, *400 Years of America, Her Discovery, History, Achievements and Politics*, (Springfield, Ohio: The New Era Company, 1892), 388.

sympathies when he states, “It is often called the battle of Shiloh, from the name of the little church around which the heaviest fighting took place.”¹⁰ Those in the South refer to this as the Battle of Pittsburg Landing. As is typical, the textbook author starts out with a neutral statement but later on the Union sympathies of the author emerge demonstrating that he believed that the South was in error.

Although Venable also gave a negative view of warfare he maintained that it was something that needed to be done, part of the patriotic duty of all citizens. He maintained that the war was justified to preserve the Union and the freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution. This comes out when he was talking about soldiers after the war. He used the word “barbarous” to describe war when he stated:

...these men came from the people, not as choosing the barbarous experience of war, but to sacrifice themselves for the sake of Union and Liberty. Their duty bravely done, they returned to the people, and gladly resumed the avocation of peace.¹¹

The author’s bias towards the North can also be seen by his use of “Union” without mention of Southern soldiers.

Several other authors tried to give a balanced accounting reflecting recognition of the newly reunited country. They were writing during a period when the idea of reconciliation was gaining in popularity. Higginson stated:

Each side learned to respect the courage and resources of the other, and to feel that, if Americans were once reunited, no foreign power could ever endanger their liberties...the general feeling in both armies was, no doubt, that of sincere and manly opponents.¹²

¹⁰ Alexander Johnston, *History of the United States for Schools*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1887), 309.

¹¹ Venable, 239.

¹² Higginson, 319.

This editorializing went on for two pages. Writing in 1874, John Clark Ridpath was one of the few to put a human face to this conflict. In speaking of the border-states, he writes, “In all the border states soldiers were furnished both armies. It often happened that members of the same family were on opposite sides.”¹³ This bland statement fails to reflect the depth of emotion felt within those families and how polarized the entire nation became.

Another balanced analysis written in the 1890’s appears in a text by D. H. Montgomery. In talking about attitudes in the North and the South at the beginning of the war he states:

...it should be borne in mind that while the people of the North were eager to offer their lives for the defense of the Union, the people of the South were just as eager to give theirs to repel what they considered an invasion.¹⁴

This comes close to being a totally unbiased account of sectional reaction to the war. The qualification “what they considered” could be interpreted as a belief in the reality of those in the South being traitors. Montgomery did like to wax poetic at times. Still, in a spirit of reconciliation, he described the aftermath at Antietam as follows, “...the bodies of the ‘boys in blue’ and the ‘boys in gray’ lay in ranks like swaths of grass cut by a scythe.”¹⁵ Interestingly enough, at the bottom of the page as a footnote in small print the casualty count for both sides appears. It makes the reader wonder which was more important the poetic description or the total number of casualties.

Words

While it is very important to think about how each side is represented in any conflict, another important aspect to look at is how war, especially the Civil War, is

¹³ Ridpath, 642.

¹⁴ D. H. Montgomery, *The Leading Facts of American History*, (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1891), 289.

¹⁵ Montgomery, 303.

presented to students. The words used to describe incidents are very enlightening. The words used to describe the battles and events surrounding the war are portrayed in a manner that made the entire experience appear to be one that was worth pursuing. This main goal was to behave honorably and patriotically. It is through the use of modifiers that the honorable and patriotic nature of this war is retold by textbook authors.

Early in the descriptions of the war, students were given the impression that this war was exciting and inevitable. Venable in his 1872 text tells how citizens reacted on hearing about the impending war as follows: “The uprising of the people seemed spontaneous.”¹⁶ Montgomery also leads students to believe that when the North responded to Lincoln’s call for troops after the fall of Fort Sumter, it was unanimous and done with great willingness. He states, “...the whole North seemed to rise. Men of all parties forgot their political quarrels and hastened to the defense of the capitol.”¹⁷ This was a common way of expressing the rise to arms in the North. In describing this same call to arms, Swinton used the phrase “great zeal.”¹⁸ This phrase imparts a sense of excitement and readiness for war.

A very helpful exercise in discovering how war was presented to students is to examine some of the specific words used to describe events. Words are powerful and can by their very choice reflect a certain view of events. Are they positive words? What image do they leave with the reader about war and in particular the Civil War? What do they tell us about the time in which the authors are living? Sometimes a single word can give an interpretation to an event while by and large the presentation attempts to do something entirely different such as presenting a clear factual accounting of events.

¹⁶ Venable, 201.

¹⁷ Montgomery, 288.

¹⁸ Swinton, 168.

These earlier authors did not question whether wars should be fought. They were only concerned that readers realized the patriotic and honorable nature of the fight. As earlier discussed, most of these authors were sure that their interpretation was the best and most valid. The selection and use of various words will follow.

The analysis of the battle at Gettysburg provided by McMaster demonstrates how the rhetoric used in textbooks gave a very specific message about war. (This researcher added the bold face type in this instance.) The description is as follows:

The contest was a dreadful one; no field was ever more stubbornly fought over. About one fourth of the men engaged were killed or wounded. But the **splendid courage** of the Union Army prevailed...Gettysburg is regarded as the **greatest** battle of the war, and the Union regiments engaged have taken **just pride** in making the positions they held during the three days of awful slaughter...¹⁹

The highlighted words evoke a positive image of the results of this battle as something to emulate. The beginning impression of the quote tells of how “dreadful” was the battle’s aftermath but which was defused by the laudatory remarks that followed. This quote also exhibited a blatant pro-Union stance. It is easy to see how this author ascribed to a belief in the importance of patriotism of the times.

Even the use of one specific word can prove to be very telling. The word found with the greatest frequency was “great” or “greatest.” These words suggests something that is out of the ordinary and has a positive strong connotation. In *The Oxford American Dictionary, Herald Colleges Edition*, all of the definition choices are in a positive vein. Above average, remarkable, elaborate and of course larger are all synonyms used to describe “great.” One definition that is especially of interest to this analysis says, “doing

¹⁹ McMaster, 396.

something frequently or intensively or very well.²⁰ Although the meaning of this word also carries a sense of magnitude, most often when it was utilized in describing battles, the positive meaning of the word is primary when describing a massive battle or event. Writers of the times were very impressed with the panoply of battle. This superlative was most often found in the pre-1900 texts. The word “great” was used often in reference to Gettysburg, but authors used it to also describe other battles. Ridpath described Meade’s march to Richmond and Sherman’s march to Atlanta as “two great movements.”²¹ John J. Anderson chose to describe the battle at Antietam with the use of the word “great”.²² He used three sentences to describe this battle without giving any details such as casualty counts. Alexander Johnston in his 1887 text referred to Shiloh as “the first of the great battles of the war.”²³ This leads one to look forward to other “great” battles with anticipation. Ridpath uses the same phrase when he called the First Battle of Bull Run “the First Great Battle of the War.”²⁴ Union defeats were also called great battles such as when referring to Chancellorsville as Johnston did in his text.²⁵ Venable also uses the word “great” to refer to Chancellorsville but the impact of this use of the word is modified by the inclusion of the casualties for both sides – over 30,000 combined.²⁶ The inclusion of casualty counts lets the reader know that great may not necessarily be good. Swinton in his text refers to Chancellorsville as a desperate battle without listing casualties while referring to Gettysburg as the “greatest battle of the whole war.”²⁷ It is

²⁰ Eugene Ehrlich, Stuart Berg Flexner, Gorton Carruth, and Joyce M. Hawkins, *Oxford American Dictionary*, (New York: Avon Books, 1980), 381.

²¹ Ridpath, 706.

²² Anderson, 172.

²³ Johnston, 309.

²⁴ Ridpath, 653.

²⁵ Johnston, 326.

²⁶ Venable, 224.

²⁷ Swinton, 180, 182.

interesting to note that this is the only battle of the Civil War for which the author gives the casualty counts.

The word “great” was also used in other instances. Venable in describing the Civil War in general stated:

Reviewing the grand features of the war in a military light, we are impressed by several important facts, which alike illustrate the resources of modern science and the inventive faculty of the American people.²⁸

Here it is implied that the entire panoply of war has a beauty. The focus is on the grand design and how Americans rose to the challenge using science and creativity. There is no focus on the horrors that this new science created on the battlefield.

The word “great” was also used in several other instances to describe events of the Civil War. One event that captured the attention of many was the first ironclad battle. McMaster’s description is very representative when he calls the battle between the Merrimac and the Monitor “the greatest naval battle of modern times.”²⁹ What was significant was that it forever changed naval warfare as it became one using naval artillery. The author equated this evolution with greatness. Americans are known for their belief in progress as a great thing. This looking to improvement as a “great” thing and not becoming entrenched in thinking things should always be done a certain way is a part of the American character.

Another event to garner the sobriquet “great” was Confederate John Morgan’s raid through Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio. In calling Morgan’s raid “great”, Ridpath focused on the path of the raid with only a brief, dry description of the negative effect on

²⁸ Venable, 240.

²⁹ McMaster, 417.

the countryside.³⁰ The gallantry and daring of this raid was the focus, not the resulting destruction and mayhem.

“Magnificent” is another one of those words that were used with regularity. Ridpath used the term when describing the initial Rebel attack at Shiloh. His description stated, “...there burst through the woods in front of the Union camp a magnificent line of battle.”³¹ This glorifies the strategy of Albert Sydney Johnston who lost his life during this battle. However, a short distance down the page, Ridpath does explain graphically the results of that battle thus adding a note of realism to his earlier glowing statement about Johnston’s tactics when he stated, “There had never before been such a harvest of death in the New World.”³² Mackenzie in his earlier text referred to McClellan’s troops as a “magnificent army” and on the same page again uses glowing terminology to describe the troops when he calls them a “splendid army.”³³ He even referred to Lee’s troops in this manner when he stated, “The history of the once splendid Army of Northern Virginia had closed.”³⁴ It is interesting to note that even a defeated army was described in such glowing terms. This leads the reader to think that armies and the wars they are associated with are good. These statements were written by authors who believed that certain wars in our history were well worth fighting. Several wars are even today portrayed as patriotic wars that needed to be fought. The Revolutionary War, the Civil War and World War II are examples.

³⁰ Ridpath, 691.

³¹ Ridpath, 664.

³² Ridpath, 664.

³³ Mackenzie, 218.

³⁴ Mackenzie, 255.

Phrases

Some authors attempted to inject some reality into their descriptions but often sent mixed messages. For instance, McMaster described the Chickamauga Valley Battle as “one of the most desperate battles of the war.”³⁵ This phrase has a negative tone that is modified a little further down the page when the author describes one portion of this fight as follows:

But the left wing, under General George H. Thomas, a grand character and splendid officer, by some of the best fighting ever seen, held the enemy in check and saved the army from rout.³⁶

This sentence tells the reader two things. As this text was written by a Northerner or one of the winners, the South was the enemy. Secondly, the fighting was good. No casualty counts were given for either side and that sanitizes the battle picture. Ridpath in his description of the Virginia campaigns of 1862 said they “were even more grand and destructive than those in the West.”³⁷ The mixed positive and negative imagery can be seen in the pairing of “grand” and “destructive.”

Montgomery, early in his section about the Civil War, gave an impression of the negative side of war. In describing the retreat after the First Battle of Bull Run Montgomery wrote, “They fled back to Washington in confusion and terror. It was the first panic of the war.”³⁸ It was unusual for nineteenth century writers to dwell on the negative side of war. This battle was one of the few that often received that treatment. Most often when giving graphic, but negative, details of the fighting the various authors used very brief phrases.

³⁵ McMaster, 399.

³⁶ McMaster, 399.

³⁷ Ridpath, 672.

³⁸ Montgomery, 293.

Several authors used the word “bloody” and paired it with another strong negative word to give a realistic feeling for the results of battle. Anderson, writing in 1875, hinted at the reality of war when he said, “The battles of Spotsylvania, North Anna and Cold Harbor were particularly desperate and bloody.”³⁹ However, lumping all these extremely costly battles into one dilutes the magnitude of the casualty counts. Likewise, Mackenzie described the siege of Petersburg as “tedious, bloody”⁴⁰ without going into any detail about attrition especially by the Confederates who had no replacements for lost men. This battle was more than just tedious, it was one of the first lengthy battles of what would become in World War I trench warfare.

One of the best at describing the results of some of these battles in a realistic fashion was Ridpath. Writing just before the turn of the century, he stated, “The hand-to-hand fighting at ‘Bloody Angle’ was something terrible. Men fell like flies until their bodies piled up on each other.”⁴¹ This imagery painted a vivid but unusually graphic picture of what happened at that point of the battle.

Tactics

During the time period under discussion, one of the aspects rarely touched upon was how the tactics of the day had not changed while the guns and cannon allowed for both greater accuracy and more distance being covered. The armies still attacked using massed frontal assaults. Most of these charges were described assuming that this was the accepted way to conduct a battle. Johnston, in 1887, gave a dry description to the storming of Marye’s Heights at Fredericksburg. After one sentence describing this hill as fortified, he stated, “Burnside crossed the river and attempted to storm the hills

³⁹ Anderson, 179.

⁴⁰ MacKenzie, 245.

⁴¹ Ridpath, 721.

(December 13). He was defeated, with heavy loss, and driven back to the north side of the Rappahannock.”⁴² It was assumed that the reader would understand through this minimal description the futility of Burnside’s tactic of attacking up hill into emplaced artillery.

Because the taking of Missionary Ridge at Chattanooga, Tennessee turned into a great victory for the North, it often received coverage that extolled the results over the tactics used. Ridpath’s lengthy description is worth citing as an example of the type of reporting that extolled the bravery without talking about the stupidity of making the attempt directly into mounted cannon fire. Both sides were surprised as to the results. The description is as follows:

To take this ridge seemed next to impossible. In the face of this formidable opposition, the Union charge was made. They swept across the plain and then up the hill. It was here that General Philip H. Sheridan earned for himself an enviable name for his bravery. Dismounting at the foot of the hill, he plunged through the undergrowth with sword in hand at the head of his men. Without hesitation the attacking columns, with hundreds of their comrades falling beneath the blistering fire, soon reached the brow of the hill, from where the Confederates fled in wild disorder.⁴³

When Sherman made his march through Georgia and to the sea there was little recognition that warfare was being forever changed. Runyan, in her 1892 text describing this period, gave no sense of the magnitude of Sherman’s march. Her text only gave the reader dry commentary on the flow of the war chronologically. Her coverage of this campaign focused only on dates of different battles and the cities captured. She did digress from this sterile recitation in describing one of John Bell Hood’s attempts to stop Sherman, when she simply stated, “General Hood made a desperate attack, but only to be

⁴² Johnston, 322.

⁴³ Ridpath, 690.

repulsed with heavy losses.”⁴⁴ This one statement was then followed by one of the few statements as to why the burning of Atlanta was so devastating to the South. Runyan wrote, “The city was at once besieged. It was the stronghold of the South. Here were the machine shops, foundries and car works of the Confederacy.”⁴⁵ This campaign received more detailed attention than most but still lacked any discussion of the concept of total war. Another variance from other texts in her description was a reference to the Confederates burning things before the arrival of Sherman’s troops.⁴⁶ This gives the readers information that the Southern forces were also doing some of the destruction of property and the countryside. During this time the idea of reconciliation was really gaining in influence. Most writers were very careful about showing the Confederacy in a negative light at the expense of letting readers believe that the Union forces were responsible for all the destruction during this march.

Earlier Anderson, in 1875, was even more ambiguous about the effects of Sherman’s march. He used the neutral “memorable” to describe this action. The only hint as to what the “March to the Sea” was really like and what it meant to the population was a one-page pen and ink drawing entitled “War’s Doings – Burning a Town.”⁴⁷ This showed a mother clutching her two young children in the foreground running away from soldiers in the background setting fire to buildings. Other than the use of the word “memorable” no reference of how the lithograph demonstrated the personal reality of this march is made. Again the reader was given no information about the concept of total war.

⁴⁴ Runyan, 408.

⁴⁵ Runyan, 409.

⁴⁶ Runyan, 410.

⁴⁷ Anderson, 181.

Part Two: 1910-1960

The second selection of material found was from 1910 through 1960. This period encompassing both the world wars was one where history was written so that patriotism was a positive virtue to be held up as an example for all Americans. There was more uniformity across the nation as to how history was presented because of the national distribution of textbooks. Each school district still chose which text to use but the presentation of general facts was standardized with some difference in emphasis in different regions and even different districts next to each other.

This section will be shorter than Part I of this chapter as fewer texts were located. There are representative texts from each decade. It was more difficult to determine if these texts were aimed at younger readers. This may not be as significant for this time period as most high schools were still trying to include the entire range of American history in one school year.

Author's Purpose

The attempt to justify why an author wrote a particular text continued into the twentieth century. The reasoning and justifications do not appear as blatantly superior in tone as the earlier texts, but this need to explain why a specific text was best was still set forth.⁴⁸ In 1936, W. E. Woodward wrote in his preface, “I wanted to learn just what had really happened since our history began, the true inwardness of events, the trend of ideas,

⁴⁸ C. B. Taylor in his 1833 preface to his text stated: “Having learned, at least to some extent, to appreciate the value of those blessings, which have descended to the posterity of the pilgrims, the author would now contribute his mite for the benefit of the present and future generations.”(C. B. Taylor, *A Universal History of the United States*, (Buffalo, New York: Ezra Strong, Publisher, 1833), no page number.

the growth of the American spirit, and the development of our institutions.”⁴⁹ Charles and Mary Beard called on more than forty years of scholarship in their preparatory note saying,

As its title indicates, the volume deals with fundamental activities, ideas, and interests which have entered into the development of American society from the colonial period to the contemporary age.⁵⁰

Continuing in this confident manner, Bailey in his 1956 text is certain that by reading his tome, students will “come away with a deeper appreciation of the hardships and contributions of the men and women who built America.”⁵¹ The above two writers believed strongly in America and were confident in her place in the world order. These American authors were full of confidence about the veracity in their interpretation of history for their designated audience.

Sectional Bias

By 1925 texts were much more adept at presenting history in a less judgmental way. There was much less editorializing about the Civil War period and a fairly straightforward presentation of the facts an author chose to include in his text. William H. Mace wrote a text that provided a fairly balanced accounting as to the causes of the war and the activities during the war. In this text it was harder to discern how the author felt, or on which side his sympathies lay. However, in discussing the taking of the Mississippi River in 1862, the name of the section appears in bold print. It is stated in the following manner: “The opening of the Mississippi and the capture of New Orleans.”⁵² The way this is phrased leads the reader to believe that the author felt this was a positive

⁴⁹ W.E. Woodward, *A New American History*, (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1936), viii.

⁵⁰ Charles Beard, and Mary Beard, *The Beard's Basic History of the United States*, (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1944), v.

⁵¹ Thomas A. Bailey, *The American Pageant*, (Boston: Heath and Company, 1956), vii.

⁵² William H. Mace, *American History*, (New York: Rand McNally and Company, 1925), 187.

thing. To say this in a neutral way the author could have instead titled this section: “The battle for control of the Mississippi.” This author fully believed that the North was right and could confidently express this point of view since the North won the overall conflict.

W. E. Woodward in 1936 gave an even more balanced account of the war from a sectional point of view but did not refrain from stating things that lead the reader to get the definite feeling that the South was the side in the wrong in this conflict. In his chapter on secession he clearly expresses this view saying, “...if ordinary common sense is taken as a basis of reference only one case can be made, and that one unfavorable to secession.”⁵³ This author agreed that the South was traitorous in seceding.

The Beards in their 1944 text gave a more balanced account. This could be seen by the way they referred to the two sides. As it was during World War II, promoting national unity was very important. They used the phrase “both governments in America”⁵⁴ when discussing foreign relations thus demonstrating a more neutral reporting of both sides in this conflict. There is an absence of negative or inflammatory words when describing the Southern cause. There is also very little space spent in describing battles and the military flow of the war. It was obvious that the goal of their revisionist viewpoint was to create in readers a unified patriotic feeling about the United States as one country. Their solution was to deal with this conflict as just a political problem and not to spend too much time on the actual conduct of the war which would necessitate discussing the deep rift between the two sides.

