



THE NEUTRAL GROUND

DELVE DEEPER READING LIST



The Neutral Ground documents New Orleans' fight over monuments and America's troubled romance with the Lost Cause. In 2015, director CJ Hunt was filming the New Orleans City Council's vote to remove four confederate monuments. But when that removal is halted by lawsuits and death threats, CJ sets out to understand why a losing army from 1865 still holds so much power in America.

This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Susan Conlon, MLS, and Kim Dorman, Community Engagement Coordinator of Princeton Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Neutral Ground*.

Contributors

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ADULT NON-FICTION

Gallagher, Gary W. Nell Irvin Painter, Karen L Cox, W. Fitzhugh Brundage, and Catherine Clinton. *Confederate Statues and Memorialization*, Athens, Georgia, University of Georgia, 2019.

Offers a rich discussion between four leading scholars who have studied the history of Confederate memory and memorialization. Through this dialogue, we see how historians explore contentious topics and provide historical context for students and the broader public.

Farrow, Anne, Joel Lang, and Jennifer Frank. *Complicity: How the North Promoted, Prolonged, and Profited from Slavery*. New York, New York: Ballantine Books, 2005

In this book, three New England journalists demythologize the region of America known for tolerance and liberation, revealing a place where thousands of people were held in bondage and slavery was both an economic dynamo and a necessary way of life.

Gallagher, Gary W. and Alan T. Nolan. *The Myth of the Lost Cause of and Civil War History*. Bloomington, IN. Indiana University Press, 2010.

Nine distinguished historians debunk the myth of the Lost Cause in an effort to replace falsity with truth.

Baptist, Edward E. *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*. New York, New York: Basic Books, 2016.

Americans tend to cast slavery as a pre-modern institution - the nation's original sin, perhaps, but isolated in time and divorced from America's later success. But to do so robs the millions who suffered in bondage of their full legacy. As historian Edward E. Baptist reveals in *The Half has Never Been Told*, the expansion of slavery in the first eight decades after American independence drove the evolution and modernization of the United States. In the span of single lifetime, the South grew from a narrow coastal strip of worn out tobacco plantations to a continental cotton empire, and the United States grew into a modern, industrial, and capitalist economy.

Smith, Clint. *How the Word is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America*. New York, New York, Little Brown. 2021

Beginning in his hometown of New Orleans, Clint Smith leads the reader on a tour of monuments and landmarks - those that are honest about their past and those that are not - that offer an intergenerational story of how slavery has been central in shaping our nation's collective history, and ourselves. Informed by scholarship and brought to life by the story of people living today.

DuBois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*, New York, New York: Penguin Classics, 2021

When *The Souls of Black Folk* was first published in 1903, it had a galvanizing effect on the conversation about race in America—and it remains both a touchstone in the literature of African America. Believing that one can know the “soul” of a race by knowing the souls of individuals, W. E. B. Du Bois combines history and stirring autobiography to reflect on the magnitude of American racism and to chart a path forward against oppression, and introduces the now-famous concepts of the color line, the veil, and double-consciousness.

Seck, Ibrahima. *Bouki Fait Gumbo*. New Orleans, Louisiana: UNO Press, 2015.

An exploration of slavery and its impact on southern culture, *Bouki Fait Gumbo* is the first book to map the history of Habitation Haydel. Now known as the Whitney Plantation, the Haydel began operating in 1752 as an indigo producer and went on to become one of the most important sugar plantations in Louisiana. This in-depth study traces the route of African slaves to the German Coast of Louisiana, charts the various owners of the Haydel, and discusses the daily life of slaves on the plantation. Although the book does not shy away from depicting the brutalities of slavery, at its heart are the stories of the robust culinary and musical cultures that grew out of slaves’ desires to reconnect with their home. As Ibrahima Seck says in the book’s introduction, “The history of slavery should not only be the history of deportation and hard labor in the plantations. Beyond these painful memories, we should always dig deep enough to find out how Africans contributed tremendously to the making of Southern Culture and American identity.

Cox, Karen L. *No Common Ground: Confederate Monuments and the Ongoing Fight for Racial Justice*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021.

When it comes to Confederate monuments, there is no common ground. Polarizing debates over their meaning have intensified into legislative maneuvering to preserve the statues, legal battles to remove them, and rowdy crowds taking matters into their own hands. These conflicts have raged for well over a century--but they've never been as intense as they are today.

