

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

The Civil War Era in Southern Appalachia

By **Steven E. Nash**, East Tennessee State University

Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Noe, Kenneth W. and Shannon H. Wilson, eds.	<i>The Civil War in Appalachia: Collected Essays</i> . Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004.

Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year. “Title,” in <i>Journal</i> ##, no. # (Date): #.
Inscoe, John C.	<i>Mountain Masters: Slavery and the Secession Crisis in Western North Carolina</i> . Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989.
Inscoe, John C. and Gordon B. McKinney	<i>The Heart of Confederate Appalachia: Western North Carolina in the Civil War</i> . Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
McKenzie, Robert Tracy	<i>Lincolmites and Rebels: A Divided Town in the American Civil War</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
McKnight, Brian D.	<i>Contested Borderland: The Civil War in Appalachian Kentucky and Virginia</i> . Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006.

Noe, Kenneth W.	<i>Southwest Virginia's Railroad: Modernization and the Sectional Crisis.</i> Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994.
Sarris, Jonathan Dean	<i>A Separate Civil War: Communities in Conflict in the Mountain South.</i> Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006.
Slap, Andrew L., ed.	<i>Reconstructing Appalachia: The Civil War's Aftermath.</i> Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010.
Waller, Altina L.	<i>Feud: Hatfields, McCoys, and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860-1900.</i> Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.

Organizations

Organization Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
Appalachian Regional Commission	The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is an economic development partnership entity of the federal government and 13 state governments focusing on 423 counties across the Appalachian Region. ARC's mission is to innovate, partner and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia to help the region achieve socioeconomic parity with the nation. Their website is: https://www.arc.gov/

Web Resources

Other Sources

Scholars

Name	Email
Steven E. Nash	nashse@mail.etsu.edu

Topic Précis

Published in 1862, *Alleghania* described Appalachia (a term that came into common usage later in the 19th century) as a mountainous region with an overwhelmingly white population whose relative lack of ties to slavery made them likely to oppose secession and the Confederacy. In fact, slavery was less prevalent in Appalachia with about 10% of the population enslaved (compared to about 50% in the Deep South). However, elite mountaineers often enslaved people and dominated local economies and politics. Further, secession and the war opened the region to new forces. The wartime influx of governmental power created new power dynamics that split people's loyalties between the United States and Confederacy. Such divisions also sparked localized violence between guerrilla bands, local state home guards, and small regular commands across West Virginia, southwestern Virginia, eastern Kentucky, western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, and northern Georgia. Still, issues of resource control (specifically salt) and more meant that the Appalachian region retained political, economic, and logistical significance to both Union and Confederate planners during the war.

Divided loyalties continued and evolved into Reconstruction. Divisions among different classes of whites would eventually create political opportunities for African Americans striving to secure their rights and freedom. Outside governmental power continued to be important. Freedmen's Bureau agents helped African Americans to acquire land, establish schools, and secure employment. Such aid helped foster a biracial political alliance through the Republican Party. Resistance to biracial Republicanism in the mountains sparked the arrival of the Ku Klux Klan who resisted African Americans' political participation and Federal suppression of illicit whiskey production. Devastated by the war, economic recovery in Appalachia came with growth in agricultural production, particularly tobacco, and later in resource development including coal, minerals, timber and railroads.

During the Civil War Era geography, political rivalries and divided loyalties, and a hierarchical social structure with slavery shaped Appalachia. So too did tensions after the war arising from emancipation and the rise of the Klan. Local boosters, fiction writers and reformers fostered the notion of widespread unionism in Appalachia to attract investment to the region. The history of guerilla warfare, slavery, divided loyalties, and Confederate sentiment disappeared. As a result, modern Americans came to imagine Appalachia as the mountainous, poor, unionist area described in *Alleghania* in 1862.