⁵³ Woodward, 513.

⁵⁴ Beard, 274.

The Bailey text goes the unusual route of titling his chapter on the war, “The War for Southern Independence.”⁵⁵ Referring to it this way seems to be an attempt to be more sensitive to the feelings of those in the South about the war. However it does not take too long before his true sentiments come forth. In describing the firing on Fort Sumter the author lapses into rhetoric reminiscent of earlier nineteenth century authors. He states, “The Southerners had wantonly fired upon the glorious Stars and Stripes, and honor demanded that the United States fight back.”⁵⁶ The author’s feeling about the necessity of waging a war can also be seen more in his failure to state that this was the Northern view. It took further study to see that the author was relating the Northern point of view. This sentence was supposed to reflect what was said in the North not the author’s point of view. High school students reading this most likely lacked the sophistication to understand that he was not expressing his own viewpoint.

Words

The use of specific words to describe battles and events is considerably less blatant in these later texts. Woodward in his 1936 text gives a surprisingly thoughtful and sane description of the reaction to the fall of Fort Sumter. He wrote:

Wars are almost always begun with gaiety and lightness of spirit, with cheers and songs. The day after the surrender of Fort Sumter the entire land, both North and South, blazed with an ardent and confident patriotism, although patriotism in the South was precisely opposite to that in the North.⁵⁷

A different way of explaining history can be seen to be emerging. It is more thoughtful without relying on a dry recitation of battles and events. Although Woodward does

⁵⁵ Bailey, xi.

⁵⁶ Bailey, 418.

⁵⁷ Woodward, 524.

spend time on the conduct of the war, he also includes a wider representation of events occurring during that time period relating them to the war.

The Beards in their text were less exuberant than the pre-twentieth century texts in relating the country's reaction to the fall of Fort Sumter. They stated: "Millions of people in the North who had been lukewarm or hesitant now declared their unequivocal readiness to defend the Union."⁵⁸ This statement appears amid a thorough analysis of the political situation. As previously stated, these authors chose to focus on the political struggle between the two sections with little discussion of the war. The only time battles were mentioned was when they effected the political situation directly. An example of this was a very brief discussion about the battle at Antietam in relationship to the Emancipation Proclamation.

The authors of the early twentieth century texts were less likely to use such laudatory words as "great" or "magnificent" when describing battles. However, occasionally such terminology could be contained in their descriptions. Woodward refers to Shiloh, saying, "In point of magnitude it was the greatest battle that had ever been fought, up to that time, on the American continent."⁵⁹ In this case the reader understands that the author meant a large battle. Woodward also used the word "greatest" in describing the battle at Chancellorsville. He is very precise in his use of the English language as can be seen in his description which couples it with the word defeat. He stated, "The battle – called Chancellorsville – stands in history as the greatest defeat, and the most unpardonable one, of any of the Union armies in the Civil War."⁶⁰ His phrasing

⁵⁸ Beard, 269.

⁵⁹ Woodward, 537.

⁶⁰ Woodward, 548.

also reflects a Northern bias as today this battle is often referred to as Lee's greatest victory or the high water of the Confederacy.

Phrases

There was a definite shift in the way these later authors used phrases to describe the action during the Civil War. Bailey, in his mid- twentieth century text, was willing to state the realities of battle. This realism was much more common after World War I when the horrors of war were very fresh in the memories of writers. In describing the results at Fredericksburg, Bailey stated strongly, "...the day's preceeding may be more accurately described as wholesale murder."⁶¹ He was not afraid to include his opinion about these results. In characterizing General Ambrose Burnside's tactics at this battle, Bailey said, "General Burnside, who had apparently no more knowledge of scientific warfare than a bull who charges a red flag in an arena, confronted Lee at Fredericksburg, in Virginia."⁶² While this makes for enjoyable reading it goes against a tradition of being an impartial reporter of events. It also fails to inform the reader about all the pressure that Burnside was under to win coupled with his personal inability to change a plan mid-stream. This leaves the reader with an incomplete picture as this battle is presented without any supporting information that would help the reader understand why it happened.

Tactics

Weapons development created a real problem when it came to tactics. One of the mid-twentieth century writers handled this change in tactics differently at the end of the war differently than the earlier writers. Woodward in his 1936 text really tried to impress

⁶¹ Bailey, 539.

⁶² Bailey, 539.

his readers with how the change in style of warfare was changing in the later days of the war. He quoted General Sherman on this as follows:

The war did not begin professionally until after Vicksburg and Gettysburg, that is, not until July 1863. It took two years for Lincoln and his advisors to learn how to go about breaking down the Confederate resistance, and it took equally long for a new breed of generals to rise to the top.⁶³

Even though Woodward calls Sherman's march a "cheerful jaunt," he gives one of the most graphic descriptions of this campaign unlike those found in earlier texts. This vivid word picture continued in his summation of conditions in the South immediately after the war. He stated:

Imagine a land in which almost every corporation, every business enterprise and every individual, except for a few war profiteers, is plunged into universal bankruptcy, and you will have a picture of the South in the six months after the Civil War.⁶⁴

Unlike Runyon in her much earlier text, Woodward fails to state which side responsible for this destruction or if both sides participated in the ruination of the countryside. This lack of information is a case of the author taking the easy way out by not attributing fault to either side therefore not rubbing anyone's feelings the wrong way.

Bailey could not quite decide how he felt about the war. He commented on the tactics and the results of these tactics only briefly. In his description of Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, he used the positive word "magnificent" along with the word "futile" when creating a word picture. He said, "It was the failure of General Pickett's magnificent but futile charge that finally broke the back of the Confederates."⁶⁵ The pairing of these two words lets the reader visualize the panoply of the event while still seeing that old style tactics could not succeed in the face of new advanced types of artillery. He did go on to

⁶³ Woodward, 550.

⁶⁴ Woodward, 572.

⁶⁵ Bailey, 437.

describe Grant's final campaign very graphically with the casualty counts for both sides included. The reader could get a sense of the more gruesome aspects of the war with his use of the phrase "ghastly gamble"⁶⁶ in describing the reality at Cold Harbor. Even though the author does not say it specifically, the text leads the reader to sense in the following description how unrealistic the tactics employed were. Grant was still from the old school when it came to frontal assaults into overwhelming artillery. He wrote, "The Union soldiers advanced to almost certain death with papers pinned on their backs bearing their names and addresses. In a few minutes, about 7,000 men were killed or wounded."⁶⁷ Although the author does not directly say that Grant should have conducted this campaign differently, he does make sure that most of the reality and horror of the situation are related in the narrative.

Conclusion

As can be seen, texts in the period just after the Civil War and through the beginning of the twentieth century were pretty uniform in the detailing of this conflict. The earlier texts rarely included casualty counts while in the newer texts these were often included as footnotes or afterthoughts. The language and phraseology used in the pre-twentieth century texts were more likely to describe war in positive and grandiose terms. Rarely was the effect of war on the population and countryside included. Most often the impression of total support for this war was fostered. For instance it was rare that the draft riots in New York City were mentioned and then only in relation to how it disturbed the commerce of the city. The full details of how devastating Sherman's March to the Sea was on the Southern countryside were rarely detailed out. Only in the later texts did

⁶⁶ Bailey, 438.

⁶⁷ Bailey, 438.

the reader get any sense as to the real devastation done to the countryside, especially in the South. Still most readers got a feeling that war just happened. The earlier texts were written by those who had experienced the war first hand. There were still many veterans alive who thought the use of oral history fleshed out the war experience. These early texts were most concerned with presenting chronology, names, and places. This inadvertently led to battles listed as occurring one after the other in glorious fashion without any connection to casualties and effect on the land or people in the vicinity. The authors of the later texts were relying on written accounts and not first hand experience. They also had different agendas as the country was solidly reunited but facing the waging of two world wars. Patriotism was still emphasized but war as a positive experience was not included in their descriptions.

CHAPTER 2: Pre- 1960 Literature for Children

Children's literature as a separate category was in its infancy during the period of and just after the Civil War. At this juncture children's books were primarily written with a specific lesson in mind. According to Lee Galda and Bernice Cullinan, "Early publications sought to instill a community's values in the young, to socialize them, and to teach them."⁶⁸ James Marten in the acknowledgements to his book *Lessons of War: The Civil War in Children's Magazines* expanded on this theme when he said, "...there is a thread that at least tenuously connects writing for children over the generations: the insistence by our society that certain types of behavior are more acceptable than others."⁶⁹ In his first chapter when discussing material found in magazines of the times, Marten continued stating:

These features may have been especially effective during wartime, when shared patriotism, sacrifice, and sympathy further cemented the usual bonds of affection and common interest found in these literary commentaries...A cynic might call this indoctrination, a social scientist would call it socialization, but Civil War children called it literature.⁷⁰

In most of the fiction written at this time, it is easy to discern the author's purpose in writing about a specific aspect of the conflict. Ridpath stated that the publication of

⁶⁸ Lee Galda and Bernice Cullinan, *Literature and the Child*, (Belmont, California: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning, 2002), 20.

⁶⁹ James Marten, *Lessons of War: The Civil War in Children's Magazines*, (Wilmington, Delaware: A Scholarly Resources Inc. Imprint, 1999), ix.

⁷⁰ Marten, 2.

books helped shape the beliefs of readers, especially the young, and could be considered one of the causes of the Civil War. He stated:

The minds of all classes, especially the young, were ...prejudiced and poisoned. In the North the belief was fostered that the South was given up to inhumanity, ignorance and barbarism, while in the South the opinion prevailed that the Northern people were a selfish race of mean, cold-blooded Yankees.⁷¹

This continued even after the war when more material came to be written. Children were a prime audience whose beliefs needed to be molded. Marten said in discussing nineteenth-century Americans, including authors for children, that they viewed “childhood as a time of preparation for adulthood...”⁷² The writers of this period accepted as their role the molding of their readers in such a way as to make them patriotic and honorable citizens as adults. Periodicals, newspapers and books were authors only avenues outside of texts available to influence young readers. These statements demonstrate the importance of surveying the following works in understanding the informational/instructional material about war that was available to young readers of the post Civil War period.

In this chapter several types of material will be analyzed. These include novels, biographies, first hand accounts, general narratives about the Civil War, and some material from children’s magazines published during the war. As in the texts certain themes and word usage carry over. The theme of honor is very prevalent especially in books written before 1910. Marten stated this when he said:

Works of fiction and non-fiction alike stressed character and framed the world in moral terms, assuring readers that patriotism and unselfishness together would guarantee individual success and national honor.⁷³

⁷¹ Ridpath, 650.

⁷² Marten, xii.

⁷³ Marten, xiii.

Part One of this chapter will include the majority of the books reviewed which were from 1870-1910. Those written in the period 1910-1960 will be discussed in Part Two of this chapter.

In discussing fictional books from this era , it becomes necessary to look at individual authors and their specific works. At the end of Part One of this chapter, the works of two authors will be discussed in more detail: Oliver Optic and Stephen Crane. Oliver Optic was definitely a product of his times and his books seem very dated to the reader of today while Stephen Crane's, *The Red Badge of Courage*, is a timeless classic and is still widely used today.

As with the first chapter, a variety was sought. Almost no material with a Southern voice was found. For the period during the war, Marten described this lack as follows:

...Confederate publishers, plagued by shortages of ink, paper, and skilled printers, generally ignored magazines and novels in favor of instructional literature, producing more than two-dozen catechisms and hymnals. Nearly three-fourths of the children's volumes published in the Confederacy were school books designed to make children aware of the issue that caused the war and to muster Southern youngsters' support for the Confederate war effort.⁷⁴

After the war the Southern infrastructure could not support much of a printing industry. Therefore, the books surveyed in this study were published in the North, mostly New England. A book written by Southerner Joel Chandler Harris of Uncle Remus fame was published in New York. It was about a young printer who lived on a plantation during the war. Even though it was written from a purported Southern view many Northern sentiments crept in.

⁷⁴ Marten, xvi.

In the preface of his 1908 biography of Robert E. Lee, Thomas Nelson Page made a case for presenting the Southern side stating:

We of the South have been wont to leave the writing of history mainly to others, and it is far from a complete excuse that whilst others were writing history we were making it. It is as much the duty of a people to disprove any charge blackening their fame as it is of an individual. Indeed, the injury is infinitely more far-reaching in the former case than in the case of an individual.⁷⁵

Page is saying in the above excerpt that the South was too busy reconstructing their homes and states to be bothered with publishing their own versions of this conflict. He is also implying that writing about such events would appear to be an attempt to justify something that according to him needed no justification. Of Course, the history of the Confederacy he preferred not to write was one that was about losing the war. Ironically, this book was still published in the North.

Part One: 1860-1910

The books from this era were very uniform in the tone they set. Honor, courage and patriotism were virtues that authors felt that younger readers needed to experience through the written word. Most of the books were very interesting to read and it could be seen how young readers viewpoints would be easily influenced as they identified with the historical figures and fictional characters.

Author's Purpose

As in textbooks, authors of children's books in the period after the Civil War through the early twentieth century often included a preface stating why they were writing their books. This information was most often found in the non-fiction works. In

⁷⁵ Thomas Nelson Page, *Robert E. Lee, The Southerner*, (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1908), xii.

his 1892 book *Private W.B. Smith* stated: “If this republic has future struggles before it, and is to come out victorious in them all, we must see to it that children of each generation know by heart the glorious history of their country.”⁷⁶ His book is one that extolled bravery and honor while giving graphic details of his experiences that included time in Andersonville Prison. In 1890, Benjamin Goodhue in his compilation of stories stated in his preface:

In presenting this work to the reader we have endeavored to illustrate the better and more kindly promptings of human nature under the barbarous and cruel conditions of war.

The dangers and privations in the course of a soldier’s duties are not made the principle feature; but higher moral and sentimental elements of character are delineated in a plain style, in order that the subject matter may be made interesting alike to the adult and the youth.⁷⁷

This preface tells the reader that war is a negative experience but that good things come of it. The selections included in this book follow the preface’s stated purpose and show only the good things that come out of war. This leads the reader to think of war in a positive light and to accept that war was an accepted part of reality.

Jesse Bowman Young wrote a book on his experiences during the Civil War entitled *What a Boy Saw in the Army*. In his “Prefatory Note” he lays out his purpose saying:

He was trained in war times to love the Union and the flag; to appreciate the meaning of the word ‘freedom;’ to revere the principles which after a life-and-death struggle, became triumphant;...He has many blessings to be grateful for, but chief among them he reckons the privilege of having been a soldier boy in the armies of the Union.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Private W. B. Smith, *On Wheels and How I Came There*, (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1892), 9.

⁷⁷ Benjamin W. Goodhue, *Incidents of the Civil War*, (Chicago: J. D. Tallmadge, Publisher, 1890), no page number, just before the table of contents.

⁷⁸ Jesse Bowman Young, *What a Boy Saw in the Army*, (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1894), 3-4.

Here the author tells the reader being a soldier is good and being part of the army was an honorable experience. Fighting for freedom was deemed one of the most honorable endeavors. It can then be inferred from the above statement that the war was at the very least a normal occurrence.

Sectional Bias

A Northern bias was visible in almost all the material surveyed. The statements made by the various authors who were primarily from the winning side, left no doubt as to which side they felt was just and in the right. In his book on the life of Lincoln, John Carroll Power wrote of the battle at Fort Sumter as follows: “War was thus forced on the nation. The overt act had been committed by the traitors, and there was no alternative but to accept the situation.”⁷⁹ This statement tells the reader who was in the right at the very beginning of the war. The reader is also told that the war was necessary. Written in 1911⁸⁰, another biography of Lincoln aimed at boys described this battle in decidedly Northern terms when the author said, “By deliberate act of the Confederate government, its attempt at peaceable secession had been changed to active war.”⁸¹

Children’s magazines of the time typically expressed strong sectional bias about the Civil War instilling the reader with a clear notion about the rightness of one side. A story in *Young Folks* magazine in 1865 was clear on the rightness of the Northern cause. In “Boy of Chancellorsville,” General Lee is described as one who “deliberately, basely,

⁷⁹ John Carroll Power, *Abraham Lincoln*, (Chicago and Springfield, Illinois: H. W. Roker, Publisher, 1889), 58.

⁸⁰ This work is only one year outside the stated guidelines for this section of the study but, as it is before the first world war, it was decided to keep it with this material.

⁸¹ Helen Nicolay, *The Boy’s Life of Abraham Lincoln*, (New York: The Century Company, 1911), 149.

and under circumstances of unparalleled meanness, betrayed his country, and long after all hope of success was lost carried on a murderous war against his own race and kindred.”⁸² This rhetoric was typical of material published for young people. One of the most popular magazine editors of children’s magazines, Oliver Optic, explained why there had to be war as follows:

The only difficulty just now with the Southern states is, that they will not acknowledge the legal authority of the President; they will not obey him; they will not observe the laws of the land, laws which they helped frame and promised to obey... We commend the Northern States, call them loyal, simply because they are obedient.⁸³

This was a repetition of the rhetoric common in Northern publications of the time. In another magazine for youth Optic characterized rebel soldiers as “scoundrels.”⁸⁴ At times Optic glorified the rebels while still telling his readers that they were in the wrong with the phrase “Chivalrous representatives of tyranny.”⁸⁵ All these quotes have one thing in common – a belief that only the Union cause was justified and needed to be understood by young readers.

In *On The Plantation*, written by the Southern author, Joel Chandler Harris, the reader is led to believe that this work is written from a Southern point of view. Harris also in his preface specifically tells the reader that this work is aimed at youth when he states, “...any of the youngsters who read this.”⁸⁶ Upon careful reading, a pro-Northern attitude can be determined. In describing one follower of the Confederacy Harris states, “Like thousands of others who fought on the side of the rebellion, he had no principle in

⁸² Marten, 114.

⁸³ Marten, 5.

⁸⁴ Marten, 66.

⁸⁵ Marten, 44.

⁸⁶ Joel Chandler Harris, *On the Plantation*, (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1897), 21.

the matter, and only went with the crowd.”⁸⁷ The use of the word rebellion to describe the Southern cause and the statement of the soldier having no principle when enlisting in that army tells the reader that Southerners were on the wrong side of the war. It can be inferred that those enlisting in the South were traitors.

One of the few blatantly pro-Southern statements was found in an article in the *Child's Index* of September 1862. At the end of an editorial describing how comfortable Southern children were at home, the writer explains war to readers as follows:

War is horrible, children, most horrible, because it causes so much suffering and sorrow and distress...But it is a great consolation to know that we are fighting in a just cause; that is, to save our country from ruin. We are but trying to drive wicked invaders from our land.⁸⁸

In this statement war is deemed bad but necessary to preserve the national integrity of the Confederacy which the author deems a viable country. This author does not believe that the Southern states acted in a traitorous manner when they left the Union. This is as much of an attempt by a Southern author to indoctrinate his readers as to the efficacy of the Southern point of view. The message is different but the goal of indoctrinating young readers as to the correct way of thinking is the same in both the North and the South.

Reverend Allen M. Scott, D.D., wrote a series of essays during the war. After reading them friends encouraged him to publish the essays. They were first published in a Memphis daily paper and then collected in book form. What made this book unusual is the format used to write it. It is written in the style of the King James Version of the Bible which was an idiom understood by the readers of the day. Most of the essays were written about the action in the western theater of the war with only selected mention of the action in the east. He stated in his preface that he chose this style because it “is

⁸⁷ Harris, 196.

⁸⁸ Marten, 208.

quaint, unusual, and from its novelty, calculated to make a lasting impression on the mind.”⁸⁹ His Northern bias can be seen in his description of the South as a “treason-ridden land.”⁹⁰ To get a feel for his unusual prose style and to demonstrate his Unionist leanings, a quote describing the battle at Antietam and South Mountain follows:

And George set the battle array against the proud foes of the nation and came upon them like a great whirlwind.

And drove them before him with might and with power and put them to the sword and smote them sore...