Smith, Lillian. *Killers of the Dream*. New York, New York: WW Norton, 1994.

A southern white writer, educator, and activist, Lillian Smith (1897-1966) spoke out all her life against injustice. In *Killers of the Dream* (1949), her most influential book, she draws on memories of her childhood to describe the psychological and moral cost of the powerful, contradictory rules about sin, sex, and segregation—the intricate system of taboos—that undergirded Southern society.

ADULT FICTION

Jones, Edward P. *The Known World*. New York, New York: Amistad, 2003.

Henry Townsend, a former slave, has a fondness for *Paradise Lost* and an unusual mentor--William Robbins, perhaps the most powerful white man in antebellum Virginia's Manchester County. Under Robbins's tutelage, Henry becomes proprietor of his own plantation as well as his own slaves. Henry tragically fails to understand the fundamental flaws in his thinking that he can be a better slave master than a white man.

McBride, James. *The Good Lord Bird*. New York, New York: Riverhead Books, 2013

Henry Shackleford is a young slave living in the Kansas Territory in 1857, when the region is a battleground between anti- and pro-slavery forces. When John Brown, the legendary abolitionist, arrives in the area, an argument between Brown and Henry's master quickly turns violent. Henry is forced to leave town with Brown, who believes he's a girl. Over the ensuing months, Henry, whom Brown nicknames Little Onion, conceals his true identity as he struggles to stay alive.

Walker, Margaret. *Jubilee (50th Anniversary Edition)*. Boston, Massachusetts, 2016.

Jubilee tells the true story of Vyry, the child of a white plantation owner and his black mistress. Vyry bears witness to the South's antebellum opulence and to its brutality, its wartime ruin, and the promises of Reconstruction. Weaving her own family's oral history with thirty years of research, Margaret Walker's novel brings the everyday experiences of slaves to light.

Whitehead, Colson. *The Nickel Boys*. New York, New York: Doubleday, 2019

In this follow-up to the Pulitzer Prize, and National Book Award-winning *The Underground Railroad*, Colson Whitehead brilliantly dramatizes another strand of American history through the story of two boys sentenced to a hellish reform school in Jim Crow-era Florida. As the Civil Rights movement begins to reach the black enclave of Frenchtown in segregated Tallahassee, Elwood Curtis takes the words of Dr. Martin Luther King to heart: He is "as good as anyone."

Locke, Attica. *The Cutting Season*. New York: Harper Perennial, a division of HarperCollins, 2012.

This thriller interweaves two murder mysteries, one on Belle Vie, a historic landmark in the middle of Louisiana's Sugar Cane country, and one involving a slave gone missing more than one hundred years earlier. A meditation on how America reckons its past with its future.

Tademy, Lalita. *Cane River*. New York, New York: Warner Books; Oprah's Book Club edition, 2005.

Beginning with her great-great-great-great grandmother, a slave owned by a Creole family, Lalita Tademy chronicles four generations of strong, determined black women as they battle injustice to unite their family and forge success on their own terms. They are women whose lives begin in slavery, who weather the Civil War, and who grapple with contradictions of emancipation, Jim Crow, and the pre-Civil Rights South. As she peels back layers of racial and cultural attitudes, Tademy paints a remarkable picture of rural Louisiana and the resilient spirit of one unforgettable family.

NON-FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Acho, Emmanuel. *Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Boy*. New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2021.

Adapted from Emmanuel Acho's New York Times bestseller *Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man*, this young readers edition aims at opening a dialogue about systemic racism with our youngest generation. Approaching every awkward, taboo, and uncomfortable question with openness and patience, Emmanuel Acho connects his own experience with race and racism—from attending majority-white prep schools to his time in the NFL playing on majority-black football teams—to insightful lessons in black history and black culture.

Otfinoski, Steven. *The Civil War (Step into history series.)* New York, NY: Scholastic, 2017.

This book details major events of the U.S. Civil War, as well as the war's cultural impact.

Cohen-Janca, Irène. *Ruby, Head High*. Mankato, MN: Creative Editions, 2019.

Inspired by an iconic Norman Rockwell painting and translated from an original French text, this is a story about the day a little girl in New Orleans held her head high and changed the world.