So they departed away out of the country and came unto the land of their fathers and they spoiled not the land of the Yankees.⁹¹

The above quote implies a victory for the Union without mentioning the carnage of this battle. Scott’s writing is confident as befits the winners of this war.

In the poetry of the later nineteenth century, a definite Northern bias could be found. This had an effect on young readers as poems were often included in readers and books that contained selections meant to be memorized or read in a public setting.

Following are two selections, one by John Greenleaf Whittier and the other from an anonymous author. In Whittier’s Poem, “Barbara Frietchie,” the story of a Union loyalist who flew the stars and stripes in defiance of Rebel troops is told. The last two stanzas are as follows:

Barbara Frietche’s work is o’er,
And the rebel rides on his raids no more
Honor to her! And let a tear
Fall, for her side, on Stonewall’s bier.

Over Barbara Frietche’s grave
Flag of freedom and union wave
Peace and order and beauty draw
Round the symbol of light and law.

⁸⁹ Reverend Allen M. Scott, D.D., *Chronicles of the Great Rebellion*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: C. F. Vent & Co., 1868), 4.

⁹⁰Scott, 12.

⁹¹Scott, 215.

And ever the stars look down
On the stars below in Frederick town.⁹²

In “Sheridan’s Ride,” an unknown author writes of Sheridan coming to save the day. Included below are the first and last stanzas. The first stanza sets the scene of anticipation of Sheridan’s arrival. The next stanzas build up to his arrival. The last stanza lauds his arrival and leaves no doubt in the reader’s mind as to the rightness of the Union cause.

The terrible grumble and rumble and roar,
Telling the battle was once more,
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

Hurrah, hurrah for Sheridan!
Hurrah, hurrah for horse and man!
And when their statues are placed on high,
Under the dome of the Union sky, -
The American Soldiers Temple of Fame -⁹³

Both of these selections are blatant in their support of the Union cause as rarely are losses glorified in history. Students reciting and hearing the recitation of this style of poetry were definitely learning that the winning Union side was the correct take on this conflict.

Another way that bias was shown was in an author’s feelings about war itself. Sentiments for and against war were evident in the literature of the day in contrast to textbook avoidance of such statements. While textual material was more likely to strive for a purportedly neutral stance, writers of fiction and non-fiction were under no such constraints. Examples of negative and positive images of war were often found in the same work. The Reverend Allen Scott in his essays provided a good example of this. On one hand he extols the results of battle when describing the battle at Cane Hill in Arkansas saying:

⁹² Mrs. P. A. Adams, *Selections for Young People*, (Boston: James H. Earle Publisher, 1888), 353.

⁹³ Adams, 348.

And Heron joined his army unto the army of James, and they set the battle in array against the armies of the tribes of Dixie.

And fell upon them and smote them sorely, and put them to flight after a mighty conflict.⁹⁴

In this description of a battle, the biblical format and language of the text creates a feeling of grandeur about the battle. In a chapter about Gettysburg the opposite feeling about a battle is given. He states:

And the noise of the conflict was terrible, and the smoke of the battle was as of the burning of cities and the ground was heaped with the dead and the wounded and dying.⁹⁵

He gives an even more graphic and negative view of the aftermath of battle in his description of the earlier battle at Shiloh.

Never since men first began to dwell upon the face of the earth, had any seen the like, man slaying his fellow-man and even brother slaying another.

The earth was drenched in human gore, and the blood ran in rivulets, and the dead lay in heaps over the land.⁹⁶

Scott presented a realistic portrayal of battle within his satiric presentation. His unusual style achieved more than many authors in getting the message out that war, while at times necessary, was not necessarily a pleasant experience.

Other authors portrayed the horrors of war while still extolling the need to continue the fight as a patriotic duty. In *Winning His Way*, Charles Carlton Coffin has his main character reflecting on war as he views a newly slain soldier:

As Paul beheld the quivering flesh, the sight filled him with horror, and made him sick at heart. Such might be his fate before the day was done. He thought of home – of his mother, of Azalia and of the dear friends far away. He thought also of God, and the hereafter; but remembered that he was in the keeping of his

⁹⁴Scott, 226.

⁹⁵Scott, 335.

⁹⁶Scott, 96.

Heavenly Father. He was there to do his duty, and if he was to meet with death, would meet it resolutely.⁹⁷

This author while explaining the horrors of war still tells the reader that it is only one's duty to continue on in spite of the consequences. The implication is that those at home as well as God, expect it of the soldier and the last thing he wants is to let people and his God down.

Oliver Optic often had his characters mouthing patriotic statements as to the validity of fighting. One of his characters describes his duty thusly, "I put my trust in God; and come what may, I know it will be all right with me as long as I do my duty to my God and Country."⁹⁸ Optic was never subtle in teaching his readers that honor and duty along with patriotism were virtues to be practiced at all costs.

It was often in poetry and song that the most strident feelings were expressed. During the war these feelings were usually very strongly worded in favor of the war and one particular side.⁹⁹ The most famous of these was a song that is still sung in churches and at patriotic events today. This is the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" by Julia Ward Howe. In this hymn God is pictured as being on our side and our side is assumed to be the Union. Looking at the first and last verses illustrates this strident patriotism well.

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He's trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightening of his terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory that transfigures you and me;
As he died to make men holy; let us die to make men free;

⁹⁷ Charles Carleton Coffin, *Winning His Way*, (Boston: Estes and Lariat, 1885), 148.

⁹⁸ Oliver Optic, *The Sailor Boy*, (New York: Hurst and Co., no date- probably an 1890's reprint of 1863 work), 81.

⁹⁹ We are seeing an increase in songs today that have a patriotic theme as we are again fighting a war.

While God is marching on.¹⁰⁰

Other verses were published in children's magazines with the intention that they be used for oral recitation. The author even italicized words that were supposed to be emphasized. Appearing below is the last stanza of one verse that appeared in *Student and Schoolmate* in September of 1862:

You have called us and we're coming, by *Richmond's* bloody tide
 To lay us down for *Freedom's* sake, our *brother's* bones beside;
 Or from foul *treason's* savage grasp to *wrench* the murderous blade,
 And in the face of *foreign* foes its fragments parade.
Six hundred thousand loyal men and true have gone before –
 We are coming, Father Abraham – *three hundred thousand more!*¹⁰¹

The practice of including readings to be read aloud continued after the Civil War. Not all selections were on the side of war. Often the editor of the book included only certain stanzas of a longer poem. In the 1911 collection edited by James Baldwin and Ida C. Bender a selection from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's work about the Civil War entitled "The Arsenal at Springfield" was included. This portion was entitled "When War shall be No more". The last stanza calling for peace is as follows:

Peace! And no longer from its brazen portals
 The blast of War's great organ shakes the skies;
 But beautiful as songs of the immortals,
 The holy melodies of love arise.¹⁰²

This poem was written during the period under discussion. It is interesting to note that the section of this poem both talks about the glories of war while praising the peace that followed.

¹⁰⁰ Adams, 347-8.

¹⁰¹ Marten, 63.

¹⁰² James Baldwin and Ida C. Bender, *The Expressive Readers' Seventh Reader*, (New York: American Book Company, 1911), 91.

Balanced Reporting

Works that were not intended as textbooks often used interesting ways to express both sides of the issue during the Civil War. This section is brief, and as in most works, it was easy to determine an author's bias. Occasionally a writer was successful in presenting a situation in a way that fairly described both viewpoints. Coffin in *Winning His Way* tackles this problem of objectivity by having two porch-sitting gentlemen discuss the capture of Fort Sumter, the validity of secession, and the calling for enlistment of new troops.¹⁰³ As one of the gentlemen was a transplanted Virginian, this scene became an effective way to present both sides. Optic, who usually unabashedly presented a Northern view point, at times presented a balanced point of view. In *Fighting Joe* he describes the aftermath at Antietam as follows: "The result of the battle was less decisive than had been hoped and expected from the splendid fighting and brilliant partial results achieved."¹⁰⁴ This battle was often claimed as a Northern victory and became the impetus for the release of the Emancipation Proclamation.

In *A Perfect Tribute*, Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews uses the ploy of having a dying captain from the Southern army comment on Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. He says,

It is only the greatest who can be partisan without bitterness, and only such today may call himself not Northern or Southern, but American. To feel that your enemy can fight you to death without malice, with charity-it lifts country, it lifts humanity to something worth dying for.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Coffin, 108.

¹⁰⁴ Oliver Optic, *Fighting Joe*, (New York: Hurst and Company, no date, probably 1980's reprint of 1863 work), p.117.

¹⁰⁵ Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews, *The Perfect Tribute*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906,1908), 62.

The book was a small one printed in a very ornate style and was written at a time when reconciliation was of utmost importance and the reason the war was fought was being relegated to the background.

Words

The words used to describe particular events and battles were similar to those used in textual materials. The main difference was that the phrasing was longer and the language more poetic or flowery. There was less concern for a straightforward presentation. The authors were not worried about including their own feelings.

In a *Pictorial History of the United States*, by Charles Morris, the chapter on the Civil War was entitled “The Great Civil War.”¹⁰⁶ He used the word “great” when he described in general terms the battles fought between Washington and Richmond. He commented, “But small as it was, here the greatest battles were fought.”¹⁰⁷ This use of the word “great” is telling the reader that learning about the Civil War is important. As is possible in a book not intended for schools but the general public, Morris is able to modify his use of the word “great.” He includes his thoughts on war in general and how others try to depict it when he stated, “War is the most terrible thing upon the earth, though men try to make it look like a pleasant show with their banners and trumpets and drums.”¹⁰⁸ However this negative war statement is diminished by the illustration on the next page entitled “Cushing’s Last Shot.” It shows Cushing using his last breath to light his cannon. This is pictured as a noble gesture. This analysis of one two-page spread demonstrates how an author’s real point of view is hard to determine. The one anti-war

¹⁰⁶ Charles Morris, *Pictorial History of the United States*, (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, 1901), ix.

¹⁰⁷ Morris, 192.

¹⁰⁸ Morris, 192.

statement is sandwiched between a positive statement about war and a heroic depiction of battlefield sacrifice. The message that emerges is that war is a necessary evil.

As in the textbooks of this period, authors during much of the late nineteenth century often use the word “great” to describe specific battles. Oliver Optic referred to the battle of Antietam as “that greatest and most momentous battle...”¹⁰⁹ Optic is telling the reader that this battle was of great importance. Occasionally this word was used in conjunction with other words which helped to modify any positive effect of the word “great.” In the magazine, *Our Young Folks*, Edmund Kirke’s short story, “The Boy of Chancellorsville,” was published. He describes that battle as “great and terrible.”¹¹⁰ The reader in this case is told that the battle was something positive, but that negative elements were also part of the fight.

Many of the authors used other words beginning with “G” to describe battle scenes. Reverend Scott used the word “gladness” to express the nobleness of battle when he talked about General William Rosecrans at Stone River. In his description Rosecrans was “Gallant and brave, and led his armies forth to the battle with shouts and with gladness.”¹¹¹ In the July, 1864 *Student and Schoolmate* an article titled “Campaigning” starts out as follows: “As the active campaign of spring is now working out such glorious results for the Union and liberty...”¹¹² This article focuses only on the way the army divisions were organized without any mention of what campaigning entailed. It was made to sound almost like a walk in the park.

¹⁰⁹ Optic, *Fighting Joe*, 115.

¹¹⁰ Marten, 110.

¹¹¹ Scott, 232.

¹¹² Marten, 36.

Other words were used to convey what war was like. The battle in the clouds at Missionary Ridge was described in an almost poetic way by Oliver Optic when he wrote the following:

There in the clouds, at midnight, was fought and won this remarkable battle. The crests of the hills were carried at the point of the bayonet, and the gallant thirty-third left one third of its number killed and wounded on the ground; but the victory was complete...¹¹³

Readers can picture how destructive this battle was with regards to human life but Optic's use of the word gallant is consistent with the emphasis of the time period on honor and carrying out one's patriotic duty.

Finally in this section on words it would be informative to really look at a portion of Edward Everett's speech presented just before Lincoln delivered his Gettysburg address. This speech which was more typical of the times than Lincoln's speech rarely gets much attention today. Such orations were considered good entertainment. A portion of this oration was published in "The Student and Schoolmate" in March of 1864. It appeared with specific words in italics for emphasis. Everett stated:

Surely I would do no injustice to the other noble achievements of the war, which have reflected such *honor* on *both* arms of the service, and have entitled the *armies* and the *navy* of the United States – their officers and men – the warmest *thanks* and the richest *rewards* which a grateful people can pay. But *they* I am sure will join us in saying, as we bid farewell to the *dust* of these *martyr-heroes*, that *wheresoever* throughout the civilized *world*, the accounts of this great warfare are read, and down to the *latest* period of recorded time, in the glorious annals of our common country, there will be no *brighter* page than that which relates to THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG.¹¹⁴

This oration was typical of the times and equates death with a noble cause on the battlefield with greatness and as a bright page in history. Performing with honor was to

¹¹³ Optic, 202.

¹¹⁴ Marten, 65.

be extolled. This statement affirms the belief that war has a positive outcome especially when you are on the winning side.

Oliver Optic and Stephen Crane

Oliver Optic and Stephen Crane represent two ends of the spectrum when it comes to writing books about the Civil War in the nineteenth century. Optic wrote books for children of the day glorifying honor and the glory of war. His books were propaganda pieces touting the efficacy of the Northern cause. Crane also wrote about honor and courage but from the introspective point of view of one soldier. His soldier was struggling with himself as to how his life would impact and be impacted by the war. Crane's small tome is still read in classrooms today while Optic's mass output is mostly relegated to the obscurity of antiquarian book stores and the collectors who frequent them.

The focus of this brief discussion is to examine the way these two authors talked about war. An entire book could be written just examining these writings which is not the purpose of this research. In many ways their presentations reflect the values and beliefs of the times. Only a little background material will be included to provide a necessary backdrop.

Oliver Optic was the pen name of William T. Adams. In addition to writing a monthly column in *The Student and Schoolmate* magazine, he was a very prolific author known for writing the most popular juvenile novels about the Civil War.¹¹⁵ His two trilogies of the Civil War which relate the experiences of two brothers, one in the navy and one in the army, were written during or immediately after the Civil War and reissued

¹¹⁵ Marten, 3.

in the 1890's along with another new series based during the Civil War. Marten described Optic's output as follows:

Optic emphasized the creative courage and steadfast patriotism of both boys, who operate more or less alone, relying on their own skill, only a few close friends, their courage and patriotism, and their virtue – qualities found in virtually every story and novel for children during the middle third of the nineteenth century. Their escapades showed what it meant to be a “true soldier,” to be someone “who loves his country, and fights for her because he loves her; but at the same time, one who is true to himself and his God.”¹¹⁶

The tone of Optic's books was very straightforward – he wanted to be sure that his readers knew that the Union side was right and how best to think about this war.

Stephen Crane's book, *Red Badge of Courage*, was published in 1895, thirty years after the end of the war. Crane was born just after the Civil War so did not personally experience the war first hand like Optic. He certainly heard first hand about the war from veterans who still were very much alive. He is known primarily for this short novel. He has been described as an “American novelist, poet, bohemian, war correspondent.”¹¹⁷

Both of these authors reflect the times in their focus on honor and the desire of their main characters to be seen as upholding their duties as soldiers. Their characters come from similar backgrounds. Optic's brothers have a widowed mother and it appears in Crane's work as if Henry's mother may also be living alone as when he is remembering what he went through to enlist no mention is made of his father. The mothers in both stories exhort their boys to mind their manners and to behave honorably. It is these authors' presentations of the behavior the boys exhibited that is markedly different.

¹¹⁶ Marten, 3.

¹¹⁷ Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*, (New York: Dover publications, 1990), note after title page.

Oliver Optic has his characters acting with assurance and always relying on their own wits to successfully carry out their duties as soldiers. His viewpoint was very easy to understand as he was very straightforward about everything. In his column in *The Student and Schoolmate* magazine, he envisioned himself as a kindly schoolmaster and his readers were his students. One statement written in 1863 is very typical of the ideas he tried to impart to his students. He stated, "We may be called upon to endure more to make great sacrifices of comfort and plenty; if we are, let us show our devotion to the great cause by suffering without a murmur."¹¹⁸

Within the text of his books, Optic included mini-sermons about why the war needed to be fought. In each of his books, he had a preface that described his purpose. In *Sailor Boy*, he instructs his readers as to his beliefs and implies that readers will be in agreement with his point of view. He described his main character as follows:

...it is the record of a young man whose soul burned with a patriotic desire to serve his country in the hour of her greatest need; and therein he is only a type of tens of thousands, who have forsaken the joys of home and the allurements of plenty to battle upon the seas and the land for the integrity of the Union, --for a united country, which is one of the essential elements of our national peace, freedom, and prosperity.¹¹⁹

One last quote taken from the middle of another of his books describes battle in glowing terms. In referring to the battle of Antietam, Optic described the Pennsylvania Reserves as "a noble body of troops and had done some of the most splendid fighting of the war on the Peninsula."¹²⁰ His books were very readable, enjoyable and very popular in their time. It can be seen that the effect of what they said was absorbed by many especially when they were reissued in the 1890s.

¹¹⁸ Marten, 4.

¹¹⁹ Optic, *Sailor Boy*, 5.

¹²⁰ Optic, *Fighting Joe*, 121.

Stephen Crane used a completely different style of writing *The Red Badge of Courage*. His book is short and all the action takes place within the mind of Henry Fielding. His character suffers doubts about his ability to face the enemy and even runs from his first battle. Henry's thoughts vacillated between the horrors of war and the glory of battle. Rarely was an anti-war sentiment directly expressed. The implied anti-war sentiment in this novel was consistent with an emergent anti-imperialist sentiment that occurred in the 1890s.

One of the metaphors often used was one that equated battle with a machine. Henry reflected, "The battle was like the grinding of an immense and terrible machine to him. Its complexities and powers, its grim processes, fascinated him. He must go close and see it produce corpses."¹²¹ Several other references equating machines to what was happening were used. This was written when the machine age was just beginning to take over and Crane spoke to the fears people had of this phenomenon. This can be seen in the following two quotes. In one a regiment was described as "a machine run down"¹²² while in the other the precise routine of precision gunners had Henry pitying them as "methodical idiots! Machine-like fools."¹²³

Crane's descriptions of battle could be just as poetic as Optic's. The following description delivers a positive view of the flow of a battle. Henry reflects:

These parts of the opposing armies were two long waves that pitched up on each other madly at dictated points. To and fro they swelled. Sometimes one side by its yells and cheers would proclaim decisive blows, but a moment later the other side would be all yells and cheers.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Crane, 37.

¹²² Crane, 83.

¹²³ Crane, 31.

¹²⁴ Crane, 91.

More often Henry, or the youth as Crane often dubs him in the book, is most worried about how his time in battle will be perceived by others. He is immensely worried about reacting honorably. This is in contrast to Optic's characters who just do the honorable thing without mulling over the consequences. Henry reflected on how his emotions seemed to be at odds with those around him as follows:

His emotions made him feel strange in the presence of men who talked excitedly of a prospective battle as of a drama they were about to witness with nothing but eagerness and curiosity apparent in their faces. It was often that he suspected them to be liars.¹²⁵

Through the eyes of the youth, Crane gives a view of war that is very realistic. His youth thinks, "But awake he had regarded battles as crimson blotches on the pages of the past."¹²⁶ Much like Optic's characters, the most important thing to Henry was to have courage. Early in the book Henry "tried to mathematically prove to himself that he would not run from battle."¹²⁷ After fleeing from his first battle, Henry spends the rest of the book trying to redeem himself especially in his own eyes. He does get his red badge of courage in the end – a wound in battle.

Both Crane and Optic were a product of their times. Crane was more of an intellectual reporter so his novel took place mostly in the mind of his protagonist while Optic existed as an evangelizing educator and thus his output was aimed at forming the minds of his readers. One was more introspective while the other believed that it was his mission to inculcate his readers in the values he felt important. In the end it is the book that makes the reader think about all aspects of battle and, on their own, come to conclusions about the conflict that has remained in use to this day.

¹²⁵ Crane, 10.

¹²⁶ Crane, 3.

¹²⁷ Crane, 6.

Part Two: 1910-1960

It is during this period that real societal changes could be seen. History and therefore historical fiction still focused on honor and the patriotic aspect of war. In addition, the growth of children's literature as a separate entity rapidly emerged. This was caused by several developments as identified by Galda and Cullinan:

As more children learned how to read and write due to universal first- through eighth-grade public schools, the quantity and the types of books published for them rapidly increased. At the same time new technology methods helped reduce publishing costs, and the public generosity of charitable individuals allowed public library systems to rapidly develop...¹²⁸

Also during this period the picture book format was developed and a separate category of young adult books emerged. More non-fiction books on the topic of the Civil War were available and were often intended for both school libraries and private consumption. Most of this material as in the previously mentioned textbooks of the same period was written by those who had no personal experience with the Civil War.

Author's Purpose

Books written after World War II were more likely to be realistic about the conditions during battle but similarities as to the reasons for writing the books were easy to see. The preface written by E.B. Long to *The Post Reader of Civil War Stories* published in 1958 continues to portray the Civil War in the same light as earlier authors. He presents a variety of reasons why reading such a volume is important while also philosophizing on war in general. Initially he describes "war" as "something that seeps down deep into the crevices of the human soul and, despite great effort, can never be

¹²⁸ Galda, 19.

routed out.”¹²⁹ In describing the depth to be found in the stories included in the anthology, he describes the backdrop as follows: “Over all hangs the heady, invigorating, and at times destroying pall of the Civil War.”¹³⁰ This description contains a mixture of metaphors. The war was invigorating while there was also a pall surrounding it. Since the positive reference is first, that is the one most readers will take with them. At the end of the introduction there is an attempt to analyze why war in general captures the imagination of so many. The author states:

Many tell us that war is horribly, unnecessarily evil in all its aspects. Why then do we have so much of it? Why then do poets chant, the historians recount and the story tellers weave their themes? Nobody condones it, the soldier and the general least of all. But the holocaust oft times discovers in the human spirit a basic soundness, a mysterious impulse that causes man to realize himself, to rise or fall in the crisis. It is individualism triumphant...The evils of the Civil War cannot be escaped, but the man who walked down the lonely road into adventure, often pierced with death, has his victory.¹³¹

In this statement it is easy to see both positive and negative feelings about war but the bottom line is that it is an adventure. The magazine in which these stories first appeared had a wide readership among all ages. Therefore it had great influence as to whether a topic was received positively or negatively.

In 1960 there was a resurgence of interest in the Civil War because of its upcoming centennial, Burke Davis wrote the book *Our Incredible Civil War* and the title itself leads a reader to think that there was something noteworthy about the experience. Davis ends his introduction by stating: “Much of this book was written with the ‘new crop’ of American Civil War enthusiasts in mind, in the hope that it might lead some to

¹²⁹ Gordon Carroll, Editor, *The Post Reader of Civil War Stories*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1958), 5.

¹³⁰ Carroll, 8.

¹³¹ Carroll, 9.

seriously study this dark but wonderful time in our history.”¹³² This leads the reader to expect to find heroic tales that, even though they have a dark or negative side, were basically exciting and therefore positive in nature.

One book was discovered that was hoped to contain a more balanced view of the conflict. It was published during a period of reconciliation just before World War I where the concept of national unity took precedence over all other ideas especially racial justice and equality. A. C. Whitehead, in his book, *Two Great Southerners*, exhibited his Southern roots in the first paragraph of the preface when he wrote: “The primary aim of this book is to acquaint the children of the South with the goodness of two of her noblest sons.”¹³³ He finishes his preface with the following claim:

All points of controversy and sectional feeling have been avoided. It is a time when the whole nation is laying aside discussion of such topics, a time when North and South are each realizing and acknowledging, that in the Great Trial each was faithful to duty.¹³⁴

These two men were faithful to duty only if the readers could overlook as the author did which side Lee and Davis were representing. Being a part of the Confederacy according to Davis, did not negate the fact that they were Americans. This use of America when describing the country totally ignores the rest of the name which is The United States. His claim of avoiding sectional feeling is false since he takes the decidedly Southern viewpoint when he implies that both sides were just doing their duty during the Civil War.

¹³² Burke Davis, *Our Incredible Civil War*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), 14.

¹³³ A. C. Whitehead, *Two Great Southerners*, (New York: American Book Company, 1912), 3.

¹³⁴ Whitehead, 3.

Sectional Bias

A type of blatant sectionalism could be found in both fictional and non-fictional works published into the 1940's and 1950's. One book title was a reprint of a work originally published in 1915 but then reprinted for new patriotic wartime audiences in 1943. The main character is Harry, a Southern boy, but many of his musings took on a decidedly Northern slant. The following two excerpts are the main character's thoughts of the battle at Chancellorsville. Immediately after the battle Harry thinks about the Southern cause:

Besides their need was far more desperate. The Southern Army did not increase in numbers...Before it stood the Army of the Potomac, outnumbering it two to one, and behind that army stood a great nation ready to pour forth more men by the hundreds of thousands and more money by hundreds of millions to save the Union.¹³⁵

Later in the book Harry continues to muse about this battle and its impact as follows:

He believed that they would have annihilated the Army of the Potomac, that only a few fugitives from it would have escaped across the Potomac. The time came to him in the after years when he often asked himself would such a result have been good for the American people.¹³⁶

In the above quotes a Northern bias is still evident even though it is not as strong as in earlier works. In the first quote Harry is lamenting the abundance of human and financial resources available to the North. In the second quote which has Harry believing that it was best for the now united country that the North won is where the reader gets a decidedly pro-Northern feeling about the ultimate outcome of the war. The phrase, "American people," also reflects the World War II strong feeling about patriotism.

¹³⁵ Joseph A. Altsheler, *The Star of Gettysburg*, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1915, reprinted 1943), 215.

¹³⁶ Altsheler, 264.

One of the most pro-Southern points of view found was in the John Tilley book titled, *Facts Historians Leave Out*. This 1952 book is an attempt to justify the Southern cause. Typical of the author's statements is as follows, "this and other acts of an unfriendly section, led the Southerners to form their own government, one which could and would afford protection for their families and homes."¹³⁷ In this quote the North is relegated to an "unfriendly section" of the country unwilling to see the Southern point of view. The justification was that the South was left no choice but to take up arms and protect its interests. This was a very poor attempt to rewrite history to justify the beliefs of the author.

In the children's book, *Gettysburg*, written mid-twentieth-century, MacKinlay Kantor wrote about the battle that took place in early July of 1863. This book exhibits a Union point of view throughout. Early in his book the Southern troops are described from the point of view of the citizens of Gettysburg. He wrote, "A menace was assembling, away over where South Mountain swelled its blue-green shoulder. A War. An Army. Worse than that, an *enemy* army."¹³⁸ Later in the book, he referred to rebels from Georgia as "ragged hairy men."¹³⁹ According to Kantor, the Southerners were clearly traitors.

Most of the sentiments that were expressed during this middle period were in favor of war. In his book of Lincoln stories, Anthony Gross includes a quote credited to Lincoln. While reviewing a regiment Lincoln tells the soldiers why they were fighting as follows:

¹³⁷ Jonh S. Tilley, *Facts Historians Leave Out, A Youth's Confederate Primer*, (Montgomery, Alabama: Paragon Press, 1951, 12th printing 1961), 31.

¹³⁸ MacKinlay Kantor, *Gettysburg*, (New York: Random House, 1952), 7.

¹³⁹ Kanter, 97.

It is in order that each one of you may have through this free government which we have enjoyed an open field and a fair chance... that the struggle should be maintained that we may not lose our birthright.¹⁴⁰

This quote is expressing the view that fighting in this war was a patriotic duty and one that should be gladly embraced. Since freedom has always been a unifying element in the history of the United States, choosing this quote expressed the prevailing view of the winners that they were fighting to preserve the freedoms that were a hallmark from the beginning of the country.

Kantor wrote his book on the Battle of Gettysburg in 1952 when the memories of World War II were still very fresh in everyone's mind. He was thinking as much of that war as of the Civil War when he expressed his feelings about war's necessity as follows:

What had been accomplished?...

When we are assailed by cruel enemies who would change our whole way of living, who would gobble up the weaker people of the earth and march them off to slave labor camps, we are glad that we have young men willing to train and march and fly. We are thankful that they are willing to throw their bodies between the families of our nation and the fierce danger of fists and shells from far away.

For generations people have prayed in gratitude: our nation is sound and unseparated. It was held together by the courage of people...¹⁴¹

Kantor continued in this attitude of educating his readers and helping them understand how this all related to them. He is trying to explain to the readers of the 1950's one of the reasons for the animosity and fears that developed between the sections stated:

It is ignorance which breeds our lies; and so it was in 1863. Terrified Pennsylvanians told and believed queer tales about the oncoming rebels, not only because few of them had ever seen a Southerner or even bothered to guess what he was like.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Anthony Gross, editor, *Lincoln's Own Stories*, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1912), 137.

¹⁴¹ Kantor, 149.

¹⁴² Kantor, 15.

Kantor was speaking to young people on the cusp of the information age. These children were just beginning to watch national television programs and the nightly news. They were acutely aware of America as one country that had just successfully waged a World War. He was helping them understand how it was during the 1860's. His statement could also have been used to describe the country at the beginning of the next decade when the civil rights movement marched into national prominence.

Words

As in the textbooks, the word most often used to describe events was “great” or some variation of that word. This word appeared in titles of books such as A.C. Whitehead’s 1912 book on Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee. It is entitled *Two Great Southerners*. This book’s goal was to make sure the reader accepted the positive role these two men played in the history of this country in spite of being on the losing side. This author was a strong proponent of the idea of reconciliation and by calling these two men “Great Americans” he was speaking directly to Southerners by anointing these two men as American. These men were historical figures that all citizens could be proud to call Americans according to Whitehead. This book came out one year before the fiftieth anniversary of Gettysburg which had become a celebration of the valor of both sides while ignoring the traitorous act of the South and the animosity generated.

In light of the reconciliation attitude, the battle that is most often described as “great” is Gettysburg. Altsheler in his book describes the aftermath of this battle as “in all respects the greatest battle fought on the American continent...and fifty thousand men had fallen.”¹⁴³ He is careful to use a combined casualty count. This quote may lead the reader to equate “greatest” with the number of casualties. The author here was clearly

¹⁴³ Altsheler, 369.

stating that what made the battle “great” was the number of casualties which is not necessarily a good thing. However, in an earlier reference to Gettysburg he uses the word “great” in both a positive and negative way stating, “Now in the three great battles that were fought at Gettysburg, great numbers were slain and multitudes were sore wounded.”¹⁴⁴ It leaves the reader to determine if great is a positive term when coupled with the numbers of soldiers who fell during the battle. This book was also written just after the fiftieth anniversary event commemorating this battle where bringing together both sides to honor their valor was the main goal.

In his *Youth’s Confederate Primer*, John S. Tilley described the period of time before the battle for Fort Jackson and St. Phillips as follows: “On the afternoon before the great battle...”¹⁴⁵ Each reference using this term is framed in such a way that the reader is led to believe that this was something momentous. The connotation was such that the word “great’s” meaning became more than that a battle large in size was fought but that it was also important. The slaughter at Fredericksburg was described by a Confederate character as follows: “Fredericksburg was won, but two armies, resolute and defiant, gathered themselves anew for other battles as great or greater.”¹⁴⁶ Even if one battle was over the soldiers could anticipate future meetings that produced greatness.

Altsheler equated war with games when talking about the aftermath at Antietam. He described the scene as follows, “Thousands of wounded, still pale, but with returning strength, lay on the October leaves and looked forward to the day when they could join

¹⁴⁴ Altsheler, 337.

¹⁴⁵ John S. Tilley, 166.

¹⁴⁶ Altsheler, 130.

their comrades in either games or war.”¹⁴⁷ In a poem by Brett Harte meant to be recited aloud, one stanza includes these lines:

The generous deed was done;
In the storm of the years that are fading,
No braver battle was won;¹⁴⁸

Harte is saying that dying in battle is a generous act or to take it one step further it was an honorable thing to die in battle.

Conclusion

Books written for general consumption rather than school usage expressed a wider variety of opinions. Many of the books were written for a general reading audience but were read by youth and adults alike. Amidst the glorious descriptions of battle, the reader was more likely to be presented with the realities of this war. The horrors of battle were often well depicted, but many authors liked to gloss over these realities and only tell of the joys of a battle well fought or the honor exhibited by those taking part. Rarely was war deemed a negative and possibly preventable occurrence. Authors of books directed specifically toward younger readers claimed that they were protecting their young readers by excluding lengthy descriptions of events. They focused mainly on uplifting anecdotes within the framework of the whole. While often enjoyable for today’s readers, these books are written in a style that is unfamiliar.

¹⁴⁷ Altsheler, 4.

¹⁴⁸ Baldwin, 88.

PART II: POST 1960 MATERIAL FOR CHILDREN

There are many changes in historical presentations since the Civil War aimed at children. The choice of 1960 as the year to split this study in two parts seemed a logical choice. With the election of John F. Kennedy as president, the country seemed poised for great changes. The Civil Rights Movement was gathering momentum while another war was looming on the horizon. The Vietnam War, because of daily television battlefield coverage, changed how Americans reacted to war. For the first time an anti-war movement really affected the nation's conscience in a way that continues today. This section will look at how war is presented to the youth of today.

The format of this section will mirror the previous section as closely as possible to make comparisons easier. Some differences will be easy to see. Over one hundred years of history now separates students from the Civil War. The writing of Civil War history has been affected by the continual discovery of material. This has been primarily in the form of diaries and letters unearthed in various family estates and archives. The literary styles found in the non-textual material have much more variety than that of the earlier period. Much of the intent, however, has remained the same. Cullinan and Galda relate the importance of historical fiction as follows:

History is made by people with strengths and weaknesses who experience victories and defeats... Authors of books set in the past want children to know historical figures as human beings—real people like themselves who have shortcomings as well as strengths.¹⁴⁹

This quote demonstrates that authors of today are still choosing how to present historical events so that their readers absorb the information and ideas that each author deems important. It is believed by many that children need to be guided in their learning and many authors take it upon themselves to provide the literary vehicle for this to occur. Unfortunately this literary vehicle often takes the form of a biased propaganda tract.

Chapter 3: Post-1960 Texts

Over half of the texts used for this section are from 1980 or later. These were the ones to be found in use or previously used material in the middle school classrooms in the Flint area. Many of the classroom texts were used for ten years or more and still remained in the classrooms after their everyday usage to serve as additional resource material. Several others were located in used-book stores. Old textbooks, especially the ones from this period, are not really considered old enough to be a desirable commodity in these stores, so the selection is limited.

In comparison to the appearance with the older texts many changes have been made. The biggest change is in the size of the books. Whereas students just after the Civil War could carry all their books with just a strap around them, students of today need backpacks. These texts are usually eight and a half inches by ten and a half inches. Loewen in his book analyzing texts stated, “The specimens in my collection of a dozen of the most popular textbooks average four and a half pounds in weight and 888 pages in

¹⁴⁹ Galda, 206.

length.”¹⁵⁰ Just taking one book home at night becomes a struggle, so most students use overloaded backpacks to carry their books around.

Another change can be seen in the shiny covers. The covers on most incorporate the national colors of red, white and blue into their design. Two used a shade of beige as the primary color or as the main color, but these texts utilized at least two of the primary colors associated with the American flag. The titles are usually a variation on “The Story of America” or “The History of the United States.” This use of color, the flag or an eagle introduces the student to the patriotism as an underlying purpose of the book. The authors and publishers are aware that it takes the entire presentation to get their vision across. In this case the vision remains the same as earlier texts – to create a patriotic citizen with accurate and balanced reporting of history playing a secondary role.

Another major difference to be found is in the increased use of non-written material. In most of the texts surveyed pictures, maps, charts and separately framed extra material such as biographical information took up one third to one-half of the text. This could be in response to the lower reading level and lack of desire to read found in many students. Some authors arrange the textual material in two columns to a page while other texts used one wide column to leave more room for other non-textual material. In the Civil War sections, vintage photographs and paintings from the Civil War period were often used. The more recent a text’s publication date, the greater use of color in the non-textual material. There were many charts, timelines, and material the authors deemed of secondary importance, presented in separate sidebars surrounding the primary written material.

¹⁵⁰ James W. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, (New York: The New Press, 1995), 3.

These cosmetic changes reflect the presentation of material on the Civil War. However, the authors still pick and choose how the material is presented to teach children a specific version of events. According to Cullinan and Galda, “Every generation of historians, to some degree, reinterprets the past by using the concerns of the present as a lens.”¹⁵¹ One major change has been the inclusion of how African-Americans and women played a role in this conflict. Cullinan and Galda also charged teachers to beware of how authors deal with these topics when they stated, “When writing about periods of time in which racism and sexism abounded, authors must take care to portray these social issues honestly while at the same time not condoning them.”¹⁵² The analysis that follows will explore how the Civil War era is presented to students of today.

Author’s Preface, etc.

Most, but not all, authors included some kind of introduction to their text. Sometimes it took the form of a letter to students, while one author used a first chapter to set out the rationale for the format of the text. Several notes to the student were very similar to the style of older texts. In a 1961 text, the author states his purpose as follows: “The present book unfolds a narrative, which it is hoped, will help stimulate interest in what must be recognized as a truly magnificent achievement by the American people.”¹⁵³ In a 1981 text, the editors state in a note to the student:

The purpose of this book is to help you understand the history of the United States. You will learn how our country began, how men and women contributed to its growth and development, and how the United States became a powerful world leader. You will see links between the past and the present.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Galda, 207.

¹⁵² Galda, 207.

¹⁵³ Thomas A. Bailey, *The American Pageant – A History of the Republic, Second Edition*, (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1961), vii.

¹⁵⁴ Jane Petlinski, Eleanor Ripp, Editors, *United States History, Third Edition*, (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Globe Fearon, 2001), xvi.

Both the above quotes share a belief that this history of the United States should be developed in a positive manner. Boorstin and Kelley in their prologue use an even more ebullient phrasing when describing their viewpoint. Two sentences that lead off the two first paragraphs are especially interesting. They are:

American history is the story of a magic transformation.

and

Our history is the story of these millions in search of what it means to be an American.¹⁵⁵

The above authors want the students to understand from the outset that there is something special or even “magical” about the history of this country. The inference can be taken that they mean that this country has its own special place in the world and that it is to be considered positive. The word “magical” just replaces the idea that it was God’s will or providence that this country was discovered as found in the nineteenth century texts.

In several of the other texts reviewed, the authors have as a major goal to create thinking individuals who are able to take the information given and decide for themselves how the material then impacts their beliefs and life. One author entitled his introduction, “Challenges” and made the following statement:

Americans still face challenges. Study carefully the pictures and words on the following pages. They serve as an introduction to problems that have challenged Americans since the founding of the country. How do you think these challenges are being met? At present, your answer will be on a very limited amount of evidence...By the time you have finished all of this book, your answer may well have changed. By then you will have studied the events, ideas and attitudes that make up this country’s history and affect the way people respond to the challenges of America.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Daniel J. Boorstin and Brooks Mather Kelley with Ruth Frankel Boorstin, *A History of the United States*, (Lexington Massachusetts: Ginn and Company, 1981), 1.

¹⁵⁶ Bernard Weisberger, *The Impact of Our Past – A History of the United States, Second Edition*, (New York: Webster Division, McGraw Hill Book Company, 1976), 11.

Most of the modern authors were more concerned in their opening statements with convincing their students why they should be studying history. One author at the end of his lengthy introductory chapter was quite emphatic about why students should study history when he wrote:

The impact of our past is with us all the time. Only by understanding it can we decide how we might answer some of the nation's most important challenges...Each of the eight units of this book is designed so that you can use your growing knowledge about the impact of our past to decide how to handle the problems as well as the promise of the present and future.¹⁵⁷

The one thing that this author fails to tell students is that he is choosing what information is presented and how that material will be analyzed.