Stanchak, John E. *Civil War*. New York, NY: DK Publishing, 2015.

Examines aspects of the Civil War, including the issue of slavery, secession, the raising of armies, individual battles, the commanders, Northern life, Confederate culture, the surrender of the South, and the aftermath.

Tate, Don. *William Still and His Freedom Stories*. Atlanta, Georgia: Peachtree Publishing Company Inc., 2020.

This is the biographical story of William Still, known as the Father of the Underground Railroad from award-winning author-illustrator Don Tate. William Still's parents escaped slavery but had to leave two of their children behind, a tragedy that haunted the family. As a young man, William went to work for the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, where he raised money, planned rescues, and helped freedom seekers who had traveled north. And then one day, a strangely familiar man came into William's office, searching for information about his long-lost family. Could it be? Motivated by his own family's experience, William began collecting the stories of thousands of other freedom seekers. As a result, he was able to reunite other families and build a remarkable source of information, including encounters with Harriet Tubman, Henry "Box" Brown, and William and Ellen Craft.

Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Box*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2020.

Henry Brown mails himself to freedom. With illustrations in rich hues and patterns by artist Michele Wood, “Box” is augmented with historical records and an introductory excerpt from Henry's own writing as well as a timeline, notes from the author and illustrator, and a bibliography.

FICTION AND PICTURE BOOKS FOR YOUNGER READERS

Bolden, Tonya. *Crossing Ebenezer Creek*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2017.

Freed from slavery, Mariah and her young brother Zeke join Sherman's march through Georgia, where Mariah meets a free black named Caleb and dares to imagine the possibility of true love, but hope can come at a cost.

Devenny, Jenny. *Race Cars: A Children's book about white privilege*. Beverly, MA : Quarto Knows, 2021.

A story of two best friends, a white car and a black car, that have different experiences and face different rules while entering the same race

Fradin, Judith Bloom. *Stolen Into Slavery: The True Story of Solomon Northup, Free Black Man*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2012.

Follows the story of Solomon Northup--a free black man who was kidnapped and forced into slavery--through his twelve years of bondage in Louisiana until friends from New York rescued him from a cotton plantation.

Henderson, Leah. *A Day for Rememberin': The First Memorial Day*. New York, NY: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2021.

In Charleston, South Carolina, in 1865, ten-year-old Eli and other newly freed slaves gather to honor the memory of fallen Union soldiers, an event considered to be one of the first celebrations of what is now called Memorial Day. Includes author's note.

Levine, Ellen. *Henry's Freedom Box*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2007.

A fictionalized account of how in 1849 a Virginia slave, Henry "Box" Brown escaped to freedom by shipping himself in a wooden crate from Richmond to Philadelphia.

Marsalis, Wynton. *Squeak! rumble! whomp! whomp! whomp!* Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2012.

Ringling with exuberance and auditory delights, this collaboration by jazz musician and composer Wynton Marsalis and illustrator Paul Rogers takes readers (and listeners) on a rollicking, clanging, clapping tour through the many sounds that fill a neighborhood. Visual clues are provided in the illustration that provide context that it is set in New Orleans, the birthplace of jazz.

Walter, Jon. *My Name is Not Friday*. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc, 2016.

Samuel and his younger brother, Joshua, are free black boys living in an orphanage during the Civil War, but when Samuel takes the blame for his brother's prank, he is sent South, given a new name, and sold into slavery--and somehow he must survive both captivity and the war, to find his way back to his brother.

Wiechman, Kathy Cannon. *Like a River*. Honesdale, PA.: Calkins Creek, an imprint of Highlights, 2015.

Two Union soldiers, one too young to have properly enlisted, and the other a girl disguised as a boy, find themselves struggling through the rigors and horrors of war, from amputation to the Andersonville prison camp.

DELVE EVEN DEEPER

Delve Even Deeper

The topics approached in this film are broad and entrenched into many facets of American Society. Should you wish to 'delve even deeper' we've added these titles across a variety of topics.

brown, adrienne maree. *We Will Not Cancel Us: And Other Dreams of Transformative Justice*, Chico, California: AK Press 2020

Carpio, Glenda. *Laughing Fit to Kill: Black Humor in the Fictions of Slavery*, Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.2008.

Kreiser, Lawrence A and Randal Allred. *The Civil War in Popular Culture: Memory And Meaning*. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2014.