In another text the authors also posed the question as to why the student should study history. The answer in the Davison and Underwood text was a little more ambiguous when students were asked a question to answer the authors' question as to why they should study American history. They stated, "What stories will you pass on? In the end, this history of America will be your history too."¹⁵⁸ The implication is that students need to take ownership in the history of their past as they will be participating in the creation of history in their present that will become the history of their future. If the authors are unable to present a clear-cut reason why their text is important then it makes one wonder if their presentation will also lack a clear focus.

In an earlier text, there was a more definite statement given on what is important about the study of American history. This text asserts that there is an underlying theme throughout American history. The authors stated in their opening chapter, "One idea will

¹⁵⁷ Weisberger, 19.

¹⁵⁸ James West Davidson and Kathleen Underwood, *American Journey – The Quest for Liberty to 1877*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentis Hall, 1992), xvii.

show itself again and again as you learn the story of America. It is that our people value one thing above all others – their freedom.”¹⁵⁹ This statement tells the reader that the text will demonstrate that this is true. The authors then have to present information in a way that may ignore other trends to prove this statement. In regard to the period covered by this study, the implication was that the Civil War was primarily a fight for freedom. This can be taken in several ways such as freedom for the slaves or the freedom of the South to secede or the freedom of the North to preserve the Union. This amorphous theme can be presented in such a way that no one side will appear to be in the wrong while another side is definitely right. It is almost as if authors are unwilling to commit to an absolute statement about right and wrong, and there are those things that can be said to be definitely right or wrong.

Two authors were quite specific as to what students would achieve by studying the text that they wrote. *Story of America* follows a common theme of creating responsible citizens when in the introduction the author states, “...you should understand the democratic values and ethical ideas that guide the American people and appreciate the civic responsibilities of all Americans to participate in American democracy.”¹⁶⁰ This purpose represents a continuation of thought from earlier texts. However this author does provide a less traditional statement at the beginning of his introduction. He states that the history of America “is a great epic and the unique tale of how hundreds of millions of people came to live on this vast continent, while the original inhabitants lost their lands.”¹⁶¹ This initial reference to the original inhabitants is not explored further in the

¹⁵⁹ Harold H. Eibling, Fred M. King, and James Harlow, *The Story of America*, (River Forest, Illinois: Laidlaw Brothers Publishing, 1965), 11.

¹⁶⁰ John Garraty, *The Story of America*, (Austin, Texas: Rinehart and Winston, 1994), xxvi.

¹⁶¹ Garraty, xxvii.

introduction therefore it seems to be placed there to provide only lip service to the existence of a native population and their claim to the land. Most authors seem to have difficulty in reconciling the goal of creating good citizens while accurately describing all of American history. In the atmosphere of the present time, political correctness often means that the only real truth is that everyone is a winner and good with no recriminations being laid on the losers or those in the wrong in order to avoid creating bad feelings in those in an earlier era who would have been said to have been losers or traitors. In talking about the Civil War this is exhibited by a reluctance to call the Confederates traitors.

As can be seen, an author's stated purpose is important to explore prior to looking at a specific portion of a text. The next sections will now focus on those chapters dealing with the specific topic of the Civil War. How the topic of war is presented will be governed by the specific mind-set of each writer.

Bias

In analyzing current texts, it became apparent that sectional bias was not the only bias to be found. Both positive and negative feelings about war in general also became evident in texts written after 1960.

Often bias can be seen in simple things such as the title of chapters. One book entitled the chapters on the Civil War "War About Slavery"¹⁶² and "The North Wins the Civil War."¹⁶³ What was interesting about this book, more of a reference book than a text, was that it was written by an English author. By using the above titles he gives the impression that the North was in the right. This book also used the Northern names for

¹⁶² Hugh Brogan, *The Longman History of the United States of America*, (New York: William Morrow and Inc. 1985), 324.

¹⁶³ Brogan, 412.

battles and other events. Another author presented another viewpoint when he named his chapter on the Civil War: “The War for Southern Independence.”¹⁶⁴ This author is reflecting the philosophy of reconciliation as the title of this chapter lends validation to the Southern point of view that they had a right to secede. By referring to it in this manner, today’s Southerners’ feelings are being considered of importance while describing what was for the South a defeat. These authors in subscribing to political correctness fail to realize that it can never replace the facts even when they hurt someone’s feelings. That is the weakness of the Reconciliation point of view.

There were other instances of highlighted sub-section headings or even illustrations that demonstrated bias toward one side or the other. Rarely did any of these titles portray the South as being in the right. One text titled a subsection “A New Nation.”¹⁶⁵ While this section only stated what the Southerners believed in a non-judgmental way, the use of the words “New Nation” gives an indication that the South really created a new country. The authors described their reasoning for secession as follows:

They believed that they had every right to secede. After all, the Declaration of Independence said “it is the right of the people to alter or abolish” a government that denies the rights of their citizens. Lincoln, they believed, would deny white Southerners their right to own slaves.¹⁶⁶

This description of the Southern rationale is written in such a manner that the reasons do not appear to be valid in today’s world. At the time under discussion, Lincoln had no intention of outlawing slavery immediately. The secessionists were employing anti-government propaganda to win the hearts and minds of Southerners especially. Although

¹⁶⁴ Bailey, 416.

¹⁶⁵ Davidson, 534.

¹⁶⁶ Davidson, 534.

the author refrains from expressing a value judgment, students of today are being led to see the fallacy in this Southern argument. When taken in context with the sub-section title, the overall message the author intends to get across becomes garbled.

A Union point of view was often very much in evidence in other ways. The choice for illustrations could also be seen to express a Northern point of view. Garraty, in the first paragraph of his chapter on the Civil War, gives a very neutral explanation as to what each side felt it was fighting for, he even gave the Confederate reasons first. What most students will remember, however, is the choice of a political cartoon to demonstrate how one side portrayed the war in political cartoons. The cartoon is titled “The Eagle’s Nest.”¹⁶⁷ The caption for this cartoon is as follows:

The American eagle guards its nest of states in this 1861 cartoon. But while the eagle warns against traitors, the southern states in the foreground are hatching rebellion. This war propaganda cartoon leaves no doubt as to the artist’s position: “The Union: It Must and Shall be Preserved.” Make a poster or draw a picture that shows the breakup of the Union in a different way.¹⁶⁸

The choice of this cartoon also gives the author’s position away, even though he gives a neutral assignment for students. Most students would be inclined to take the Union side unless the teacher made sure they knew that the assignment could be drawn picturing the stance of either side.

Once students started reading the texts for content they were met with various word images that left them without any doubt as to which side they were to believe was in the right. These statements were usually from a Union point of view. One text was very blunt about the possibilities of the South winning when it stated, “Worst of all for the South, it suffered from delusions which prevented it from seeing the facts...The

¹⁶⁷ Garraty, 542.

¹⁶⁸ Garraty, 542.

South's grandiose dreams turned into nightmares."¹⁶⁹ This quote is also unusual as it is not the usual bland recounting of viewpoints found in most texts.

Another text talked about the founding of the Confederacy prior to discussing Lincoln's first inauguration. Jefferson Davis's inaugural address was described as follows: "In his inaugural address President Davis insisted that he desired to maintain peaceful relations with the United States. His speech was not very inspiring."¹⁷⁰

Following this analysis, a lengthy discussion of Lincoln's inauguration was given two pages including an extensive quote from Lincoln's inaugural address. Lincoln's address was presented without any editorial comments. Occurring early in the discussion about the war, the reader quickly is given information that the confederacy had less validity than the Union.

Strong negative words were rarely used when discussing the South. One author gave a lengthy analysis of why the war happened. He stated:

Why did the war come? The generation that fought it had simple answers. To some Northerners it was God's judgment on the land for the sin of slavery. Yet many other Northerners would have denied such an idea. The war to them was only to save the Union...from the efforts of traitors to destroy it. Southerners believed that the war grew out of Northern violations of the South's constitutional rights.¹⁷¹

The word traitor was rarely used to describe the Southern states so as not to upset Southerners and thus not get their books purchased in that region. This analysis also gives the Northern point of view first and at some length while the Southern point of view rates only one sentence. Again students reading this text are given reason to look at the South as being in error and traitorous.

¹⁶⁹ Boorstin, 275.

¹⁷⁰ Garraty, 545.

¹⁷¹ Weisberger, 344.

Bias could also be discerned when it came to whether war was necessary. The images of war were most always negative. Weisberger in his text used an entire page to reproduce an 1889 painting of the first battle at Bull Run. The caption that was paired with this illustration stated:

The first major Civil War battle was a confused and bloody fight between two green armies at Bull Run, Virginia, on July 21, 1861. However, this 1889 romantic painting features dashing, gallant cavalymen and soldiers dying bravely and painlessly.¹⁷²

The impression that the painting gives is that war is glorious but the caption questions the reality the artist portrays. Since visual images are so powerful, it seems as if the students will remember the painting and not the caption unless a teacher really helps students to evaluate what they are seeing.

One battle that often is used to describe the horrors of war is Antietam.

Weisberger in his text describes this battle as a Union win rather than a draw as most historians now categorize it. He attempts to pair a picture from the battle with a description of the fighting in the cornfield. He stated:

But death gathered the biggest crop on September 17 when the two armies met in the battle of Antietam. After a day of short-range blazing away at each other in orchards and cornfields, about 11,000 were killed or wounded on each side.¹⁷³

This description was paired with a photograph taken on the battlefield after it was over.

One famous photograph by Gardner is of three dead soldiers along a fence row. The caption stated, "Southerners lay dead in a cornfield after the Battle of Antietam in September, 1862."¹⁷⁴ The author makes no mention of how heavy the fighting was in the cornfield or that one could walk across it after the battle without touching the ground

¹⁷² Weisberger, 373.

¹⁷³ Weisberger, 374.

¹⁷⁴ Weisberger, 374-5.

because of the number of casualties. He also makes an error in identifying the location the photograph portrayed. In his book on Antietam, William A. Frassanito identifies the location as being across from and north of the Dunker Church. This placed it at least 1,000 yards from the cornfield.¹⁷⁵ In trying to make his point of the horrors of battle, the textbook author falls short. To get across his intended point of the horrors of battle, he needed to include more detail of what really happened. One of the reason that this error occurred is that not all textbook authors could be expert in all areas, thus errors such as this creep into the texts.

In describing another battle, the above author was more successful in getting his point across about the horrors of war. Paired with a picture of war-weary soldiers and a young dead soldier, his description of the siege at Petersburg is as follows:

The war became a dreary business. Men crouched in holes in the earth, battling heat, mud, insects and sickness...Tragedies, like the death of the young soldier at far right, multiplied, week after bloody week.¹⁷⁶

In this case the picture he used really reinforced his textual message that this war became anything but a glorious adventure.

Other authors also touched on some of the less glorious events of the war. In one text Sherman's march to the sea was given two paragraphs. Included in this description was the following sentence. "Then began one of the most terrible marches in history..."¹⁷⁷ This statement was not used in conjunction with a description of the then new concept of total war. There was no description of the countryside after the march or the Southern reaction to it. Taken in isolation from the larger picture this statement

¹⁷⁵ William A. Frassanito, *Antietam, The Photographic Legacy of America's Bloodiest Day*, (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1978), 126.

¹⁷⁶ Weisberger, 390.

¹⁷⁷ Ebling, 353.

seems to be included only to talk about the horrors of war. However, without much supporting information the statement seems almost an afterthought.

Only two authors gave a statement about the lasting effects of the war. John R. O'Connor instructed his readers as follows:

The Civil War had important and lasting effects on the United States. While African-Americans were no longer slaves, in the years ahead they would struggle to try to achieve equality. The Civil War also increased the power of the federal government. No state or group of states ever again could claim the right to leave the Union. Finally, the war left many people in both the North and the South bitter and angry.¹⁷⁸

This comment is unusual in that it made a strong statement for why the war was fought.

This author implies that it was a good thing that the federal government's power was increased. Even though he alludes to negative feelings on both sides, his view about the validity of the Union position comes through.

Bailey also came down strongly on the results of the war. His remarks were more explicit and it was plain to see that he was a strong unionist. He stated:

The greatest constitutional decision of the century, in a sense, was handed down at Appomattox Court House, where Lee surrendered. The champions of extreme states' rights were crushed. The national government, rewelded in this fiery furnace of war, emerged unshaken. Nullification and secession, those twin nightmares of previous decades, were laid to rest.¹⁷⁹

This statement is much more poetic and contains more strong words than most of the texts surveyed. Equating nullification and secession with the word nightmare leaves no doubt as to how strongly Bailey feels about the Union's ultimate victory in the war.

¹⁷⁸ John R. O'Connor, *Exploring American History*, (Paramus, New Jersey: Globe Book Company, 1994), 415.

¹⁷⁹ Bailey, 457.

As seen in earlier quotes, Weisberger appears to downplay the intensity of the war. The reader never gets the feeling that this war is necessary. He is just following through with his primary theme stated at the beginning of the chapter.

Civil wars often seem more senseless and destructive than other wars because they are like a fight between the members of a family. Peaceful ways of settling differences are forgotten and give way to violence between those who a short time before were united in achieving truly worthwhile goals.¹⁸⁰

In this statement antiwar sentiments are clearly evident with the use of the word senseless. He really over simplifies the entire conflict as a family fight that has become a feud that gets settled in a war.

Kathleen Underwood in her signed introduction to the Civil War Chapter stated the reasons the war happened differently. She wrote:

But sometimes, even democracy fails. The North and South, for example, could not settle their dispute over slavery by political means. Instead they went to war. The Civil War was long and bloody, still when it was over, the Union was stronger.¹⁸¹

In this statement she lets the reader know that there are times when people believe strongly enough about things that war becomes the only way to settle the issue. There are things worthy of fighting for.

In this section it can be seen that modern textbook writers are more accurate in their presentation of facts but still demonstrate definite feelings about the validity of either side or war itself. The peace movement that began in the 1960's has affected how war is presented. Historians of the earlier periods discussed did not have the post Vietnam bias towards war and, therefore, viewed the reasons and causes for the Civil

¹⁸⁰ Weisberger, 340.

¹⁸¹ Davidson, 541.

War more objectively. Most authors seem to feel that wars should be prevented. The minority abhors the reality of war even while they believe that sometimes it is necessary.

Words and Phrases

In one area a real change in emphasis could be seen in comparison with older texts. This was in the phrases and words used to describe battle. Whereas older texts used adjectives that talked about battles in positive, glowing terms, the recent texts used more negative words that dwelt on the horrors of battle. The concept of honor which was so important in earlier works was conspicuously absent. In the values of America today as presented in texts, there is no honor. One author did use honor as a reason to go to war in describing the feeling in the country after the fall of Fort Sumter. He stated: “the assault on Fort Sumter provoked the North to a fighting pitch. The Southerners had wantonly fired upon the glorious Stars and Stripes and honor demanded that the United States fight back.”¹⁸² This was also a blatantly pro-Union statement that was written just before the Vietnam War and associated protests were a part of the national conscience.

Some authors had trouble deciding how they wanted to present this war. Davidson and Underwood entitled a subsection “Glorious War” which came from a letter written by a Confederate soldier. The section actually talked about the horrors of war as the following quote demonstrates:

One Confederate Soldier wrote: “I never realized the ‘pomp and circumstance’ of the thing called glorious war until I saw this. Men...lying dead in every conceivable position; the dead...with their eyes wide open, the wounded begging piteously for help.”¹⁸³

¹⁸² Bailey, 418.

¹⁸³ Davidson, 550.

The authors did very little to explain the irony that they were using and expected students to understand from a limited explanation that war was really horrible.

Another author used the words “terrible”¹⁸⁴ and “disaster”¹⁸⁵ to describe battles with little supporting information about the battles. In discussing the Seven Days battle, the use of terrible combined with the fact that the Confederates lost twice as many as the Union was all the information given. Brown and Bass also used very negative terminology in describing the battle at Fredericksburg when they referred to it as a “slaughter.”¹⁸⁶ It was a slaughter, but body counts seemed to be the most important information that the author wanted students to know and remember.

Authors used strong words to describe the Battle of Shiloh. These words were ones that told of war in a very harsh manner. Brogan called this battle “...the first of the great butcheries which were to characterize the war...”¹⁸⁷ Bailey called it “one of the goriest fields of the war.”¹⁸⁸ Some authors were less specific when talking about Shiloh. Garraty called it a “costly victory,”¹⁸⁹ while giving only Union casualties and very little detail about the battle. There was one text that left all specific information out and just referred to Shiloh as “another important battle”¹⁹⁰ in describing this pivotal battle.

One of the favorite words used to describe battles was “bloody.” The battle that most often had that adjective applied to it was Antietam. Brown and Bass used two words “bitter, bloody”¹⁹¹ to describe the battle, while O’Connor referred to it as “the

¹⁸⁴ Richard C. Brown and Herbert J. Bass, *One Flag, One Land*, (Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett and Ginn, 1987), 373.

¹⁸⁵ Brown, 371.

¹⁸⁶ Brown, 376.

¹⁸⁷ Brogan, 335.

¹⁸⁸ Bailey, 435.

¹⁸⁹ Garraty, 579.

¹⁹⁰ O’Connor, 407.

¹⁹¹ Brown, 375.

bloodiest single day of the entire war...”¹⁹² Garraty doubled up on his use of the word bloody to describe Antietam when he called it in the text, “the bloody struggle,”¹⁹³ and paired it with the caption under an illustration on the facing page that stated, “For yet another time in this bloody war neither side had won much of an advantage.”¹⁹⁴ In another text, the authors felt the need to use the word twice when they characterized Antietam as follows” All day long on September 17, in the bloodiest battle of an appalling bloody war...”¹⁹⁵

The use of the word bloody was not limited to the battle of Antietam. Brown and Bass talked about the battle at Shiloh in the following manner: “Though it was counted as a Union Victory, ‘Bloody Shiloh’ cost Grant’s army 13,000 casualties.”¹⁹⁶ Gettysburg was also characterized as “the bloodiest battle of the Civil War...”¹⁹⁷ A final example of the use of the word bloody is seen in Boorstin’s and Kelley’s text. They described Grant’s final campaign as follows: “In May 1864 began the final, brutal, bloody battles of exhaustion.”¹⁹⁸

In one instance the bravery of troops was always highlighted. This was in regards to African-American troops. Weisberger stated it in the following way:

From their first exposure to combat in October of 1862, blacks earned the admiration of many white officers, like one who wrote that they fought “with a coolness and bravery that would have done credit to veteran soldiers.”¹⁹⁹

One battle in the war was usually singled out to discuss African-American participation in the Civil War and that was the attack on Fort Wagner. The popularity of the movie,

¹⁹² Oconnor, 407.

¹⁹³ Garraty, 568.

¹⁹⁴ Garraty, 569.

¹⁹⁵ Boorstin, 288.

¹⁹⁶ Brown, 371.

¹⁹⁷ Petlinski 183.

¹⁹⁸ Boorstin, 295.

¹⁹⁹ Weisberger, 381.

Glory, is responsible for this battle being given unwarranted attention. In one text the only two battle illustrations were of Gettysburg and Fort Wagner. In this text there was a stylized heroic picture with the following caption; “The all-black 54th Massachusetts Regiment storm the Confederate stronghold...”²⁰⁰ Boorstin and Kelley described their participation as follows: “They showed their bravery in battle, for example in July 1863, when the 54th Massachusetts charged Fort Wagner outside Charleston, South Carolina.”²⁰¹ Another author referred to the attack on Fort Wagner by the 54th Massachusetts as “valiant”²⁰² which was the only time that any battle was referred to in a positive manner. Often a visual representation of this battle was included in the chapter on the Civil War. In one text it was the only battle illustration in that section. The caption under the picture stated:

The 54th Massachusetts Infantry was the first African-American regiment in the Union Army. It won lasting fame for its heroism in a battle near Charleston, South Carolina.²⁰³

In another text the only battle that was discussed in depth was the one at Fort Wagner. It was included in a sidebar. The final paragraph stated:

Nearly half the soldiers in the 54th were killed during that battle, including Shaw. Even though the unit did not win the battle, the bravery; of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteers earned its members respect and fame.²⁰⁴

As can be seen the textbook writers wanted students to be sure to understand that battles were not glorious or magnificent as earlier authors described these battles.

Explaining to readers how terrible and bloody war and battles were often seemed to be

²⁰⁰ Brown, 378.

²⁰¹ Boorstin, 292.

²⁰² Brogan, 342.

²⁰³ O’Connor, 412.

²⁰⁴ Petlenski, 187.

more important to writers than talking about the events themselves. The one exception was the inclusion of the Battle of Fort Wagner. This battle gained more prominence because of an effort to show African-American contributions to the Civil War. What was interesting was that these were the only soldiers who were singled out to extol their bravery. None of the other units that were of one ethnic group, such as the Irish Brigade were mentioned to talk about their bravery. Again it is seen that the authors are being politically correct in highlighting African-American participation.

Strategy

Tactics and overall strategy were discussed more frequently in modern texts than in the older ones. As one author stated, “War had fundamentally changed.”²⁰⁵ Many of the authors were intent on explaining why and how war changed during the Civil War. Weisberger sounded much like Crane in *The Red Badge of Courage* when he compared modern war to modern industry. His editorializing description stated, “Modern warfare is, in fact, much like modern industry: huge in scale and blindly impersonal.”²⁰⁶ Another author gave a rather simplistic explanation when he wrote, “War had fundamentally changed. Strategy built on information of the site determined the outcome of most battles.”²⁰⁷ This was an over simplification. Those who got the high ground most often won, but this explanation did not explain why so many charges such as at Fredericksburg and Gettysburg were attempted with disastrous results. The simple reasoning failed to explain how over four years generals were learning the hard way that old tactics did not work with the new ordinance available to each side.

²⁰⁵ Garraty, 556.

²⁰⁶ Weisberger, 393.

²⁰⁷ Garraty, 556.

Boorstin and Kelly spent four pages setting the scene as to how times had changed and how these changes affected waging war. Their explanation was an introduction to the new style of warfare. They wrote:

But this kind of war was no longer a game. The old rules of war which the generals had learned at West Point were not much use. This was all-out war, with no holds barred. The winning generals turned out to be those, like U. S. Grant who had never believed the old rules or those like William T. Sherman, who were good at forgetting them.²⁰⁸

These same authors also credited Grant with recognizing as early as Shiloh that in order to win he had to change his tactics. They wrote: “At Shiloh, Grant learned that he was in a war far different from what he had counted on in the beginning...Now he knew that this would be a war to exhaustion.”²⁰⁹ This theme of “a war to exhaustion” was continued throughout the rest of the discussion of the Civil War in this text.

Most authors were not as philosophical but still emphasized the concept of total war that was usually discussed in the context of Sherman’s “March to the Sea.” One text defined this type of warfare as follows: “Total war means the destruction of food, equipment and anything else of use to soldiers and civilians.”²¹⁰ This description was similar to those in other texts. One author did try to explain why this type of warfare was used. Weisberger explained it as follows:

Sherman did not hate southern civilians, but if their sufferings caused a quicker collapse of the Confederacy, the misery of the war would be over that much sooner. A few more hungry women and children would mean fewer dead heroes.²¹¹

Two pages further on, this author also talked about how Grant was buying into this concept even at a heavy cost to his forces as well as to Confederate forces. He wrote:

²⁰⁸ Boorstin, 277.

²⁰⁹ Boorstin, 286.

²¹⁰ Petlinski, 190.

²¹¹ Weisberger, 388.

...Grant's plan became clear. He would force Lee into constant action. Lee could not replace lost men and equipment as readily as the Union armies. Ceaseless fighting would wear him down....But the Union "bulldog" was chewed too, heavy casualties were the cost of Grant's plan. Yet it was working.²¹²

This author made sure students knew the price paid by this new type of warfare.

One incident in particular could not be reconciled with the new way of war and that was Pickett's Charge during the Battle of Gettysburg. It was never pointed out that the South never subscribed to the new way of waging war. One text provided students with a first hand account of this battle by quoting a letter from General Pickett to his wife. The description is as follows:

Over Cemetery Ridge the Federals saw a scene never before witnessed on this continent...an army forming in line of battle in full view of the enemy, under their very eyes charging across a space of nearly a mile...in length over fields of grain and then smooth expanse-moving with the steadiness of a dress parade, the pride and glory soon to be crushed by an overwhelming heartbreak.²¹³

This direct quote from Pickett was very similar to many of the other descriptions of this battle. Some authors used the adjectives great, heroic or brave to describe this attack. None of the texts pointed out how foolish this was or that Lee had seen the Union army attempt such an attack at Fredericksburg and lose. For all the discussion of a new way to wage war, few texts helped students understand that this "total war" took place at the end of the war. One author reserved only two sentences for this event when he wrote, "Finally on the third day, Lee sent 13,000 troops in one charge against the Union lines. Almost half the attackers were killed, and the rest were driven back."²¹⁴ This bland emotionless sentence buried in the only paragraph about the entire three day battle of Gettysburg, ignored entirely the futility of the charge. Boorstin and Kelley were one of

²¹² Weisbeeger, 390.

²¹³ Garraty, 575.

²¹⁴ O'Connor, 413.

the few who allude to the fact that it took most of the war for generals to understand the realities of the new kind of war. They stated, "In time the generals would learn that armies could no longer confront each other in solid ranks."²¹⁵ This simple understated sentence was the only case this researcher discovered where authors explained the contradictions that generals were confronted with and how hard it was to unlearn the old style of war with the realities of the war they were fighting. Again, authors relegated this point to insignificance when it is the most important to recognize when attempting to understand how this war was waged.

Conclusion

As can be seen, textbook writers in the post Vietnam era were presented with many new challenges. There was a very real antiwar feeling present in the country that lasts until today. These authors felt it necessary to include more about African-Americans. As a result these textbooks tried to do too many things that resulted in students failing to get a coherent picture of the Civil War period. They got bits and pieces with some detailed vignettes of the life and times of the 1860's. Rarely were students able to trace the flow of events without the teacher assigning a timeline project. Finally, the facts were generally more accurate with the authors still choosing what facts to include in order to get a specific idea across but what was lost was a sense of storytelling. These texts were for the most part arid and boring.

²¹⁵ Boorstin, 277.

Chapter Four: Post 1960 Civil War Literature for Children

Compared to material available for children prior to the twentieth century, there has been an explosion of material published since 1960. Studies continue to stress the importance of reading. Cullinan and Galda state in the preface of their children's literature text, "In these times of mandated high stakes testing with teacher accountability linked to test scores, it is vital that we not lose sight of one important reason to become a fluent reader – books."²¹⁶ They also state that: "Literature entertains and it informs. It enables young people to explore and understand their world."²¹⁷ The books concerning the Civil War provide children and youth with a multitude of ways to explore this period of American history. These choices are used both in the classroom and by individual independent readers.

An important reason why it is also important to survey non-textual material is that schools today do not rely solely on material found in textbooks. Nationally mandated social studies curricula draw upon a wide variety of sources, not just textbooks. The good teacher will surround students with a multitude of choices on a given topic. In many classrooms the textbooks have become the supplemental material taking second place to other resources. It is also important to have material at various reading levels to reach the students of wide reading skills. This supplemental material serves another purpose. Cullinan and Galda state:

When they read good historical fiction, children can imagine themselves living in another time and place. They can speculate about how they would have reacted and how they would have felt. They can read about ordinary people acting

²¹⁶ Galda, xv.

²¹⁷ Galda, 7.

heroically. By doing so, they can begin to understand the impact one person can have on history.²¹⁸

Teachers of today are charged with accomplishing more than learning dates, battles and generals' names. Elaine C. Stephen and Jean E. Brown stated:

Developing critical thinking skills is a significant goal of the curricula for both history and language arts classes. This goal is reflected in the National standards for United States History and the IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts...Integrating a wide range of literature with subject topics provides students with learning experiences that help them fulfill these curricular goals.²¹⁹

Since this topic is usually taught in middle school, where a teacher will typically have students who read at a low elementary level all the way up to adult or college level, using historical fiction of various reading levels on a single topic means more of the students have a chance to understand a topic on a deeper level not provided by text books.

Unlike the period from the Civil War until 1900, teachers of today have a wealth of research to call upon when looking for the best material to use in the classroom. There are even books out that help educators wade through the morass of available material. One such book is the above quoted *Learning About...The Civil War*, by Elaine C. Stephen and Jean E. Brown. In a brief synopsis the theme and details of a book are given followed by suggested classroom learning activities. The importance of seriously looking at the overall message in each book assigned is that ultimately it may be this supplemental material that has the most lasting influence on readers as it tends to be more enjoyable and thus more memorable.

The choices that are available can be categorized into several areas. The first is non-fiction works. These include generalized books about the entire Civil War such as

²¹⁸ Galda, 206.

²¹⁹ Elaine C. Stephens and Jean E. Brown, *Learning about...The Civil War, Literature and Other Resources for Young People*, (North Haven, Connecticut: Linnet Professional Publications, 1998), 4.

the recently published work entitled *Fields of Fury, The American Civil War* by acclaimed Civil War historian James McPherson. This beautiful book is of a larger size, 10" by 10" and contains photographs, artwork about the war, battle maps and a time line on the fly leaf. The text is succinct and well thought out. Other books single out one battle or topic. Topics include: The Underground Railroad, boys in the war, Lincoln's whiskers, and specific battles. Other factual books are biographies of key personnel during this time period. Recently, entire series have been published that include a balance of Union and Confederate notables.

Within this category of factual material many different techniques have been used to capture the interest of young readers. Several have used a comic book format. One used the ghost of Willie Lincoln to take two children around behind the scenes of Civil War events. Several biographies also used the comic book format. Another technique could be found in *Cobblestone*, a history magazine for young readers. Each issue takes one topic and using several formats will take an in-depth look at that topic. These topics may be an individual, battle, type of military unit or specific groups involved in the Civil War.

The fictional works also use several different ways to capture a reader's attention. In *The Root Cellar* by Janet Lunn, the main character travels back in time to assist a former resident of her aunt's home find her beau who is missing. Through the journey she makes, a great deal of information is imparted about what life was like during this time period including the effect of war on the citizenry of the countryside they pass through. One of the most interesting aspects of this book is that the characters are Canadian in origin. Another book, *Private Captain* by Marty Crisp, has a young boy and

his cousin accompanied by a cow and dog taking a trip to find his brother after the Battle of Gettysburg.

Other books make a real attempt at informing the reader about both sides involved in the conflict. Kathleen Ernst has written several that are concerned with the border state of Maryland. This allowed her to include characters that lived side by side but were of a different persuasion about this war. There also is a greater attempt at informing young readers about how African-Americans, both free and in slavery, were affected by this conflict. The topic most often explored is the Underground Railroad and the 54th Massachusetts Regiment which was an African-American regiment led by white officers. Also biographies of famous African-Americans such as Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth are readily available.

One thing that ties all the historical fiction books together for a younger audience is the main character. This character is usually a young person either in the path of the war or one who actually participates firsthand in the war. While seeing through this same- aged character's eyes, the younger reader can relate readily to the times. Stephen and Brown state: "The process of reading about the experiences of someone close to their own age who is living in such different conditions makes the time vital and believable for students."²²⁰

It would be impossible to include an analysis of all the books collected during the research for this study. Close to one hundred were surveyed. Only selected works will be referenced in the body of the thesis but a complete bibliography will be inserted as an appendix.

²²⁰ Stephen, 3.

Author's Preface, Etc.

As was found in the earlier texts, authors were wont to state their purposes for creating their works. The bottom line is that authors were assuming the role as teacher and made definite choices as to which material was important to include. These prefaces were most often found in the non-fictional works. In the preface of *The Ghosts of the Civil War*, Cheryl Harness states as her purpose:

Americans of the 19th century were haunted by the memory of their 18th-century ancestors, who fought a revolution and founded a democratic republic “conceived in liberty,” yet which allowed human beings to be held in bondage. There had to be bloody justice. This had to be settled, even if it meant tearing the Union of states apart, so we could be one free nation where we, the people, governed ourselves. But with how much say-so from our leaders in Washington and those closer to home? What does it mean to be a citizen of the United States? And how is one’s American life affected by the color of one’s skin? It’s with these questions that the Ghosts of the Civil War haunt us to this very day.²²¹

We learn a great deal from this paragraph. Harness is pro-Union and sees this war as inevitable and necessary. Her purpose is to give readers enough information to connect things that are being dealt with today with the events in the past. This book is cluttered with an often confusing mass of visual imagery that the main characters are led through by the ghost of Willie Lincoln.

The noted Civil War historian, James McPherson, was more successful in presenting a well organized but readable book for children. In his introduction he echoes Harness’ observations more clearly when he states succinctly, “Over five generations have now past since the war and we are still trying to measure its influence.”²²² His thesis is that the Civil War changed our nation in two ways which are:

²²¹ Cheryl Harness, *Ghosts of the Civil War*, (New York: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2002), First page – pages are unnumbered.

²²² James McPherson, *Fields of Fury, The American Civil War*, (New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2002), 4.

“First, it established the identity of the nation as a young democratic republic that could survive any challenge, even a war between states...Second, the Civil War helped change the laws to give Liberty for all” in the United States.”²²³

His book makes good use of photos, some art work and battlefield maps to explain this war. He ends his introduction with a statement about two of his ancestors who fought for the North but generalizes about soldiers on both sides when he says, “They fought for causes they believed in so deeply that they were willing to sacrifice all--even their lives”²²⁴

In an earlier book, another Civil War historian tackles a children’s book. In 1960, Bruce Catton, in an introduction to a book by Charles Flato aimed at younger readers, expressed many of the same sentiments as the first two authors. This book is written before the Vietnam War and a fairly positive view of war is presented. At the end of his introduction he states:

Its story is something to be enjoyed as a story, to be studied as a piece of history, and to be brooded on as the biggest, most colorful and exciting and meaningful chapter in American life. It may be another century will pass before we entirely understand what it was and what it meant. Meanwhile, it is fascinating, sometimes sad, sometimes terrifying, very often inspiring, and always full of meaning.²²⁵

This paragraph is full of mixed messages. In the topic sentence, the reader is told that this is an enjoyable read and in the conclusion the reader is told that it is inspiring and fascinating. The words “sad” and “terrifying” are bracketed and overshadowed by positive images. The overall effect of this book, written in 1961 or just prior to massive United States involvement in the Vietnam War, is that it presents a less negative feeling about this conflict. The imagery chosen includes generally bright and heroic paintings

²²³ McPherson, 4.

²²⁴ McPherson, 5.

²²⁵ Charles Flato, *The Golden Book of the Civil War*, (New York: Golden Press, 1961), 7.

about different events with the only photos showing camp life or portraits of those involved. Only one picture of a dead soldier is included.

Many authors used the wealth of historic photographs taken by Matthew Brady's studio and other innovative photographers. It is through this historic visual record that the story of the Civil War is told. Martin Sandler in his introduction talks about the Civil War as a bitter conflict and then goes on to explain why he is using visual imagery to tell the story. He wrote:

From the moment it began, scores of artists and reporters took to the field, documenting every aspect of the war. They were joined on the battlefields and in the camps by a host of photographers using cameras and other equipment that had been invented less than ten years earlier. In the pages that follow, you will witness the scenes that these artists and photographers captured and will encounter the words of those caught up in a nation at war with itself.²²⁶

This introduction is a fair representation of what follows in the rest of the book. The dark photographs are often gruesome and rarely heroic. The reader is presented with material and allowed to come to his own conclusions.

In order to capture the interest of young readers, several authors explored the role of young boys in the Civil War. Many of them served as drummer boys and even enlisted at an earlier age than is deemed prudent today. In his afterword, Jim Murphy stated:

Boys have always been among the first to fight...Initially, boys might join the army to find adventure, to escape boredom, or to be where their friends are. But in the end, they fight and die for the same reason as older soldiers – to defend their homes and their freedom.²²⁷

This book told about how young boys on both sides were involved in this war. One of the important points that Murphy makes was also stated by Stephen and Brown as follows:

²²⁶ Martin W. Sandler, *Civil War: A Library of Congress Book*, (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 1996), 5.

²²⁷ Jim Murphy, *The Boys' War*, (New York: Clarion Books, 1990), 100.

“While the image of war was appealing, its reality was painful; many of the boys are shocked by the reality.”²²⁸ However this was more a book about the Civil War than one that related the causes, reasons or progress of conflict.

Howard Egger-Bovet and Marlene Smith-Baranzini wrote another book aimed at children. They used children living at this time to tell the story of the Civil War. This book really attempted to inform readers about the life and times in both the North and South while also giving a feeling for how the war was conducted. Their preface was entitled “Boys in Battle.” In the last paragraph they laid out their goals for this book.

They wrote:

In this book you will learn why the southern states decided to separate from the northern states and why the civil war that resulted was so bitterly fought. You will also learn how our young country expanded to the West and how the addition of new states complicated the argument between the North and the South.²²⁹

This is an ambitious goal which the authors were able to carry out without overwhelming younger readers with too much fact while still giving them a feel for the progress of the war.

In a book entitled, *Black Stars of Civil War Times*, the authors state in the introduction:

All were people who actively sought to control their own lives, even those whose circumstances made that nearly impossible. Together, their stories make up an important, and often little known, chapter in American history.²³⁰

²²⁸ Stephens 146.

²²⁹ Howard Egger-Bovet and Marlene Smith-Baranzini, *USKids History: Book of the American Civil War*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), 7.

²³⁰ Jim Haskins, general editor, written by Jim Haskins, Clinton Cox, Otha Richard Sullivan, Ed. D., Eleanora Tate, & Brenda Wilkinson, *Black Stars of Civil War Times*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2003), 3.

These authors' goal was to make the importance of this era relevant to readers of all types, especially African-Americans, by detailing individual lives.

As can be seen, the introductions, prefaces and afterwords were straightforward. The positive statements cited demonstrate a real belief in the importance of the subject. There was little editorializing, but readers were believed in need of instruction about the Civil War and each author felt compelled to tell a specific part of the story.

Bias: Sectional and Anti-War Sentiments

There was a greater attempt on the part of most authors to provide an unbiased reporting of events. Opinions differed more widely about the necessity of the Civil War or war in general. Most of the time an author's bias could be discerned. This could be told primarily by who a main character fought for, pictures that were chosen and names of battles as battles were often named differently on both sides.

Of the many authors that are writing today, Kathleen Ernst has been successful in portraying the conflict in the Border States. By using this venue she is able to describe attitudes and feelings from both sides in the Civil War. In discussing the characters used in *The Bravest Girl in Sharpsburg*, she states:

Was Teresa, who risked an army's anger to protect her flag, patriotic and brave, or stubborn and unreasonable? Were the Southern sympathizers in Sharpsburg patriots in the tradition of the American Revolution, or outlaws? These questions have no answers...²³¹

These questions posed in the author's afterword reveal a great deal about the author's bias. She felt no need to identify which side Theresa was on while asking specific questions about Southern sympathizers. Each chapter is written in the first person from

²³¹ Kathleen Ernst, *The Bravest Girl in Sharpsburg*, (Shippenburg, Pennsylvania.: White Mane Publishing Company, 1997), 224.

the point of view of one of the main characters, usually alternating. Early on in her book the reader was primed to view Theresa as the main character when she was featured in the first chapter. Theresa muses, "I knew exactly where my loyalties lay: with the Union."²³² This sentence is in the second paragraph thus setting in the mind of the reader one point of view. On the second page of the second chapter, Savilla, the other main character, states, "Not support the cause? How could I not? Everyone in my family is a patriot. We supported the Confederacy."²³³ This is a very positive and strong statement by a character that represents the Southern point of view. The fact that it is the second point of view presented leads the reader to subconsciously give it second place in importance or veracity.