Nieman, Susan. *Learning from the Germans: Race and the Memory of Evil*. New York, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019.

Voices of the movement

Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*, New York, New York: Penguin Classics, 2007

Davis, Angela Y. *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine and the Foundations of a Movement*. Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books 2016.

Hale, Jon. *Freedom Schools: Student Activists in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement*. New York, New York: Columbia University Press: 2016.

Horton, James Oliver, and Louis E. Horton, *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*, Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008

Lorde, Audre, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, New York, New York: Penguin Classics, 2020.

Moody, Ann. *Coming of Age in Mississippi: The Classic Autobiography of Growing Up Poor and Black in the Rural South*. New York, New York: (Delta) Penguin Random House, 2004.

Payne, Charles M. *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition of the Freedom Struggle*, Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2007.

Peniel E. Joseph. *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights - Black Power Era*. New York, New York: Routledge, 2006.

Shakur, Assata, *Assata: An Autobiography*. Chico, California: AK PRes, 1998.

The Lost Cause & Civil War History

McCurry, Stephanie. *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012.

Domby, Adam H. *The False Cause: Fraud, fabrication and while supremacy in confederate memory*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2020.

Lee, Robert W. *A Sin By Any Other Name*. New York, New York: Convergent Books, 2019.

Seidule, Ty. *Robert E. Lee and Me*. New York : St. Martin's Press, 2020.

Towns, Stuart W. *Enduring Legacy: Rhetoric and Ritual of the Lost Cause*. Tuscaloosa, Alabama, University of Alabama Press, 2012.

Books on Truth and Reconciliation

Edkins, Jenny, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Magarell, Lisa and Joya Wesley. *Learning from Greensboro: Truth and Reconciliation in the United States*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

Minow, Martha. *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History After Genocide and Mass Violence*. New York, New York: Beacon Press. 1999.

Books About Education, Whiteness, Race & Racism

Alcoff, Linda Martin. *The Future of Whiteness*, Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2015

Anderson, Carol. *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*. New York, New York: Bloomsbury Reprint, 2017.

Desmond, Matthew; Emirbayer, Mustafa. *Racial Domination, Racial Progress: The Sociology of Race in America*. New York, New York. McGraw-Hill Education, 2009.

Fanon, F. *The wretched of the earth* (C. Farrington, Trans.). New York, New York: Grove Press, 1963.

Fanon, F. *Toward the African revolution: Political essays*. (H. M. Chevalier, Trans.). New York, New York: Grove Press, 1967.

Freire, P. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Freiburg im Bressgau, Germany: Herder and Herder, 1972/2001.

Freire, P. *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civic courage*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998.

Fredrickson, George M. *Racism: A Short History*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015.

Hartman, S. V. *Scenes of subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. Oxford University Press, 1997.

hooks, b. *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Oxfordshire, England: Routledge, 1994.

hooks, b. *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press 2000.

hooks, b. *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope*. Oxford, England: Routledge, 2003.

Leonardo, Z. *Race, whiteness, and education*, Oxford, England: Routledge, 2009.

Love, Bettina, *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*, New York, New York: Beacon Press, 2019.

Nelson, L. P. & Harold, C. N. (Eds.). *The Legacy of Race and Inequality*. Charlottesville, Virginia, University of Virginia Press, 2017.

Sharpe, C. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2016.

Sokol, J. *There Goes my Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975*, New York, New York: Vintage, 2006.

Thandeka, *Learning to Be White: Money, Race and God in America*, New York, New York: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2000.

Books about the History of American Education & Schools

***Black Protest Thought and Education.* (2005). By: William Watkins.**

***The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935.* (1988). By: James D. Anderson**

***Race, Schools, and Hope: African Americans and School Choice after Brown.* (2008). By: Lisa Stulberg.**

***The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education.* (1974). By: David B. Tyack**

***From Racial Liberalism to Racial Literacy: Brown v. Board of Education and the interest-divergence dilemma.* (2004). By: Guinier, L. (2004). *The Journal of American History*, 91(1), 92-118.**

***Gentrification and Schools: The Process of Integration When Whites Reverse Flight* (2012). By: Jennifer Burns Stillman**

***The History and Political Goals of Public Schooling.* (2017). By: Joel Spring**