Another fictional book aimed at younger or less advanced readers ascribes feelings about the war to the young main character. Twelve year old Grace Bedell wants to have an impact in what is considered a man's domain- politics. Her contribution, a true story presented in a fictional format, is to write to Abraham Lincoln and suggest that he would look more presidential with a beard. The authors' sentiments about war are readily apparent. They have her musing about the situation as follows:

She truly wanted Mr. Lincoln to win. But she also did not want a war. Why couldn't the adults just agree that slavery was bad, that the slaves should be set free to live their own lives? Then there would be no war between the states.²³⁴

This one brief quote expresses several of the authors' biases. First they are anti-slavery and pro-North. They also are not in favor of war as a way to solve problems. These thoughts by a twelve year old seem more mature than one would expect and felt out of

²³² Ernst, 1.

²³³ Ernst, 11.

²³⁴ Peter and Connie Roop, *Grace's Letter to Lincoln*, (New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 1998), 48.

place and was a less than successful attempt by the authors to insert their own interpretation into the story.

In his book, *The Boys' War*, Jim Murphy is very successful at giving a balanced accounting of the participation of young boys from both sides during this conflict. He was careful to draw parallels between the conditions for boys on both sides. He pointed out in one chapter that boys from both sides often had to endure hazing from the older troops. In linking the two sides' treatment he stated, "Much the same happened in the Confederate army, as the soldiers in newly formed units tested each other or tried to see what these little boys were made of."²³⁵ The photographs in this book are very graphic, often showing boys who were killed during a battle. There is an absence of heroic illustrations depicting war in a heroic manner. In spite of his care in presenting both sides equally, Murphy always presented the Union side first. In presenting the Union side first he was expressing the dominant belief that patriotism was to be favored over treason. This leads the reader to put the Union cause first in their mind which can be seen as a covert way of taking the Union side. He also presents the war in anything but a positive way. The use of graphic pictures does not lead the reader to think that war is a good thing.

Martin Sandler in *Civil War, A Library of Congress Book* used a combination of artwork and photography. As in Murphy's book, Sandler also always told the Northern side first. The interpretation of the conflict could be seen as more heroic as more artwork was included along with the photographic record. The position of drummer boy was positively shown. On top of a drawing of a drummer boy with a bandage on his head, playing while a battle was going on, the following stanza from a poem was included

²³⁵Murphy, *The Boys War*, 22.

in large print and boxed in so that is stood out.

My mother said to me,
 “you can do your part, my boy, for the land.
 For if you will beat the drum,
 You will take the place of a man.”

From the poem “The Drummer Boy”
 Author unknown, c. 1862²³⁶

This juxtaposition of a modern text with period pictures and quotes led to the reader’s getting a mixed message about war. If on first contact with the book, a reader just looks at the pictures and reads the framed quotation then a completely different view of this war emerges than if the reader reads all the text. Most younger readers will look at the illustrations and initially skip the text.

Cheryl Harness in her book also puts the Union information first. On one cluttered two-page spread, Grant and his army are pictured above Lee and his army. The period being talked about is the spring of 1864 when the Union is marching on Richmond and Lee is continually falling back. Lee is portrayed as discouraged while Grant is shown as a positive figure. These two pages have too much information for the reader to grasp much of what is going on. Again the covert message is that the North is on top since that is where it appears on the page.

Sometimes the reader needs to look no further than the title to determine an author’s bias. There are two series of books out for young readers that follow the lives of various young people during different stages of America’s past. The *My Name is America* series is for boys while the *Dear America* series is for girls. On the back cover for *A Light in the Storm*, the young diarist, Amelia Martin is quoted, “Mr. Lincoln’s hands...they must be a thousand times stronger than mine. Please God, give Mr. Lincoln

²³⁶ Sandler, 33.

strong hands.”²³⁷ A similar pro-Union stance can be seen on the cover of the corresponding book written for boys. On the back cover of *The Journal of James Edmond Pease, A Civil War Union Soldier*, a quote about the fighting is highlighted. He writes, “But that didn’t make me any less mad at the Rebs.”²³⁸ From the outset, both of these books leave no doubt as to which side of this conflict they favor. This point of view never equates treasonous attitudes of the South with the Union point of view.

A final book is discussed in this section, *The Battle of Galveston*, by Tom Townsend. What is unusual about this book is that it was the only one discovered that presented a truly Southern point of view. It was found in a small bookstore in a suburb of Houston. Early on in the book conversations between characters set a pro-Confederate tone. Luke, the main young character, asks his father, “You reckon he can run them Yankees outa Galveston, Pa?”²³⁹ Townsend does a very good job of portraying the feelings of those living in the Galveston area during the war. They may not all be excited about participating, like Luke’s father, but will do their duty for their country which is the Confederacy. While telling the story of this battle, the author was careful not to make war something to be anticipated with glee. He has Luke feeling that inside he “had the sick feeling that before it was all over, the war was going to get much too close.”²⁴⁰ In the telling of this tale, there is a mixture of images that make it hard for the reader to decide how they should feel about war. Luke is mulling over what he should do during the battle, whether or not to take powder bags out to gunners. He thinks,

²³⁷ Karen Hesse, *A Light in the Storm, The Civil War Diary of Amelia Martin*, (New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1999), back cover of book.

²³⁸ Jim Murphy, *The Journal of James Edmond Pease, a Civil War Union Soldier*, (New York: Scholastic, Inc, 1998), back cover of book.

²³⁹ Tom Townsend, *The Battle Of Galveston*, (Austin, Texas: Eakin Press, 1989), 2.

²⁴⁰ Townsend, 8.

“going out there where men were dying; going out into that holocaust which had just killed Andy.”²⁴¹ Is the reader going to remember this statement or the excited reaction of a boat captain exclaiming, “Dang Yankee skipper done run his ignorant self aground on Pelican Spit!”²⁴² As is often the case, what will stick in the readers’ mind is the excitement of the battle rather than the internal musings of one character. It is a by-product of telling a good tale that the deeper thoughts expressed by characters is lost. This was a book about a decisive victory in the South, not about the horrors of war.

As can be seen in the recent material, bias was less overtly stated. What was more likely to occur was a Northern orientation in the telling of a story or recitation of events. There were many more negative references to the results of battles and in reference to war in general while authors tried to be objective about events. The fictional accounts often got very involved in the telling of events which often overshadowed the realities of war. Kathleen Ernst and Marty Crisp were especially successful in keeping the horrors of war in the front of the readers’ minds. Crisp’s description of the work of the townspeople in cleaning up the battlefield at Gettysburg is especially memorable.

Words and Phrasing

While in the older material adjectives were frequently added to descriptions of battles, this is less likely to occur in the present-day works. The non-fiction works were least likely to add such comments. Most of the adjectives used to modify battle names are conspicuously absent. What the reader finds are many negative comments about the effects and horrors of war.

²⁴¹ Townsend, 53.

²⁴² Townsend, 55.

The reader is apt to find phrases instead of individual words describing battles. While earlier works often referred to the Battle of Gettysburg as “great,” Duane Damon in an article in *Cobblestone* magazine describes the scene as “the killing fields of Gettysburg.”²⁴³

In the non-fictional works, descriptions of battles were paired with vintage photos to bring home the reality of war. This pairing of text and visual imagery must be looked at together rather than analyzed separately. In one book the battle at Antietam is described as “the bloodiest battle in American history.”²⁴⁴ At the bottom of this same page is a picture labeled, “Dead Confederate soldiers were hastily buried in a ditch.”²⁴⁵ Murphy also made sure his readers got the point that war was not fun when he positioned the following quote from a young soldier between two graphic pictures of dead soldiers. In the text he quotes Elisha Stockwell,

I want to say, as we lay there and the shells were flying over us, my thoughts went back to my home, and I thought what a foolish boy I was to run away and get into such a mess as I was in. I would have been glad to have seen my father coming after me.²⁴⁶

This two page spread has very little text with the pictures dominating. One photo showed a soldier dead with his mouth gaping open in a very non-heroic pose and the other showed a mass of dead soldiers along a fence row. These two examples are just two of many found in other non-fictional works that pair up somber war photographs with negative comments about war.

²⁴³ Damon, Duane, “A Moment of Mercy”, *Cobblestone*, (Peterborough, New Hampshire: Cobblestone Publishing, Inc., July 1988, Volume 9, Number 7), 17.

²⁴⁴ Egger Bovet, 69.

²⁴⁵ Egger-Bovet, 69.

²⁴⁶ Murphy, *Boys' War*, 33.

In contrast Sandler describes the Massachusetts 54th as exhibiting “extraordinary bravery.”²⁴⁷ Paired with this statement is a heroic depiction of the charge during the battle of Fort Wagner. This picture includes an American flag held aloft and extending outside the border of the picture into the page margin. This emphasizes the glory and heroism of the African-American troops. When artworks are used to illustrate a point the stark realism of photographs is missing.

The fictional books often gave very chilling descriptions of battles and their aftermath. Irene Hunt in her Newberry Medal Honor book, *Across Five Aprils*, describes the battle at Gettysburg as follow:

The news of the battle was confused at first, incoherent, sometimes contradictory, but one thing was certain: here was a clash that roared with a violence and terror such as the country had ever known... With broken young bodies piled high at Gettysburg and thousands of homes rocked in agony over their loss, the beaten army was allowed to withdraw and prepare for more bloodshed, while the victorious army licked its wounds and made no effort to pursue its opportunities.²⁴⁸

This book is filled with many descriptions like the above quote. This book is a traditional coming of age story that follows the life of Jethro who at age nine becomes the man of his family. Readers of this book are led through the five years of the war with special emphasis on how it affected one boy. This allowed readers to experience through literature how the war affected boys who stayed home. The implication was that they had their own war experiences even though they were at home.

Many other books also included realistic descriptions of battles that were less than heroic. In *The Root Cellar*, Will describes his impression of the battle at Cold Harbor after the battle as follows:

²⁴⁷ Sandler, 53.

²⁴⁸ Hunt, Irene, *Across Five Aprils*, (New York: Berkley Books, Tempo Edition 1965, Berkley edition 1986), 152.

There's dead and wounded men lying all over the field, moaning and groaning, and those of us who wasn't hurt was trying to get them back to safety, and sometimes we could and sometimes them Secesh devils kept shooting and never once letting us near.²⁴⁹

This quote is a small part of a graphic description of what it was like to be in the thick of a battle. In a similar after-battle description, Ben, the main character in *Private Captain*, is described on the battlefield after Gettysburg. How the conditions affected him personally were as follows:

He stumbled and tripped over one body and then another. He accidentally kicked against an arm, and the arm rolled away. It had just been lying there, shot off. He hadn't really kicked it off. But his stomach roiled and wrenched just the same.²⁵⁰

While telling an interesting and often humorous tale, these books make sure their readers understand that war is not something glorious but most often horrible.

Picture Books

Picture books of a large size are no longer just for the very young. Many of these books are well crafted in their presentation and make a very strong statement for readers of all ages. Stephens and Brown stated, "...picture books which used to be written almost exclusively for young children increasingly are written for older students, especially when addressing complex and sensitive subjects."²⁵¹ Two of these will be looked at in depth. One semi-fictional and the other is a pictorial presentation of Lincoln's Gettysburg address.

The Gettysburg Address is illustrated by Michael McCurdy using pen and ink drawings. He took each phrase of this speech and created a picture that illustrated its meaning. Two of the two-page-spreads are especially moving. To illustrate the concept

²⁴⁹ Janet Lunn, *The Root Cellar*, (New York: Puffin Book, 1981), 179.

²⁵⁰ Marty Crisp, *Private Captain*, (New York: Philomel Books, 2001), 219.

²⁵¹ Stephens, xi.

that “all men are created equal,” he has slave families marching along with bent backs and the men in chains. The phrase “we are engaged in a great civil war” is depicted by the two armies firing at each other from point blank range. The startled looks on several faces as they are shot are very powerful. This book leads the reader to reflect on the sadness caused by war and look to the promise of the future after war is over.²⁵²

The other book is *Pink and Say* By Patricia Polacco. Polacco’s story ideas come from her family’s oral history. Each story she writes is illustrated by the author’s own watercolors. This story is about the meeting of two teenage soldiers during the Civil War. Pinkus Aylee or Pink is a young African-American soldier who finds Sheldon Russell Curtis or Say wounded on the battlefield. He takes him home to his mother to heal. During this process the boys become fast friends. This story tells through text and expressive illustrations the conditions of the times. This includes the plight of former slaves, the terror of living in a war zone, the reality of marauders and prison camps. Through all of this a tight bond of friendship develops between the boys. On one two-page-spread there is a picture of Pink’s mother cosseting a distraught Say. The text expresses common thoughts of the times. The conversation is as follows:

“What’s wrong child?” Moe Moe Bay said from her Chair.

“I don’t want to go back,” I blurted out.

“I know child,” she said, “Of course you don’t.”

“You don’t understand. I took up and run away from my unit. I was hit when I was runnin’.” I sobbed so hard my ribs hurt. “I’m a coward and a deserter.”

She looked at the fire and said nothing for the longest time. Then her voice covered my cries. “You ain’t nothing of the kind. You a child...a child! Of course you were scared. Ain’t nobody that ain’t”

“I’m not brave like Pink...I’m not brave.”²⁵³

²⁵² Abraham Lincoln, *The Gettysburg Address*, Illustrated by Michael McCurdy, Foreword by Garry Wills, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1995), no page numbers.

²⁵³ Patricia Polacco, *Pink and Say*, (New York: Philomel Books:1994), 28.

This two-page-spread talks about honor and courage in much the same way Crane did in *Red Badge of Courage*. Polacco's readers learn about a soldier's concept of honor in this two-page-spread while Crane used it as a topic for his entire book. The most moving illustration is at the end of the book. It is of the two boys being pulled apart as they arrive at Andersonville. This picture is just of hands, one dark and one light being pulled apart. Pink is taken off to be hanged while Say survives to keep alive the memory of their friendship. This book deals with the concept of war on many levels. By relating one story from a very intimate point of view, Polacco tells her readers how horrible war is.

Conclusion

In the material surveyed in this chapter, descriptions of war were very graphic. The results of battles were described in great detail. There was less emphasis on the conduct and flow of a battle than on the effects on soldiers and the countryside. Readers still were presented with very readable stories that would capture their attention. There was less emphasis on doing the honorable thing and the glory of war. More statements about the futility of war could be found. This emphasis on the horrors of war is connected to the pacifism of post Vietnam America. Fighting for anything including freedom is not given a positive profile. It is almost as if there is no longer anything left that is worth fighting for. When presenting material about this war, the authors seemed to generalize their feelings about war from a twentieth century perspective while discussing a nineteenth century conflict.

The importance of illustrations could not be ignored. There was a universal use of vintage photographs, artwork and new illustrations to explain what the authors were saying in their written text. Some authors were more successful at utilizing illustrations

that meshed with what was said in their written comments. Many of the well-crafted books such as McPherson's *Fields of Fury* and Polacco's *Pink and Say* are worthy of displaying as proud possessions. Others will just be used and discarded after a short shelf life.

One of the most interesting aspects of this genre is that authors chose many different avenues to tell their stories. Every form from activity books to comics to romance novels to time travel was used to educate about this time period. All these authors did share with the earlier authors the aim of educating their reader. While entertaining their readers they also were informing them about the Civil War and their own interpretation of facts and the importance of these past events to readers today.

Chapter 5: Non-Print Material

The Civil War was the first war to be extensively documented photographically. There were other forms of the visual arts that were also available to artists of the day. These ranged from water colors to oils to illustrations to political cartoons. Because of ready availability of printing presses, sheet music with a wartime theme written during or just after the war was also disseminated throughout the entire country. This visual and audio record has expanded exponentially since the Civil War. As discussed in previous chapters, much of the earlier record is still available to be used in material for children. Additional material is continually being created or made available for educational and entertainment purposes using many different media. For instance the January 10, 2005 *Flint Journal*, announced the following internet posting:

The Library of Congress is posting 2240 maps and charts and 76 atlases and sketchbooks, while the Virginia Historical Society and the Library of Virginia are adding about 600 items. Much of the collection is online now; the rest will be by spring.²⁵⁴

It is beyond the scope of this research to delve into the overwhelming amount of material of this type. This chapter will only briefly sample the use of different media about this time period.

Classrooms in the years after the Civil War contained very little visual material. There might be a portrait of George Washington and/or one of Abraham Lincoln. There also might be a map which often displayed countries as they then existed. If the school was fortunate there might be a piano that could be used to instruct students in music, some of which may have originated during the Civil War. Students learned basically from textbooks that as the years went on contained more and more illustrative material.

²⁵⁴ "Civil War maps, data posted on Internet," *Flint Journal*, January 10, 2005, A9.

The classrooms of today have available modern multimedia equipment. Teachers may have computers connected to the internet on their desks and televisions with CD players and VCR's built-in and hanging from the ceiling for all students to view. The walls may be covered with material reflecting topics presently under discussion. Teachers rarely depend entirely on textual material. They use movies, either popular commercial productions or those produced for educational purposes, along with the previously discussed trade paperbacks.

The youth of today can become involved in history in many ways. Parents often work in some aspect of the historical heritage of the United States when they take vacations. National parks have been created around many of the battlegrounds from the Civil War with programs about events that took place at each site available for all ages. Entire families have become involved in the re-enactment movement, often traveling the country to different sites to live history. There is the brand new National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania that uses all the above mentioned techniques to bring the Civil War period to life. This museum is "billed as the first museum in the country devoted to covering the entire war from the multiple perspectives of Union and Confederacy, black and white, general and private, soldier and politician, and plain suffering citizen..."²⁵⁵ This museum's theme uses all media in their presentations that now delve into more than battlefield tactics and the experiences of soldiers in battle.

Hollywood has produced many movies on the Civil War that portray events with varying degrees of accuracy. Included in these are *Gone with the Wind*, *Shenandoah*, *Friendly Persuasion*, *Glory*, *Gettysburg* and *Gods and Generals*. These movies are then

²⁵⁵ Stephen Salisbury, "City Has High Hopes for Civil War Museum," *Detroit Free Press*, February 15, 2001, 16A.

shown on television or become available to rent or purchase for home consumption.

There are also both educational and entertaining movies created just for television.

There will be three sections in this chapter. First, one portion of a battle will be looked at as to how it has been visually represented since the Civil War. The site chosen is “Bloody Lane” at Antietam. Then two recent movies, *Gettysburg* and *Glory* will be discussed since these are about the two battles most often included in modern texts. Finally, Ken Burns’ *The Civil War* will be briefly referenced as it is often used in classrooms of today.

Bloody Lane

The portrayal of history through the use of visual arts has been a continuing artistic theme. History has been used in many different ways artistically. The eighteenth century saw a trend toward depicting events as they really were. During the Civil War and thereafter this trend continued to evolve. The artistic medium used to depict these historical events also grew to include photography and video presentations. These changes can be demonstrated by looking at one battle of the Civil War, particularly one phase of that battle.

The Battle of Antietam (Sharpsburg) fought on September 17, 1862 has been characterized as “The Bloodiest Day” in American warfare. This Civil War battle was fought in the countryside surrounding Sharpsburg, Maryland which included Antietam Creek. It covered over twelve square miles. The number of casualties (including injured, killed, missing and captured) for this battle has been reported to be 22,726. This is a total count for both sides.²⁵⁶ Never before had so many Americans fallen in combat on a single day as they did at Antietam. Both sides claimed victory, but it was not a clear-cut victory for either side. This was the first

²⁵⁶ Ronald Bailey and The Editors of Time Life Books, *The Bloodiest Day, The Battle of Antietam*, Time-Life Books, Alexandria, Virginia, 1984, p.150.

time General Lee had been forced to retreat. Had Union Commander George B. McClellan been more willing to press his advantage, Lee's Army of Virginia could have been totally destroyed.

Antietam is considered one of the turning points in the War as the terms under which the conflict was fought were profoundly altered.²⁵⁷ Lincoln was searching for a victory in order to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. Though the outcome was not clear, Lincoln claimed victory in order to issue the Proclamation. Of greater significance to the South was the reaction of the British to Lee's failure to sustain his invasion of the North. The British decided to hold off their formal recognition of the Confederacy. This left the Confederacy fighting alone without formal help from other countries.

The Sunken Road later known as Bloody Lane was part of the mid-day phase of the battle. It was here that the slaughter continued. The Rebel army had used this sunken roadway for cover and repulsed the Union army for several hours causing many casualties. After finally taking the high ground, the Union army was able to mow down the Rebels like sitting ducks. When this phase of the battle was over, about 5,600 dead and wounded lay in and around Bloody Lane. The widely published images that came from this portion of the battle are haunting to this day. There are many primary sources for visual information on this battle. Two of the early sources will be discussed in detail.

The lasting impact of the works of Alexander Gardner, a photographer, and James Hope, a landscape artist, who were both present at Antietam, was very different. This difference in impact reflects the change in how history has been reported ever since.

Alexander Gardner was employed at Matthew Brady's photographic gallery. He took seventy photographs of the battlefield. The photographs of Bloody Lane were taken two days after the battle. The focus of the camera was straight down the sunken roadbed. It can be seen

²⁵⁷ Ronald Bailey, 150.

that many of the bodies were still there. In one of the pictures, the viewer can get a sense as to how tightly packed together the bodies had been. Copies of these pictures appeared in Matthew Brady's photographic gallery in New York City two weeks after the battle. New York, itself, showed little sign of a civil war being waged with the South.²⁵⁸ There were no streets gutted by artillery fire or burnt out homes. Commerce was being carried out as if no war was being waged. An unknown reporter wrote of his response to seeing these images. He said that the pictures brought home the reality of the war more clearly than any list of names ever could.²⁵⁹ This was the beginning of real-time reportage of historical events. No longer could war be glorified in the same abstract way. The realities of what was going on in the present tense were inescapable. These photographs are still used in the textbooks of today.

James Hope was forty-three and a member of the 2nd Vermont Infantry. He had been a part of several previous battles. During this battle he was unable to take an active part because of illness. His duties were those of scout and mapmaker. He was a professional artist and made sketches of the battle. After the battle he converted these sketches into a series of five large paintings. One of these is titled *Confederate Dead in the Bloody Lane* and was completed in 1889. This painting shows a landscape with shadowy mountains in the background and a rolling field in the middle. The graphic portrayal of the dead in the lane dominates the lower third of the painting. There is a great contrast between the carnage and the pristine landscape. It can be seen that Hope was much more comfortable with landscape drawing than with figure drawing. Hope's painting was a result of the artist's personal recollection of the scene. His painting is not as widely known today as the Brady photographs.

²⁵⁸ Frassanito, 14.

²⁵⁹ Frassanito, 15.

The use of different forms of visual representations to look at this portion of the battle continues to expand. Other forms of imagery have been added for those who today want to learn about the battle. Period photographs are still in use today showing that *Bloody Lane* has been preserved for all of posterity to see and learn from the past. The change in access to them is that many are available to be downloaded from the internet. Mental pictures are created by National Parks rangers, who are master storytellers, as they retell the story at the site increasing the impact of larger than life historical paintings. There is a specially produced film shown in the visitors' center that uses re-enactors to portray this portion of the battle.²⁶⁰ On the 135th anniversary of the battle, over 14,000 re-enactors or visual artists reenacted the battle on site thus giving those visitors present a real feel for the battle. One of the things that visitors all have to be aware of is that the viewpoint presented at the battlegrounds changes to reflect the interpretations given to events as the country is faced with really looking at this conflict in accurately historic manner and not one that is colored by emotion. Delia M. Rios expanded on this point when she wrote:

Even now, Americans walking the fields, hills and woods of the nation's Civil War battlefields learn very little there about why these men put their lives on the line...

By 2001, when the country marks the sesquicentennial of the war's outbreak in 1861, the 28 battlefields will reflect the best historic thinking of the moment.

That means coming to terms with the political, social and economic disputes that set the North and South against one another, and acknowledging the painful history of slavery.²⁶¹

Visual representations of this sort continue to expand. It is especially interesting to note that most of the earlier photos are still available and being analyzed to create an accurate record of the battle. Joined with current representations, it can be seen that the sources available are

²⁶⁰ Of interest: I discovered that my Maytag repairman was one of those re-enactors in the National Parks production.

²⁶¹ Delia M. Rios, "Roots of War: U. S. Integrating Slavery Issue into Battlefield Programs", *Flint Journal*, May 14, 2000, D1.

almost overwhelming forcing teachers and students to make choices as to what material to use for study.

Gettysburg and Glory

Gettysburg and *Glory* are two of the many movies that are currently available for teachers to use to supplement textual material. These two movies are easiest to connect to textual material as they are the battles depicted most often in texts in some detail.

Gettysburg was a major three-day battle that is often referred to as the turning point in the war. This movie was an adaptation of Michael Shaara's, *The Killer Angels*. This book followed the course of the battle through the eyes of several key participants of the battle. In the movie the battle scenes were depicted vividly. One key portion of the battle was the defense of Little Round Top by Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain's 20th Maine. This was the more typical movie battle in that it had heroic overtones. Chamberlain's sergeant is killed in a typical heroic death scene. The staging of this battle shows the carnage in great detail but the viewer is given a sense that it was heroic. One of the ways the viewer was assisted in feeling this heroism was through the stirring musical score.

The other part of the three-day battle that is given significant screen time occurs on the third day and included Pickett's Charge. It is in the recreation of this charge that the cinematographers really gave the viewer a sense of the intensity and brutality of battle. Two scenes especially brought this home to the viewer. One showed Chamberlain and his brother hugging the ground behind the lines during the intense shelling before Pickett's charge. The other when Southern General Lewis Armistead is killed after reaching the Union lines at "Bloody Angle." The movie depiction of the charge demonstrates the futility of such a charge into artillery by showing the carnage. The viewers are given a real sense of the heroism of

making such a futile attempt on the Union Lines. Again the musical score helps to set the scene and intensify the experience for the viewer. (In the prequel, *Gods and Generals*, the feeling of the intensity of battle in the depiction of the Union assault on Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg is even more intense and very difficult to sit through.)

This movie fulfills Shaara's main purpose stated in his reader's note at the beginning of his book. He stated:

Stephen Crane once said that he wrote *The Red Badge of Courage* because reading the cold history was not enough; he wanted to know what it was like to *be* there, what the weather was like, what men's faces looked like. In order to live it he had to write it. This book was written for much the same reason.²⁶²

Today's consumers can readily experience this battle over and over through the use of DVD's and VCR's. They can also buy the musical sound track or the companion CD, with music from the Civil War era. The score is especially stirring and evokes not only a sense of urgency but also of grandeur and heroism of the times.

The movie *Glory* focuses on the integration of African-American soldiers into the Union Army. It starts with the creation of the 54th Massachusetts under the leadership of a white officer, Colonel Robert Shaw. The climactic scene is the assault on Fort Wagner in South Carolina. The main theme of this movie was the struggle for these soldiers to gain acceptance and respect both as members of the Union army and as men. The movie shows how a group of untrained men from all walks of life are forged into a cohesive fighting unit.

In the scene just before the assault, Shaw requests the honor of leading the attack. This meant walking into blazing cannon without much hope of surviving. The viewer really got a sense of the eighteenth century belief in the importance of achieving honor on the battlefield as a way of proving one's worth. This was the way that the African-American troops were most

²⁶² Michael Shaara, *The Killer Angels*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1974), vii.

likely to gain the respect of their comrades. The musical score of this scene really helped the viewer feel how heroic but futile this attack ultimately was. The final scene was of Shaw's body being thrown into a mass grave with those from his regiment that perished. Again the musical score is very pivotal in creating a mood that helps foster the theme of tragic heroism.

These two films using modern techniques make quite an impression on viewers. It is interesting that in an attempt to illustrate African-American involvement in the Civil War, the attack on Fort Wagner as filmed in *Glory* receives as much attention and sometimes more in the classroom as the battle at Gettysburg. The primary value of this battle was that the futile charge was led by the 54th Massachusetts. Contrary to the historic and military importance of this battle, students are being led to think erroneously that Gettysburg and the assault on Fort Wagner are of equal importance for the sake of political correctness.

The Civil War: A film by Ken Burns

In 1990, the Public Broadcasting Service aired the Civil War documentary by Ken Burns. This mini-series was shown in nine one hour segments and influenced the way documentaries are now made. It is now out in DVD format on five discs at a cost of approximately one hundred dollars. This format makes it an invaluable tool for the classroom teacher as short segments can be easily shown within less than one hour class time. Each scene covers a specific topic that can be accessed quickly as there is a blank black frame with the title of each scene.

The documentary utilizes several avenues to get the information about each phase of the Civil War. Interviews with historians are interposed with film of current Civil War sites interposed with battle maps and period photographs. The historians draw upon their area of expertise to tell stories about events that really bring them to life. Matthew Melton in his review of the series wrote about the narrative as follows: "Narrative plays a crucial role in the

restructuring and possible recapturing of history. Ken Burns has “now told us the grand story of the American Civil War...there are certain elements of the story that reach for the sublime.”²⁶³

Shelby Foote, a Southerner, gets the most air time and is a master story teller who added enough intimate detail to dry facts to engage the viewer. What is really interesting is that there are no recreations of battle scenes by re-enactors or actors. Most of the action is shown by emphasizing different parts of photographs and the use of battlefield maps. What really makes everything come alive is the soundtrack that uses battlefield sound, period music, and even specially created music to get the viewer to really experience the Civil War.

Even in the nine episodes of this mini-series, Burns had to make choices of what information to include without overwhelming the viewer. Melton commented as follows on these choices:

A great deal is missing from Burns’ introduction to the war. Northern sentiment is represented by abolitionists and Southern sentiment is represented by an extreme states’ rights man from South Carolina. The incredible diversity of opinions and ideologies bubbling under the surface on both sides is not touched.²⁶⁴

In this Burns’ task can be compared equally with that of a textbook writer who uses his own biases in deciding what should be included in a text book. Ultimately the viewer gets the history lesson Burns wished to deliver.

Conclusion

The above comments offer but a glimpse of the non-print material available. This material has been available for use since the Civil War and the first real-time reportage through Matthew Brady’s photographs and continues today through the production of mini-series and movies. Barely touched upon is the material produced on a smaller scale such as the movie

²⁶³ Matthew Melton, “Ken Burns’ Civil War: Epic Narrative and Public Moral Argument,” <http://www.regent.edu/acad/schcom/rojc/melton.html>, 1.

²⁶⁴ Melton, 3.

shown at the visitors' center at Antietam National Battleground. Teachers in the classrooms today would be remiss if they did not avail themselves of the many non-print sources available as their use enriches the learning experience. Since textbooks now no longer have a narrative that tells a story that contains drama and excitement, the use of this other material may be the only way to engage students in the exciting struggles of our past.

CONCLUSION

The Civil War remains a significant topic in the schools of today. As in the years just after the war, educators are challenged to present this topic in some manner so that students will learn about the history while taking with them lessons that they can apply to their daily lives. Explaining war to children is very important. Elaine Schmidt wrote: “How do we explain war to children? As we watched television reports of sniper shootings and wondered about future conflict with Iraq, how do we explain it all to children?”²⁶⁵ This research has looked at the textual piece of this question.

The early writers were sure that they were presenting the best information to students with the aim of creating good citizens. Each assumed that their text was an improvement over others and stated this in their introduction. Even though the format of the texts is very different today, current textbook writers still assume that they have the magic answer to how United States history should be presented to students. All the authors chose which information should be in their texts for students based on what lessons they expected students to learn.

Almost all the texts were published in the Northeast because after the war, there was no textbook industry left in the South. By the time the South had recovered to a level where developing such an industry was feasible, the Northeast had a virtual monopoly in publishing texts. Even today most publishers of textbooks have their main offices in the Northeast with occasional branches in other cities. Another change is in the size of these books. Early texts were fairly straightforward in their presentation, including only the historical flow of events enabling publishers to keep the size to what

²⁶⁵ Elaine Schmidt, War as a Child’s Play.” *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, October 28, 2002, E1.

today is the size of a trade paperback. Present day authors feel compelled to include a multitude of facts, charts, illustrations and supportive data of a sociological and political nature not found in the earlier texts. This has created a textbook that is almost the size of a piece of notebook paper but weighing several pounds. No wonder students of today use book bags rather than straps to carry their books.

Early textbook writers were more accepting of the inevitability of war. Rarely was there any information given about those who protested against the Civil War on either side. They phrased their descriptions of battle in grandiose terms. Battles were great and magnificent. They were mainly concerned that their readers learned that the Union was preserved and that it was done in an honorable fashion. Most of these texts used a chronological way of presenting information. The narrative was in the form of a story with information used to support the story. Most of the time information was easy to access and readers got a real sense of the progression of the war. Bias towards the Union was very pronounced until the turn of the century when reconciliation became the watch word. It was at this point that students began to be taught that there were heroes on both sides and that all were Americans who were just having a family argument.

Modern texts are more likely to go for realism when presenting information. There is a real effort to present information that is accurate; thus battles were often called bloody and terrible slaughters. In an effort to cover all sides of the story and to be politically correct, information about African-American participation has been increased. This increase in African-American coverage has resulted in one battle in particular getting as much coverage as the battle at Gettysburg. This battle was not very significant in winning the war, but is mentioned only because of the heroic charge by the 54th

Massachusetts, an all African-American regiment with white officers. This was not the only regiment of color but it is the one mentioned.

There is a significant increase in information about the conditions all over the country. The effect of the war on the home front has become more than a sidebar. Students were also more apt to hear about dissent and the reactions to this dissent. The role of women was included usually by mentioning Clara Barton and the creation of the American Red Cross.

War as an inevitable result in this conflict is presented as a sad occurrence with authors being careful to present both the Union and Confederate reasons for the war. Although most texts made an effort to present their information in an unbiased manner, most still exhibited a pronounced Union bias. In these current texts, students were still taught that preserving the Union was a good thing while downplaying the negativity of secession. Battles and leaders were presented so that readers could see that there were heroes on both sides. Treating battles and all leaders in this way can be seen as a continuation of the reconciliation theme that emerged in the 1890's. The idea that takes precedence is that all are Americans and good and greatness could be found on both sides of the conflict.

Rather than focusing on which side was correct or about the validity of going to war over the issues present in 1861, many authors focused on the change in tactics. Several textbook writers were enamored with the concept of "total war." This concept of involving both military and civilian populations in finally winning the war was discussed at great length. Rather than discussing the validity of the war in general, the concept of

total war was debated as a legitimate strategy. Most authors seemed to at least condone the tactic by their choice of quotes and other historical information.

In addition to being physically heavy, modern texts contain an overabundance of information. The result is often a loss of an understanding of the chronological progression of history. In order to satisfy all group demands as to what should be included, texts today have become ponderous with the sense of the excitement of history being lost.

Literature for children has grown exponentially since the Civil War. This genre was in its infancy in the later half of the nineteenth century. Finding examples of material written for children was challenging. Often books were published that appealed to all ages. They were most often found in two categories, novels and personal reminiscences by participants in the war. As the twentieth century began it was easier to find children's books about the Civil War that talked about the entire war or just one phase. Especially since the centennial of the war in the 1960's, this topic has been an easily accessed genre. Over ninety books were collected without much difficulty with most being written from 1980 to the present. Everything from small trade paperbacks offered from places like Scholastic which markets directly in the schools to beautifully crafted oversized books of lasting quality were available. Once this process of collection was over, additional material was always being discovered.

One of the main themes in the earlier books was honor. The main character was always shown to be acting in an honorable way against overwhelming odds. Most of the fictional works seemed to be written from the same formula. Usually the main character was the devoted son of a widowed mother. This young man then went on to serve his

country valiantly. The other characters in the books were there to support the main character; often they helped him carry out his mission while serving with his comrades at arms who represented many walks of life. Occasionally a Southerner was the main character, but even in those few books discovered the main character exhibited a Union bias. Again these books were published in the North, which meant that Northern publishers' points of view had to be considered.

One of the interesting findings was that those books such as those by Oliver Optic which were so popular during the late nineteenth century did not really stand the test of time. They made amusing reading for the modern reader but were obviously dated. One small book, Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, has survived the test of time and is still used in classrooms today. Milton J. Bates was quoted in an article about a play adapted from the book put on by a children's theater in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The reason for this book's continued relevance according to Bates is that a story "would bring in the full human context."²⁶⁶ This book still deals with honor but in a way that is timeless.

The books that were often the most interesting were those that were first-hand accounts. These authors had a reason for writing that was similar to that of textbook writers. They wanted to make sure young readers understood the war experience and what really happened, at least from their point of view. Of course, they were still very much concerned with honor and behaving honorably while in battle.

By the time of World War II, more books were published that emphasized unity in addition to bravery. Most of these books also presented war in a manner that made readers assume that war was necessary and glorious. These books also were more likely to use more period photographs and other illustrations to enhance the readability of these

²⁶⁶ Schmidt, 3E.

books for young people. One book published at the end of this period was MacKinlay Kantor's book, *Gettysburg*. While the prose is preachy and somewhat condescending in style, the information given really helps young readers understand what that battle was like and the effect on all who participated.

It is when analysis of current material is attempted that the task becomes overwhelming. In format there is everything from comic books, large format picture books, factual books on the entire war or just a small portion of it, biographies of key players, and novels. The fictional works also take many routes to engage the reader. Some used time travel while others were written in a traditional historical fiction format. These fictional works usually had one thing in common, a young main character with whom readers could identify. While some of the books were not very useful, most of them were effective in achieving their main goal of informing young readers about the life and times during the Civil War period.

The current material on the Civil War reflects current thinking about war. Those books that use photographs from this period always include those photos that show dead bodies, some of which are in gruesome shape. These books also show camp life and stills that include soldiers participating in various activities. The ones that really make an impression are those of surgeons at work amputating limbs after battles. The written material that is paired with this material is definitely anti-war. Often authors either trivialize the reasons the two sides went to war or make sure that readers know that war is a bad choice. One book even had a young girl musing about how horrible it was that people had to go to war to settle their differences.

The novels do give a very good description of what life was like and how the war affected those at home and in the path of the battles. Some authors included some lighter elements such as the cow and pesky cousin that were a part of the entourage in *Private Captain*. These lighter elements did not keep the authors from making sure their readers understood how horrible the aftermath of war really was. Some of the most effective books were those written with characters from both sides who dwelt in the Border States. Even though fairness was exhibited when presenting both sides, the reader could usually sense that the author believed that the fight to preserve the Union was the correct side. Only one book was found that really presented a totally Southern point of view. That book was published locally in the Houston area.

The non-print material was only briefly touched on in this paper. Music and pictures affected how youth of the late nineteenth century perceived the war. It is no less true today that visual and audio materials still affect perceptions of war. What makes these non-print sources so astounding today is the volume that is readily available.

As can be seen, teachers and parents of today are faced with a multitude of resources to use in educating children. War is a daily part of their lives through the news put out by all types of media. Using the Civil War as a backdrop provides educators a ready tool to discuss this topic. The difficulty is that most current texts are so bland that students often fail to realize the passions that were present that caused this war to start. It is the effort to keep from offending any interest group that keeps texts from really expressing any idea strongly. It is often in the trade books on the subject that readers get the best view on the choices made during the Civil War era by the military, politicians, and the civilian population.

Ironically, the task at hand is still very much like what earlier authors were trying to achieve. That task is to choose material that best teaches children about this war and then connect it to the real world around them. Schmidt summed up this task in her article with two quotes from those she interviewed. James Marten, whose works were used earlier in this report, said, “You have to make children realize that war is a real thing and that it is not fun.”²⁶⁷ Finally the artistic director for the play, *The Red Badge of Courage*, said, “The play does not make the statement that violence is necessary. It asks when we do it are we aware of what it means.”²⁶⁸

When we are aware of the messages found in the material given to children, it becomes easier to craft lessons that make the information relevant to their lives. This takes careful study and reflection by adults as to all the messages included remembering that many of these are hidden within the content of the text. This can be observed by choice of words and by inclusion or exclusion of material. History in and of itself is exciting and children can become excited about it if we provide them with quality material.

²⁶⁷ Schmidt, 1E.

²⁶⁸ Schmidt, 3E.

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